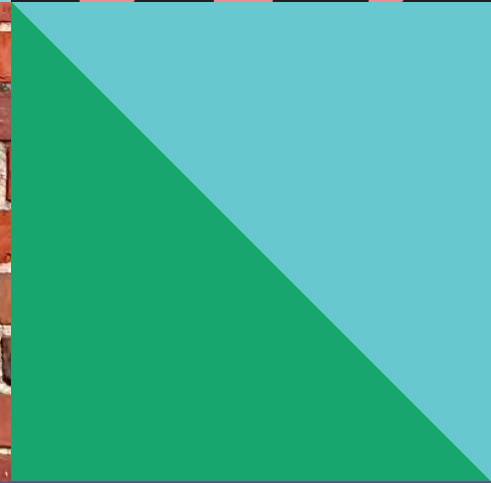
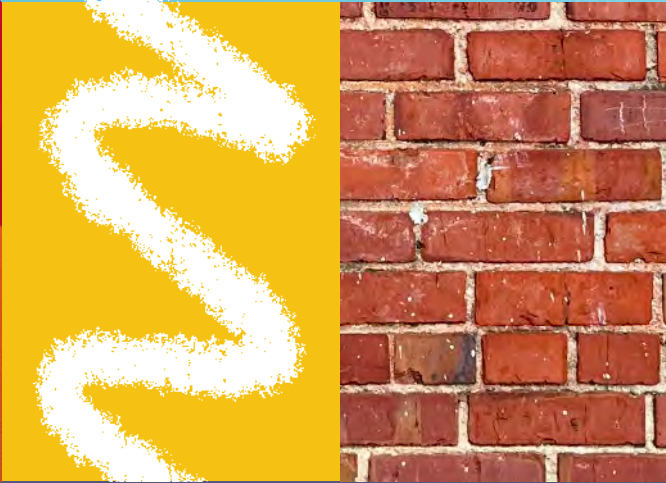
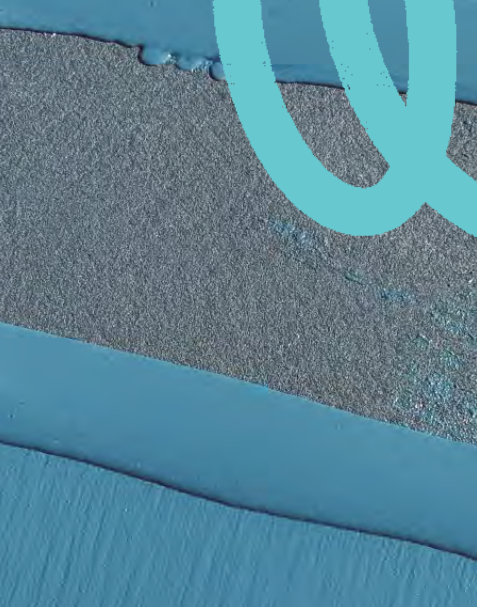
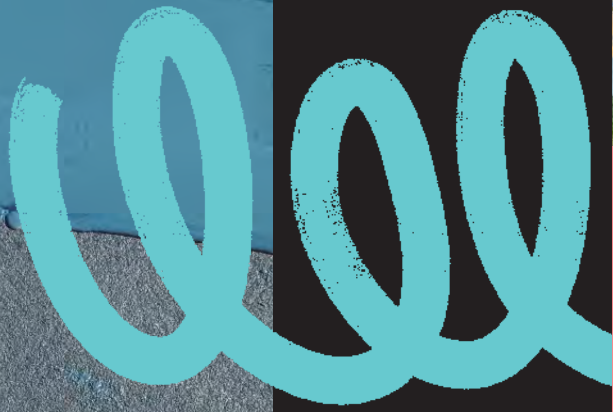


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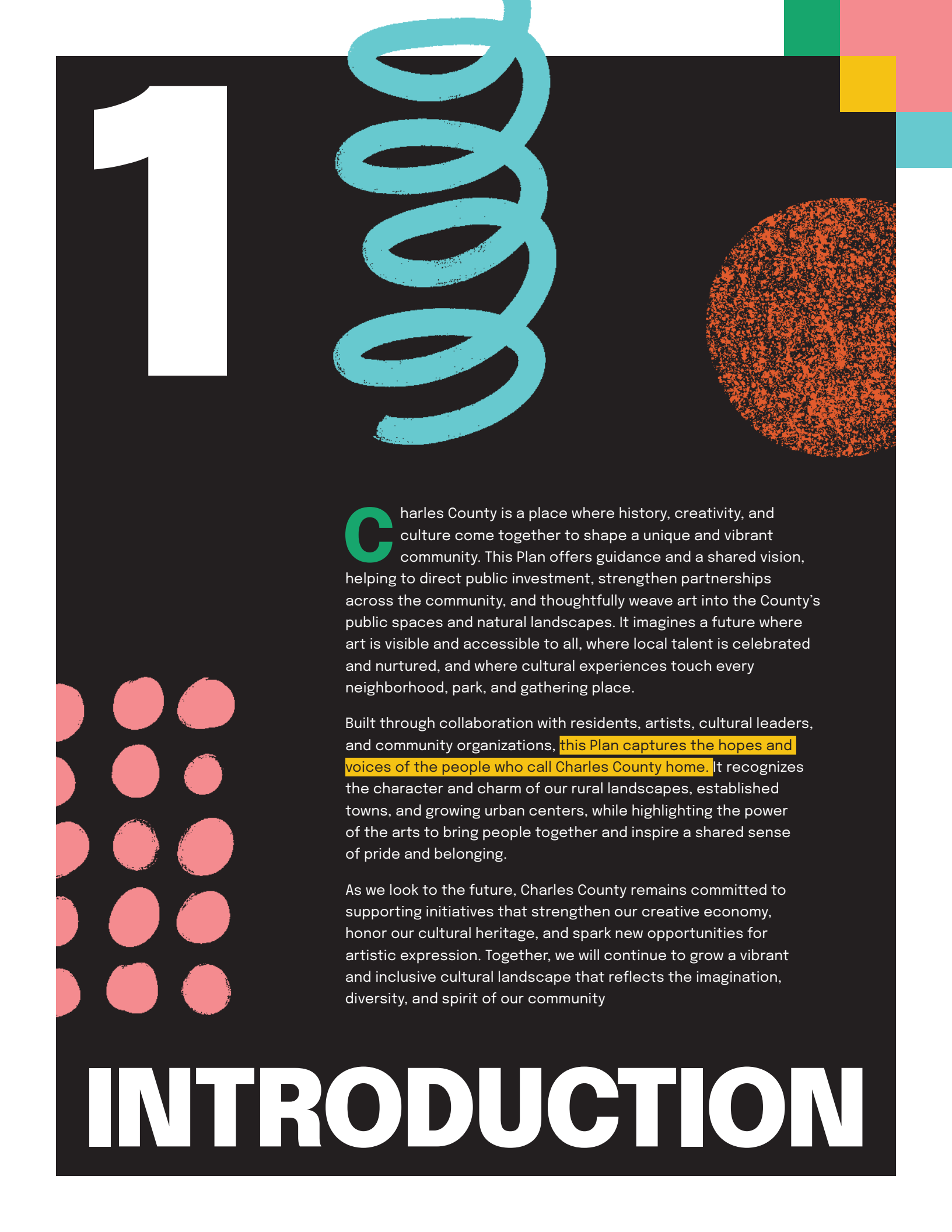
# CHARLES COUNTY Public Arts & Cultural Master Plan



**SITE DESIGN**

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# 1

**C**harles County is a place where history, creativity, and culture come together to shape a unique and vibrant community. This Plan offers guidance and a shared vision, helping to direct public investment, strengthen partnerships across the community, and thoughtfully weave art into the County's public spaces and natural landscapes. It imagines a future where art is visible and accessible to all, where local talent is celebrated and nurtured, and where cultural experiences touch every neighborhood, park, and gathering place.

Built through collaboration with residents, artists, cultural leaders, and community organizations, **this Plan captures the hopes and voices of the people who call Charles County home.** It recognizes the character and charm of our rural landscapes, established towns, and growing urban centers, while highlighting the power of the arts to bring people together and inspire a shared sense of pride and belonging.

As we look to the future, Charles County remains committed to supporting initiatives that strengthen our creative economy, honor our cultural heritage, and spark new opportunities for artistic expression. Together, we will continue to grow a vibrant and inclusive cultural landscape that reflects the imagination, diversity, and spirit of our community

# INTRODUCTION

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the many community members, artists, creative workers, business owners, educators, non-profit leaders, and County staff whose insight, leadership, and participation made this Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan possible.

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## Maryland State Arts Council



# 2

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is an executive summary of the Master Plan; please refer to the full document for a more detailed review of each section.

# PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Charles County's first Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan establishes a comprehensive County Government framework for arts and culture—the first in the County government's history. Built directly from community input and deep research, it responds to the clear desire for more sector coordination, creative spaces, and arts investments. The plan positions the arts as foundational to smarter growth, aligned with the County's goals for economic development, youth opportunities, tourism, and quality of life.

## WHY ARTS MATTER HERE

Arts and culture are not just amenities but core economic drivers and social goods.

**In Maryland, the arts contribute \$13.7 billion to the state economy, support 86,000 jobs, and strengthen education, health, and community identity.**

National research shows that **cultural resources correlate with safer neighborhoods, improved student outcomes in math and English, and lower healthcare costs.**

Cultural industries are related to greater patent innovation and improved resident retention.

## WHAT WE HEARD—KEY FINDINGS

### ◆ A Need for Arts Spaces

Only 8% of respondents say there are enough arts and culture spaces. Residents expressed frustration with the lack of venues for performances, classes, youth programming, rehearsals, studios, galleries, and maker spaces.

### ◆ Underfunded and Undersupported Arts Ecosystem

Charles County is second-lowest in Maryland for arts funding per capita (\$1.27 vs MD median \$4.12) and lacks creative sector coordination.

### ◆ Residents travel outside of County for arts and culture events

61% of respondents who attend arts and cultural events a few times a year say that they leave Charles County. This is a highly unusual dynamic for a county.

### ◆ Desire for Placemaking

Residents frequently expressed desire for walkable communities with a greater sense of place and character through the arts.

## ➡ COUNTYWIDE ENGAGEMENT

\* **Countywide survey**—101 survey responses \* **3 public meetings**—Indian Head, La Plata, and Waldorf \* **3 sector conversations**—36 participants across arts, education, business, and government \* **11 one-on-one interviews** \* **6 site visits**—across the county \* **Comparative study** of all 24 Maryland county arts councils

# A PLAN BUILT ON FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The plan calls for a public art program, micro-grants, zoning incentives that encourage developers to include arts spaces, and a Percent for Art ordinance. These tools ensure that arts and culture grow alongside the County's built environment.

## CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Multi-use cultural trails, rural arts hubs, agritourism partnerships, and waterfront activations create a network of places where residents can experience art, nature, and heritage together.

## COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE

The plan strengthens creative workforce development, expands youth arts pathways, supports collaboration across arts groups, and creates new channels for community-generated arts programming.

## GOVERNMENT AND FINANCE

Dedicated arts staff, a renewed County arts council, a capital funding grant, and sustained public funding for the arts. A new county engagement model provides the support to catalyze long-term arts development.

## ➔ ARTS FUNDING ACROSS MARYLAND

The MD state median for arts funding is \$4.12 per capita, while the top third of counties fund at over \$7.00 per capita. It is recommended that Charles County fund the arts between this range from its current \$1.27 per capita.

# A ROADMAP FOR A MORE VIBRANT COMMUNITY

This plan outlines a phased approach:

### YEARS 1-2

#### LAY THE FOUNDATION

Hire staff, form new county arts council, launch microgrants, pilot new programs, establish arts zoning incentives, pursue A&E and ERA Districts, adopt Percent for Art, and plan central arts venue.

### YEARS 3-5

#### BUILD MOMENTUM

Expand public art, capital, and youth supporting programs, develop trail networks, activate natural resources, launch regional Arts Leadership Fellowship.

### YEARS 6-10

#### SUSTAIN GROWTH

Upgrade cultural infrastructure, expand ERA Districts, deepen private partnerships, and position Charles County as a regional cultural leader.

# A COUNTY WHERE CREATIVITY BELONGS EVERYWHERE

The Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan imagines a Charles County that is more connected, expressive, and vibrant; where young people have creative pathways; where artists can build careers; where public spaces reflect local identity; and where the arts are a powerful engine for economic vitality, tourism, and community wellbeing.

With this plan, Charles County sets the foundation to build a thriving arts ecosystem, emerge as a regional cultural leader, and ensure that the arts become a part of daily life across the County.



“

Art is what makes the world a vibrant place. I love going places to view art and really learn about a place and the culture of that place by experiencing their art.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

A person with dark curly hair, wearing a black t-shirt and black shorts, is captured from behind, shooting a basketball. The t-shirt has 'STAY STRONG' in teal and 'ON THE GO' in purple. The basketball court is colorful with yellow, orange, and red sections. In the background, there are trees, a fence, and other people. A large white number '3' is overlaid on the top left.

3

**WHY A  
MASTER PLAN?**



## Why Charles County is Developing its First-Ever Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan

**T**his first-ever Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan was commissioned by the Charles County Government Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to establish a clear, coordinated framework for how arts and culture can enhance daily life and community programming, guide development of art spaces and public art, and strengthen the arts ecosystem. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland was a major project partner on this project, providing the funding for developing this Master Plan.

The Master Plan builds on a growing interest and recognition that the arts play a central role in County residents' everyday experiences—in recreation, education, business, or civic life. This Master Plan responds directly to the County's call for a comprehensive roadmap for public arts and culture that:

- \* Identifies key places for creativity where public art and cultural activity can have the strongest impact.
- \* Establishes a public art and culture policy framework that integrates the arts into processes, capital projects, infrastructure, and public spaces.
- \* Encourages design excellence across public buildings, streets, and open spaces.
- \* Builds stronger partnerships among County departments, local arts organizations, businesses, and residents.
- \* Supports arts education and creative workforce pathways that foster lifelong learning opportunities.
- \* Lays the foundation for new venues, cultural hubs, and thematic art programs that reflect the County's identity and diversity.

The Master Plan is designed to serve as a living document—part vision, part toolkit—to help County staff, policymakers, artists, creative workers, and community members turn ideas into action. This plan includes opportunity areas, model policies, funding strategies, and actionable recommendations that make the arts a tangible, visible part of County growth.

By bringing together artists, educators, planners, businesses, and government around shared values, this plan aims to make creativity a cornerstone of community life in Charles County.

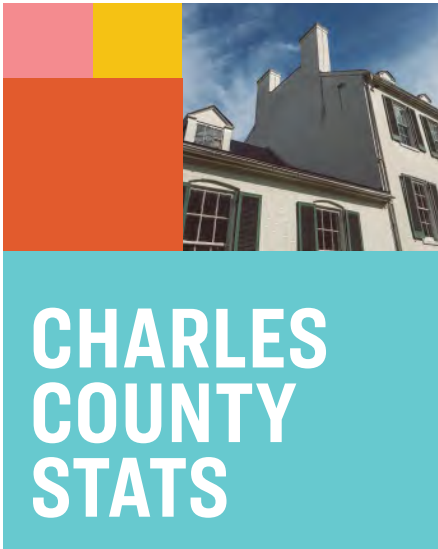
The Master Plan builds on a growing interest and recognition that the arts play a central role in County residents' everyday experiences

A decorative horizontal bar at the top right of the page, composed of several colored segments: purple, orange, yellow, and pink.

# 4

A low-angle photograph of tall reeds with green leaves and golden-brown seed heads against a clear blue sky. The reeds are the central focus of the page.

# COUNTY OVERVIEW



**643** square miles<sup>1</sup>

**Fast-growing population<sup>2</sup>**

Population in 2000

**121,000**

Population in 2025

**172,000**

Median household income<sup>4</sup>

**\$120,592**

U.S. household income

**\$82,690**

**Neighboring household incomes:**

Prince George's County, MD (\$97,171)

Montgomery County, MD (\$128,733)

Arlington County, VA (\$140,160)

Fairfax County, VA (\$150,113)

St.Mary's County MD (\$114,580)

Calvert County MD (\$132,059)

**Commuting Community**

**64% of residents commute to DC and surrounding suburbs<sup>33</sup>**

**F**ramed by the Potomac River, the Chesapeake Bay, and rolling farmland, Charles County sits at the crossroads of rapid growth, ecology, and history. Once defined by its quiet agricultural landscape and waterways, the County today bridges the rural heritage of Southern Maryland and the bustling energy of new development and commercial growth. Its 643 square miles encompass a remarkable range of places: from the commercial corridors of Waldorf and the historic heart of La Plata to the tranquil villages and woodlands of Hughesville, Indian Head, and Port Tobacco.

For centuries, the County has been shaped by its rivers and people. Indigenous communities stewarded this land long before and through initial European colonization; later, tobacco plantations dependent on enslaved persons and fishing defined the area's early economy. Its history includes roles in the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the complex evolution of Maryland's landscape. In the early and mid 1900s, the County became known as "Little Las Vegas" with a region spotted with small gambling parlors, river-side hotels, and performance venues. When gambling was banned in the 1960s and tobacco farms became ever less lucrative, the County's economy reorientated towards Washington DC, setting the stage for today's suburban and commercial expansion along U.S. Route 301.

Today, Charles County is one of Maryland's fastest growing and most diverse counties, with a population of approximately 172,000 residents—an over 40 percent increase from 2000. The county has evolved from a predominantly rural region into a suburban hub deeply connected to the Washington metropolitan area—with farmland and forest rapidly decreasing in scale. Its residents reflect a richly multicultural community: a newly majority-Black or African American population, growing Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial communities, and a steady influx of individuals and families seeking affordability, open space, and access to the region's employment centers. The result is a county where traditions of stewardship and community pride meet the challenges and opportunities of rapid growth.

Culturally and economically, proximity to Washington D.C. defines much of Charles County's rhythm. Thousands of commuters cross the Potomac daily to federal agencies, military installations, and private employers, bringing home professional expertise, diverse experiences, and global perspectives. Increasingly, these residents are also investing their creative energy locally—founding arts organizations, teaching, and transforming civic spaces into venues for storytelling, performance, creativity, and connection.

As the County crafts its first Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan, it has the opportunity to weave these strands together—honoring the past, supporting the present, and imagining a future where creativity helps shape a more connected, expressive, and resilient county.

**ArtsVision 2020—Precedents and what happened?**

While this is the first official public arts and cultural master plan in the history of Charles County government, this plan builds on the precedent set by



the ArtsVision 2020 plan developed by the Charles County Arts Alliance. Founded in 1987, the Arts Alliance is an independent non-profit and is the County-designated Arts Council.<sup>21</sup> Between 2005 and 2007, the Arts Alliance prepared a thorough review of the existing arts landscape in Charles County and offered a number of action recommendations. Among these recommendations were forward looking proposals to include a permanent role for arts and culture in the County Government, establishing an arts venue, expanding arts programming for all, developing arts and entertainment districts, and increasing affordability of arts spaces.

Over the intervening twenty years, the Arts Alliance has done a great deal of work, but their larger goals have been left unrealized. Reasons for not reaching their desired outcomes include changes in county priorities, no dedicated county government advocate, instability of state grant funding for the arts, challenges with board retention, and the tumultuous periods of the Great Recession and Covid-19 Pandemic.

The project team recognizes and applauds the work of the Arts Alliance in championing the arts for Charles County and will be drawing from their efforts in the original ArtsVision 2020 plan along with lessons learned from the successes and challenges they had in implementing their ArtsVision.

**Active agricultural industry and natural assets<sup>1,5</sup>**

Thirteenth most farming acreage in state, by portion population, and third most tree coverage in the state

**Diverse and changing community<sup>3</sup>**

In 2022, Charles County was reported by the *Washington Post* as the “wealthiest Black-majority county in the U.S.”

**Rapid decline in forest and agriculture<sup>27</sup>**

20% decrease in farmland between 2007 and 2021





A woman with grey curly hair and glasses is speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a black top. Behind her, a diverse group of people, including a young girl with braids and a woman with long blonde hair, are looking towards her. The background is dark, and the overall atmosphere is one of a public event or gathering.

5

**DEFINING  
PUBLIC ART &  
CULTURE & ITS  
BENEFITS**

# EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF THE ARTS

Arts and culture are powerful drivers of health, education, and community. A growing body of research demonstrates that participation in the arts measurably improves quality of life across a range of indicators.

A 2017 University of Pennsylvania study found that in lower income neighborhoods, clusters of cultural resources are significantly linked to better health, education, and safety outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

**18% increase**  
in **students scoring** in the top-tier on English and math exams

**18% reduction**  
in **serious crime**

**14% decrease**  
in **child abuse and neglect**

**5% decrease** in **obesity**

Arts participation also strongly correlates with educational and social mobility.

**At-risk students involved in the arts are 23% more likely to attend college than peers with low arts engagement.**<sup>13</sup>



## Broad definition of the arts

The arts encompasses all creative practices and disciplines across visual, performing, literary, media, design, and folk forms, whether they be produced by individuals or organizations, or in formal venues or everyday community settings.

## Description of benefits

Arts and culture strengthens local economies and workforce pipelines, support health, education, and community trust; catalyze commercial vitality and real estate value; expand opportunities for youth and lifelong learning; and create opportunities for community building and creative expression.

## How Arts Have an Outsized Impact on the Government and Business

Although it may seem counterintuitive to some, major research suggests that a dynamic arts sector is a better predictor of a vibrant economy and responsive government than the other way around. In *Making Democracy Work*, political scientist Robert Putnam conducted a landmark twenty-plus year study of regional governments in Italy, uncovering why some regions thrived while others stagnated despite identical institutional frameworks. He found that prosperity and effective governance were not simply products of policy or structure, but of social capital, a dense networks of trust, reciprocity, and civic engagement that knit communities together.<sup>11</sup> Regions rich in cultural participation, local associations, and shared public life—often expressed through arts, festivals, and collective creative endeavors—exhibited more responsive governments, stronger economies, and higher quality of life. Putnam’s findings suggest that the arts are not peripheral luxuries, but essential civic infrastructure: they cultivate the trust, collaboration, and civic identity that make democracy and economic vitality possible.



## HOW ARTS IMPROVE HEALTH AND LOWER COST OF CARE

### Economic benefits

The arts are not just expressions of creativity, they are also powerful economic engines. Across the United States, the creative sector fuels business activity, employment, innovation, and community vitality at every scale.

### National Impact

According to the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (2023)<sup>18,19</sup>, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$151.7 billion annually, including \$73.3 billion in direct spending by organizations, and an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related spending by audiences. This activity supports 2.6 million jobs, \$101 billion in personal income, and \$29.1 billion in tax revenue each year.

On average, attendees at cultural events spend \$38.44<sup>18</sup> in addition to the cost of admission—on dining, transportation, and other local businesses—demonstrating how arts participation ripples across the economy.

Importantly, the arts also drive the skills and creativity that power the broader workforce. In national surveys, business leaders rank “creativity” among the top five most important applied skills, with 72% identifying it as “high importance” for future success. The arts sector is not only a revenue generator, but a critical incubator for innovation and adaptable talent across industries.<sup>14</sup>

A 2017–2022 study out of the UK, looking at data from the US and the UK found that engagement with arts and culture produces an estimated £7,000,000 (~\$9,240,000) in annual benefits—roughly £1,000 (~\$1,310) per person in savings through improved health, wellbeing, and productivity. Even modest participation, such as attending arts events a few times per year, was linked to measurable gains.<sup>8</sup>

For example, older adults who took weekly drawings classes for three months saved the healthcare system an average of \$1,310 each by reducing doctor visits and improving mental health.<sup>8</sup>

In 2009, nearly half of all U.S. medical institutions offered some sort of arts program—of those, 80% stated a main reason for having arts in healthcare is to benefit patient recovery.<sup>9</sup>

A 2017 study found that 67% of music therapy participants with dementia felt less anxious and reduced their use of medication.<sup>10</sup>



# MARYLAND'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Maryland's art sector is a major contributor to the state's prosperity.

## \$13.7 billion

Amount the arts sector contributes to Maryland's economy—supporting **86,000 jobs** and delivering **\$7.6 billion in compensation to arts workers.**<sup>\*6,7</sup>

**Every \$1 in grant funding generates \$1.86 in statewide economic activity.**

In total, **the creative sector had a \$12.8 billion impact in Maryland.** Arts events drew **5.3 million in-person attendees** and **3.9 million virtual attendees**, with **visitor spending at \$252 million** at arts events.<sup>\*\*6,7</sup>

\* 2024 study by the National Endowment for the Arts and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis \*\* The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC)'s FY 2023 Economic Impact Report



### Arts as Anchors and Innovation Catalysts

The arts also act as economic anchors and catalysts for innovation. The Kresge Foundation's Overlooked Anchors (2019) study shows that large, medium, and even small cultural spaces and organizations—like theaters, museums, and community arts center—function similar to hospitals and universities as stable neighborhood anchors that drive local business activity, foot traffic, and commercial clustering.<sup>17</sup> This is bolstered by Brookins' 2018 research that creative districts attract new investment, revitalize downtowns, and foster ecosystems where both artists and businesses thrive.

