



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Rick Harcum, Chief Administrative Officer

December 11, 2020

Dear Council President Keegan-Ayer and Council Members,

I am pleased to present the annual report for 2020 along with the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which will be formally presented to the County Council on December 15, 2020.

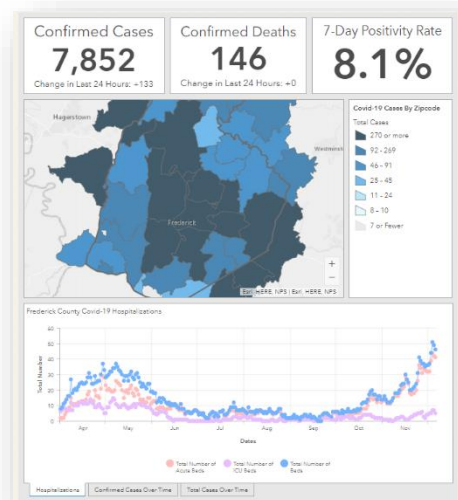
One of the fundamental responsibilities of county government is to ensure the health and welfare of our residents. In 2020, our world changed as a new and unprecedented challenge – the coronavirus health pandemic – made our responsibility to protect health and well-being prominent and clear.

Even on the darkest days of this pandemic, our community came together to take care of each other and there were signs of hope and optimism for the better days ahead. Frederick County is truly a special place, filled with extraordinary people doing extraordinary things to help make our community thrive. As County Executive, I am proud of our resilience and our resolve to weather this pandemic while keeping our eye and our focus on a path toward a bright future.

HEALTH

We know good health is essential for a high quality of life. My primary responsibility as County Executive is to protect public health and welfare; it is all about taking care of people. During the pandemic, my administration's focus has been on health issues and providing clear, reliable communication of critically needed information to people:

- Frederick County stood up a COVID-19 dashboard so the public can readily access current information and statistics about cases of the virus, hospitalizations, and more. Statistics are updated daily at 10 a.m. and additional information is sent by text or email to more than 8,000 Frederick County residents.
- Regular, sometimes daily, briefings occurred with public health officials and key county staff, especially during the height of the pandemic.
- The County purchased personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect our healthcare workers, public safety employees, and to support




Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

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community need. This was no easy task because of shortages in the supply chain. To protect our investment, we took action and purchased warehouse space to safely and efficiently store PPE in a climate-controlled environment, to be prepared for an uptick in new cases.

- The Health Department created a nursing home team to support efforts to control the spread and take care of patients. County agencies began testing residents at various locations around the county, performing contact tracing, and working to ensure we had enough PPE for healthcare workers and first responders, as well as nursing home staff.

Frederick County Government workers continue to provide essential services to our community, though sometimes in a new or modified way:

- Residents can count on fire and EMS, law enforcement, 9-1-1 and all our public safety partners to be on the job. Our Division of Fire and Rescue Services responded to 30,632 calls for service through December 7, 2020.
- Senior Services employees continue delivering groceries to seniors, with help from Transit and other division staff. This year we have seen a huge demand for our senior nutrition programs, including Meals on Wheels and Groceries for Seniors. Since April, we distributed approximately 28 tons of food. Demand for meals has increased by more than 600%.
- Transit drivers shuttle patients to dialysis and get essential workers to their jobs and have done so throughout the pandemic.
- Library staff offer creative virtual programming, such as story times, science projects and genealogy. Digital content expanded to meet demand, and curbside pickup of materials remains popular. In fact, since curbside pickup started in June, patrons checked out over 254,500 items using this service. Digital checkouts have been available all year long, with more than 500,000 digital checkouts.
- County parks have stayed open to visitors throughout the pandemic so people can get out to walk, hike or bike to take care of their physical and mental health. Our park staff created special one-day programs to safely engage kids and families. Residents also can take advantage of the new Parkside Dining Program, with participating restaurants delivering food to our parks for outside dining.

