



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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County Executive

News Release

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State of the County Address Highlights **Good Life in Frederick County** *Executive Gardner Outlines Accomplishments*

FREDERICK, Md. – In her final State of the County Address, Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner touted a long list of accomplishments achieved during the county's first-ever administration as a charter government. From standing up a new form of government, to creating a shared community vision through Livable Frederick, the eight years of Executive Gardner's tenure have delivered opportunity, prosperity, and a good life for the people of Frederick County.

"The state of Frederick County is exceptional," Executive Gardner said. "It has been my honor and privilege to serve as Frederick County's first County Executive. Working together with our partners, we have created a strong community and delivered outstanding schools, safe communities, and a thriving economy with a diversity of jobs."

Key achievements highlighted in her address included:

- **Restored trust in County Government.** The County's ethics laws were strengthened to hold elected officials accountable. Frederick County is the only county in the state with an independently appointed Ethics Commission. All initiatives have included robust public processes to ensure open government.
- **Secured a bright future through Livable Frederick.** The award-winning Livable Frederick plan created a shared community vision for the future and a roadmap to protect and preserve Frederick County's unique sense of belonging.
- **Advanced a legacy of agriculture.** Over 73,000 acres of farmland are currently preserved with the annual investment in agricultural preservation programs doubled to protect the County's best farmland for future generations. The County created agricultural innovation grants to keep the industry economically viable and has invested in the next generation of farmers.
- **Supported record-breaking job growth and a strong, diverse economy:**
 - **Created ROOT**, a unique eco-system of economic development and community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, higher education, and a business incubator to grow new ideas, innovation, and jobs to help businesses take root and grow in Frederick County.
 - **Attracted new employers.** Frederick County experienced record-breaking job growth and welcomed new large employers with Kite Pharma, Quantum Loophole, Ellume, and Kroger-Ocado locating here. During the height of the pandemic, more than 100 businesses opened or expanded their operations, including many in the county's Main Street communities.

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- **Made a record investment in public education** - \$640 million beyond required funding
 - **In the classroom:** Supported having the best teachers and staff in the classroom with a record \$113 million operating budget investment over mandated Maintenance of Effort funding.
 - **In technology:** Provided almost \$3 million targeted to technology needs so every student could access a Chrome Book and a hot spot.
 - **In school construction:** School construction projects totaled \$525 million over eight years.
- **Built new schools so every child has a seat in a classroom.** Completed the new Frederick High School; five elementary schools, including Urbana, Butterfly Ridge, Sugarloaf, Blue Heron, and Waverley; an addition to Oakdale Middle; and a brand new Rock Creek School. The first-ever limited renovation project was undertaken at Thurmont Elementary. Another nine school construction projects are under design and funded construction, including Brunswick Elementary.
- **Ensured Frederick County leads the way with innovation in public education.** The LYNX program provides students with new experiences through work, the arts, and trades. The Early College partnership with Frederick Community College allows students to earn associate's degrees at the same time as they earn their high school diploma.
- **Supported libraries.** New branch libraries opened in Walkersville and Myersville, and construction has begun on a new Middletown library that will be six times bigger than the existing branch. With the help of the Fry Family, the Point of Rocks library was renovated and expanded.
- **Addressed public health crisis head on.**
 - **Created hope for recovery from addiction.** The County established a continuum of care for addiction and behavioral health by: adding a detox facility, so residents no longer have to leave Frederick County for treatment; starting a Mobile Crisis Response team to bring services to people where they are; and securing federal funds to establish a crisis stabilization center.
 - **Rose to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic to protect public health and help the community recover.** The health department along with county agencies opened mass vaccination clinics, Covid-19 testing, and contact tracing. Community partners collaborated with the County to provide 83 food distribution points and over \$17 million in rental assistance to people in need. County divisions managed millions of dollars in grants to businesses, farms, and nonprofits and others to support economic recovery.
- **Advanced diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging**
 - **Worked to solve health disparities.** A temporary satellite office of the Frederick County Health Department on the Golden Mile transitioned to a permanent Equity Office to ensure underrepresented populations have access to health services and screenings. A community advisory board is helping to address maternal health disparities.
 - **Advanced equity in County Government.** Launched an Office of Equity and Inclusion and appointed an Equity and Inclusion advisory committee to ensure an ongoing community voice. Started the hard work to ensure the county workforce better reflects the community's racial and ethnic makeup. Established the EmPower Program to support minority businesses and develop minority business leaders, and created an employer toolkit so all businesses can improve their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
 - **Adapted playgrounds and created adaptive recreational programs** to engage children and people of all abilities.

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Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

- **Jump-started park construction.** New and expanded parks include Othello Regional Park, Point of Rocks Community Commons, Utica District Park, and Middletown Park.
- **Ensured safe communities:**
 - Added over 200 firefighter/EMTs to transition to tactical staffing in the Division of Fire and Rescue to ensure response times and a high level of service to people in need.
 - Added call takers at 9-1-1 communications to meet growing call volume and technology to prepare for Next Generation 9-1-1, which will include video and expanded translation services.
 - Added staffing in law enforcement and corrections as well as body cameras for sheriff deputies as mandated by the state.
 - Constructed the new Middletown and Northgate Fire Stations; improved the burn building at the Public Safety Training Center; achieved accreditation for the paramedic training program; and began construction on a new medical unit at the Adult Detention Center.
- **Improved access to transportation.** The County's award-winning transit system eliminated fares and added all-electric buses. The zero-emission buses are powered by the sun, with a large solar array in a closed part of the landfill generating enough electricity to power the bus charging stations and six county facilities. Thanks to strong advocacy, Frederick County will receive \$167 million to wide U.S. 15 through the City of Frederick, the largest new project in the state's Consolidated Transportation Program.
- **Implemented all the recommendations of the *Seniors First Initiative*.** Executive Gardner created a new Senior Services Division to empower, educate and engage seniors. Expanded programming is available at physical senior centers, a new virtual senior center, and in hybrid formats.
- **Maintained County ownership of Citizens Care & Rehabilitation Center and Montevue.** Frederick County continues its long-standing tradition of taking care of our own and has kept our promise to our seniors. Services are pivoting to help more seniors age in place.
- **Protected taxpayers and delivered fiscal responsibility.** Property tax rates remain unchanged over the entirety of the Gardner Administration. Income tax rates were reduced for households with earned income of \$100,000 or less. The Senior Tax Credit was expanded, and a Veterans Tax Credit was adopted. Strong fiscal management led to Frederick County earning three AAA bond ratings, which saved taxpayers millions.

Executive Gardner's final State of the County Address can be viewed in its entirety at FrederickCountyMD.gov/FCGtv.

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