Another study, out of the Knight Foundation (2018) found that residents who choose where to live based on quality of life factors, including access to arts and culture, report stronger attachment to place and are less likely to leave their metro region.<sup>16</sup> In other words, arts investments result in a stronger sense of place and a more stable community.

Research also shows that the arts catalyze innovation and entrepreneurship far beyond the creative sector.<sup>15</sup> A 2020 study by S. Yum found a strong correlation between dense cultural sector clusters and higher patent submissions, suggesting that regions rich in arts activity experience measurable increases in innovation. These studies show that investing in the arts is an investment in the whole County economy.



6

**RESEARCH &  
ENGAGEMENT  
PROCESS**

# COMMUNITY NOTES

Community notes throughout this document are a collection of comments taken from the online community survey and in-person meetings.

“ We need more plazas and open spaces that are not parking lots...where there is open space surrounded by shops and housing. These could be great for all-purpose arts, and arts related buildings could be located nearby. I support any and all efforts to increase the County’s pursuit of more prominent arts and culture programming.”

“ I would love for existing, vacant buildings to be turned into music venues. Also, more murals/sidewalk art celebrating/honoring underrepresented communities and identities.”

“ An all purpose arts center for youth to learn, rehearse, produce and present artistic performances. Include all types of the art form to include music, film, theatre, arts & crafts, dance, instruments. Develop a regular schedule up to 11:00pm. Provide opportunities for mentorship. Low cost to no cost opportunities that serve as delinquency prevention and youth development.”

“ We need a dedicated Arts Center with studios for classes and workshops, and gallery spaces to showcase local talent.”

“ Tax breaks and benefits for the arts workforce working in a designated arts zone and businesses in the same zone.”

## Research and Engagement Process

**D**eveloping a vision for the County requires working from the ground up—activating community networks, deepening existing relationships, and expanding the circle of participation at every step.

The project team began with comprehensive research to establish a strong factual contextual foundation for our work. From there, they held a series of sector conversations with leaders across government, arts and culture, education, and business. These structured discussions provided a framework for identifying both shared priorities, systemic challenges, and areas for deeper engagement. Next, the team engaged in one-on-one conversations with community members, artists, educators, creative workers, and county staff to develop a more nuanced understanding of county needs, pain points, and opportunities.

The insights gathered from these early engagements informed a public-facing phase of three public meetings and a broad county-wide survey designed to reach residents across the county. At the same time, the project team conducted a statewide survey of Maryland’s 24 county-designated arts councils (plus Baltimore City) to benchmark funding models, revenue sources, governance structures, and relationships with respective county governments. Finally, the team conducted on-the-ground fact-finding site visits across six representative areas of the county: Waldorf, La Plata, Indian Head, Hughesville, Benedict, and the Indian Head Rail Trail.

This multi-stage engagement process ensures that the team builds a broad and deep quantitative and qualitative understanding of the county that represents its diversity while also being specific enough to guide actionable recommendations.

## On Community Engagement—Connecting Community Members Through Planning

The project team’s consulting philosophy is based in “consulting through action.” This means that as the team engages community members, the team also encourages cross-community dialogue that builds local networks capable of advancing, enacting, and advocating for the recommendations within this plan. At every step of this process the project team prioritizes



this arts ecosystem building: through sector conversations with open dialogues that energize participants to exchange contact information, to community meetings with interactive stations that encourage shared brainstorming, to surveys that ask how community members seek to participate in the arts.



**NUMBER OF PEOPLE & INSTITUTIONS REACHED**

**Detailed review of engagement process**

- \* **Research**—Comprehensive research that spans planning documents and data related to art, zoning, mapping, nature preservation, economic development, transportation planning, government budgets, and history.
- \* **Sector conversations**—three virtual sector conversations to guide initial work on the Master Plan along with framing for the public meetings and surveys. The sector conversations were organized for the three following sectors: 1. Government; 2. Arts + education; and, 3. business
- \* **One-on-Ones**—several one-on-one meetings with community members, arts leaders, and county staff in order to get a clearer picture of the arts in Charles County.
- \* **Public Meetings**—three public meetings across the county, in three weeks. Meetings took place in Indian Head, Waldorf, and La Plata. During these meetings, each participant had an opportunity to provide interactive feedback at three separate stations, with questions mirroring those on the survey
- \* **Surveys**—comprehensive survey open for three weeks, available to the entire county.
- \* **Site Visits**—three full days of site visits across the entire county and various types of places—from urban corridors and suburban town centers to rural villages and forested parks.
- \* **State-wide Study**—a review of the finances, funding sources, governance, and county-arts council relationships at the arts councils of each of the 24 county-designated arts councils (plus Baltimore City).

**Survey**

**101 responses** from residents, artists, educators, business owners, and community members across the County

**Sector Conversations**

**36 participants** representing arts, education, business, and government sectors

**One-on-One Conversations**

**11 in depth interviews** with key community, business, and arts leaders

**Public Meetings**

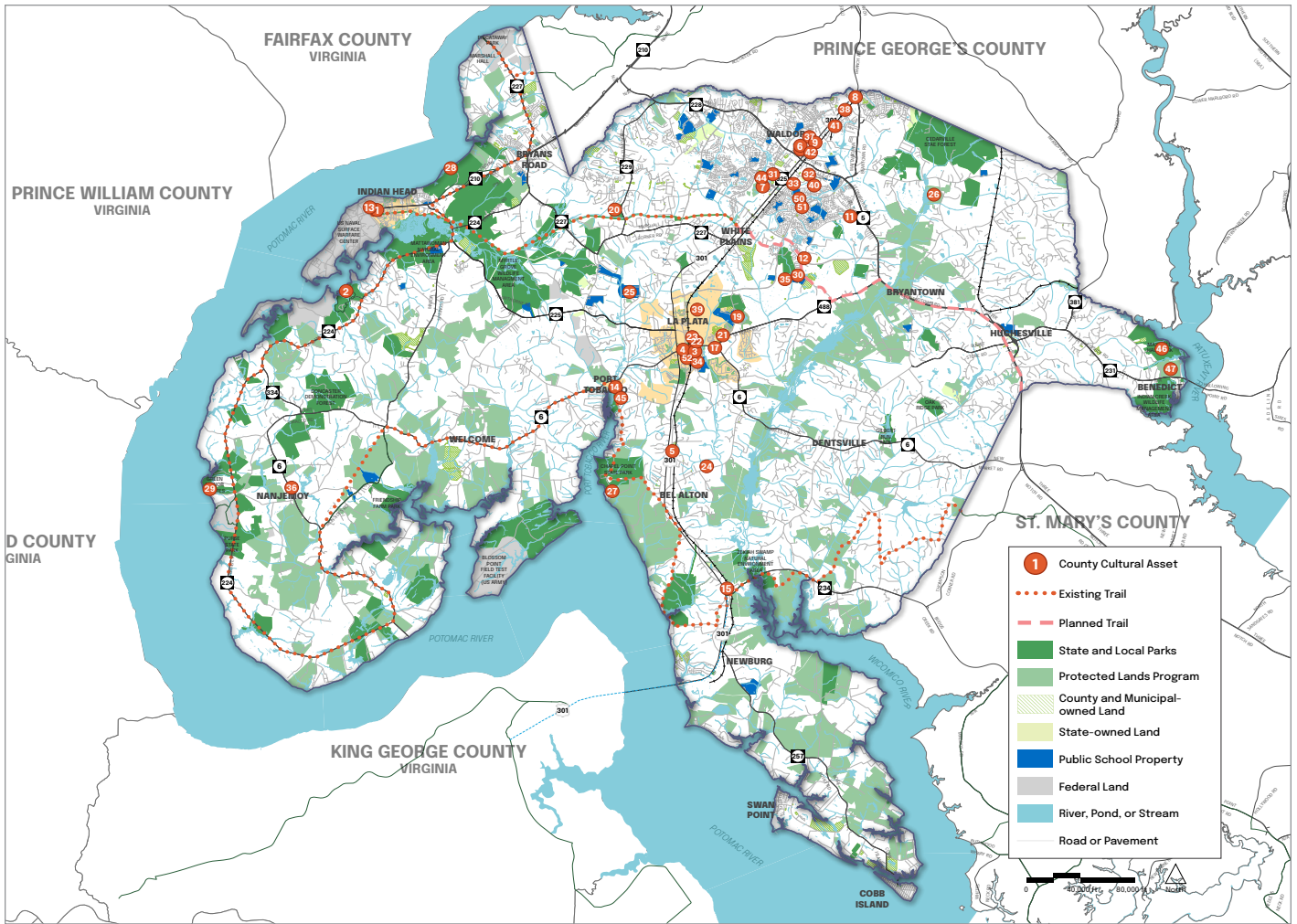
**3 in-person meetings** held in Indian Head, Waldorf, and La Plata, engaging 30+ community members.

**Site Visits**

**Field observations across 6 parts of the county:** Waldorf, La Plata, Indian Head, Hughesville, Benedict, Indian Head Rail Trail

**Statewide Study**

**Analysis of 24 Maryland county arts councils and Baltimore City** on funding, structure, and policy alignment.



# COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED CULTURAL ASSETS



1	Indian Head Center for the Arts	Indian Head	Theater
2	Mattawoman Creek Art Center	Marbury	Visual Arts
3	La Plata Town Concerts	La Plata	Event
4	Port Tobacco Players	La Plata	Theater
5	County Fair	La Plata	
6	Summer in the Park	Outside Mall	
7	Kulture Gallery	Waldorf	Visual Arts
8	Cup of Sugar	Waldorf	Restaurant
9	Silver Skewers	Waldorf	Restaurant
10	Pop-up and Grow weekend market place	Waldorf	Event
11	Graces Event Center	Waldorf	Gathering Space
12	Selbys Grab and Go	St.Charles	Restaurant
13	Artsfest	Indian Head	Event
14	Market Day	Port Tobacco Courthouse	Event
15	Maryland Veterans Museum	Newburg	Culture

## Cultural Assets (cont.)

16	Christ Church	La Plata	Culture
17	La Plata CCYO Chamber Music Festival	La Plata	Event
18	Galleries at University of Maryland Charles Regional Hospital	La Plata	Visual Arts
19	Neighborhood Creative Arts Center	La Plata	Culture
20	Bensville Basketball Court	Bennsville	Gathering Space
21	Charles County Arts Alliance	La Plata	Organization
22	Chamber of Commerce	La Plata	Organization
23	Historical Society of Charles County	La Plata	Culture
24	Friends of Rich Hill	Bel Alton	Organization
25	College of Southern Maryland Theatre and Galleries	La Plata	Performing Arts
26	Mudd House Museum	Waldorf	Culture
27	St. Ignatius Church	Port Tobacco	Organization
28	Chapman's Landing	Indian Head	Nature
29	Mallows Point	Nanjemoy	Nature
31	St. Charles Mall	Waldorf	Gathering Space
30	James E. Richmond Science Center	Waldorf	Gathering Space
32	Juneteenth Celebration at Waldorf Senior and Rec Center	Waldorf	Culture
33	Upward Thrive Academy's Acting Up Theatre Troupe	Waldorf	Performing Arts
34	Studio 53 / Bird City Records	La Plata	Visual Arts
35	Mixtape Series	Waldorf	Event/ Performing Arts
36	Nanjemoy Heritage Day	Nanjemoy	Event
37	Lela Belle Dance Studio	Waldorf	Performing Arts
38	Oscar Hawkins Ballet Academy	Waldorf	Performing Arts
39	BFunk South	La Plata	Performing Arts
40	TNT Dance Academy	Waldorf	Performing Arts
41	Dance Therapy Arts	Waldorf	Performing Arts
42	Old Waldorf School Waldorf History Museum	Waldorf	Gathering Space
43	La Plata Bird City Pocket Park	La Plata	Gathering Space
44	Lifes Journey Writers Guild	St. Charles	Organization
45	Charles County Archaeological Society	La Plata	Organization
46	Maxwell Hall	Hughesville	Gathering Space
47	Serenity Farm	Benedict	Gathering Space
48	Southern Maryland Wood Carvers		Organization
49	Charles County Youth Orchestra		Organization
50	Chesapeake Choral Arts Society		Organization
51	SMCR's Arts4All Singers		Organization
52	Danin's Showbiz Boutique		Organization



## COMMUNITY NOTES

“ Art is what makes the world a vibrant place. I love going places to view art and really learn about a place and the culture of that place by experiencing their art.”

“ Personally, the arts are my safe haven. They are my means of connecting deeply with myself, others and the world around me. They've shaped my voice, my motivation, and my resilience.”

“ In this growing county, with housing going up in large numbers, we need to create an infrastructure for families and individuals that allows for artistic experiences. I would like to see educators, civic leaders, and corporate donors to create a cohesive arts experience. For some it will be performances, for others art experiences (pottery or ballroom for adults, for others experiences for their children to develop their skills, minds, and appreciation.”

# SURVEY RESULTS



Residents Want To Have Fun, Express Themselves, And Learn

## 91.4%

nearly all respondents said that they were motivated by entertainment and fun

## Over 50%

of respondents felt that social connections, learning something new, and supporting local artists were motivations in arts and cultural events.

The following benefits of arts and culture stood out as most important to respondents, with each being selected by over 50% of respondents.

- \* **Community connection and pride** (61.7%)
- \* **Youth engagement and education** (53.19%)
- \* **Creative self-expression** (52.13%)

## Residents Leave Charles County for Arts And Culture

Almost across the board, Charles County residents go to more arts events outside of Charles County more frequently than they go to events in the county. Normally residents would be expected to attend local county-based arts and cultural events at a far higher level than outside county events. The fact that outside events receive similar or even greater attendance than Charles County-based events is a significant insight that demonstrates that residents are leaving the county for programming.

### Frequency of Attending Arts and Cultural Events

	Charles County	Outside of Charles County
Never	12%	8%
Once a year	17%	10%
A few times a year	50%	61%
Monthly	18%	17%
Weekly or more	3%	4%



## Not Enough Arts Spaces in Charles County

A strong majority of respondents, 56.67%, indicated a **need for arts and cultural spaces**, while only 7.78% indicated that there was enough arts and cultural spaces. The remainder, 35.56% were not sure.

When asked about types of spaces most needed, options received between 15% and 50%, indicating that there is a strong **need for a wide range of all types of arts spaces**.

## Policy Priorities—Art Venue, Public Art, Programming, And Funding

When asked to pick top 3 arts policy priorities, respondents overwhelmingly indicated a desire for a **new county arts center** (48.28%).

After this policy, respondents indicated support for a cluster of policies including:

- \* **Art in public realm** (36.78%)
- \* **Arts funding** (31.03%)
- \* **More arts programming** (28.74%)
- \* **Arts for youth** (35.63%)



**Preferred Types of Public Art**

Respondents indicated support for a broad and eclectic range of public art. Murals were the most popular type, with 61.45% respondents placing these in their top 3 . Other popular types of art are community participatory art, functional art, temporary and pop-up public art, interactive art, large-scale iconic sculptures, and pavement + sidewalk art.



**Preferred Arts Locations–  
Shared Spaces And Places**

Respondents indicated a general preference for public art locations that were **shared communal places**, such as parks, commercial areas, public buildings, schools, and streetscapes.

**Marketing—the Typical Suspects**

Respondents shared that they learn about local and regional arts and cultural events and programming from the places typical in 2025: word of mouth, Facebook, email newsletters, Instagram, flyers, and newspapers.

**Community Members Want to Help**

**60%** of survey respondents said they'd be interested in supporting arts and culture in Charles County.



It is critical that there is movement on this initiative. Our young people are growing up in an environment of isolation and poor mental health. We need opportunities for self-expression and the admiration of art to help them explore their inner creativity and appreciation for beauty.”

### Additional Community Notes

Taking advantage of publicly owned spaces and private underused spaces (i.e. Neighborhood Community Centers HOA's) for small group activities.

Nowhere in Charles County is there a kiln for ceramics.

GOBS of waterways and shoreline (mostly privately owned). Makes no sense there is so little access.

Pocket parks throughout neighborhoods community involvement.

Broader classes that teach art skills for teens and adults are sorely needed.

More venues, more ads to promote events.

After schools programs that provide tools for young artists.

County emphasis on Art in the County 'Arts' as a specific responsibility of some county agency.

A way to advertise arts activities and programming and spread the word more widely.

Ongoing creative placemaking committee to expand current public art and sustain it in the future.

Community-based classes and events that address cultural representation, across all ages.

Traditional theatre with a proscenium stage that has rehearsal space.

Funding for local arts programs. Art district zoning.

Art classes for seniors, professional music performances for youth / families to see professional artists in action.

Independent bookstores (and author visits)!

Advanced kids arts classes—go beyond basic crafts, especially for older kids.

Would love more interactive free recreational places to linger, learn, and enjoy community art.

More open mic nights supporting poetry.

More cross communication and events with other SoMD art groups and councils, more gallery space (public and private) for artists to exhibit. Youth engagement.

Public art integrated into activity centers, greater county support for heritage sites including Port Tobacco as an arts hub.

Programs that support youth in the arts, especially visual arts.

Live music venues that would attract known artists and create opportunities for local musicians.

In Minot, North Dakota they took two cultural symbols and made them engaging in an open park where community members could walk around on a daily basis. The city kept it clean and the park was respected. It encouraged free physical exercise, visual and mental engagement, cultural pride and opportunity for reflection. I can't find that in Charles County. I not only miss it, I need it. I would drive 30 min just walk there in quiet reflection or for family engagement with technology. I have been to Mattawoman Creek Art Center which is nice, but more is needed as part of the planning of communities in Charles County in Waldorf and La Plata areas.

I would like to see more involvement overall with the established art communities, especially in public high schools and the community college.

Support and promote the arts related businesses that are already established in Charles County and raise awareness of their existence.



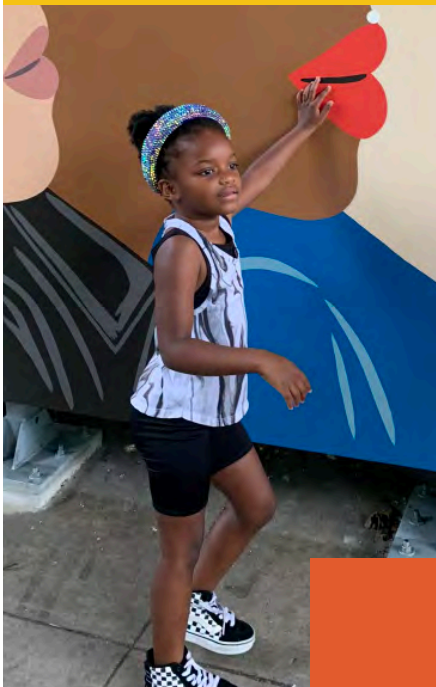
7

# CROSS-STATE ARTS FUNDING STUDY

Comparative Review  
of County-Designated  
Arts Organizations  
Across Maryland



Charles  
County has the  
second-lowest  
arts funding in  
Maryland



To better understand the possible options and opportunities for Charles County’s arts ecosystem, our team conducted a study looking at funding and governance of each of the 24 county-designated arts councils in Maryland.

### Funding review

Following a comprehensive review of all 24 counties in Maryland (including Baltimore City), the project team found that Harford County and Charles County, by a wide margin, are the two counties in the state with the lowest per person funding for the arts—at about \$1.13 and \$1.27 per capita, respectively.

The median arts funding per county in Maryland is \$4.12 per capita. Meanwhile, the average art funding per person was \$7.02. If removing the two lowest and highest outliers, the average arts funding per person is closer to \$5.12. The range of arts funding per person goes from \$1.13 to \$46.52.

### Funding Sources

The project team was able to assess publicly available data for funding sources for county art councils along with information from responding arts councils. The primary funding sources were, by a large margin, public resources such as the CAD grant, direct funding from the county government, and lodging fees. It may be useful for the Maryland State Arts Council to provide a more granular review of funding sources.

#### Funding sources include:

- \* Community Arts Development Grant (CAD) from MSAC
- \* Direct County Funding
- \* Direct Municipal Funding
- \* Grants
- \* Private Donors
- \* Foundation support
- \* Venue rentals
- \* Hotel / Lodging Fee
- \* Earned Revenue (through programs and events)
- \* Sales Revenue (of art + merchandise)

### Structure + Relationship with County Review

County arts councils feature substantial variation, but certain trends emerge. Most, though not all, are independent or semi-independent non-profits. The two most common types of arts councils are fully independent non-profits with independently elected board members and semi-independent non-profits with county-appointed board members. Two counties, Harford County and Baltimore County have county government-run arts commissions. From interviews with leaders of these arts councils, the project team found that each model has certain benefits and responds to its county’s size and unique contexts.



**First Off, Why a Non-profit?**

Non-profits, unlike government entities, allow counties to bring in additional donor funding, compete for grants, and engage community members for volunteer support of the arts.

**Independent or County-Appointed Board?**

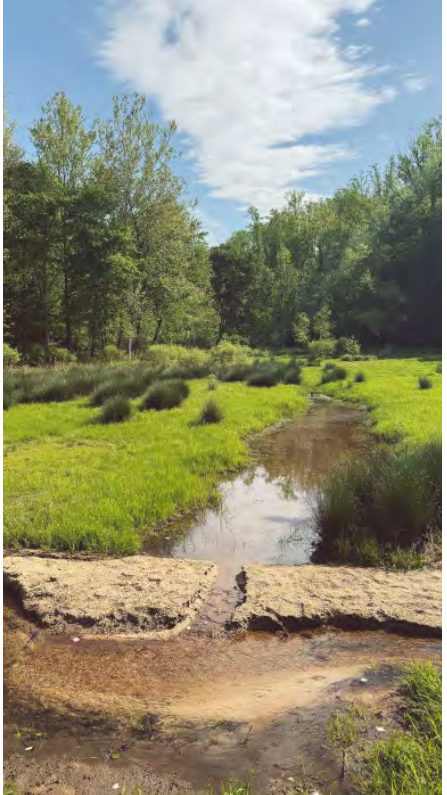
The distinction between fully independent boards and county-appointed boards appears to be related to an arts council receiving substantial county funding in addition to the state funding provided by MSAC’s Community Arts Development (CAD) grants. The project team theorizes that more public funding for the arts results in a greater need for public accountability, and, as a result, county-appointed board members answerable to democratically elected officials. However, there is no one-size fits all model—much seems to depend on specific county and individual personnel dynamics.

**Non-Profits for Hire**

Counties have also grown arts capacity without assuming responsibility for appointing the arts council board by contracting local non-profits who are capable of assuming the implementation of certain public policies. For instance, if there is an arts program that a county is hoping to develop, it might publish an RFP for arts services and then have that entity develop the program.

**Percent for Art Programs**

A percent for art program is a policy that requires a small percentage of all capital projects (typically .5%–1.5%) to be dedicated to the creation of public art. Along with the State of Maryland, three counties in Maryland have a percent for art program, and a fourth county is in the process of considering one. These counties are Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County. Frederick County is currently in the process of considering a percent for art program. Of the four existing programs at the state and county levels, two are half a percentage point and two are one percentage point. Each program varies in how the funds are allocated towards the arts, rules for use of the funds, and management of the program. As an outlier, in 2025, the City of Annapolis established public arts funding through a 3% hotel tax.