- Planning & Permitting never closed or stopped accepting plans and permit applications. With online permitting and virtual inspections, these dedicated staff have helped to keep our economy moving without missing a beat.
- Our Interagency Information Technologies Division kept everyone working remotely and virtually. This transition was seamless. IIT staff also supported all the online portals and applications for grants for rental assistance, Jump Start grants for businesses and farm operations, and child care grants.
- Staff at our landfill kept operations open throughout the pandemic and managed unbelievable crowds of people bringing things to the landfill after cleaning out their garages or basements during quarantine.

Many non-profit organizations, foundations, service organizations and individuals have collaborated to provide food, school supplies, masks, and more to people in need. The response of our community partners to the pandemic has been amazing. In particular, two hardworking partners have spearheaded the community response to the pandemic:

- Frederick Health Hospital (FHH) doctors, nurses, lab technicians, respiratory therapists, cleaning staff, and many others have played a critical role in the community response to COVID-19. FHH has provided a true community service by providing drive-through testing seven days a week for months and continuing today. Testing is critical to identify, treat, and isolate people with the virus. FHH, along with the Health Department, has played a critical role in coordinating testing and managing outbreaks in nursing homes, caring and comforting people who are ill and afraid, and helping patients who are isolated and alone in the hospital connect with their families.
- Our own Frederick County Health Department, under the leadership of Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, has managed the community response to COVID-19 in many ways. The Health Department created a nursing home team to go into our nursing homes to assess infection control and support the care for patients with COVID. They have provided consistent reliable information and direction to the public, and expanded pop-up testing in the rural areas of the county, at churches, and other community locations. The Health Department also has been preparing for the distribution of vaccines to residents.



We are grateful to our federal partners for providing federal coronavirus relief funding, which helps fund our public health response to the virus, as well as supports people and businesses to

recover. Attachment 1 provides a summary of the Federal CARES funding received and expended, to date.

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunities abound in Frederick County, with our outstanding schools, safe communities, and great places to recreate and enjoy nature.

Schools

We know that outstanding public education ensures our economic prosperity by delivering a well-educated workforce. Frederick County is committed to keeping the promise of public education and to making sure that education remains the path to opportunity for all of our students, no matter their background or where they live.

While schools are operating a bit differently right now with the shift to virtual learning to keep our students safe and healthy, we know our teachers, educators, administrators, and parents are working hard to adapt and help our children be successful.

This year, Frederick County Government supported our school system with funding above maintenance of effort in the FY21 budget, to support teacher salaries and to honor contractual obligations. We know students will need additional help to catch up when it is safe to return all students to the classroom to address academic gaps and mental health impacts caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Frederick County Government provided an additional \$2 million from our general operating budget to expand virtual school capabilities and provide students with Chromebooks and hotspots for internet access. Recently, Frederick County Government and The City of Frederick announced a partnership to provide more than \$3 million in relief to Frederick County Public Schools to help cover costs related to food distributions; technology and other costs associated with virtual and in-person learning; as well as safety measures such as personal protective equipment and enhanced air filters. Funding for the grant came from the Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund award.

Our school construction program continues on schedule. With the completion of Urbana Elementary School and the opening of the new Sugarloaf Elementary School, over 1,000 new elementary school seats have been added in the Urbana area since 2014. Four other school construction projects are under construction to solve school overcrowding:

- A brand new Blue Heron Elementary School and an addition to Oakdale Middle School will provide greatly needed school capacity to address overcrowding in the Oakdale and Lake Linganore areas.

- A brand new Rock Creek School will open in the spring of 2021 at its new location in Walkersville.
- Work will begin immediately at Rock Creek School's prior location for our largest-ever elementary school project - a new 1,000-seat Waverley Elementary School, funded in this year's capital budget.
- In Brunswick, the long-awaited replacement elementary school will begin construction this year. This school will add capacity and replace an open classroom school with the latest in school space and technology.