# MARYLAND COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL REVIEW

County	Population	Arts Council	FY 2024–County Arts Development Grants
Harford	265,514	Harford County Cultural Arts Advisory Board	\$208,902
Charles	174,478	Charles County Arts Alliance	\$201,297
Prince George's	966,629	Prince George's Arts and Humanities Council	\$264,306
St. Mary's	116,469	St. Mary's County Arts Council	\$189,491
Washington	157,228	Washington County Arts Council	\$200,120
Anne Arundel	602,350	Arts Council of Anne Arundel County	\$235,620
Calvert	94,913	Arts Council of Calvert County Inc.	\$195,171
Wicomico	106,329	Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council	\$195,989
Cecil	106,305	Cecil County Arts Council	\$196,012
Baltimore County	852,425	Baltimore County Arts & Culture Commission	\$256,130
Frederick	299,317	Frederick Arts Council	\$210,784
Worcester	54,337	Worcester County Arts Council	\$191,869
Carroll	177,108	Carroll County Arts Council	\$201,719
Queen Anne's	53,688	Queen Anne's County Arts Council Inc.	\$191,694
Howard	339,668	Howard County Arts Council	\$214,704
Montgomery	1,082,273	Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County	\$272,865
Talbot	38,244	Talbot County Arts Council	\$190,577
Caroline	34,248	Caroline County Council of Arts	\$190,212
Somerset	25,241	Somerset County Arts Council	\$196,817
Baltimore City	568,271	Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts	\$233,726
Allegany	67,097	Allegany Arts Council	\$192,956
Dorchester	33,138	Dorchester Center for the Arts	\$190,154
Garrett	28,393	Garrett County Arts Council	\$189,818
Kent	19,557	Kent Cultural Alliance	\$189,067



County	Arts Council Budget	Per Capita	Percent for Art?	Structure
Harford	\$298,902	\$1.13	N	County Appointed Non-Profit-Library
Charles	\$222,325	\$1.27	N	Independent Non-Profit
Prince George's	\$1,663,300	\$1.72	at least 1% of new/majorly renovated County civic building construction costs	County Appointed Non-Profit
St. Mary's	\$233,368	\$2.00	N	Independent Non-Profit
Washington	\$358,535	\$2.28	N	Independent Non-Profit
Anne Arundel	\$1,576,587	\$2.62	N	Independent Non-Profit
Calvert	\$250,000	\$2.63	N	Independent Non-Profit
Wicomico	\$291,823	\$2.74	N	Independent Non-Profit
Cecil	\$311,000	\$2.93	N	Independent Non-Profit
Baltimore County	\$2,600,000	\$3.05	N	County Appointed Non-Profit
Frederick	\$1,176,612	\$3.93	N	Independent Non-Profit
Worcester	\$214,535	\$3.95	N	Independent Non-Profit
Carroll	\$759,000	\$4.29	N	Independent Non-Profit
Queen Anne's	\$297,108	\$5.53	N	Independent Non-Profit
Howard	\$2,214,210	\$6.52	N	Independent Non-Profit
Montgomery	\$7,057,029	\$6.52	Public Arts Trust with annual allocation equal to 0.05% of total programme capital expenditures in the county	County Appointed Non-Profit
Talbot	\$276,000	\$7.22	N	Independent Non-Profit
Caroline	\$261,426	\$7.63	N	Independent Non-Profit
Somerset	\$196,817	\$7.80	N	Independent Non-Profit
Baltimore City	\$4,761,190	\$8.38	1% of eligible capital construction costs	County Appointed Non-Profit
Allegany	\$569,000	\$8.48	N	Independent Non-Profit
Dorchester	\$405,000	\$12.22	N	Independent Non-Profit
Garrett	\$486,429	\$17.13	N	Independent Non-Profit
Kent	\$909,712	\$46.52	N	Independent Non-Profit

“

I hope all the funding and effort that was put into a plan actually comes to fruition.

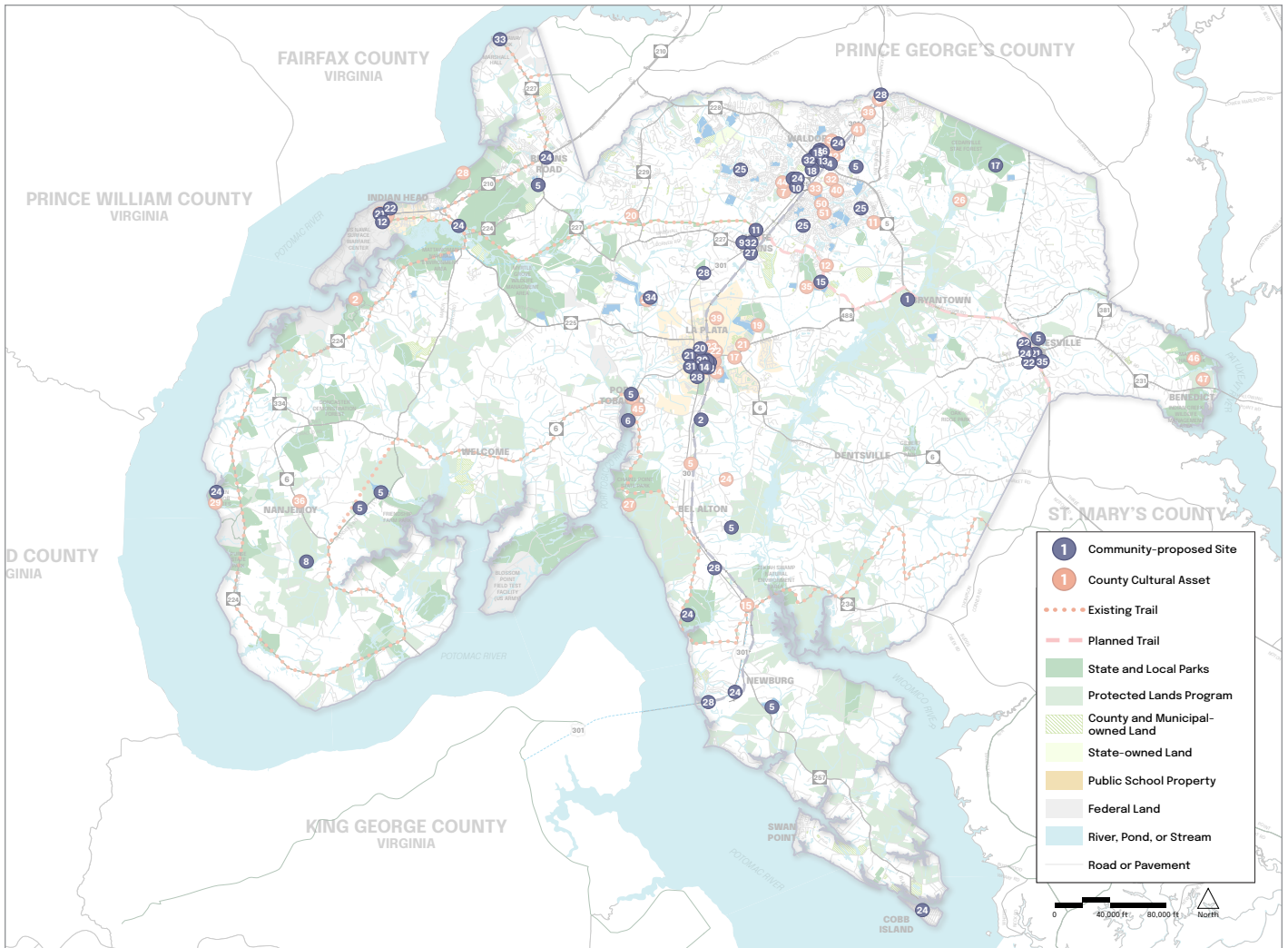
—SURVEY RESPONDENT





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# KEY FINDINGS & COMMUNITY- DRIVEN PRIORITIES



# COMMUNITY-PROPOSED ARTS AND CULTURAL SITES

During the sector discussions and three public meetings, county community members identified proposed locations for new arts spaces, cultural activities, and works of public art. These arts and cultural sites were collated and mapped, highlighting the existing areas where activities are clustering in the County and identifying locations where new activities could be introduced or expanded upon. These community-proposed sites were studied in order to identify the community-driven priorities and themes.

- 1 Parks and Nature Trails
- 2 Art Festivals
- 3 Pop-Up Galleries
- 4 Art Classes
- 5 Arts Programming at Recreation Centers and Schools (especially Title I)
- 6 Sculpture at Port Tobacco River Park
- 7 Use St. Charles Town Center excess parking for arts, culture, parks
- 8 Cultural Arts Festival at park in Nanjemoy
- 9 Performing Arts Theater

- 10 Art Wall at St. Charles Mall Circle
- 11 Integrate arts, culture, parks on St. Charles Pathway Trail
- 12 Indian Head Rail Trail Arts
- 13 Indoor Theater
- 14 Arts Center (similar to Maryland Hall)
- 15 Maker Space
- 16 Rehearsal Space
- 17 Sculptures in public parks
- 18 Vendors show case
- 19 Creative spaces for all ages (esp 2-17) for paint, art, hands-on crafts, and projects
- 20 Performance/exhibit space for children and teen groups
- 21 Creative open space (like downtown Annapolis) that are walkable and encourage community connection
- 22 Open play area for children coupled with intellectual or creative workshops
- 23 Interactive outdoor arts (playgrounds, sculptures, gardens)
- 24 Open play area for children coupled with intellectual or creative workshops
- 25 Public art (could be murals, sculpture, interactive, functional (benches), play equipment, anything)
- 26 Connect artists with HOA's and community centers
- 27 Dedicated gallery for artists/bookshelves for local authors
- 28 County run art center—where children and adults can take classes
- 29 Art along major roads for beautification
- 30 Studio/class space
- 31 Gallery Spaces
- 32 Movie house w/ local food and drink
- 33 Performance venue for music, theater, spoken word, etc.
- 34 Multidisciplinary Art Center
- 35 Outdoor Amphitheater
- 36 Cultural Performing Arts Center—join with Calvert and St. Mary's Counties



# COMMUNITY DRIVEN PRIORITIES

After considerable research, engagement, and community dialogue, certain community-driven priorities emerged from the surveys, stakeholder conversations, public meetings, and research as driving forces for a revitalized vision of public arts and culture in Charles County:



## Workforce Development

A need for professional support for careers in the arts—educational opportunities, professional development, networking, and art creation / performance opportunities.



## Arts Spaces

A need for physical spaces for convening, creating, showcasing, rehearsing, practicing, and performing.



## Placemaking

A need for walkable neighborhoods with a sense of place and easy access to community amenities, creative programming, retail, parks



## Beautiful Places

A need for beautiful and exciting places that include distinctive public art, thoughtful urban design elements, and lush nature and landscaping.



## Things to Do

A need for activities for various age ranges that offer opportunities to learn new skills or information, explore a new craft, connect with others, and have fun.



## Community

A need for connection and opportunities for convening and exchanging information with other artists, creatives, and lovers of the arts.

## Nature

While this isn't as addressable through this Master Plan, a key finding was a strong desire to preserve the natural environment and agricultural production in Charles County and to increase access to recreational use of these lands.

An aerial photograph of a green field with white chalk lines. A large number '9' is drawn in the top left. Other lines form a large 'X' and a triangle. The background is a solid teal color.

9

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
& IMPLEMENTATION**

# ABOUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are a list of thoughtfully developed recommendations and implementation considerations. Each of these recommendations is connected to direct goals and insight provided by Charles County community members via surveys, community meetings, and sector conversation.

## Four Pillars of Recommendations

### 1 Built Environment

Integrating arts into the built environment—including development and infrastructure.

- \* Establish Public Art Program and Micro-Grant Program
- \* New Central Arts Venue
- \* Leveraging Zoning and Land Use to Incorporate Arts Priorities

### 2 Cultural Infrastructure

Connecting art, nature, and heritage through place-based projects.

- \* Develop a Multi-Use Walkway and Trail Network Across the County
- \* Agricultural Tourism and Rural Arts Experiences
- \* Waterfront and Shoreline Activation

### 3 Community & Workforce

Supporting arts programming, network building, and career pathways

- \* Professional Development Opportunities
- \* Support Additional Arts Programming
- \* Youth Arts Opportunities
- \* Support County Arts Ecosystem

### 4 Government & Finance

Establishing clear structures, funding, and accountability

- \* Evolve Arts Alliance Into a New Charles County Arts Council
- \* Establish New Arts Staff within RPT
- \* Establish Process for Reviewing Public Art
- \* Establish Process for Parklets
- \* Establish Capital Funding for Arts Spaces
- \* Percent for Art
- \* Establish Arts Districts and Seek State of MD Arts and Entertainment District Designations
- \* Annual/Semi-Annual Cross Department Meetings to Share Arts Updates and Opportunities
- \* Five-Year Master Plan Review
- \* Increase County Arts Funding





# How To Read Recommendations

## RECOMMENDATION TITLE

### PRIORITIES

Share which of the community-identified priorities (see page 34) this recommendation connects to, so that each policy recommendation is clearly connected to community-identified data and conversation.

### DESCRIPTION

Provides a community-identified issue to be addressed, provides contextual understanding, and offers guidance as to solutions

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

When included, this provides a set of considerations for implementation. This method leaves room for county staff and community members to drive how these recommendations come to fruition, but offers expert guidance where needed.

# Considerations While Developing Recommendations

## Leveraging Public and Private Sector Capacities

To ensure a more sustainable, and county-wide approach, the project team constantly evaluates how to leverage public sector resources to activate private sector action, and how to balance arts priorities with financial and management sustainability. In short: Where is public investment most impactful and where can it empower community members and the private sector?

## Benefits of Walkable Environments– Cost Efficiency and Greater Impact

In short, walkable environments require fewer resources to maintain cultural amenities and they result in more casual and organic activations that contribute to economic and social vibrancy. Conversely, the more spread out, car-centric, and stand-alone a cultural amenity is, the more likely it will require public financial support. This is not an inherently bad thing—remote cultural amenities can have positive impacts in driving new investment and creating destination spaces. However, it is a calculation that the County must make clear-eyed when pursuing policy priorities.



## MINI CASE STUDY

# Impact of Walkability and Density on Cultural Amenities

## Bryan's Road Village Green vs. Indian Head Rail Trail



BRYAN'S ROAD VILLAGE GREEN



INDIAN HEAD RAIL TRAIL

**B**oth the Bryan's Road Village Green and the Indian Head Rail Trail are county investments in placemaking—one a large community plaza and the other a nature-filled multi-use pathway. Both are well designed, beautiful spaces. The difference in use between the two is immense.

The park is empty with people going to the medical facilities nearby sitting at the periphery of it—it has overgrown shrubbery, dilapidated signage, and trash.

Meanwhile, the Indian Head Rail Trail is the opposite—well used and loved, with a wide range of users from sporty cyclists to retirees on a stroll, to families exploring nature.

While there are many reasons for the difference in use, one is clear: one space offers something people want near where they are, the other does not.

The Indian Head Rail Trail has a major trail head right off of the main commercial corridor of Route 301 and even has a distillery next to the trail head that hosts tastings and

While there are many reasons for the difference in use, one is clear: one space offers something people want near where they are, the other does not.

gatherings Thursday through Sunday. More can be done to leverage these trail heads, but the immediate impact of activation is clear.

Meanwhile, the Bryans Road Village Green, while a similarly lovely space, is surrounded by a sea of parking and few sidewalks. There is no commercial or community activity that would be mutually beneficial with this space.

As this plan provides recommendations, it will be critical to consider this contrast in two spaces in the county and the impact that denser spaces that connect with where people are and leverage existing activity will be.

## Establish Public Art Program and Micro-Grant Program

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Beautiful Places, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** Develop a robust and stable annual public arts program that incorporates both physical artwork and arts programming. The public arts program should include programs at various budget levels to support various functions. Artworks can also support various parts of the arts ecosystem. Smaller projects being geared more towards local creatives, in order to build up an ecosystem of local artists who are capable of eventually moving to larger projects. Meanwhile, as projects become larger, they open up to larger and larger pools of artists—first regional and then national and international—in order to bring new visions to Charles County and to connect local artists with a larger community of creatives.

The project team also encourages the establishment of micro-grants—between \$100 and \$350, offered on a rolling basis, that encourage community and creative experimentation. These projects would be temporary or semi-permanent, with the goal of supporting new ideas, creating an on-road to the arts sector, and infusing arts into all parts of County community life.

### RFQ vs RFP

- Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) ask artists to submit information about their experience, previous work, and other forms of evidence of their ability to create a public artwork. RFQs tend to have a two step selection process. First, semi-finalists are selected to create a proposal for the site. Second, proposals are considered and one is selected.
  - **Artist Rosters:** Artist Rosters are a way of simplifying the process for both the artist and the commissioning body. Artist rosters are best when there is dedicated staff to manage them and where there is a consistent stream of public art projects to warrant the work in establishing and maintaining an artist roster.
  - **An artist roster works as follows:** the county would request artists to share their portfolio and qualifications to be reviewed for a general artist roster. Then, as projects come up, county staff would prepare a shortlist of artists for an art selection panel to review. Upon review, the panel would select a grouping of semi-finalist artists who would then be invited to prepare a proposal. Then, proposals are considered and one is selected.
- Requests for Proposals (RFP) ask artists to develop and submit their ideas for a commission. Artworks are then selected for commissioning.

### When to Use and RFQ and an RFP

- RFPs are best for smaller and time-sensitive projects, as RFPs allow artists to propose ideas and experiment at a manageable scale.

- RFQs are ideal for medium, large, and significant projects. RFQ is the best process for larger projects because it acknowledges that developing a public art proposal takes significant time and a great deal of work is needed to build the site—understandings to make excellent public art. By allowing artists to simply share their experience and interest, and then selecting a shortlisted few, who are compensated, the result is often a more successful artwork, a fairer process, and a larger pool of artists for the county to select from.

### Compensation

#### Selection Process

Preparing and reviewing proposals work and must be compensated as such. Both jurors (when appropriate), and semi-finalists should be compensated commensurate with the work and scale of the project.

#### Competitive and Fair Artist Compensation

Creating a beautiful, interesting, safe, and long-lasting artwork takes substantial training, experience, and skill. It should be compensated at a rate that is commensurate with that level of work. While it can be challenging to estimate a fair rate, a good starting point, particularly for two-dimensional work, is to seek price points to have a contractor prepare a wall one or two colors or lay mosaics with a simple design—and then imagine that the work needs to be custom-designed and require more time and more trained and skilled artisan professionals.

# RECOMMENDATIONS | BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## Process Sheet

### What to ask?

Whether it is an RFP or an RFQ, the most important two questions to ask about an application process are: 1) whether the information being requested is necessary for review; and 2) whether the information is reasonable to prepare? The priority for a call should be to make it as straightforward and easy as possible, to encourage as broad a pool of applicants as possible.

### What to ask in an RFQ

#### Phase 1–Open RFQ

- Portfolio (6–10 artworks)
- CV/Resume
- Brief Artist Statement, 200 word max–500 word max (optional)
- References (optional)

#### Phase 2–Semi-Finalist Proposal

The larger the scale, the more information should be sought from Semi-Finalists.

- Narrative Summary
- Design Concept
- Fabrication and Installation Plan
- List of Subcontractors
- Project Schedule
- Project Budget
- Proof of Insurance or Capacity to Provide Insurance

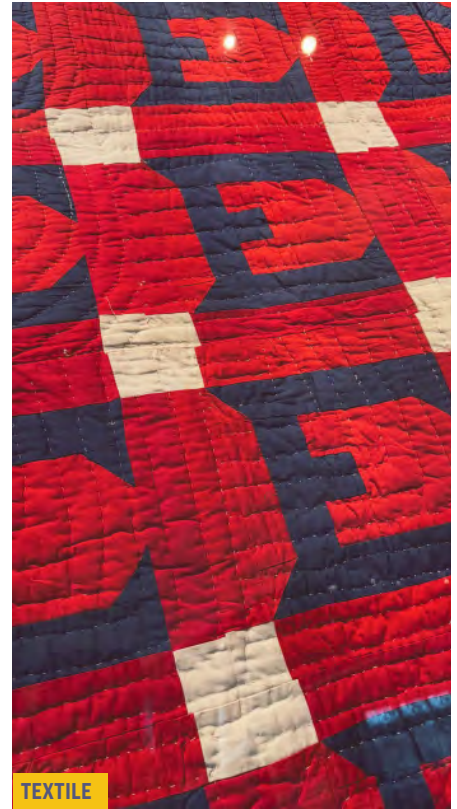
## Scale of Projects

Scale	Price	Art Selection Process	Artist Eligibility	Funding Source	Description of Projects	Typical Locations
Micro Projects	\$100–\$1,000	RFP	County	Arts Council	Experimental, prototyping, quick deploy. Request for Proposal process because it should be a way for community members to develop concepts and try them out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park Space</li> <li>• City Owned Facilities</li> <li>• Private Spaces, Publicly Accessible</li> </ul>
Small-scale Projects	\$1,000–\$15,000	RFP / RFQ	County / Regional	Arts Council, Partnerships and Donations	Often more community and context-based projects that create small but impactful projects. Typically more Request for Qualifications process, but a Request for Proposal process may occasionally be appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Owned Facilities and Properties</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Private Spaces, Publicly Accessible</li> </ul>
Medium-scale Projects	\$15,000–\$75,000	RFQ	Mid-Atlantic / 200 miles	County Funds, Partnerships and Donations, Percent for Art	Often bridge local identity and regional excellence. Often involve greater scale, more complex fabrication and siting. These commissions could engage artists from across the Mid-Atlantic region and help raise the County's artistic profile while continuing to build partnerships with local fabricators, engineers, and arts organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• City Owned Facilities and Properties</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Private Spaces, Publicly Accessible</li> </ul>
Large-scale Projects	\$75,000–\$300,000	RFQ	National	Percent for Art	Signature public artworks that anchor civic sites, gateways, and redevelopment areas. These often draw attention beyond the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• City Owned Facilities and Properties</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Private Spaces, Publicly Accessible</li> </ul>
Landmark Projects	\$300,000+	RFQ	National International	Percent for Art	Transformative, destination-making artworks that become icons for the County. These projects are often integrated into major infrastructure, parks, or cultural campuses. They drive tourism, position Charles County as a leader in arts investments, build county identity, and connects the county's creative ecosystem to a national and international creative network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Public Infrastructure</li> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• City Owned Facilities and Properties</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Private Spaces, Publicly Accessible</li> </ul>

## TYPES OF PUBLIC ART

Public art encompasses a wide range of creative expression that transforms everyday spaces where people live, work, gather, and visit.

Each category below reflects each type of public art below offers opportunities for community connection, storytelling, and placemaking across Charles County.



TEXTILE

2-D ART



MURAL



### Murals

Murals transform blank walls into storytelling canvases that can reflect a community's past, present, and aspirations. They are powerful tools for local pride, cultural visibility, and neighborhood beautification. Murals can range from small-scale community projects to large commissioned works that anchor town centers, schools, and public corridors. When coordinated with design and planning initiatives, murals can also strengthen wayfinding and support walkability. Murals can be painted directly on walls, but can also be applied to parachute cloth or aluminum composite paneling. Particular care should be taken to longevity of murals—when appropriate, high quality, light-fast colors should be used.

### 2-D Art

While murals are the most common form of two dimensional art, there are a number of other media and techniques that create unique and impactful public art. These can include projects that employ cut aluminum, bas-relief sculpture, mosaic, printed photography, and mixed media.

### Mosaics

Mosaics use weather resistant materials to create brilliant and textured works of art that can be integrated into walls, benches, floors, architectural details, infrastructure elements or even sculptures. Mosaics also easily lend themselves to community participation in fabrication.

### Textile

Textile arts can be quick-deploy knit art on trees to large-scale



MOSAIC

# RECOMMENDATIONS | BUILT ENVIRONMENT

LARGE SCALE SCULPTURES



INTERACTIVE INSTALLATIONS



COMMUNITY-PARTICIPATORY ARTWORKS



SITE-RESPONSIVE INSTALLATIONS



SMALL & MEDIUM SCALE SCULPTURES

permanent fabric installations. Whether indoor, or, occasionally outdoor, these artworks can celebrate heritage, honor traditions, or explore new creative expressions.

## Interactive Installations

Interactive installations invite the public to engage directly—through motion, sound, touch, or digital technology. These pieces turn observers into participants, fostering play, curiosity, and social connection. They are particularly effective where interactivity encourages repeat visitation and multi-generational participation.

## Community-participatory Artworks

Community-participatory artworks center collaboration, process, and shared authorship. Residents,

youth, and local organizations are involved in idea generation, design, and sometimes fabrication. The result is an artwork that carries a community's collective voice and memory, building trust, visibility, and civic pride. These projects are especially effective in neighborhoods where community empowerment is a priority.

## Small and Medium Scale Sculptures

Smaller sculptural works provide accessible opportunities for both emerging and established artists to contribute to the County's cultural landscape. These pieces may be located in parks, sidewalks, civic spaces, and publicly accessible private spaces. These artworks offer local focal points and moments of discovery and delight. They allow a

wide range of materials from stone and metal to glass and wood to be integrated into a more human-scale streetscape or as wayfinding landmarks along a trail through parkland.

## Large Scale Sculptures

Large-scale sculptures often serve as visual anchors or landmarks for major public spaces, gateways, civic spaces, and transportation corridors. These works define an identity for a place—whether through abstract form, historical symbolism, or local material reference. When thoughtfully sited, they become iconic landmarks of civic character and creative ambition, and a major draw for tourism.

## Site-Responsive Installations

Site-responsive installations encompass contextual, often three

## VIDEO, DIGITAL, AND MEDIA ART



dimensional artworks designed to transform whole spaces or zones. These may include multimedia, environmental, or ephemeral elements that reframe a familiar space. Installations excel at activating underused areas such as building facades, bridges, parks, trails, and waterfronts, often finding connections between art, architecture, infrastructure, and landscape.

### Temporary / Pop-Up Public Art

Temporary and pop-up artworks infuse everyday places with creative surprise. Because of their short lifespan, they allow experimentation, agility, and rapid response to community themes or seasonal events. From art pop-ups in vacant storefronts and wheatpasted art to sidewalk chalk



LIGHT-BASED ARTWORKS



FUNCTIONAL ART



TEMPORARY / POP-UP PUBLIC ART

art to ephemeral performances or projections, temporary art energizes the public realm and invites new audiences to participate in cultural life. Temporary artworks also provide excellent ways for aspiring and emerging artists to explore new ideas and techniques—also warming sometimes hesitant community members to new ideas and possibilities for public expression and art in public space.

Temporary art, like all art, takes work and requires real resources. While this art is temporary, it should be compensated appropriately for the work performed and scale of work delivered.

### Video, Digital, and Media Art

Video, digital, and media art harness emerging technologies

such as projection mapping, LED screens, augmented reality, and sound to create immersive and imaginative experiences. These projects can also be particularly effective in the darker months of the year, activating spaces for evening community programming or art—and creating reasons to visit commercial areas in the evening or to spend time together outdoors. These installations are also notable for their capacity to engage broad physical areas that may be challenging for more traditional media of public art, or where physical alterations to properties are not able to be made. A note, however, that lighting, projection, and digital art can have substantial costs for impactful and weather resistant lighting and programming.



WAYFINDING ART



PAVEMENT & SIDEWALK ART



PLACEMAKING PARKLETS

## Light-Based Artworks

Light-based art transforms the built environment after dark, enhancing safety and ambiance while adding visual excitement. These works may range from facade art to illuminated path art to large-scale installations—making spaces feel majestic, welcoming, or magical. They often are also designed to be striking in the daytime, transforming as the sun descends.

## Functional Art (Benches, Bike Racks, and other Infrastructure)

Functional art integrates creative expression into everyday infrastructure. Artist-designed benches, bike racks, bus shelters, signage, and planters become points of interest and county identity. These works humanize the built environment, especially when

coordinated with larger streetscape or park projects. Even prosaic infrastructure such as stormwater management structures can be transformed by art.

## Pavement and Sidewalk Art

Pavement and sidewalk art embeds creativity into the most accessible public surface: the ground. From stamped concrete and mosaics, to painted intersections and engraved pavers, these works bring joy, wonder, and character to streets, sidewalks, and plazas. These projects can increase pedestrian and vehicular safety, improve walkability, all while celebrating local themes underfoot.

## Placemaking Parklets

Placemaking parklets convert portions of underused land into vibrant social spaces featuring

art, landscaping, and seating. These parklets tend to be created in public right-of-way such as parking spaces or street edges along with private underused spaces, such as parking lots. Often created in partnership with businesses or community groups, parklets demonstrate how modest design interventions of creative placemaking can expand public space, encourage local commerce, and create exciting spaces for people to connect.

## Wayfinding Art

Wayfinding art merges navigation with storytelling. Sculptural or artist-designed signage, pavement markers and gateway help people orient themselves or learn local history and stories, while expressing the character of a place.



## New Central Arts Venue

**PRIORITIES:** Art Spaces, Things to Do, Workforce Development, Community, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** Establish a central arts venue to act as the home for the arts in Charles County. Further study needs to be done to determine the ideal location, programming, costs, funding, and governance for this type of project.

- \* When placed as part of the neighborhood fabric, arts centers can help boost local economies and act as economic anchors. The project team strongly encourages that the central arts venue be located in a more accessible, dense area of the County.
- \* Placing an arts center in proximity to other commercial and residential spaces both improves access and attendance to the arts center and increases commercial activity at neighboring storefronts. In Maryland alone, there are several examples of the success of arts centers integrated into commercial and residential areas: Pyramid Atlantic in Hyattsville, Red Dirt Studio in Mt. Rainier, and Creative Alliance in Baltimore City.
- \* For this reason, the project team believes that Waldorf’s main commercial corridor and La Plata’s town center are ideal locations to consider for siting a central arts venue.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- \* Establish an advisory committee for arts spaces to guide feasibility studies, and process, possibly partnering with a/multiple local arts organizations in organizing this group
- \* Identify possible locations, ideally county owned or easily purchasable. Identify funding sources. Do whatever possible to activate the space, or even establish temporary arts spaces in the interim—keeping momentum is key.



### Leveraging Zoning and Land Use to Incorporate Arts Priorities

**PRIORITIES:** Art Spaces, Things to Do, Workforce Development, Placemaking, Nature

**DESCRIPTION:** Charles County already faces a dire need for arts spaces—a need that will grow more acute as the county population continues to grow. Even if a central arts venue were to be funded and created in the next few years, it cannot alone meet existing and future demand. By embedding arts priorities into zoning regulations, the County can ensure that new developments can also contribute to the vibrancy of a growing Charles County and support the development and stability of arts spaces across the county. Doing so will leverage minimal public resources to result in maximum private-sector activity, and will also disperse demand on any new central arts venue, to ensure that it responds to the needs of the county for generations to come.

Language should be included in the County zoning code that supports the creation of artist work and rehearsal spaces, cultural venues, arts organization spaces, makerspaces, temporary and permanent public art installations, and creative placemaking elements.

## Three-Tier Arts Density Bonus—County-Wide

An arts density bonus provides a clear, flexible incentive for private developers to include arts and cultural spaces within new projects. By providing relief in Base Zone regulations to allow for increases in permissible density, building height, floor area ratio, lot coverage, and flexibility in site design, and including arts-related features as a part of the Superior Design Criteria for Planned Development Zones, the County can leverage private investment to deliver public benefits without requiring direct public expenditure.

*Paired with partial property tax abatement for deed-restricted arts-use square footage to stabilize operating costs.*

### \* TIER 1 (Art Activation)

Public art; outdoor performance infrastructure → regulation relief to achieve 5% density bonus

### \* TIER 2 (Art Space)

Small to medium arts spaces with modest equipment needs → regulation relief to achieve 25% density bonus

### \* TIER 3 (Art Anchor)

Medium to large arts spaces that act as larger area arts anchors, often with greater equipment needs → regulation relief to achieve 40% density bonus

## Density Bonuses

Arts and/or Cultural Element	Typical Space / Scale	Consolidated Density Bonus Tier	Cost Estimate (Capital or \$/sq ft)
Small Performance Venue / Black Box Theater	2,500–5,000 sq ft, 80–150 seats	40.00%	
Specialty Makerspace (Ceramics/Metal/Wood)	1,500–3,000 sq ft with specialty infrastructure	40.00%	Specialized ventilation/utility infrastructure required.
Residency / Incubator Suites (Short-Term Creative Housing/Workspace)	2–6 units, 200–450 sq ft each	40.00%	Residency program should have clear management plan.
Artist Studios—Expanded Cluster / Creative Incubator	8–16 studios, ~3,000–5,000 sq ft total	40.00%	
Dance / Movement Studio (Enhanced Spec)	1,200–2,500 sq ft	40.00%	Includes sprung floor, mirror wall, changing area, ventilation upgrades.
Artist Studios—Small Cluster	4–8 studios, ~200–350 sq ft each (1,000–2,500 sq ft)	25.00%	
General Makerspace (Shared Fabrication Space)	1,200–2,000 sq ft	25.00%	
Rehearsal Space	800–1,500 sq ft	25.00%	Must include sprung floor or acoustic treatment for performing arts suitability.
Youth Arts Teaching Space	800–1,800 sq ft with sinks, storage	25.00%	
Gallery / Exhibition Space (Street-Facing)	600–1,200 sq ft	25.00%	Must remain publicly accessible
Creative Production Studio (Podcast/Recording/Media)	400–1,000 sq ft modular	25.00%	Acoustic treatment or isolation booth required to qualify.
Public Art—Major Commission / Art Integrated Property-Wide	N/A – includes integration with landscape or building	5.00%	Must be permanent and well maintained
Cultural Seating / Shade / Play Features (Artist-Designed Landscape Elements)	Small plaza node (400–800 sq ft equivalent footprint)	5.00%	Design includes artistic fabrication, not standard site furniture.

## A note on development incentives

### Clarity, Simplicity, and Scale:

In order to make a difference in community priorities, real estate development incentives must be clear, accessible, and substantial.

Requesting these community assets comes at real cost to developers—a cost that should be balanced by incentives to encourage private-sector developments that incorporate the arts. There are countless cautionary tales of communities across Maryland and the U.S. that offer real estate developers incentives for certain types of public priorities, without having considered the cost of these public priorities. The result is that these incentives are rarely leveraged—resulting in wasted time for the county and no further advancement of community priorities.

**Why Density Bonuses?** A property is multi-faceted and often one element ties to another. To ensure that an incentivized priority is actually realized, the project team encourages simplicity in incentives. That is why the project team recommends a generalized density bonus, which allows a developer to contextually adapt their project to the bonus—toggling the appropriate height, floor to area ratio, parking, and setback, and land-use blend.

## A note on Implementation of Density Bonuses

**Long Time Horizons:** Benefits should last an essentially indefinite amount of time. For instance, if a space is to be designated as an arts use, it should be designated as such indefinitely or a very long time horizon—perhaps 99 years. There are many cautionary tales of 15, 20, or 30 year time horizons for community spaces being turned into commercial spaces the moment that the required year-amount is concluded. These anecdotes are so common because many real estate developers will eventually sell properties within that time frame. If a developer expects the art space to eventually become a market-rate commercial space by the time they sell the property, that additional revenue-generation will be factored into business plans and prospective sale price. This will inevitably lead to closures of arts spaces within a decade of opening, removing the purpose of the art incentive in the first place.

**Partial Property Tax Abatements:** A challenge for density-bonus incentivized arts spaces is that the arts tenant of these spaces can sometimes be burdened with substantial unforeseen costs in addition to base rent. These costs typically include the tenant's portion of utilities, common area management fees, and property tax. To alleviate the burden on arts spaces and encourage the flourishing of an arts ecosystem, the

project team strongly encourages a partial property tax abatement for the square footage of space being used for designated arts spaces at the property. This would be paired with the density bonus so that not only would an arts space be built, but that it would be a stable arts spaces filled with local artists, arts collaboratives, and arts organizations.

**Fit-Out Spaces:** Spaces that are provided as part of a density bonus incentive must be delivered, to at least a base use, at the cost of the developer. For example, if a project includes a dance studio, a developer shall also provide the resources for the mirrored wall, sprung floor, and sound isolation.

**Incompatibility of permitted densities with other regulations or economic constraints:** Often, the availability of a density bonus will not be an economic motivator for a private developer because other economic constraints limit the highest return on a development site to something less than what a Base Zone's by-right permitted density will allow. In certain cases, other regulations will be the effective limitation on the development's return. Thus, it may be more effective to be able to offer relief from other regulations to incentivize the provision of arts components, including smaller lot sizes as discussed below.

## EXAMPLES OF ARTS INVESTMENTS

The project team has prepared some examples of adequate incentives based on what the project team believes will reasonably entice local developers into incorporating arts in the future and attract regional and national developers who find this to be an attractive community for investment.

### Small Performance Venue / Black Box Theater

A flexible, mid-sized performance space (typically 80–150 seats) designed for theater music, dance, and multimedia events. Requires acoustically treated, column-free space with lighting grid, backstage support, ADA access, and, ideally, flexible seating. Works well on ground floors of mixed-use developments.

### Specialty Makerspace (Ceramics / Metal / Wood)

A shared workshop equipped for fabrication in specific materials—such as pottery kilns, welding bays, or woodworking tools—with appropriate safety and ventilation equipment. Requires durable floors, high ceilings, robust electrical and mechanical systems, and fire-rated separation. Works well in light industrial and adaptive reuse sites.

### Artist Studios / Creative Incubator

Clusters of private or semi-private studios where artists can work, share resources, and connect with each other. Offer 150–500 sq. ft spaces with natural light, secure access, and 24/7 operation. Consider shared wash sinks, ventilation, gallery display corridors, and loading dock / shared intensive use space.

### Residency / Incubator Suites (Short-Term Creative Housing / Workspace)

Affordable, short-term living or working units for artists-in-residence, visiting creatives, or early-stage cultural entrepreneurs. Should be partnered with an arts organization to manage the residency program. Can be co-located with studios or cultural facilities. Should have flexible lease terms, include small living units, or shared semi-private units with shared amenities.

### Dance / Movement Studio

A dedicated space for rehearsal, classes, and performance preparation. Needs sprung flooring, mirrors, ventilation, and high ceilings.

### Rehearsal Space

A multipurpose room for performing artists to practice, stage small workshops, or prepare for events. Needs acoustic insulation, soundproofing, and flexible lighting.

### Public Art

Permanent or temporary artwork integrated into the built or natural environment. Could include murals, sculptures, mosaics, lighting installations, reliefs, and digital media.

### General Makerspace

A collaborative workshop that provides shared tools for 3D printing, laser cutting, light fabrication, silk-screen printing, and prototyping.

### Youth Arts Teaching Space

A classroom or studio designed for young people to explore artmaking, design, or performance in a safe, well-equipped environment. Needs sinks and storage.

### Gallery / Exhibition Space

A street-visible space for the display of visual art, community exhibitions, or rotating cultural showcases. Needs public visibility, controlled lighting, wall systems for hanging art. Works well as ground-floor activation in mixed-use projects.

### Artist Live / Work Space

Spaces that combine living with areas for creative production, allowing artists to both inhabit and practice their craft in the same unit. These spaces require flexible design standards—higher ceiling, durable flooring, good ventilation, and above average sound-proofing.

### Creative Production Studio

Spaces for podcasting, recording, or small-scale media production. Needs soundproofing, modular recording booths, and strong electrical and data connectivity.

### Artist-Designed Landscaping and Infrastructure

Functional public amenities designed or co-designed by artists. Could include benches, shade structures, crosswalks, and wayfinding elements that blend utility with creative expression.



## Clarity on Building Standards–County-Wide

Artist Live / Work spaces frequently stumble under conventional building codes. The project team recommends that Artist Live / Work units be certified to comply with either the Residential Code or the Light Commercial Code (with habitable residential provisions, upon Building Official review. This flexibility lowers regulatory barriers and enables creative production and habitation to co-exist efficiently.

## By-Right Artist Studios–County-Wide

To encourage a thriving creative economy and reduce barriers for small-scale artists, the County should permit artist studio spaces as a by-right use across residential zones. Allowing these spaces without requiring special exceptions or conditional use approvals will lower costs for artists, decrease traffic with fewer trips across the county, and accelerate the growth of local creative clusters.

## Smaller Lot Minimums–Designated Areas Within the County

- \* High minimum lot-size thresholds hinder affordable, dynamic creative-district development—especially for infill, smaller-scale projects, and arts-organization-led projects. To support creative ecosystems, we encourage this as a feature of County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts (ERA) Districts:
  - **Minimum lot area:** 1,000 SF (or 50% of the base district minimum, whichever is less)
  - **Front build to:** 0-10 ft; rear/side reduced if fire code is satisfied.
- \* These numbers were drawn from other regions where walkable and vibrant neighborhoods allow smaller-scale live/work spaces, studios, galleries, performance spaces, and adaptive reuse projects that are financially feasible and context-appropriate.<sup>20</sup>
- \* Smaller lot minimums could be incorporated into special County ERA Districts or, more simply, incorporated into proposed Mixed Use / Commercial zones.

## Right-Sizing Existing Parking–County-Wide

Large surface parking lots are major obstacles to affordability and walkability—and they limit the sense of place and street life required for financially sustainable arts spaces. To address this:

- \* Permit private and public shared-use parking agreements. For example, a day office and a restaurant busy mainly in the evening could share resources.
- \* Enable the County to create parking districts with shared publicly-managed facilities, and waive minimum parking requirements for arts-space-inclusive properties in the parking district.
- \* Authorize infill of surface parking for residential, mixed-use, or commercial development, thereby converting under-used land into walkable, economically vibrant neighborhoods.
- \* Encourage temporary activation of open lots with programming such as parklets, pop-up events, and markets. This is already beginning to happen along some of the Route 301 properties and should be encouraged county-wide.

## Develop a Multi-Use Walkway and Trail Network Across the County

**PRIORITIES:** Things to Do, Community, Beautiful Places, Placemaking, Nature

**DESCRIPTION:** Develop a multi-use trail network across Charles County to increase the opportunity for residents to experience the County’s cultural and historic landscapes, as well as offer transportation alternatives to improve pedestrian connectivity and reduce vehicular congestion along County roads (trail corridors for future development have been identified on the Community-identified Public Arts and Culture Map). Further study needs to be done to determine the ideal trail corridors, phasing, costs, funding, and maintenance by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism.

A multi-use trail system with enhanced and expanded multimodal (walking and biking) facilities will improve connectivity between local destinations, such as the denser commercial areas running along MD301 and the surrounding rural villages, as well as close gaps in the existing trail network of historic and cultural trails, including the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. A successful trail network will provide residents and visitors of Charles County with more travel options and present a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable way for people to experience local arts and culture, which preserving and protecting County land. Additionally, a multi-use trail network will provide Charles County communities with transportation-specific benefits related to reductions in the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), including reductions in the estimated costs of congestion, vehicle collisions, road maintenance, and direct household vehicle expenses—as well as the estimate



### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Highlight the presence of existing trails by providing points of interest (historic signage and sculptural elements) and activities (interactive art installations) along the trails, generating more interest in the County’s current multiuse trails, such as Indian Head Rail Trail. Whereas multi-use trails have historically been viewed as sites for exercise and transportation between communities, public art and cultural elements will help transform them into a continuum of arts experiences along the trail.
- \* Establish an advisory committee for trails, to include local trail advocacy and stewardship organizations, local artists, heritage and cultural organizations, County parks, transportation, and public works departments and the State Highway Administration, to guide a master planning process in developing trail locations, historic, cultural, and arts landmarks, amenities, and signage.
- \* Major considerations include American Disability Act (ADA) accessibility to ensure that any future trail development accounts for all abilities.
- \* Explore former (abandoned) rail lines for siting future trails and minimizing the environmental impact on existing natural resources and land.
- \* Develop public-private partnerships with trail advocacy organizations and volunteers to assist in the maintenance and stewardship of the trails.
- \* Consider expanding public waterway access and its role in a comprehensive trail system.



## Agricultural Tourism and Rural Arts Experiences

**PRIORITIES:** Things to Do, Community, Nature

**DESCRIPTION:** Agricultural tourism—also known as agritourism—connects Charles County’s agricultural heritage and natural beauty with new opportunities for economic growth, education, and community programming. By better integrating the arts into farm and nature-based experiences, the County can strengthen rural economies, expand tourism, preserve natural resources, and connect residents to local food systems and creative life.

Over the past few years, Charles County has made strong progress in supporting agritourism. Through efforts that span the Department of Economic Development, the Planning and Growth Management Division, and the County’s Tourism Office, the County has preserved farmland, supported agribusiness operations, and promoted on-farm experiences such as farmers markets, pick-your-own farms, and educational tours. These programs form a strong foundation for creative rural tourism. The next step is to expand and coordinate these efforts with other mutually supportive sectors, particularly the arts.

By bringing together art, agriculture, and outdoor recreation, the County can foster unique Agri-Arts experiences that celebrate nature and the cultivation of the land. Agricultural tourism might include farm markets, artist residences on farms, seasonal festivals, vineyard and brewery events, outdoor performances, sculpture trails, artisan workshops, and eco-arts programming. More eclectic uses include haunted mazes, mini-monster-truck racing—all of the above is activity that, in one way or another, is already present in Charles County, but needs greater support and coordination to broaden community access and to improve financial viability for creatives and organizers. Together, these activities celebrate the County’s landscape and traditions while diversifying farm income, strengthening rural economies, preserving natural resources, driving regional tourism, and connecting residents to local food systems and creative life.



### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Expand Agritourism and Arts Planning and Program Support

Coordinate between proposed Arts Staff, proposed Arts Council, and various government departments and boards to incorporate arts elements into farm-supporting grant programs and align policies and marketing. Ensure professional development programming includes rural communities and farm-owners and workers. Continue expanding support for creative experiences such as haunted mazes, the mini-monster truck raceway, and outdoor movies.

#### Support the Development of Agri-Arts Hubs and Trails

Encourage and promote the establishment of Agri-Arts Hubs in key rural crossroads, such as Hughesville—spaces that highlight rural charm, are easily accessible to rural communities and agricultural producers, and are along well-traveled commuter and visitor routes. These hubs can include multi-farm single point-of-sale markets, artist studios, festivals, workshops, and seasonal events. In addition to these hubs develop a Charles County Agri-Arts Trail that links farms, wineries, vintage markets, and rural arts experience to create mutually supportive collaboration and marketing opportunities.



## Waterfront and Shoreline Activation

**PRIORITIES:** Nature, Things to Do, Community, Beautiful Places

**DESCRIPTION:** With more than 183 miles of tidal shoreline, the rivers and creeks of Charles County are among its most treasured assets. These shorelines host valuable wetlands, forested edges, historic sites, and recreation access points used today for paddling, kayaking, bird-watching, and fishing. The next step is to enrich public access through art, culture, and light-touch placemaking—protecting the county’s natural character while making the water’s edge a meaningful and accessible cultural amenity.

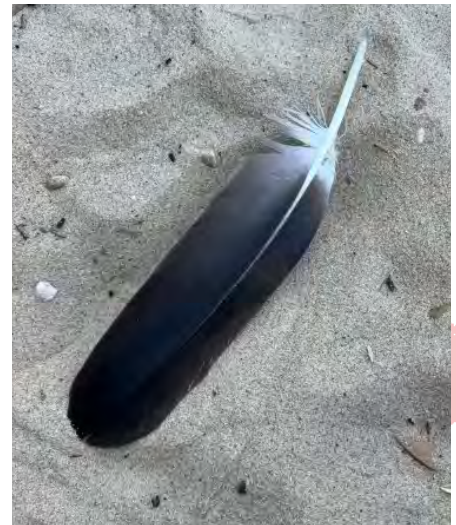
### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Small Town Shoreline Gateways

- \* Support towns such as Benedict in their roles as cultural water-edge gateways. Build on past plans from 1999, 2009, and 2012 to support arts programming, outdoor recreation, and small-scale public art as part of waterfront improvements
- \* Ensure public access points are enhanced with functional art design elements (seating, lighting, and signage).
- \* Explore whether existing or underutilized properties could be adapted for transformation into waterfront artist residencies or studios.

#### Waterways and Trails and Access

- \* Build on prior County waterfront and water path concepts to establish waterway trails across the county and a continuous trail connecting key access points to the water.
- \* Along the trail, install wayfinding art, benches, outdoor art pieces, and interpretive signage to transform access corridors into cultural routes
- \* Allow for light commercial activity near water access zones to support waterfront recreation while maintaining environmental integrity. This could include a kayak kiosk, a food truck, or equipment rental.



## Professional Development Opportunities

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Community

**DESCRIPTION:** Artists, cultural producers, and arts administrators are drivers of a creative economy that requires both artistic excellence and managerial skill. Without deliberate consideration of the arts as a career and arts workforce development, creative careers stall or talent leaves Charles County for neighboring jurisdictions with stronger support infrastructure. Building local capacity through training, mentorship, and regional collaboration will help artists and cultural workers thrive—and ensure that Charles County supports a thriving creative workforce.



## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

### Creative Workforce Training Grants

Establishing a recurring Creative Workforce Training Grant program to support artists, arts administrators, and creative entrepreneurs in pursuing professional development opportunities. These small grants (\$100–\$1,000) could fund attendance at workshops, conferences, business or marketing courses, or specialized technical training. The program would prioritize Charles County residents and arts professionals and could be administered by the proposed County arts staff or Arts Council.

### Southern Maryland Arts Leadership Fellows

Create a Southern Maryland Arts Leadership Fellowship in collaboration with neighboring counties and regional partners such as the College of Southern Maryland, local arts councils, and cultural nonprofits. This program would support emerging arts leaders—particularly early to mid-career professionals—with learning about arts management, cultural planning, event coordination, and funding. Fellows would participate in peer-learning cohorts, rotating site visits, and professional development workshops. This regional fellowship model would build a connected network of professionals across Southern Maryland, fostering long-term collaboration, knowledge sharing, and leadership within the region’s growing arts ecosystem.