Safe Places

Living and working in a safe community ensures opportunity for success. We live in a safe place because of the dedication and hard work of the men and women in all our public safety agencies, including law enforcement and corrections in the Sheriff's Office; firefighters and EMTs in the Division of Fire and Rescue; and the people who are on the front line for our first responders at 9-1-1.



To meet the needs of a growing community, we graduated three firefighter recruit classes in 2020. In September, Frederick County was awarded a \$5.6 million SAFER grant. The funds will allow us to fully staff the new Northgate Fire Station and expand daytime staffing to 24/7 coverage in Thurmont. Once these 22 new positions are filled, the Division of Fire & Rescue Service will have 495 operational career firefighters. This is the

third time the county has received a SAFER grant, adding over 100 new firefighters to keep us safe.

We look forward with great anticipation to the long awaited Northgate Fire Station, located just west of the Monocacy Boulevard and US 15 interchange. This station, which recently broke ground, will provide greatly needed access to the northwest side of the City of Frederick and surrounding area and is expected to handle more than 3,000 calls annually.

Parks

Opportunities abound in Frederick County parks as a record number of people have turned to our parks for respite and recreation during the health pandemic. Just in time to meet this demand has been the opening of two major park projects:

- Othello Regional Park is a beautiful new park filled with local history and amazing amenities in the southwestern portion of Frederick County. Visitors to this park will find sports fields, a synthetic turf field complex complete with lights, picnic shelters, a large playground, and trails. Othello is the first county park to include features for the equestrian community.
- We also unveiled a new phase at the Utica District Park. Utica is Frederick County's largest park, with nearly 250 acres. New additions this year include an incredible new tournament complex, an accessible playground, trails, and picnic areas.



Our parks add to the quality of life in Frederick County, and provide opportunity for people of all ages to recreate and enjoy the great outdoors.

Environment

Keeping and protecting what we love about Frederick County – our rich history, our cultural amenities, and our agricultural heritage - is important as our community grows. Notable accomplishments this year include:

- The adoption of a stronger Forest Resource Ordinance to prevent forest loss to new development and to require protection of our sensitive environmental features and historic resources from future development. Frederick County is leading the way in protecting our forests and environmental features, and we are mitigating the expense associated with pollution and cleaning our waterways from poorly planned development.
- Frederick County has permanently preserved more than 68,000 acres toward our long-standing goal to permanently preserve 100,000 acres. Frederick County is a national leader when it comes to being stewards of our rich farmlands, and agriculture is one of our oldest and largest industries in Frederick County. A top priority is to ensure a legacy of agriculture for future generations. Agriculture generates an economic impact of nearly \$1.5 billion annually. Preserving large areas of farmland supports the long-term viability of our agricultural community and is important to how we manage growth in our county.
- Early in 2020, before the pandemic, the County Council passed an ordinance to significantly increase our investment in agricultural land preservation programs through a \$1 increase in the recordation fee. This dedicated funding stream will help preserve

agricultural land sooner and help keep our farms productive and economically viable. Two new grant programs also were created:

- A new Agricultural Diversification Grant Fund will help farmers transition to new value-added products and to diversify their agricultural businesses.
- A Rural Historic Preservation Grant program will help farmers and other property owners preserve their historic farm bank barns, homesteads, and other important rural historic features.

In combination, these initiatives will leave a lasting legacy of agriculture and preserve our rich history for future generations.

PROSPERITY

Seizing our opportunities and delivering on a high quality of life ensures our community's prosperity. We know that having a job is fundamental to having a high quality of life. We can be proud that Frederick County is on the cutting edge, leading the way with creativity and innovation.

Our economy is diverse and the underlying fundamental strength of our economy is attracting new businesses and business expansions, even during a pandemic. In the past year, more than 1,200 new jobs were announced by 30 different businesses that expanded or located in Frederick County. They represent a wide range of industries – from Jerk 'N Jive Caribbean Kitchen, which opened a second restaurant; Kemp Protein, a bioscience company that doubled in size this year; and the Common Market, which hired 70 new people to staff its new grocery store on 7th Street.