## Support Additional Arts Programming

**PRIORITIES:** Things to Do, Community, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a challenging matter without a cure-all solution: after extensive review of existing arts programming, arts organization offerings, arts leaders surveys, and general community surveys, it's clear there is both a strong presence of arts programming and, almost paradoxically, a stated lack of art programming. It's not that there isn't art in the county, it's that everybody is doing their own thing and not supporting each others' sales channels, that unstable arts spaces mean that community members regularly need to find new art spaces to get arts services from, and that non-walkable neighborhoods atomize communities and mean that marketing has to be more targeted. What's most needed are ways to stabilize arts spaces across the county, an easy way to improve access to marketing channels for all arts sector workers, and ways to connect people so that the most powerful outreach method-word of mouth- can do its job.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Incorporate private sector arts listings on "THE GUIDE"
  - This will also improve access to The Guide, because if more groups are involved, more groups will use it.
  - This will also increase access from the arts for a broader audience—survey respondents indicated a need for classes that are more geared towards teens and adults—without increasing costs or workload for the county.
- \* Having an arts liaison for the county would help with arts ecosystem connective tissue
- \* Create a 7 AM to 11 PM, seven days a week, goal for youth programming. This would seek arts programming for youth from morning through the late evening, approximately, to serve as youth development, delinquency prevention support, and support for working families.

“

It would be great having affordable spaces for events like our writing workshops or small performance spaces for performances. We offer creative programs for free, and it's hard to find good locations.”

—YVONNE MEDLEY

THE LIFE JOURNEYS WRITERS GUILD INC.

## COMMUNITY NOTES

“ We need more programs that support youth in the arts, especially in the visual arts.”

“ I would love more advanced kids arts classes—go beyond basic crafts, especially for older kids.”

“ Charles County needs more community-based classes and events that address cultural representation across all ages and demographics.”

“ Would love to see art classes for seniors and professional music performances for youth/families to see professional artists in action”

“ I would love to see more interactive and free recreational places to linger, learn, and enjoy community art.”

“ Broader classes that teach art skills for teens and adults are sorely needed in Charles County.”

“ Would love to see the county taking advantage of publicly owned spaces and private underused spaces (i.e. Neighborhood Community Centers HOAs) for small group activities and creative workshops.”



### Youth Arts Opportunities

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Things to Do

**DESCRIPTION:** While Charles County schools offer entry points in the arts, many youth report a lack of clear transition pathways into creative careers after graduation. Establishing structured mentorship pipelines ensures that creative youth can see a future in the arts locally—not just as hobbyists, but as professionals.

This could be further supported through additional support for visiting artists and arts professionals to the county school system, grants for paid internships for the arts, and tapping into proposed arts ecosystem networks to provide job fairs or arts career days.

#### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

##### Visiting Artists and Arts Pathway Networks

Collaborate with local schools to fund bringing visiting artists into classrooms and afterschool programs. Pair these efforts with Creative Career Days or portfolio showcases to connect youth with mentors, internships, and higher education opportunities in the arts.

##### Creative Youth Micro-Grants

Establish annual micro-grants for youth-led arts projects, exhibitions, performances, and public art. These small awards (\$100–\$1,000) empower young creatives to develop their creative skills and bring art to their communities. Ideally, this program would also have a pool of arts mentors who could be paired with the youth to provide mentorship and guidance for the project.

##### Paid Arts Internships and Mentorship Programs

Provide grants or matching funds to arts organizations, nonprofits, and creative businesses to host paid youth interns, ensuring access and hands-on experience in the creative economy.



## Support County Arts Ecosystem

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Community

**DESCRIPTION:** Charles County’s arts ecosystem is scattered and siloed, with many talented individuals and organizations working in isolation. The lack of regular connection points leads to missed opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and resource sharing. To build a strong arts ecosystem, the County should invest in a deliberate arts network infrastructure—spaces, programs, and relationships that help artists, organizations, and creative businesses build relationships with each other, learn through professional dialogue, and thrive in a shared arts ecosystem.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Establish a Regular Arts Convening

The County should commit to supporting regular convenings for the arts ecosystem—ideally, monthly gatherings that blend professional dialogue with informal networking. One recommended model is a monthly themed conversation around professional issues in the creative sector, bracketed by light refreshments and conversation. This structure creates a sense of consistency for the arts sector, taps into a broad range of individual networks, offers professional development and networking opportunities, and establishes a broader dialogue and idea sharing in the county arts sector.

#### Provide Coordination and Capacity Support—Arts Ecosystem Capacity Grant

Hosting convenings and managing ongoing network coordination requires dedicated time and resources. The County should establish coordination funding grants or provide direct support through the proposed Arts Staff or Arts Council to manage these efforts. This support or grant would cover staff time, venue cost, facilitation, and outreach, ensuring that the work of connection and community-building is adequately resourced and sustained over time.

“

Several times a year, typically 3–5 in a group go into Washington DC to join others from around the area for a play, concert, etc. With dinner and the tickets for the event, we spend often \$300–\$500 (including the tickets) but had to drive to and fro. These are dollars that I would love to spend in Charles County. I’m confident we are not the only ones who do this either.”

–SURVEY RESPONDENT

## Evolve Arts Alliance Into a New Charles County Arts Council

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Community, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** A transparent, coordinated, and energetic arts council is absolutely critical for the execution of the recommendations within this plan and for a vibrant, dynamic, and well supported arts ecosystem. Our project team conducted a thorough review of peer arts councils in Maryland, interviewed Arts Alliance board and staff, and processed comments from community members to prepare this recommendation. The project team feels that in order to best support the county's arts ecosystem, this is the moment for the Arts Alliance to grow and evolve into a non-profit with a county-appointed board. Our research shows that as counties grow in population, their arts councils tend to shift from fully independent non-profits with county commissioner appointed board.

A transparent, coordinated, and proactive arts council is essential to realizing the recommendations of this plan and sustaining a vibrant, well-supported creative ecosystem. The current Charles County Arts Alliance has played an important role in advocating for the arts and managing the existing state block grant for the arts (CAD), but as the county grows, its cultural infrastructure must evolve to meet increasing demand for coordination, funding distribution, and community engagement.

Following a review of peer arts councils across Maryland, as well as interviews with Arts Alliance board members and staff, local arts leaders, and community members, this plan recommends that the existing Arts Alliance transition into a restructured Charles County Arts Council—a nonprofit organization established by the County Commissioners, with County-appointed board members.

This governance model is consistent with the structure found in a number of other Maryland counties, where the arts council serves as both a nonprofit and the county's official arts agency, enabling it to administer public funds transparently, expand programming, all while being able to access volunteer, donor, and grant resources.



### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Memorandum of Understanding and Bylaws

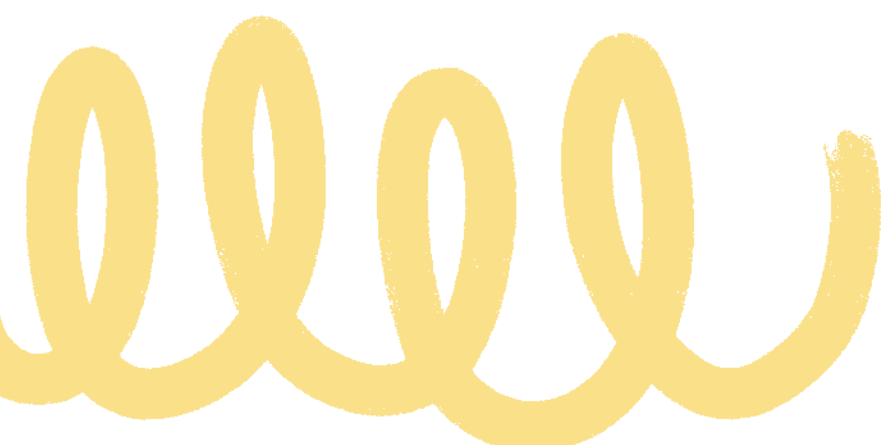
outline new relationship between arts council and county government in a Memorandum of Understanding, plan transition process, governance structure, and funding framework.

#### Added Board Members

other examples of boards transitioning from independent non-profit to county-appointed non-profit will often include all existing board members. This ensures a smooth transition. There is also room, however, for then adding to this existing board, new members who can add fresh perspectives and additional energy.

#### Three-Year Strategic Plan

Develop a three year plan, aligning with Master Plan priorities.



## Establish Dedicated Arts Staff Within RPT, with Goal of Growing Arts Team Within RPT

**PRIORITIES:** Workforce Development, Community, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a critical recommendation. Many of the recommendations included within this Master Plan will require skilled and dedicated staff capacity to manage, facilitate, or oversee their implementation. Moreover, in order to have a thriving arts ecosystem in Charles County, the county government desperately needs a clear point of contact for all matters art-related.

In the past two decades, the go-to person or division for the arts has shifted across PGM, Economic Development, and RPT, always dependent on the personnel preferences instead of a clear vision for the arts in the county. The lack of a go-to person or division also impacts county government operations—when an arts element is needed or is sought by another division, as appears to frequently happen, the county has no internal expertise of protocol.

A phased approach to address the need for dedicated arts staff is recommended. As an immediate step, the County should establish a dedicated full-time arts staff position within the Tourism Division. Of all County divisions, Tourism is currently the most closely aligned with arts-related activities, making it a practical initial home for this work. Housing arts within Tourism would require expanding the division’s scope beyond its current, primarily visitor-focused mission—adding support for local arts development, programming, and creative ecosystem growth. A name such as Arts and Tourism may even be appropriate during this transitional period.

As programs mature, the County should reassess the staffing structure for the arts program and policy portfolio. When staffing increases to three or more full-time roles, the County should conduct a review as to whether programmatic workload has expanded to the point where a new structure or division may be warranted.

A dedicated full time staff and home within the County government would resolved the issues of resident services and internal organization, and would provide critical support to Charles County’s arts ecosystem.

“ We need studio spaces like the Pyramid Atlantics in Hyattsville. It’s a great community space and helped revitalize that corridor. It’s small but it’s big in its impact. It draws people in and is grounded in the place and its people.”

—PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDEE



### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Interim Structure (1-2 Staff)

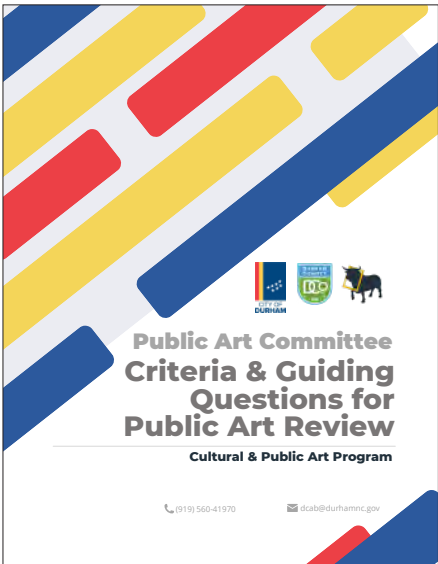
- \* Add a full-time Arts Coordinator or Arts Program Manager within the Tourism Division
- \* Expand the division’s mandate to include arts support, cultural programming, and creative ecosystem development.
- \* Coordinate closely with other County departments and the proposed Charles County Arts Council.

#### Long-Term Structure (3+ Staff)

- \* Explore a dedicated Arts Division within RPT, responsible for countywide arts policy, program management, grants administration, public art oversight, and cultural planning.

#### Working with a new Arts Council

- \* If the proposed new Charles County Arts Council is established alongside a new arts staff, one of the roles of the arts staff will be to coordinate policy across the county government, communications, offer oversight, support with county-managed grants, seek regional, state, and federal grants, and oversee review of public art and parklet proposals.



## Establish Process for Reviewing Public Art

**PRIORITIES:** Beautiful Places, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** It is important that when a person, organization, company, or government entity in the county is seeking to create a work of art in the public realm, that there is a clear, efficient, rational, and consistent process for them to receive approvals. Moreover, there is a growing dialogue that murals and public art may often be considered as free speech, with lighter restrictions on its approval versus signage.

The project team recommends modeling this process on the City of Boston’s Public Art and Design Proposal system and the Montgomery County Public Art Proposal Review system, which emphasizes collaboration, clarity, and inclusivity.

This process would be housed under the proposed division of art and culture.

**Standardized Application Portal:** A clear online submission process for individuals, organizations, developers, and County departments seeking to install public art.

**Preliminary Staff Review:** County public art staff (or designated arts council representative) review proposals for completeness, feasibility, and site appropriateness within two weeks of submissions.

**Site Permissions:** County staff coordinate with relevant property owners or departments to verify permissions and regulatory compliance (planning, historic, or environmental review)

**Tiered Review Path:**

- \* Temporary artworks
- \* Permanent artworks

## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

**Adopt policy language** to formally define review roles, meeting schedules, and documentation standards. Ideally, this is prepared in a clear and easily digestible 1-2 page document. Proposal information should be commensurate with the scale of the project and whether it is temporary or permanent.

- \* Reference models from City of Boston, Arlington County, and Montgomery County.<sup>35, 36, 37, 38</sup>
- \* Include clear distinctions between temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent artworks

### Establish oversight structure

- \* Create a Public Art Review Committee overseen by the proposed Division of Art and Culture, with representation from planning, parks, tourism, public works, arts leaders, community members, and the proposed arts council. Define quorum, meeting frequency, and decision-making authority.

### Develop application and review forms

- \* Create standardized templates for proposals (art concept, site plan, maintenance plan, budget etc.)
- \* Include accessibility and ADA compliance questions.

### Establish an online platform for submissions, transparency, and tracking

- \* Build or adapt a simple digital portal (example platforms include Submittable, Airtable, and a County website form)

- \* Include downloadable clear and digestible templates, FAQs, and guidance documents—Boston does an excellent job with this and can be used as a reference.

### Develop a Public Art Process Guide

- \* Provide a step-by-step visual of the process
- \* Include checklists for artists, developers, community groups, and County staff.
- \* Feature contact information for County arts staff or designated liaisons.

### Develop staff and reviewer capacity

- \* Hold training sessions for County staff, Arts Council members, and reviewers on criteria, evaluation standards, and communication protocols.
- \* Establish clear channels of communication for troubleshooting related to various subject areas, knowing how to refer a project to public works, planning, etc. for questions or review.

### Pilot with one or two projects

- \* Test the process using both a County-initiated project and a community-led or developer-led project.
- \* Collect feedback from artists, staff, and community participants.
- \* Refine timelines, approval thresholds, and forms based on pilot results.

### Establish regular review calendar

- \* Set predictable meeting dates
- \* Define clear turnaround times for application review (typically 4-6 weeks)

### Integrate with capital planning and zoning review

- \* Embed the public art review step in the County's existing development and permitting workflow.

### Create a public-facing project database

- \* Develop a searchable online map showing artworks, artists, and project details. GIS offers an excellent way of mapping this information.

### Provide applicant support and outreach

- \* Offer technical assistance workshops for first-time applicants.
- \* Translate application materials as needed to ensure broad access.
- \* Develop an annual "How to Propose Public Art in Charles County" info session open to the public, perhaps in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, an arts organization, or at an arts event such as Art Fest.

### Create standardized templates for proposals, site agreements, and maintenance plans.

### Provide clear review timelines

**Ensure accessibility** through community outreach, technical assistance, artist information sessions, and artist workshops.



## Establish Process for Parklets (with Possible Program)

**PRIORITIES:** Beautiful Places, Placemaking, Nature

**DESCRIPTION:** A County parklet program would encourage re-use of parking or paved spaces for public and private benefit. Parklets are small public spaces that creatively repurpose portions of open space—typically on-street parking, street edges, or areas of excess pavement or surface lots—to provide people places to gather, rest, and interact. They can include seating, planters, shade, art, and other design features that make streets more welcoming, active, unique, and pedestrian-friendly.

Parklets demonstrate how modest, low-cost interventions can transform everyday infrastructure into lively community spaces. They represent an opportunity to connect arts, mobility, and local commerce—particularly in downtown La Plata, Waldorf’s commercial corridors, and town centers and main streets across the County’s towns and villages.

Currently, there is no formal process for public or private entities to propose and establish parklets in the County. Establishing a clear framework would enable residents and local businesses to participate in creating walkable, artful spaces in the County that also establish a unique identity and drive local commerce.

## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

### Adopt County Parklet Policy with Guidelines

Establish clear policy language that allows temporary or semi-permanent parklets within public rights-of-way and private parking areas. Define eligible locations, timeframes and basic safety standards. Ensure that the standards are accessible and achievable. For process simplicity, this could also be reviewed by the proposed Public Art Review Committee.

Establish easily attainable waivers for existing parking minimums to create parklets in surface parking lots—many of the existing parking minimums in the county are very high and result in substantial empty lot space that could be converted into other use.

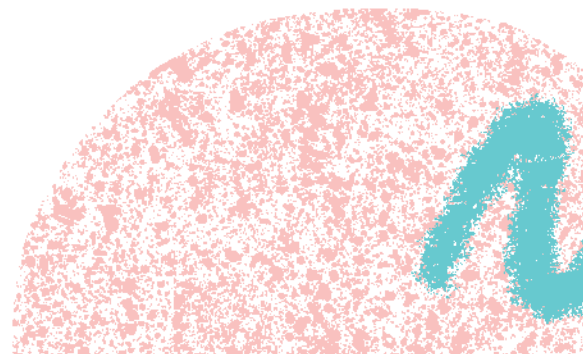
### Launch Pilot Program with Straightforward Application and Small Support Grants

Draw from existing experience to craft a straightforward application where applicants can submit a design sketch, location map, and simple maintenance and removal plan.

Offer modest grant (\$500–\$2,500) to support local groups and small businesses with launching pilot parklets

### Grow and Sustain Program

Evaluate pilot results, refine design standards, possible establish a rolling “Parklets and Placemaking” program with an application each spring and fall.





## Establish Capital Funding for Arts Spaces

**PRIORITIES:** Arts Spaces, Things to Do, Workforce Development, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** There is a dire need for arts spaces across the county, and this need will continue to grow as Charles County welcomes more residents. Moreover, local arts entrepreneurs establishing and managing arts spaces in the county are in need of capital investment to establish arts spaces with greater capacity and capacity for financial sustainability. Even if a large, county-wide arts center were to be developed, with the population growth that Charles County is expecting, the county will need additional arts spaces to avoid over capacity at a large central arts center.

The project team recommends that the County establish a rolling grant program for capital improvements for arts spaces. Such a program would offer funding to arts organizations and private arts ventures for capital projects that would create arts spaces in the county. This program would also bolster the likelihood of leveraging county dollars to aid local organizations in landing funds from the State’s capital funding for the arts program. To have a sufficient impact, the project team proposes a \$80,000–150,000 annual fund, leveraging this funding to double the investments in private sector arts infrastructure, and help to establish more stable arts spaces to serve county residents and to attract visitors.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Structure the fund as a competitive grant program with eligibility for nonprofits, small businesses, and community-based arts developers. Prioritize adaptive reuse of existing buildings, creation of shared-use facilities, and integration of arts into mixed-use and commercial developments.
- \* Grant should be on frequent grant-giving cycles, at least every six months, to better align with the time-sensitive needs of capital investments.
- \* Administer the program via the proposed arts staff, to ensure alignment with broader arts funding and policy priorities.
- \* Coordinate with zoning updates and ERA District development to ensure clustering of arts uses and alignment with County growth plans.



## Percent for Art

**PRIORITIES:** Beautiful Places, Placemaking, Workforce Development

**DESCRIPTION:** A Percent for Art policy ensures that as Charles County grows, that art is built into its very foundation. This policy dedicates a small percentage of County capital construction and maintenance budgets—typically between .05% and 1.5%—towards the commissioning, fabrication, and maintenance of public art.

This policy ensures that new public buildings, parks, and infrastructure reflect the County’s character, values, and aspirations—creating spaces that are not only functional, but beautiful, welcoming, and memorable.

Eligible expenditures would include permanent and integrated public artworks such as murals, sculptures, mosaics, functional art, and design features in civic and outdoor environments, as well as artist fees, project management costs, community engagement, and associated programming costs.

### Pooling together funds

To maximize the impact of each project’s Percent for Public Art, it is recommended that Charles County pool all Percent for Art contributions into a single Public Arts Fund in order to achieve a larger scale of project. Pooling funds allows the county to achieve greater scale and visibility, concentrating resources into major landmark projects. Pooling funds also allows strategic distribution of artworks across the county ensuring access across more urban, suburban, and rural areas.

When funds remain isolated within individual project construction budgets, projects often yield smaller, less visible results. The project team encourages the county to use this pool of funds for large and significant scale projects, with an occasional medium-scale project included.

### Capital Funding vs. General Funding

Percent for Art programs are most effective when tied to capital funding because capital budgets support long-term, physical improvements—buildings, schools, parks, infrastructure—making them the appropriate source for commissioning permanent public artworks. These projects are one-time investments with long lifespans, aligning public art with capital construction ensures that artworks are integrated into public spaces for the outset and that funding grows proportionately as the County grows.

By contrast, recurring arts needs such as programming, community engagement, grants, and education, require predictable year-over-year support. These programs should not depend on Percent for Art dollars, which fluctuate with construction cycles and cannot provide stable operating funding. Keeping capital-based public art separate from general operating investments allows Charles County to pursue bold and impactful public art through its capital improvement program Percent for Art, while ensuring that ongoing arts programs remain reliable, resilient, and sustainably funded.



### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### Adopt Percent for Art Ordinance

Work with County Commissioners, county staff, the envisioned arts council, and legal counsel to establish a formal Percent for Art ordinance. Define eligible capital projects and specify contribution rate. The project team recommends 1% of capital costs.

#### Create Public Arts Fund

Pool all Percent for Art contributions into a dedicated, interest-bearing County fund. Allow funds to roll over each year, enabling the County to combine allocations to create larger and more impactful projects.

#### Oversight and Management

Assign the proposed Charles County Arts Council to oversee the selection of the public and to project manage its creation and maintenance. Integrate review and coordination with County departments early in project planning.

## Establish County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts Districts and Seek State of Maryland Arts and Entertainment District Designations

**PRIORITIES:** Arts Spaces, Things to Do, Workforce Development, Placemaking

**DESCRIPTION:** Designating areas as special Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts (ERA) Districts can help acknowledge the presence of creative sector clusters and support their growth. The State of Maryland has an Arts and Entertainment District designation that comes with a number of benefits, but the County can also designate areas as County Entertainment, Recreation, and Art Districts (ERA Districts) to great effect.

**State Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Districts**—The State A&E District designations offer access to state grants for operating support and creates a framework for local policy innovation. In addition to direct benefits from the State of Maryland, such a designation can incentivize important policy changes favorable towards a vibrant arts ecosystem and also drive additional private sector contributions towards the arts.<sup>38</sup>

Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Districts are formal designations for the state of Maryland that “help develop community involvement, tourism, and revitalization through tax-related incentives.” There are currently 29 A&E districts across the state, and they have significantly contributed to the vibrancy, visibility, and the create sector where they are established.

### State A&E District benefits for artists and investors in arts spaces:

**Property Tax Incentives**—The owner of a manufacturing, commercial, or industrial property is eligible for a property tax credit based on the difference between the pre- and post-renovation assessment of the property when it has been wholly or partially renovated for use by “qualified residing artists” or “arts and entertainment enterprises.” The amount and duration of the tax credit, as well as the application process, is determined by the local government.

**Artist Income Tax Subtraction Modification**—A “qualified residing artist” who lives in Maryland and sells “artistic work” in any of the A&E Districts throughout the state is eligible for the income tax subtraction modification on income derived from their in-district sales (for performing artists, this includes income derived from performances in a district; for all “qualified residing artists,” this includes internet sales originating in a district).





**Admissions & Amusement Tax Exemption**—Local governments may exempt the admissions and amusement tax gross receipts from any admissions or amusement charge imposed by an “arts and entertainment enterprise” or a “qualifying residing artist” in an A&E District.

### **County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts Districts (ERA Districts):**

While Maryland has a statewide program for supporting established arts districts, there is nothing stopping a County from creating arts district designations to support nascent creative sector clusters and offer its own policy support. As described in this plan, there are certain land-use and policy programs that could support the creation of Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts Districts. Policy recommendations could include:

- \* **Smaller Minimum Lot Size**—To offer more opportunity for affordable arts spaces and walkable neighborhoods.
- \* **Preference on County Arts Grants**—Preference for applicants applying for the proposed grant for capital funding for arts spaces or proposed public arts grants.
- \* **Waived Local Taxes and Fees**—Mirror state program by waiving property taxes and local sales tax on sales on spaces and products involving the arts.
- \* **County Support**—Support from county staff or county arts council in managing and organizing ERA District and in helping to identify and secure additional grant funding support.
- \* **Mixed-Use Zoning**—Arts thrive with flexible, adaptable, and walkable spaces. Mixed-use is recommended for any County ERA District.

### **IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

While there are substantial benefits to this program, it requires thoughtful management, organizing, and upkeep. To be effective, an A&E District must be coordinated by a designated entity, maintain a registry of artists and arts businesses, and regularly track outcomes to maintain compliance with the Maryland State Arts Council’s requirements.

**Local action before State action**—While a state designation of an Arts & Entertainment District can confer substantial benefits, the County can always take action to nurture and support creative clusters—implementing policies and support at a county level.

## Possible State Arts Entertainment Districts and County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts Districts

After review, three areas in Charles County stood out as strong candidates for becoming State Arts & Entertainment Districts and County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts Districts. Some are more developed and organized than others, and will require various levels of attention to acquire a formal state designation.

### La Plata Center–Town Center Arts District

La Plata Center is an ideal candidate for an Arts & Entertainment District. La Plata has a clear town center with a strong creative economy presence—including a playhouse, tattoo parlors, a gaming store, several art boutiques, resident artists, and a collaborative municipal staff. Keep La Plata Beautiful has also done significant organizing within the arts, non-profit, and business community—resulting in regular and well attended arts events, a new bird-city-themed park, multiple public art installations, and a community clean-ups.

Between 2019 and 2021, La Plata conducted substantial groundwork to receive an Arts and Entertainment District designation—engaging 188 people in a community survey, identifying core arts leaders and businesses, and making a compelling case for a growing arts district in the county and the state of Maryland. Having reviewed the original A&E District submissions documents and having seen both the progress made since then and the continuing energy and momentum, the project team feels that now is

the time for La Plata’s Town Center to become an Arts & Entertainment District. With regards to the town center map area, the project team encourages the organizers to slightly expand the area to include the properties up to Rt.301 and east of Oak and Kent Street—these areas have substantial surface parking, which could be valuable development opportunities for artist studios and housing.

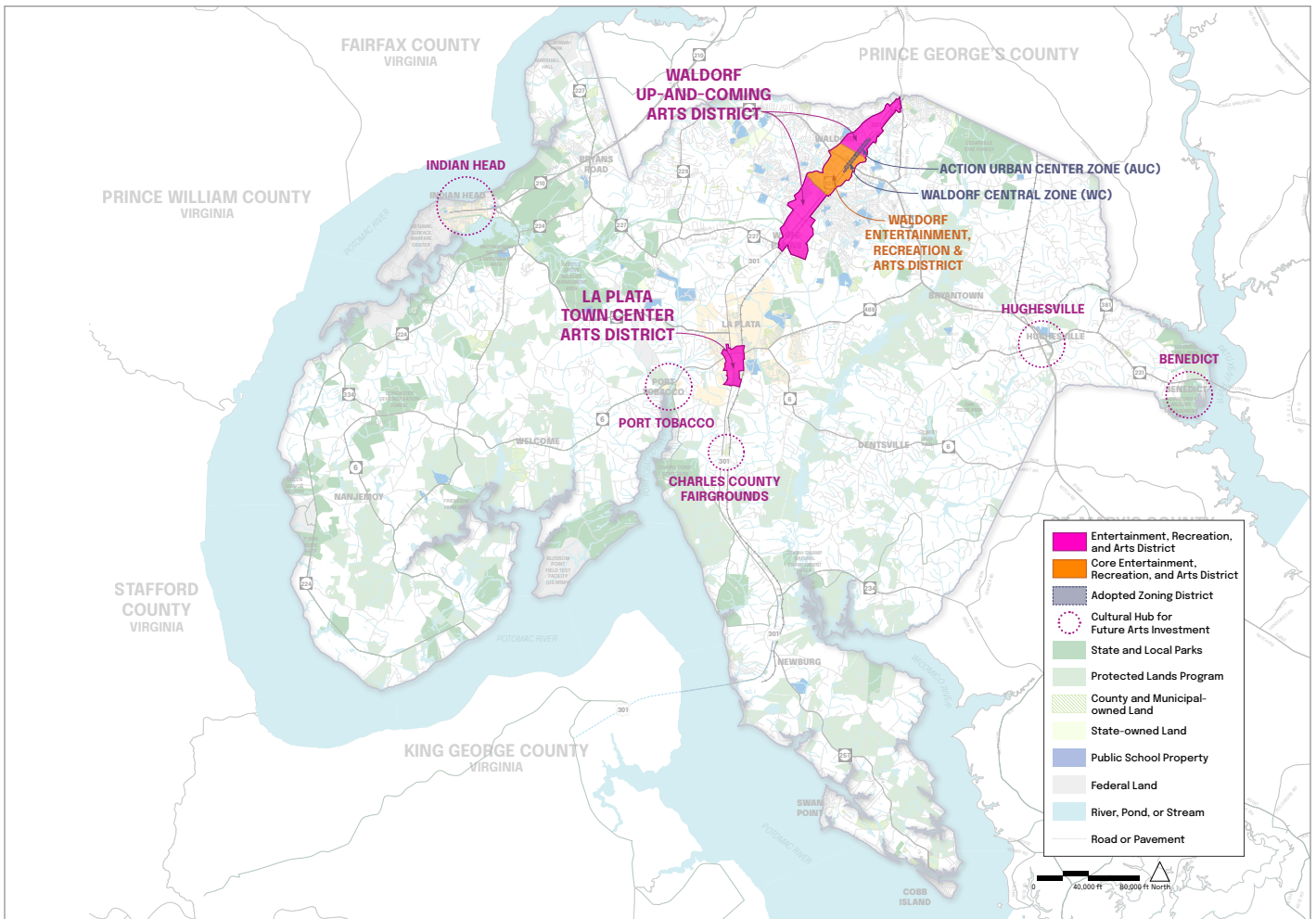
### Route 301 X Old Washington Road–Up-and-Coming Arts District

The area in Waldorf and White Plains along Route 301 and reaching towards Old Washington Road presents a natural and timely opportunity for the eventual development of a County Entertainment, Recreation, and Arts (ERA) District and an eventual designation by the state as an Arts & Entertainment District. Both the population and commercial heart of the county, this area is also the home to a significant and growing cluster of artists, creative workers, and residents who value the arts. In the older shopping centers, the St.Charles Mall, and strip malls, arts uses have already begun to take root—arts schools, dance

academies, boutique craft stores, paint and sips, banquet halls, galleries and rehearsal spaces—hinting at the area’s creative potential. Moreover, the County is already supporting a major investment in the area with the upcoming Charles County Sports and Wellness Center adjacent to the St.Charles Mall.

Despite its role as the County’s commercial hub, Waldorf lacks a true downtown or central gathering place. Efforts for a revitalized Old Washington Road are now underway. The County should plan the establishment, first, of a ERA District and, after some time, a State A&E District. Covering the area of the Old Washington Road revitalization through to the commercial corridor along Route 301 would create a sense of place, identity, and economic vitality driven by the arts.

To be successful, this district will require support from a lead organization, similar to Keep La Plata Beautiful, to organize and coordinate the arts organizations, small businesses, property owners, developers, civic leaders, and artists in the area. This group would champion the area’s creative sector, coordinate marketing and events, maintain an artist registry, and guide the application process of State designation. The proposed arts council or the proposed County Arts Staff would both be excellent starting points for coordinating either a working group for Waldorf or spinning off a new organization. Once a critical mass of arts entities and momentum has formed, it will be appropriate to seek State designation as an A&E District.



## Cultural Hub for Future Arts Investments

Indian Head and Hughesville Crossroads—among others—are identified as cultural hubs for future arts investments—while they may not yet meet the scale of arts activity required for a State-designated Arts & Entertainment District or County ERA Districts, their unique mix of small town and rural charm, natural beauty, and creative enterprise make them areas to keep in mind for future investments in the arts.

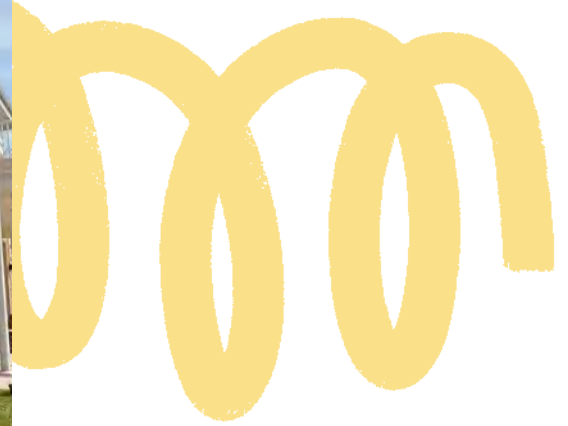
Situated in smaller and more rural communities across the county, these areas could leverage these

features to celebrate the arts, sustainability, and the intersection of agriculture and culture. These areas could include farmers markets, vintage markets, seasonal festivals, artisan workshops, agricultural demonstrations, farm-to-table experiences, and nature-inspired public arts.

The County could work with local property owners, market operators, and regional agricultural and arts organizations and businesses to establish the framework for these areas by supporting small-scale infill, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and flexible small-scale



mixed-use zoning for artisan agricultural enterprises. With these actions, the County can help cultivate these cultural hubs into models for small-town and rural creative placemaking—places where art, farming, and community life thrive together.



## Annual or Semi-Annual Cross-Department Meeting to Share Arts Updates and Opportunities

**PRIORITIES:** Beautiful Places, Placemaking, Workforce Development

**DESCRIPTION:** To ensure that the arts are fully integrated into County decision-making, regular cross-departmental coordination meetings should be established. These meetings, held annually or semi-annually, would bring together staff from departments such as Planning Growth Management, Economic Development, Recreation Parks and Tourism, and Public Works, to share updates, opportunities, and project pipelines where the arts could add value.

By creating a standing forum for communication, the County can identify early opportunities for artist involvement in capital projects, infrastructure improvements, placemaking efforts, community programs, and outreach engagement. This coordination would help align goals, reduce duplication, and ensure that the arts are viewed as a strategic tool for a more thoughtful, responsive, and impactful county government.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Designate an Arts Liaison in each relevant department or division
- \* Host annual or biannual meeting led by a new County arts staff member. Use meetings to review upcoming capital improvements, grant opportunities, and creative collaborations.
- \* Track cross-departmental partnerships in an annual public summary to demonstrate impact.

### DID YOU KNOW?

## How Arts Help Government Engagement

There is a growing movement of Artist In Residence in Government programs, where artists are paired with departments such as water treatment, planning, libraries, transportation, schools, and more.

Artists work, embedded within departments, to develop artworks that explore the department's work—improving access and transparency, and even prompting new policy for the department regarding overlooked elements.

Two excellent examples: the City of Boston, MA, which has developed a robust artist in residence program over the course of nearly a decade.

In a much smaller town context, the town of Granite Falls, MN, pop.2260 began a highly impactful artist residency that improved awareness of government programs and increased social capital. This may be an exciting program to build into future planning for the County.<sup>40, 41</sup>



### Regular Review of Master Plan— Every Five Years

**PRIORITIES:** Community, Placemaking, Beautiful Places, Workforce Development, Art Spaces

**DESCRIPTION:** To keep the Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan relevant and responsive, it should undergo a formal review and refresh every five years. This ensures that County priorities, community demographics, economic trends, and lessons learned, are consistently reflected in implementation efforts. Regular evaluation allows the County to celebrate progress, recalibrate funding strategies, and maintain momentum.

The review process should be community-informed and data-driven, combining public input, creative sector feedback, and measurable performance indicators. For instance, the update could include the number of new public art projects completed, workshops hosted, and creative businesses and organizations supported.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- \* Establish five-year review cycle incorporated into eventual Arts Councils operating framework
- \* Host a community roundtable to gather feedback on needs, opportunities, and emerging trends.
- \* Send out survey for community engagement opportunity
- \* Use review outcomes to adjust implementation tactics, refresh creative placemaking goals, and reallocate program funding, if needed.
- \* Produce a public progress report summarizing achievements, challenges, and updated priorities

## Increase County Arts Funding

**PRIORITIES:** Art Spaces, Things to Do, Workforce Development, Community, Beautiful Places

**DESCRIPTION:** To achieve the goals established by this Master Plan, Charles County must increase its investment in the arts. The County currently ranks among the bottom in Maryland for county arts funding, even as its population and economy continue to grow.

At present, the only dedicated arts funding in Charles County comes from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). In FY24, the Charles County Arts Alliance received \$222,325 in total revenue—equivalent to just \$1.27 per resident. By contrast, the state median is \$4.12 per capita and the average (excluding outliers) is \$5.12 per capita.

These investments would generate a significant return in economic activity, quality of life, youth engagement, youth engagement, tourism, and civic identity, while positioning Charles County to attract new state, federal, and philanthropic resources.

To ensure responsible growth, the County should phase in new funding levels over three years, allowing both the proposed County arts staff and the proposed Arts Council to build administrative capacity, develop programs, and measure impact.

There are a number of funding options available for the county. These could include incorporating arts funding into a general county funding line item, adding it as a specific use related to a flat county-wide fee, a percentage of sales tax, or a hospitality or lodging fee. This funding to the arts should also reach the final funding amounts on an incremental basis over a three year period—particularly in the case of a more significant investment for the arts. This would allow both the arts staff of the county government and the arts alliance an opportunity to establish processes and build capacity in order to handle larger funding amounts and more complex programs.

### Funding Options

**County-wide Flat, Per-Person Fee**—A dedicated, predictable funding stream based on a flat per-person fee that would directly support arts programming, public art, and arts grants.

**General Fund Allocation**—A recurring line item in the County’s General Fund would provide flexible funding for the arts.

**Sales Tax**—Dedicate a small portion of existing or new sales tax revenue to the arts.



## Transforming the Local Creative Landscape

Bringing Charles County to even the state median would transform the local creative landscape:

### STATE MEDIAN

At **\$4.12 per person**, county contribution of \$497,262

### STATE AVERAGE (excluding outliers)

At **\$5.12 per person**, county contribution of \$671,740

### TOP THIRD STATEWIDE

At **\$7.00 per person**, county contribution of \$999,758

## Summary of Budget Impacting Programs

This Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan identifies a range of policies and programs to strengthen the arts ecosystem in Charles County. Some of these policies include programs that require recurring investment beyond staff capacity. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of programs that will have direct budget implications.

### How to Read This Section:

#### Recommended Grant Size:

The grant figures are starting points. Grant amounts may be adjusted as programs are piloted and reevaluated.

#### Estimated Grants Per Year:

Initial estimates are based on county population, program demand, and possible funding size of the program.

#### Pilot-First, Scale Next:

Programs start small as pilot programs and then grow to meet the needs of the county.

#### Why No Final Budget:

This Master Plan is intended as a roadmap for the County and its partners to make priority decisions as to how to invest resources into the arts. Final budget allocations should be determined by County leadership as programs are developed and continuously assessed.

## RECURRING PROGRAMS

### Micro-Grant Art Program–

High-volume, low-cost grants supporting community-led creativity across the County.

- \* Recommended Grant Size: \$100–\$350
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 40–60

### Creative Workforce Training Grants

Skill-building, professional development, and certifications for artists and creative workers.

- \* Recommended Grant Size: \$100–\$1,000
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 40–80

### Southern Maryland Arts Leadership Fellowship

Developing regional arts leadership through cohort-based professional development.

- \* Costs: Programming and stipends for fellows
- \* Estimated Fellows Per Year: 6–24

### Arts Ecosystem Capacity Grant

Support for collaboration, arts network building, and organizational capacity within the creative sector.

- \* Recommended Grant: \$1,000–\$10,000
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 15

### Creative Youth Micro-Grants

Funding for youth-led creative projects with artist-supervisor support

- \* Recommended Grant: \$100–\$1,000
- \* Stipend for Artist-Supervisor: \$500
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 20–40

### Paid Arts Internships and Mentorship Programs

Workforce pathways for young creatives matched with local businesses, nonprofits, and artists.

- \* Recommended Grant: \$1,500–\$3,000 per intern
- \* Recommended Stipend: \$1,500 per placement
- \* Estimated Internships Per Year: 10–20





## Parklet Program and Grant

Artist-designed outdoor public spaces and creative placemaking activations

- \* Recommended Grant: \$500–\$2,500
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 10–15

## Capital Funding for Arts Spaces

Investment supporting development of cultural facilities, maker spaces, studios, and creative workspace .

- \* Recommended Grant: \$10,000–\$50,000
- \* Estimated Grants Per Year: 3–4

## Percent for Art Ordinance–Public Art Program

A dedicated public art program funded through County capital projects.

Not included in this section because funding is tied directly to County capital expenditures rather than general funds.

## ONE-TIME EXPENDITURES

These planning and feasibility studies may be required to support major cultural investments, but do not recur annually.

- \* Feasibility Study for Central Arts Venue
- \* Study for Parking Consolidation
- \* Study New Trails and Paths



## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

### Adopt a County Arts Funding Policy

- \* Establish a clear target for annual per-capita investment, with phased funding benchmarks.
- \* Clarify who will be receiving these funds. Based on Master Plan recommendations, most funds will eventually be likely to be managed by the proposed arts council.

### Adopt a County Arts Funding Policy

- \* Seek MSAC, National Endowment for the Arts, and other foundation matching funds.
- \* Develop public-private partnerships to support new funds.

### Percent for Public Art vs. General Arts Funding

- \* A percent for public art ordinance is an impactful tool for supporting public art in a community. However, due to the irregular funding amounts that are dependent on public capital improvement projects, this funding is best used for one-time investments like public art—and its administration and surrounding programming. For regular arts programming and grants—that benefit from stability and predictability it is preferable to support these from a more stable funding source.



“

Personally, the arts are my safe haven. They are my means of connecting deeply with myself, others and the world around me. They've shaped my voice, my motivation, and my resilience.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

# 10



**PUBLIC ARTS  
& CULTURE  
IN PRACTICE**

# Typology of Public Arts and Cultural Sites

**C**harles County includes a wide range of landscapes and built environments across its 634 square miles, from busy commercial corridors to quiet forest trails—this Master Plan hopes to offer guidance on this broad range of spaces. The Master Plan proposes multiple, coordinated tactics, broken down into “public arts and cultural types” that highlight the kind of partnership needed to successfully implement arts and culture projects across the County. Each public arts and cultural type includes descriptions of specific features, amenities, and activities best suited for serving the goal of that type.

The typology was developed as a way of classifying public spaces in Charles County, based on their land use (function) and their physical and cultural characteristics. The purpose of this typology is to support a diverse County identity, encourage the potential of different public spaces, and inform design decisions at the community-level when approaching projects on any individual site. This approach also offers flexibility to the County, so that as the communities within the County evolve, it can draw from the appropriate type.

## Typology of Sites

<b>1</b>	<b>SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL CENTERS</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>TOWN CENTERS</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>RURAL VILLAGES</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>NATURAL AREAS</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>MAIN STREETS</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ACTIVE WATERFRONTS</b>



### Suburban Commercial Centers—301 Strip Mall

Much of Charles County has been developed on the model of suburban commercial development: major arterial highways lined with shopping strips and out-buildings with large swaths of land utilized solely for parking and design focused mostly on vehicular accessibility. Placing retail-only uses within strip malls and commercial centers have led to businesses struggling to remain open, due to the general trend of retail disruption and store closings as shoppers move online and a lack of pedestrian-friendly activity. While the existing shopping centers face economic challenges, the neighborhoods surrounding them continue to see new (and relatively dense) residential development, as people and families move to Charles County from the surrounding areas.

Placing retail-only uses within strip malls have led to businesses struggling to remain open

# SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL CENTER - WALDORF

**PROPOSED BUILDING**

**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OR PARK**

**GREEN SPACE OR POCKET PARK**

**CULTURAL SITE**

**PARKING AREA & FLEXIBLE SPACE**

**COMMUNITY PORTAL**

**PEDESTRIAN-CENTERED STREETSCAPES**

ESTABLISH A LAYOUT OF STREETS AND SIDEWALKS THAT SUPPORTS GROUND-FLOOR RETAIL

**COMMUNITY-BASED ART STUDIOS, REHEARSAL SPACES, AND PERFORMANCE VENUES IN VACANT RETAIL SPACES**



CONNECT TO ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS AND NATURAL AREAS WITH PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS/TRAILS

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES TO REDUCE VEHICULAR SPEEDS

CONSOLIDATED PARKING

EXISTING BUILDING (EX.)

ADDED TREES AND PLANTINGS TO SCREEN ADJACENT HIGHWAY



**ANCHOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

CONNECT NEW & OLD DEVELOPMENT & ANCHOR RETAIL TENANTS

BERRY ROAD

MD 301 CRAIN HIGHWAY

OLD WALDORF SCHOOL

**SHARED PARKING STRATEGIES, SUCH AS PARKING GARAGES**

CONSOLIDATE AND REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF LAND DEDICATED TO PARKING

**INFILL AND ADAPTIVE REUSE OF BUILDINGS**

CONSOLIDATE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES & INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

INVESTMENT IN STREET & ROADWAY INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROVIDE SAFETY MEASURES FOR PEDESTRIANS, SUCH AS CROSSWALKS AND SIDEWALKS



OLD WASHINGTON ROAD

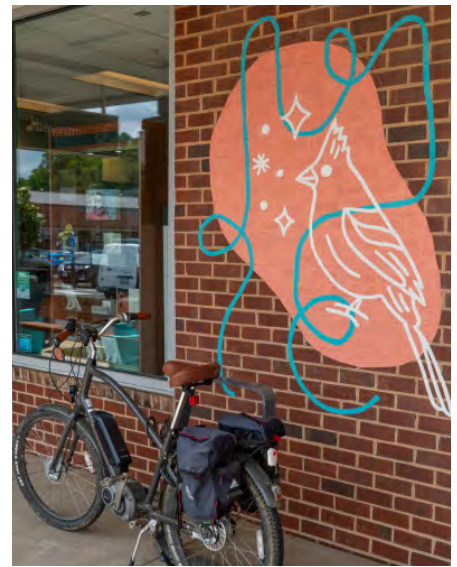
Focusing on mixed-use design strategies, such as infill development, adaptive re-use, improved walkability, and better connections between commercial uses and surrounding residential areas, and allowing for a variety of land uses, such as arts spaces, offices, community open spaces, and residences, can lead to economic transformation for these large retail centers as well as create vibrant new community hubs. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance suburban commercial centers include:

**Promoting redevelopment of commercial centers into mixed-use places with strong connections to surrounding communities.**

- \* Transform underutilized parking lots into redevelopment sites for added density and compatible uses.
- \* Establish a layout of streets and sidewalks that supports ground-floor retail and makes movement within and through the site more efficient and enjoyable. Developing sidewalks and trail systems that allow pedestrians to safely walk and bike around and through retail centers, as well as continue off-site to adjacent neighborhoods and residential areas, improves walkability. Design features include widening sidewalks, improving crosswalks, installing landscaping and green buffers between roadways and pathways, and providing adequate signage or wayfinding features. Create and expand trail access points to nature wilds, such as the Indian Head Rail Trail.
- \* Create public open spaces that connect new and old development and anchor retail tenants by providing space for seating, outdoor programming, and visibility from the surrounding streets. Design features include trees and landscaping, recreational amenities, public art, and murals.

**Facilitating infill and adaptive reuse of buildings and sites to reduce development sprawl and consolidate community activities to increase accessibility and activate spaces.**

- \* House community-based art studios, rehearsal spaces, and performance venues in vacant retail spaces, offering easy access for artists and the general public and creating a social network of community artists within close proximity to one another.
- \* Utilize shared parking strategies, such as parking garages, to consolidate and reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking. Unused parking areas can be reallocated for new development or transformed into green open spaces through depaving and landscaping.
- \* Highlight public open spaces and/or pop-up event spaces that activate underutilized areas on the weekends and at night with murals, lighting, interactive art, performances, programming, and arts markets.





### Town Center—La Plata Town Centers (Civic Centers)

The town center (or public square) is the heart of many communities in Charles County. These concentrated areas of civic and institutional properties support the day-to-day inner workings of local governments, as well as offer public spaces for community residents to gather, celebrate, and play. An engaging town center is somewhere that people feel drawn to when they want a place to get together because it is the natural focal point of town and a magnet for social life. These sites are ideal for hosting public art, programmed activities, holiday and seasonal activities, music events, and more. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance town centers include:

**Creating an enduring and memorable public realm, in which commerce, social interaction, and leisure time activities mix easily in an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, outdoor setting.**

- \* Define the public realm with streets, open spaces, and people places that support walkability and connectivity. It is critical to create a framework that elevates the pedestrian experience through pedestrian-scaled public spaces and wayfinding strategies and signage of local landmarks and public art.
- \* Shape and surround the public realm with buildings that enhance the pedestrian experience and highlight the identity of the town.