The biggest addition of new jobs will be the high-tech robotic customer fulfillment center for Kroger and Ocado. Kroger and Ocado broke ground this summer on their facility. Kroger is one of the nation's largest grocery retailers. This new location will add up to 600 new jobs, including many high-tech jobs associated with robotics, and investing tens of millions of dollars into Frederick County's economy.



The Kite Pharma facility, which is under construction in Urbana, was named the top economic development project in the state for 2020 by the Maryland Economic Development Association.

The Office of Economic Development is hard at work supporting our existing businesses, recognizing our legacy businesses, and working with new businesses that are looking to open in

our community. While the coronavirus has clearly hurt our business sector, particularly our

tourism and hospitality industries, it is clear that Frederick County will once again thrive and prosper.

EQUITY

We know there is work to be done to ensure that everyone shares in our community's prosperity and is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. The path to ensure fairness, justice and equality for all, remains a work in progress. We can and must do better to ensure basic fairness, opportunity and justice for all people no matter their race, ethnicity, or social-economic background.

In June, thousands of people of all ages, races and backgrounds stood united in a peaceful call for equity provides hope for real and meaningful change. This demand for racial equity and social justice change has to be met with action. Together with our community, Frederick County Government is committed to work toward a truly equitable and just community and ensure that every person enjoys the same opportunities to flourish. The time is now to bring people together to do the hard work to advance meaningful solutions.



- More than a dozen small group listening sessions have been held to hear the experiences of people who have been and continue to feel victimized by racism and injustices, as well as to hear their thoughts, ideas, criticisms and suggestions for action. Top priorities identified through the listening sessions include opportunity and equity in public education; teaching and learning our history; economic empowerment and support for minority businesses including opportunities for procurement with government; addressing health disparities; and police reform.
- A Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer has been hired to lead and guide our efforts within Frederick County Government and beyond.
- An Equity Leadership Team, made up of citizens, county staff, and community stakeholders, has been appointed to help shape a strategy and identify priorities. The leadership team will engage the public to ensure an open and transparent process.
- Frederick County Government has created an internal diversity committee with the goal to improve our hiring practices and ensure a culture of inclusion.
- The Office of Economic Development launched a new Minority Business Executive Development program and recently graduated the first class of Minority Business

Executives. This program builds on the skills and networking opportunities learned through the County's Minority Business Vision program, and is held in partnership with Mount St. Mary's University and Hood College.

- Plans are in place to expand the Mobile Crisis Unit to operate 24/7. The mobile crisis unit will deploy social services and mental health professionals with law enforcement, or separately, to better serve and assist people who call for help and are facing a crisis. The goal is to achieve better outcomes for people by bringing the right resources and support to people facing crisis.

STRONG FINANCES

We have been able to build schools, parks, fire stations, and more without raising taxes. Frederick County Government lives within our means. Because we are fiscally responsible and the county is well managed, we are positioned to get more bang for our dollar. Our long-term conservative approach to budgeting and managing county government meets the highest financial standards, according to an audit of the Consolidated Annual Financial Report.

The COVID-19 public health crisis has had a major impact on all of us this year, but the future financial impacts from the virus are uncertain. We anticipate increased unemployment and business closures will have an impact on our future revenues. At the same time, we have industry sectors that have prospered during the pandemic and economic development activity remains robust. Frederick County remains in a strong financial position. Frederick County has planned and built up our reserves. This forward thinking provides Frederick County with the financial means to maintain our full range of services, and to support and help our constituents during the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic.

Financial highlights:

- The budget reflects modest growth estimates as it takes into consideration the impact on revenue sources due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy as a whole.
- Property and income tax rates remained constant for Fiscal Years 2016, 2017, 2018 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- The local unemployment rate is 6.3% as of October 2020, and is well below the State rate of 6.9% and the U.S. rate of 7.7% for the same period, reflecting a strong, diverse economy and significant improvement from higher unemployment rates seen earlier in the year.
- Funding for Frederick County Public Schools exceeded Maintenance of Effort by \$7 million to maintain the County's funding commitment to education.


The year's accomplishments and activities are outlined in a video presentation of the State of the County address. The video can be viewed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38onK1VEKoA&feature=youtu.be>

As we continue to face the challenges of the coronavirus, which has brought economic and health related hardships for many, we find comfort and hope for better days ahead. We are in this together. I am confident that we will come out of the pandemic stronger and deliver on our promise for a brighter future for everyone.

Delivering on HOPE – Health, Opportunity, Prosperity and Equity – is why the state of Frederick County is strong, and why our community is one of the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,


Jan H. Gardner
Frederick County Executive

Frederick County, Maryland
Coronavirus Relief Fund
Report as of December 4, 2020

Coronavirus Relief Funding Received 45,288,950.00

Category	Program	Total CRF Budget	Program Expense to Date	CRF Budget Remaining
Public Health				
	Frederick Health Hospital		140,000.00	
	Testing		629,280.87	
	Personal Protective Equipment		5,500,000.00	
	Contact Tracing/Case Investigation		1,168,952.91	
	Community Messaging/ Navigation		605,000.00	
	Behavioral Health Provider Support		1,019,100.00	
	Other-Public Health		303,807.51	
	Public Health Total		9,366,141.29	
County Essential Services				
	Hazard Pay		3,928,934.01	
	Public Health and Safety Salaries		5,731,916.12	
	Overtime & COVID Sick/Families First Act		809,907.79	
	Personal Protective Equipment		564,546.83	
	Wastewater Testing		182,883.00	
	Clifton, Larsen, Allen-CRF Consulting		250,000.00	
	Line of Credit Expense		232,756.88	
	Board of Education Assistance		2,933,458.00	
	Nursing Facilities		1,060,814.00	
	Other County COVID-19		1,464,689.17	
	County Essential Services Total		17,159,905.80	
Volunteer Fire & Rescue			985,741.00	
Community Support				
	Water & Sewer Utility Assistance		313,000.00	
	RCEHN- Homeless Services- Shelter		1,200,000.00	
	MD Food Bank		358,700.00	
	RCEHN- Rental Assistance		3,030,000.00	
	MD Legal Aid- Eviction Prevention		81,536.00	
	Child Care Provider Assistance		2,043,925.00	
	Clagett Center Shelter		86,732.43	
	Other Community Support		127,043.38	
	Community Support Total		7,240,936.81	
Business Assistance				
	Tourism Council of Frederick County		350,000.00	
	Outdoor Dining Grants		283,500.00	
	Jump Start Grant Program: Farmers (72)		432,000.00	
	Jump Start Grant Program: Micro (498)		1,643,400.00	
	Jump Start Grant Program: Small Business (289)		2,890,000.00	
	Business Assistance Total		5,598,900.00	
Municipalities			4,970,000.00	
	Investment Earnings on CRF		-32,674.90	
Totals		45,288,950.00	45,288,950.00	0.00