Define the public realm with streets, open spaces, and people places that support walkability and connectivity

# TOWN CENTER - LA PLATA

- PROPOSED BUILDING
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OR PARK
- GREEN SPACE OR POCKET PARK
- CULTURAL SITE
- PARKING AREA & FLEXIBLE SPACE
- COMMUNITY PORTAL



**CROSSWALK ART + WAYFINDING SIGNAGE**  
STREETSCAPE ART & DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE SHOWING TOWN CENTER PROXIMITY

**PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS**  
SEPARATING PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS FROM ROADWAYS AND INCREASING ACCESS THROUGHOUT TOWN CENTER



TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES TO REDUCE VEHICULAR SPEEDS

**ART GALLERIES + CAFE**  
SHOWCASE LOCAL ARTISTS & TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS



TOWN CENTER GATEWAY

**PERFORMANCE VENUE**  
COMMUNITY VENUE FOR MUSIC, THEATER, & SPOKEN WORD, ETC.



**CIVIC OUTDOOR EVENT SPACE**  
OUTDOOR VENUE FOR LARGER EVENTS & FESTIVITIES, HIGHLIGHT TOWN

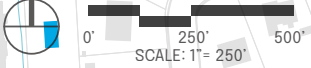
**SHARED STREET**  
CONVERTING MAIN THOROUGHFARE INTO SHARED STREET W/ TRAFFIC CALMING & SAFETY MEASURES

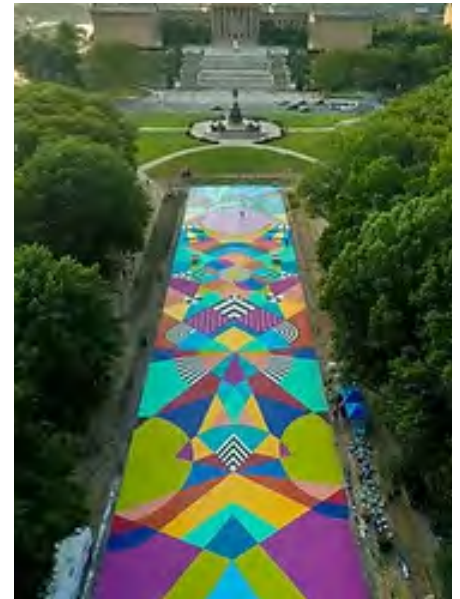


**KIDS CREATIVE SPACES**  
CREATIVE SPACES FOR KIDS AGE 0-18 FOR PAINT, ART, CRAFTS, & PROJECTS



**INTERACTIVE OUTDOOR ARTS + PLAY**  
ADJACENT TO MAJOR CIVIC HUB





## Consolidate parking areas and refocus the layout and design of streets to the pedestrian experience

Existing buildings and structures can be repurposed, with murals and sculptures enhancing and highlighting a building's architecture and function. Many of Charles County's town centers feature historic buildings and structures, and any infill development does not necessarily need to match the surrounding iconic building character but it should be carefully integrated with it.

- \* Collaborate with local artists who are passionate about contributing to their communities for permanently sited pieces of public art or temporary installations. Temporary installations, like pop-up art displays or seasonal sculptures, allow the town center to experiment with art without long-term commitments.
- \* Consolidate parking areas and refocus the layout and design of streets to the pedestrian experience. The intent is to provide adequate parking for motor vehicles while minimizing the visual impact of parking lots and structures, for example, parking structures should be scaled and blended in with the existing town center character.

**Investing in an anchor public space (i.e. town square) for the town center that offers the flexibility of hosting various sizes and types of organized community events.**

- \* Provide a variety of smaller "places" within the anchor space to appeal to various people. These can include larger investments such as outdoor cafés, fountains, sculptures, or an amphitheater for performances, or can include smaller investments, such as a vendor cart or playground that, when put together, draw people throughout the day.
- \* Consider seasonality of the space as its use changes over the course of the day, week, and year. On-site storage for movable chairs, tables, umbrellas, and games can allow for little lead time in planning for events. The space can also host temporary, seasonal activities, such as skating rinks, outdoor cafés, markets or festivals, and art exhibitions, adapting from one season to the next.



### Rural Villages—Benedict, Bel Alton, Newburg, Hughesville

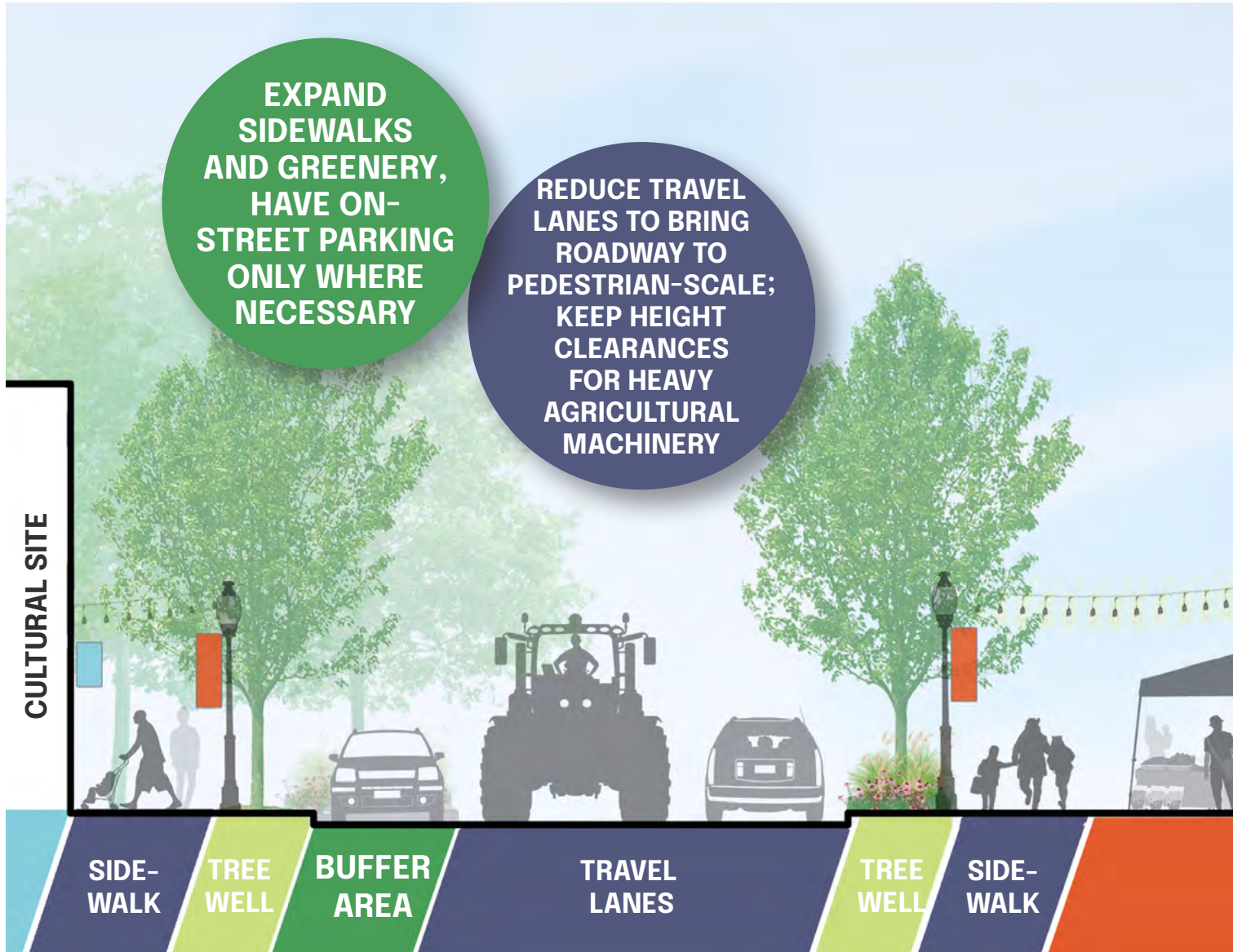
Charles County's rural villages vary in size, character, and uses but generally are small in physical area and population, provide limited, highly localized commercial services, and provide limited employment opportunities. Residents living in and around rural villages have chosen to live in this place purposefully, whether that be their family history in the community or the desire for a quieter life within Charles County's less developed agricultural areas. Placemaking and public art in these areas should focus on activating spaces around a central civic, commercial, or cultural landmark, such as a historical museum, a local business like a coffee shop, or a local park, to concentrate local land uses within the main village corridor and allow for the surrounding lands to remain undeveloped and rural. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance rural villages are shown in the the Rural Village diagram and include:

#### Creating focal points that can become destination drivers for the rural village and has the potential to attract commercial and cultural visitors.

- \* Invest in existing businesses or organizations (or start up a county-sponsored organization, if none exist) with enhanced site amenities and/or County-wide marketing.
- \* Highlight the historical and cultural significance of rural village businesses and places with village-specific branding and signage, such as historical markers or plaques, light pole banners, and murals.
- \* Revitalize deteriorated or underutilized spaces to increase safety and inspire more redevelopment.

Public art in rural areas should focus on activating spaces around a central civic, commercial or cultural landmark



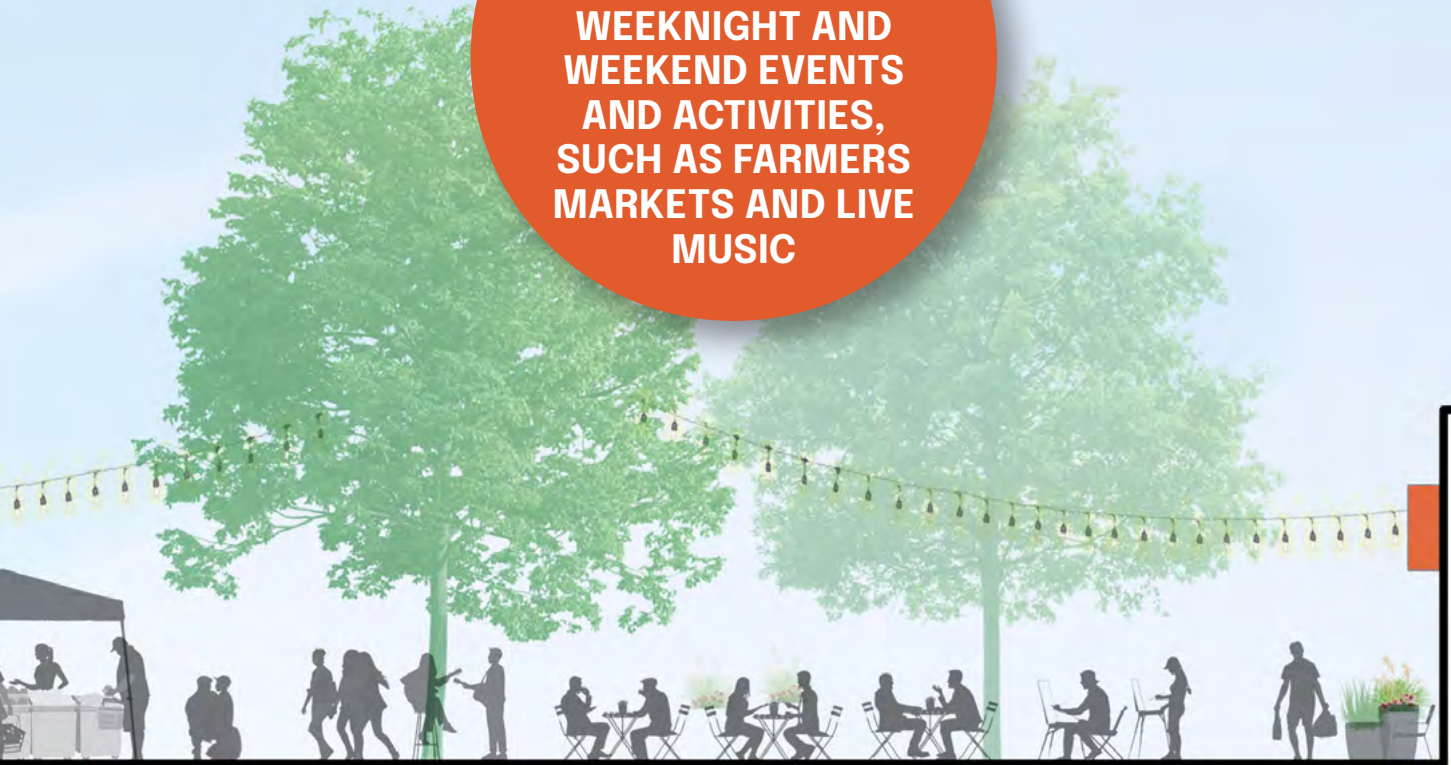


- \* Highlight the existence of the creative economy with art exhibitions and community events, encouraging future investment to stimulate both the arts community and the local economy.

**Providing welcoming and vibrant places of congregation to help nearby businesses thrive.**

- \* Provide outdoor spaces and parks within pockets of the rural village and adjacent to businesses. Creative and fun seating options, landscaping, and performance spaces for small events can draw visitors to spend more time and money within the village.
- \* Connect public spaces, that may be well spaced out, with creative elements such as ground murals or sculptural icons.
- \* Place playgrounds and play elements near businesses to provide a variety of activities across all age groups.

**CONVERT PARKING  
AREAS TO FLEXIBLE  
SPACES FOR HOSTING  
WEEKNIGHT AND  
WEEKEND EVENTS  
AND ACTIVITIES,  
SUCH AS FARMERS  
MARKETS AND LIVE  
MUSIC**



**PARKING AREA & FLEXIBLE SPACE**

**BUSINESS  
PROPERTY**

**Establishing a pedestrian-friendly streetscape that makes movement along the main street more efficient and enjoyable. With large agricultural machinery and motor vehicles still needing to travel along many of the rural village roads, streetscape design considerations should include balancing pedestrian safety with the roadway specifications for industrial-sized vehicles.**

- \* Develop sidewalks and trail systems that allow pedestrians to safely walk and bike around and through the rural village. Design features include widening sidewalks, improving crosswalks, installing landscaping and green buffers between roadways and pathways, and providing adequate signage or wayfinding features.
- \* Consolidate parking areas and refocus the layout and design of streets to the pedestrian experience. The intent is to provide adequate parking for motor vehicles while minimizing the visual impact of parking lots and structures.





“

I would love to see more interactive, free recreational places to linger, learn, and enjoy community art.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

### Natural Areas—Indian Head Rail Trail

Natural areas, such as parks, open space, trails, natural resource management areas, make up about 42 percent of the land area of Charles County. Goals of Charles County’s 2022 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan focus on improving the County’s provision of public parks and recreation amenities and initiatives to preserve lands of high agricultural and natural resource value, with an overarching goal of protecting 50 percent of County land. The County’s strong and long-standing pro-land conservation philosophy has led to the development of a robust existing system of public parks, forests, and other open space lands that provide abundant opportunities for public participation in a wide variety of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. The land, facilities, and programs available for public recreational use in Charles County are managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, the National Park Service, cultural and historic preservation organizations, and private businesses. Private developments in Charles County also play an important role in providing the public with access to the shoreline and water-based recreation opportunities.



Everyone should have the opportunity to connect with parks, open spaces, and natural areas, as they provide multiple benefits to the physical, environmental, social, and economic health of a community. Placemaking, public art, and cultural activities can enrich natural areas and even highlight in some cases the multiple health and environmental benefits that these spaces provide. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance natural areas include:

- \* Strengthening the role of natural areas as an integrated part of comprehensive community development. Not only do natural areas provide a connection to nature which can relieve stress levels, tighten interpersonal relationships, and improve mental health, they are powerful economic drivers, contributing to higher real estate values, tourism, and economic development.



Natural areas are powerful economic drivers, contributing to higher real estate values, tourism, and economic development.



Public art can be incorporated along trails in a variety of ways, such as custom signage and wayfinding at trailheads, and sculptural elements as gateways

- \* Locate new natural areas within and directly adjacent to commercial areas and businesses to stimulate commercial and social activity. Community events and festivals can be located within these natural areas.
- \* Provide public art as play elements on playgrounds, when designed to meet safety requirements.
- \* Build out a trail system across the County, interweaving trails and paths through existing residential and commercial areas to create more efficient walking and bicycling connectivity. Public art can be incorporated along trails in a variety of ways, such as custom signage and wayfinding at mile markers and trailheads, sculptural elements as gateways, and murals along the route.

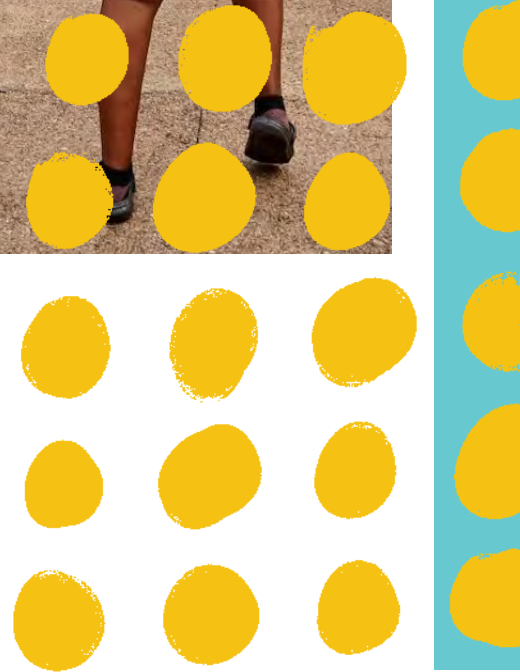
**Highlighting parks as cultural products unto themselves, as important sites for civic gathering and activity.**

- \* Emphasize the history of a natural area using landmark sculptures or informational signage.
- \* Host cultural and historical festivals within community parks, agricultural land, and open spaces.



### Main Streets–Indian Head

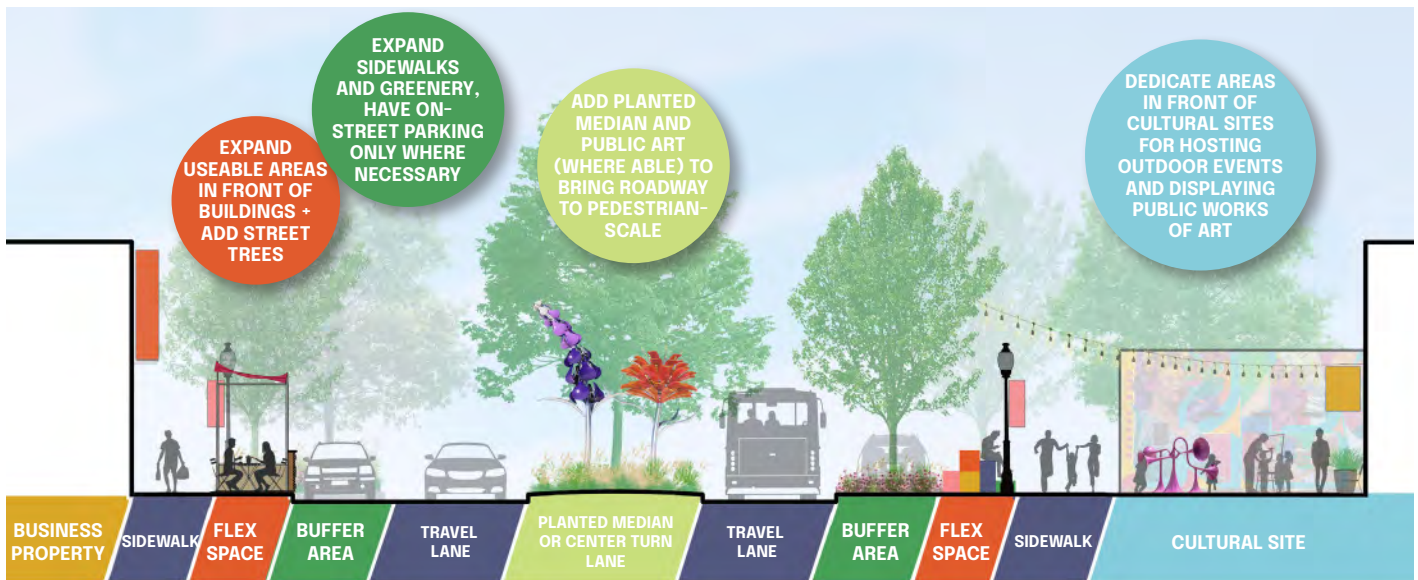
A community's main street (small town commercial hubs and corridors) brings together a variety of land uses, creating an economically self-sustaining ecosystem of retail businesses, personal and professional services, government, entertainment, dining, industry, worship, lodging, and public assembly. Many of Charles County's main streets have distinctive historic buildings that create a strong visual identity for their town or city, and many have at least a handful of successful businesses that can serve as springboards for adding new products, services, businesses, and activities to the area. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance main streets include:





**Creating an enduring and memorable public realm, in which commerce, social interaction, and leisure time activities mix easily in an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, outdoor setting.**

- \* Define the public realm with streets, open spaces, and people places that support walkability and connectivity. It is critical to create a framework that elevates the pedestrian experience through pedestrian-scaled public spaces and wayfinding strategies and signage of local landmarks and public art.
- \* Shape and surround the public realm with buildings that enhance the pedestrian experience and highlight the identity of the town. Existing buildings and structures can be repurposed, with murals and sculptures enhancing and highlighting a building’s architecture and function. Many of Charles County’s main streets feature historic buildings and structures, and any infill development does not necessarily need to match the surrounding iconic building character but it should be carefully integrated with it.
- \* Rehabilitate historic arts and cultural spaces, such as theaters and performance venues, and reactivate them for live performances, film exhibition, and public assembly.



- \* Expand the number and variety of restaurants along the main street.
- \* Collaborate with local artists who are passionate about contributing to their communities for permanently sited pieces of public art or temporary installations. Temporary installations, like pop-up art displays or seasonal sculptures, allow the main street to experiment with art without long-term commitments.
- \* Consolidate parking areas and refocus the layout and design of streets to the pedestrian experience. The intent is to provide adequate parking for motor vehicles while minimizing the visual impact of parking lots and structures, for example, parking structures should be scaled and blended in with the existing main street character.

#### Providing welcoming and vibrant places of congregation to help nearby businesses thrive.

- \* Provide outdoor spaces and parks within pockets of the main street and adjacent to businesses. Creative and fun seating options, landscaping, and performance spaces for small events can draw visitors to spend more time and money along the main street.
- \* Connect public spaces, that may be well spaced out, with creative elements such as ground murals or sculptural icons.
- \* Place playgrounds and play elements near businesses to provide a variety of activities across all age groups.

#### Establishing a pedestrian-friendly streetscape that makes movement along the main street more efficient and enjoyable.

- \* Develop sidewalks that allow pedestrians to safely walk and bike along the main street. Design features include widening sidewalks, improving crosswalks, installing landscaping and green buffers between roadways and pathways, and providing adequate signage or wayfinding features.

“

Public art should be displayed in ways beyond stagnant visuals. There are ways to integrate the performing arts in ways that are not captured in this survey. Opportunities need to be made available that offer space for both.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT



“

There are GOBS of waterways and shorelines (mostly privately owned—it makes no sense that there is so little access to them.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

**Active Waterfronts—Mallow’s Bay, Purse Park, Slavin’s Dock**

There has been, and continues to be, high demand for public recreational opportunities along Charles County’s Potomac, Patuxent, and Wicomico waterfront areas, and a desire in the County to improve and expand the inventory of public boat ramps, and other shoreline facilities. An active waterfront with high-quality, innovative public art that embraces non-traditional venues can activate Charles County’s shoreline and help establish the waterfront as a unique cultural destination for the surrounding area. Strategies for adding public arts and culture to enhance natural areas include:



### Embracing the unique conditions and evolution of the Charles County shoreline.

- \* Encourage development of a living shoreline that evolves with the weather patterns and conditions of the 21st century.
- \* Be a catalyst for education and stewardship by using art and signage to emphasize environmental challenges facing Charles County's waterways.

### Creating new experiences and relationships between people and places along the waterfront.

Place informational signage at historic or cultural locations to highlight the history of a site.

- \* Place wayfinding elements along historic waterfront routes for visitors to learn about and reenact historic journeys.
- \* Place sculptural elements along the shoreline and within the waterways for viewing from either land- or river-sides.
- \* Support public amenities such as beach access, kayak launch, boat ramps, fishing, and swimming to increase waterfront accessibility for the general public.
- \* Allow limited development for light commercial and public amenities –including temporary activations–such as boating companies, touring companies, coffee shops, cafes, restaurants, and equipment stores to increase access and ease of use.



Support public amenities, such as beach access, to increase waterfront accessibility for the general public



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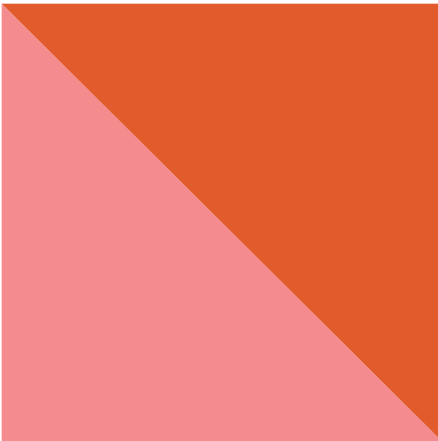
It is critical that there is movement on this initiative. Our young people are growing up in an environment of isolation and poor mental health. We need opportunities for self-expression and the admiration of art to help them explore their inner creativity and appreciation for beauty.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT



# 11

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR FUTURE STUDY**



As the project team pursued researching the arts and cultural landscape of Charles County and developing recommendations, the project team identified some areas of interest where lack of data or opportunity for exploration could prove useful. These areas include:

### **Parking Capacity and Opportunities for Coordination and Consolidation**

A major takeaway from sector conversations, one-on-ones, public meetings, surveys, and site visits was the recognition that Charles County has an abundance of underused parking in many of its commercial and residential areas. This finding presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

As discussed earlier in this Master Plan, walkable neighborhoods are essential to financially sustainable cultural and arts development. Studies consistently show that walkable, mixed-use communities reduce traffic congestion, cost less to maintain, and generate greater local economic activity and social connection. At the same time, excessive or inefficiently distributed parking can fragment walkability, limit infill development, and limit opportunities for creative placemaking. The project team recommend that the County conduct a Parking Utilization, Coordination, and Redevelopment Study to:

- Assess actual parking demand and usage across key commercial, institutional, and cultural districts.
- Identify opportunities for shared or consolidated parking that serves multiple users or destinations.
- Evaluate surplus parking areas that could be repurposed for infill housing, commercial buildings, office spaces, parks, cultural spaces, or public gathering areas.
- Explore policy and design solutions such as improved signage, district-based parking management, and flexible zoning that supports walkable redevelopment.

An excellent regional precedent can be found in Frederick, Maryland, which successfully conducted a downtown parking and wayfinding study that improved efficiency, reduced confusion, and freed up land for new uses and cultural activity. Charles County has a similar opportunity to reimagine public and private parking infrastructure as an asset for walkability, sustainability, lower traffic, and place-based economic development, creating more space for people, creativity and community life.

### **Central Arts Center Facility Location and Feasibility**

One of the major recommendations from this master plan is for the creation of a county-wide arts center. The project team strongly encourages the county to conduct a study that will assess viable locations for an arts center, develop a business and operation model with costs and revenue sources for the future arts center, and prepare a plan of action for the county to eventually develop the arts center.

## Development and Future of 301 Corridor into a “Waldorf Center”

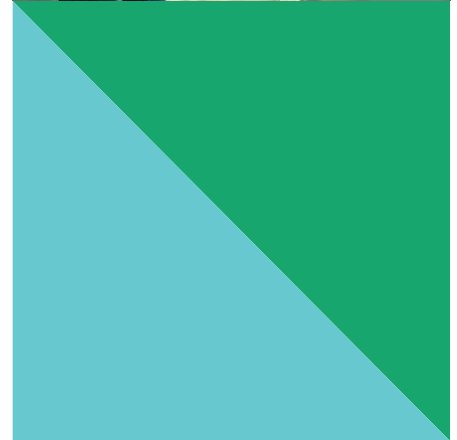
The 301 corridor is the beating heart of Charles County—it is the center of commerce and the greatest population center—and that core is growing. While exciting studies have been conducted along Old Washington Road, our project team was surprised to find that no studies have been conducted for the 301 corridor. **This area is in dire need of coordination and review**—the automobile strip-mall-covered corridor has several properties that are of mixed performance, aging retail and office building stock, growing automobile traffic, and ample parking lots. Moreover, it is directly adjacent to the Old Washington Road redevelopment zone. Historically, arts spaces thrive in pre-existing buildings since those are the ones that are cheapest—and affordable space is key to supporting a burgeoning arts ecosystem. This phenomenon can already be seen in the growing adaptive reuses of the aging Waldorf Mall—a new County-run Sports and Wellness Center for broad recreation is filling the old Sears wing. In the same wing of the mall that went towards old Sears’ entrance, arts spaces are filling vacant mall spaces—an arts school, a paint and sip, and the square— a boutique for local and regional artisans. This type of adaptive reuse is common across the 301 corridor and the project team strongly encourages the county to coordinate these efforts and to explore how to make these artist spaces permanent and how to make these areas into neighborhoods.

## County-Wide Trail and Walking Network Map and Study

Community members consistently express that open space, access to nature, and the County’s agricultural traditions are among the most cherished aspects of life in Charles County. Trails—notably Indian Head Rail Trail—are frequently cited as sources of pride and connection. **These are places where residents and visitors alike experience the County’s unique blend of history, ecology, and recreation. These trails also act as key potential transportation corridors.**

Building on this strong foundation, the County has a major opportunity to create a comprehensive County-wide Trail Network Map and Study. This initiative would identify, preserve, and expand the County’s trail systems, while better connecting them to town centers, neighborhoods, schools, parks, and cultural destinations. The study should also include regional linkages, exploring partnerships with neighboring counties to develop a Tri-County Regional Trail Network that strengthens Southern Maryland’s identity as an accessible, outdoor-oriented region.

In addition to mapping and analysis, the project should recommend strategies for trail preservation, equitable access, and active promotion—including signage, wayfinding, and cultural programming along trails. By linking trails to art, heritage, and recreation, Charles county can celebrate its natural assets while supporting environmental stewardship, reduced car traffic, increased local tourism, and improved community well-being







# 12

**NEXT STEPS &  
IMPLEMENTATION**



**T**he Charles County Public Arts and Cultural Master Plan lays out a comprehensive roadmap for building a vibrant arts ecosystem for the County. Implementation will begin with the creation of core structures and pilot initiatives, followed by growth in programming and investment, and developing into long-term county vibrancy and regional leadership. This work will require collaboration across County departments, community organizations, artists, creative workers, businesses, and residents.

Each phase builds on the last—laying the groundwork for a resilient arts ecosystem that supports artists, creatives, residents, and visitors.

## YEARS 1–2: LAY THE FOUNDATION

The first two years should focus on establishing the infrastructure, partnerships, relationships, and policies needed to support a robust arts ecosystem. By the end of Phase 1, Charles County should have built staff and partner capacity and developed an understanding of programs and policies to launch a more robust series of arts policies.

### Establish Governance Structures and Administrative Capacity

- \* Establish an arts staff with Recreation, Parks, and Tourism to coordinate arts programs and policies
- \* Form the Charles County Arts Council as the County’s nonprofit partner and primary arts service organization.
- \* Establish a Public Art Review Committee to guide review of proposed public art and parklets
- \* Hold regular cross-departmental meetings to align arts planning tourism, economic development, public works, and planning initiatives.

### Pilot Programs and Early Wins

- \* Launch pilot programs Public Art program and Microgrant Program to demonstrate early impact, increase visibility, and build administrative capacity.
- \* Integrate independent listing into THE GUIDE to expand public visibility of arts programming and events.
- \* Test additional pilot programs—including creative workforce training grants, youth micro-grants, capital funding grants, arts ecosystem capacity grant, and parklet grants. Assess demand, and tailor priorities based on available funding and capacity.
- \* Establish a working group for determining next steps on the Central Arts Venue, followed by a feasibility study for a Central Arts Venue that could serve as a regional hub for arts and cultural programming. Make decision for location, scope, and partners of Central Arts Venue.
- \* Host monthly arts sector convenings for creative workers to share resources, strengthen networks, and engage directly with the County on implementation of the Master Plan.
- \* Establish a working group to advance the 7 AM to 11 PM Youth Programming Goal, promoting safe, creative, and engaging opportunities for youth across the County.
- \* Begin developing a cultural asset map and central data system for tracking programs, artists, creatives, and facilities in the county.

### Adopt Policy and Funding Tools

- \* Adopt a Percent for Art Ordinance to dedicate a portion of County capital project budgets to public art.
- \* Update zoning incentives and development policies to encourage the development of arts spaces, establishing density bonuses, by-right artist studios, clarity on building standards, and right-sized parking policies.
- \* Secure State Arts and Entertainment District designation for La Plata to catalyze arts-based economic development.
- \* Develop guidelines for ERA District and establish and support them in Waldorf/ White Plains and Hughesville.



## YEARS 3–5: BUILD MOMENTUM

Grow the arts ecosystem through expanded programming, partnerships, and community engagement. By the end of Phase 2, Charles County will have a visible, active, and connected cultural presence across its urban centers, towns, and rural communities.

### Expand Countywide Programming

- \* Roll out countywide programs including capital funding for art spaces grants, expanded public art projects, and organizational capacity grants.

### Invest in People and Leadership

- \* Launch a pilot Southern Maryland Arts Leadership Fellowship to cultivate leadership in the arts.
- \* Pilot youth-supporting programs including youth microgrant program, youth mentorship program, and paid arts internships that connect students and emerging leaders with professional pathways.

### Strengthen Placemaking and Cultural Infrastructure

- \* Deepen County support for ERA Districts and explore opportunities for additional ERA Districts in growing or under-served areas
- \* Fund Central Arts Venue and develop temporary arts spaces that build momentum towards its construction and development.
- \* Finalize rules and policies for public art, parklets, and creative placemaking programs.
- \* Develop a multi-use trail and walkway network connecting parks, cultural sites, and towns
- \* Support Agricultural and Rural Arts through agri-arts hubs, trails, artist residencies, and farm-based cultural tourism.
- \* Pilot waterfront and shoreline activations through artful gateways, trail maps, amenities, and small-scale cultural programming.

## YEARS 6–10: SUSTAIN AND GROW

Transition from pilot and establishing new programming to program refinement and sustainability so that arts and culture continues to thrive in Charles County. By the end of Phase 3, Charles County will be recognized as regional leaders in the arts and for excellence in quality of life.

### Refine, Evaluate, Refresh

- \* Conduct a five-year Master Plan review and update, assessing progress, measuring impact, and recalibrating goals.
- \* Refine and strengthen grant programs, scaling what works, streamlining processes, and aligning funding priorities with community need.

### Strengthen Partnerships and Resources

- \* Deepen private sector, philanthropic, and regional partnerships to diversify arts funding and grow outside investment.
- \* Develop long-term strategies for arts programming, placemaking, workforce development, and arts tourism based on lessons learned from the first five years of implementation.

### Lead Regionally

- \* Position Charles County as a regional arts leader and collaborator, connecting Southern Maryland's creative sector and acting as the regional gateway to the Washington metropolitan region.
- \* Launch Central Arts Venue and continue County investments in the arts.





“

I moved here from Alexandria, VA almost four years ago. We had galleries to join, exhibits to participate in monthly, workshops and courses to attend at multiple organizations—at times, I have honestly found myself wanting to go back. This effort brings me some hope that change is on the horizon.

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

# 13



# APPENDIX

# REFERENCES

## State and Demographic Data

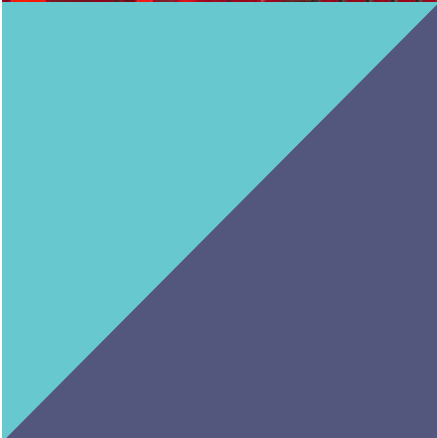
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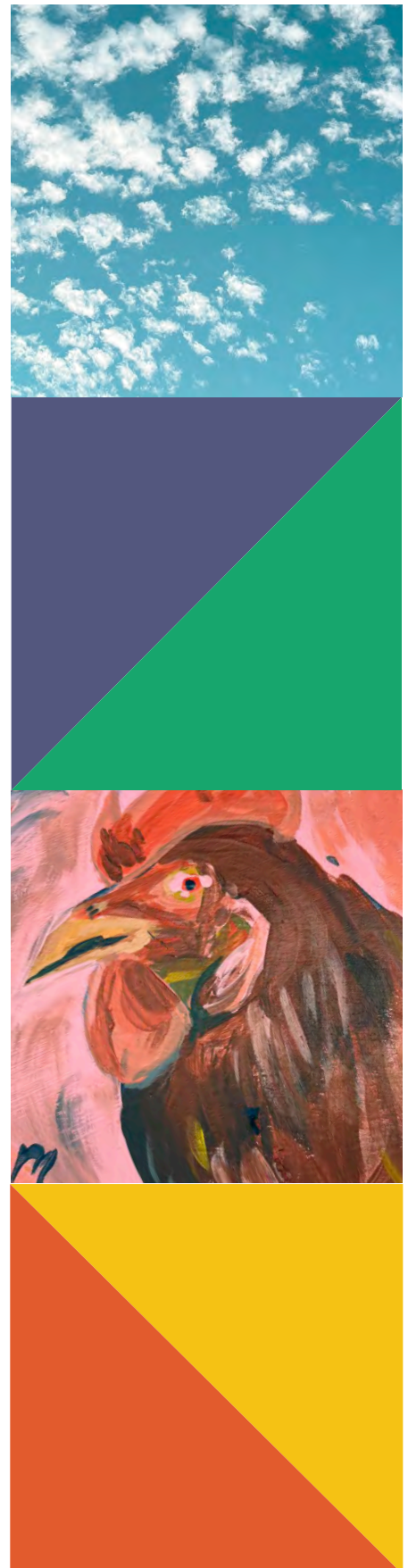
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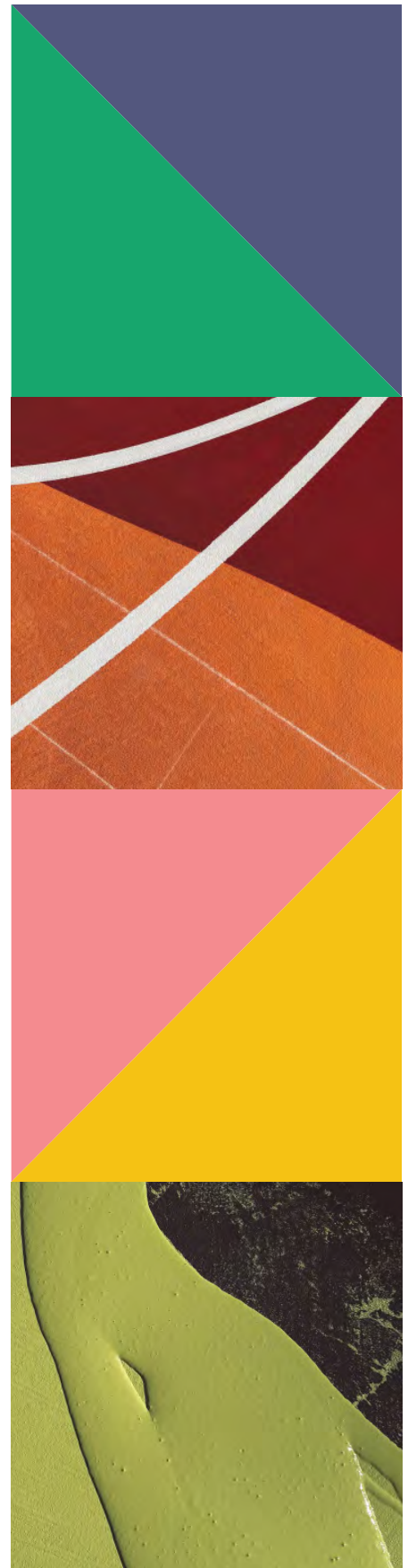




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## Processes and Best Practices

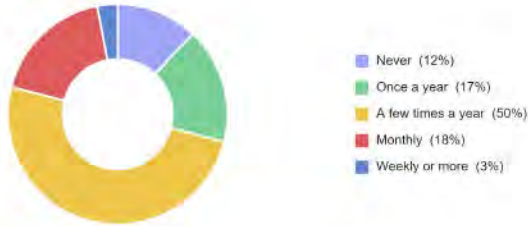
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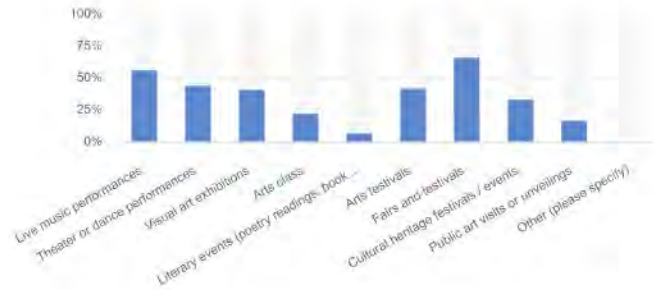
# SURVEY RESULTS

The following pages reflect survey results from 101 respondents.

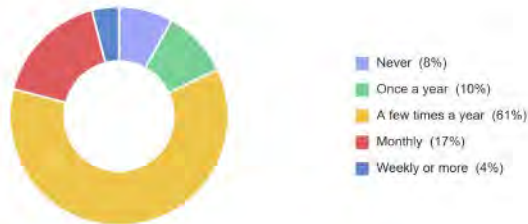
## Frequency of attending arts and cultural events in Charles County



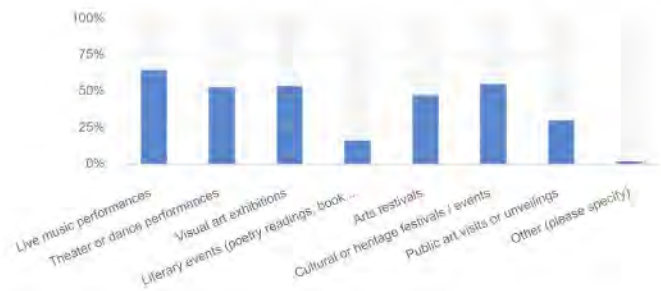
## In the past year, which arts and cultural festivals activities in Charles County have you attended? (select all that apply)



## Frequency of attending art and cultural events outside of Charles County?



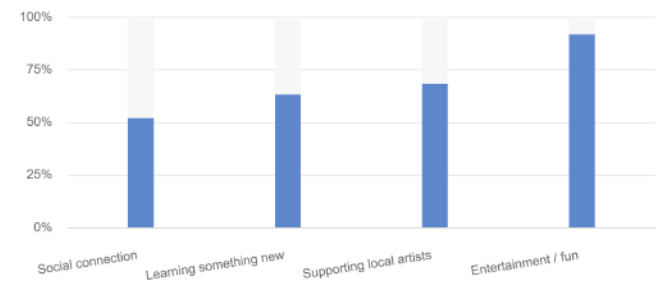
## In the past year, which arts and cultural activities outside of Charles County have you attended? (select all that apply)



## Are you involved in any arts organizations?



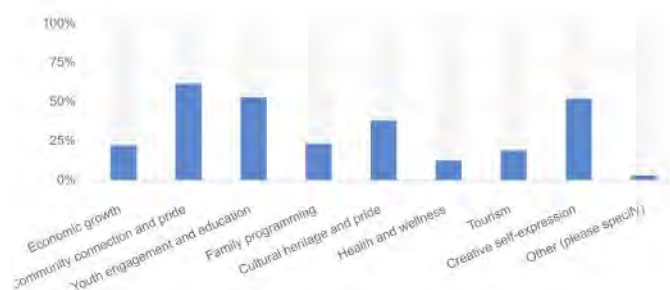
## What motivates you to participate in arts and cultural events? (select all that apply)



## Are there enough spaces for arts and cultural activities in Charles County?

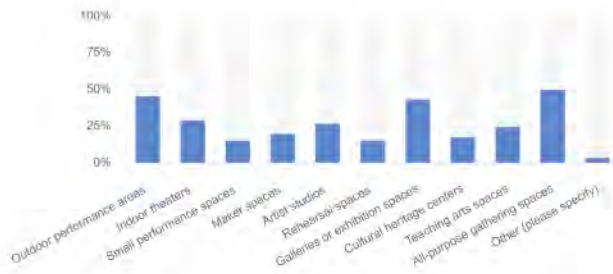


## Which benefits of arts and culture are most important to you? (select top 3 benefits)



# SURVEY RESULTS

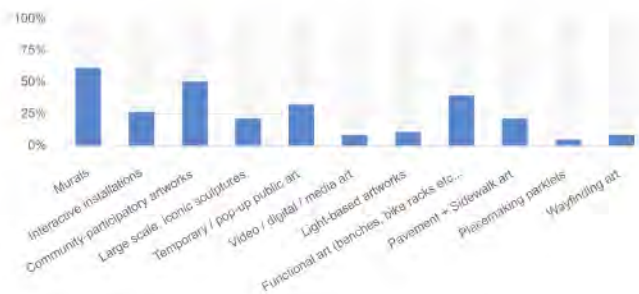
## What types of spaces are most needed? (select top 3)



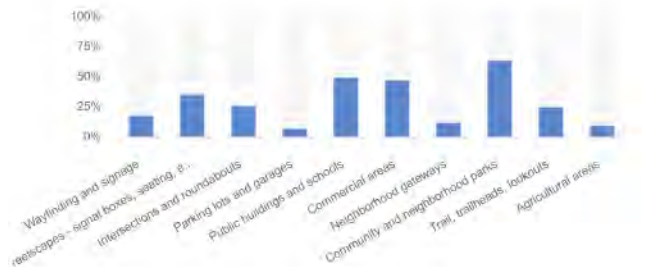
## Policy priorities - Which would you consider your top priorities? (select top 3)



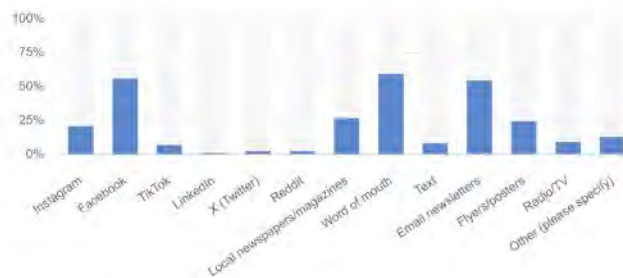
## Type of public art preferred (select top 3)



## Preferred locations for public art (select top 3)



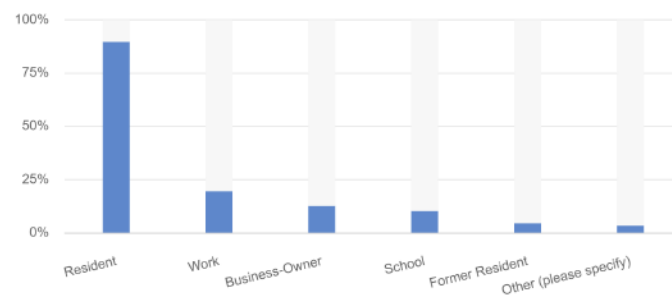
## How do you hear about local and regional arts and cultural events and programming? (select all that apply)



## Would you be interested in supporting the arts and culture in Charles County, and having somebody reach out about getting more involved?



## What is your relationship with Charles County? (select all that apply)



## Please select your age range:

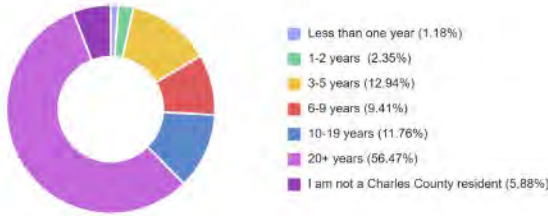


# SURVEY RESULTS

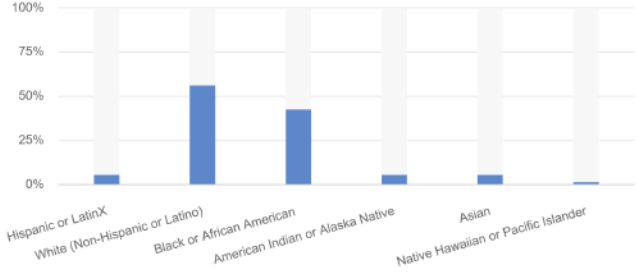
Do you own or rent your home?



How long have you lived in Charles County?



Please choose one or more races/ethnicities that you consider yourself to be (check all that apply)



LOVE BIG