2020 Legislation				
Bill Number	Title	Sponsor	Date Adopted	Vote
20-01	Add Binding Arbitration to Collective Bargaining with Fire Service Employees	CM Fitzwater	02-18-2020	6-1
20-02	Revised Electric Lighting District Tax Rates	CM Donald on behalf of CE	03-03-2020	7-0
20-03	Providing Additional Support for Agriculture Preservation by Increasing the Recordation Tax and Reallocating Recordation Tax Revenues	CM Blue, Donald, Hagen, McKay on behalf of CE	03-17-2020	6-1
20-04	Amendments to Chapter 1-21 of the Frederick County Code (Forest Resource Ordinance)	CM Hagen on behalf of CE	Expired	N/A
20-05	Amendments to Chapter 1-19 of the Frederick County Code (Zoning Ordinance)	CM Hagen on behalf of CE	Expired	N/A
20-06	General Obligation Debt Authorization	CM Keegan-Ayer on behalf of CE	06-09-2020	6-1
20-07	Amendments to Chapter 1-19 of the Frederick County Code (Zoning Ordinance)	CM Hagen, McKay on behalf of CE	08-04-2020	7-0
20-08	Amendments to Chapter 1-21 of the Frederick County Code (Forest Resource Ordinance)	CM Hagen on behalf of CE	07-21-2020	7-0
20-09	Establishing a Domestic Violence Coordinating Council	CM Fitzwater	07-21-2020	7-0
20-10	Revisions to Requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	CM Keegan-Ayer on behalf of CE	07-21-2020	7-0
20-11	Revisions to the Frederick County Employees Retirement Plan	CM Keegan-Ayer on behalf of CE	07-21-2020	7-0
20-12	Amend and Update Chapter 1-22 Article I, Development Impact Fee Procedures and Requirements, and Article II, Public School Development Impact Fee, of the Frederick County Code	CM Donald on behalf of CE	09-15-2020 *Vetoed by CE	4-3
20-13	Revisions to Clarify and Update the Impact Fee Exemption for Farm Lots	CM Keegan-Ayer on behalf of CE	09-01-2020	7-0
20-14	Modifying Waterbody Buffers	CM Donald, Hagen	09-15-2020	5-2

20-15	Farmers Market in the Zoning Ordinance	CM McKay, Donald, Hagen	09-29-2020	7-0
20-16	Use of the School Construction Fee Option In Certain Circumstances to Encourage Completion of Construction of that Development	CM McKay on behalf of CE	11-17-2020	7-0
20-17	Personnel Rule Change			

2020 Resolutions

- Sale of Surplus Real Property Resolution No. 20-01
- Support of the Maryland Department of Commerce MD Economic Development – Project Chesapeake Resolution No. 20-02
- Catoctin View Senior Apartments Affordable Housing PILOT - Resolution No. 20-03
- 2019 Triennial Update - Resolution No. 20-04
- Fiscal Year 2021 TransIT Grant Application - Resolution No. 20-05
- General Obligation Refunding Bond Series 2022A - Resolution No. 20-06
- General Obligation Refunding Bond Series 2020A - Resolution No. 20-07
- Amending Resolution No. 20-02 replace Project Chesapeake with The Kroger Co. - Resolution No. 20-08
- Tax Levy for July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 - Resolution No. 20-09
- Fall 2019 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-19-11 - Resolution No. 20-10
- Fall 2019 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-19-12 - Resolution No. 20-11
- Fall 2019 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-19-13 - Resolution No. 20-12
- Fall 2019 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-19-14 - Resolution No. 20-13
- Department of Housing and Community Development Block Grant - Resolution No. 20-14
- Department of Housing and Community Development Block Grant Round 1 - Resolution No. 20-15
- Urbana CDA Bond Refunding - Resolution No. 20-16
- Jefferson Technology Park Refunding Bond - Resolution No. 20-17
- Charter Amendment – Borrowing Limitations - Resolution No. 20-18
- Charter Amendment – Non-Interference - Resolution No. 20-19
- Charter Amendment – County Council – Vacancies - Resolution No. 20-20
- Charter Amendment – County Executive – Vacancies - Resolution No. 20-21
- Climate Emergency - Resolution No. 20-22
- Proposed Amendment to the 2018-2037 FC Solid Waste Management Plan - Resolution No. 20-23
- Amendment to Sharpe Square Pilot - Resolution No. 20-24

2020 Ordinances

- Petition to Close and Abandon Old Links Bridge Road - Ordinance No. 20-01-001
- Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Budget and Appropriations - Ordinance No. 20-02-002
- Issuance of Frederick County, Maryland Special Obligation Refunding Bonds - Ordinance No. 20-03-003
- Petition to Alter Portions of Meadow Road and Old National Pike - Ordinance No. 20-04-004

2020 Board of Health Resolutions

01-2020

02-2020