



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jan H. Gardner  
County Executive

*Rick Harcum, Chief Administrative Officer*

November 28, 2022

Dear Council President Keegan-Ayer and Council Members,

Frederick County Government and charter government have delivered for the residents of Frederick County. We have worked together to ensure great schools, safe communities, a thriving economy and outstanding services. Our entire community should be proud of what we have accomplished together, and it has been my pleasure to work with each of you.

For the past eight years, my goal as the first County Executive has been simple – to make life better for people and to leave our county in a better place than I found it. I have worked hard to deliver a good life and great place to live.

I am pleased to present the annual report for 2022, along with the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), which will be formally presented to the County Council on November 29, 2022.

#### **Livable Frederick**

Delivering a good life rests on the foundation of good planning. Livable Frederick is our award-winning plan that is based on a shared community vision of how we want to live and work in the future. The plan guides our actions and decisions across all of county government, including how we invest our limited taxpayer dollars.

In 2022, the County Council adopted the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Plan. The administration also introduced a draft plan, with a robust public process, of the South Frederick Corridors Plan to consider redevelopment of the county's primary business corridor.

I am confident that Livable Frederick will prove its success over time and will maintain the unique character of Frederick County, preserve and protect our rich history and environmental features, and ensure that Frederick County is the best place to enjoy a good life.

#### **Agriculture**



Frederick County leads the state in agriculture. To ensure a bright future of agriculture for generations we must do three things: preserve our best farmland; keep the agricultural industry economically viable; and support the next generation of farmers.

We significantly accelerated our agriculture preservation efforts by more than doubling our annual investment in our agriculture preservation programs. With over 73,000 acres of farmland preserved, we are nearing our goal of preserving 100,000 acres and expect to reach this goal by early 2030, a full 10 years sooner than originally planned.

*Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future*

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To support economic vitality, we doubled our investment in our Agriculture Innovation Grants, which allows individual farmers to decide how best to add value and diversify their operations.

Preserving our rich agricultural heritage and its economic vitality secures a bright future for all of Frederick County and helps our agricultural community and all of us to live a good life.

### **Jobs**

Frederick County is a great place to do business. During my administration, Frederick County has experienced historic, record-breaking job growth, with employers bringing thousands of new jobs across a wide variety of industry sectors.

We have welcomed large companies like Kite Pharma in Urbana, Quantum Loophole at the former Eastalco property, and Ellume and Kroger/Ocado to our MD 85 business corridor. Even during the height of the pandemic more than 100 businesses opened or expanded their operations, including Thermo-Fisher, Astra Zeneca, Flying Dog, Costco, and Frederick Health, as well as many small businesses. Frederick County now leads the state in job growth.

Over the last year businesses have continued to start, locate and expand in Frederick County, accounting for over 900,000 additional square feet of commercial space and 370 new jobs. In a recent Business Appreciation Week survey, over 60% of existing businesses indicated plans to expand in the next two years. In addition to expansions, we welcome companies such as Aligned Data Centers to the area. Aligned has signed an agreement to acquire land, power, and water at the Quantum Loophole site in a 460,000-square-foot facility.

In Frederick County, passion drives progress, and within the last year we have added new award-winning resources for our business community. The MadeInFrederickMD.com campaign was recognized as a champion of manufacturing by the Regional Manufacturing Institute, and Biotech Boot Camp received a "Silver Award" at International Economic Development Council's annual conference.

Frederick County is a great place to do business!

### **Education**

Keeping the promise of public education is essential to delivering on the promise of a good life. I am extremely proud of my administration's record investment in public education, providing more than \$35M in FY22 above Maintenance of Effort. Over the past eight years, we have invested \$133 M above the minimum required by law. This record investment supports student success by retaining the best teachers and school staff in our classrooms.

I am proud of our targeted investment in school technology. This year, I announced an additional \$1.6M to ensure every elementary student has access to their own device. Our targeted



investment over the past eight years means that there is a device and a hot spot for every Frederick County Public School student that needs one – a big step toward ensuring equity.

Combined with over \$525M in Capital funding over my terms to accelerate school construction, that's a total of \$640M ABOVE required funding. This investment in education is an investment in economic development and ensures our long-term economic prosperity.

Working hand in hand with our school system, we have constructed a record number of new schools, school additions and renovation projects. In FY22, we added nine school projects in the capital program. A new replacement Brunswick Elementary School is well under construction, and two additional new schools are under design and funded for construction at Valley Elementary and Green Valley Elementary. We have begun to set aside money in anticipation of needed improvements to the school campus in Middletown and the replacement of all three school buildings.

## **Health**

A good life depends on having good health, and Frederick County Government works to ensure a healthy community by providing safe drinking water, clean air, safe roads, trash disposal and public health. Two major health issues challenged our nation during my time as County Executive: addiction and substance misuse and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like much of our nation, Frederick County has worked to tackle the growing issue of substance misuse and addiction. Frederick County developed a robust continuum of care for behavioral health and substance misuse. Earlier in my administration, we incentivized the launch of a detox center and added Mobile Community Healthcare. This year we completed the continuum of care.

- One of our most successful initiatives has been expanding our Mobile Crisis Team to provide service 24/7. In 2022, the team served over 1,000 individuals, bringing social workers and behavioral health specialists to respond to crisis situations, often with law enforcement. These specialists help to de-escalate situations, provide resources, and connect people to long-term treatment and provide the follow up that people need. Mobile crisis saves lives by averting suicides, connecting people struggling with addiction to resources and outpatient services, and addressing mental and behavioral health.
- A crisis stabilization center is the last piece of our behavioral health continuum of care. The County received federal funds to establish a crisis stabilization center and will direct funding from our share of the national opioid settlement to help support the ongoing operational cost. Construction will begin soon with Phase I of the Crisis Stabilization Center to be open summer of 2023.



## **Equity**

The pandemic shined a bright light on health disparities, and economic inequities in our community that were exacerbated by the pandemic. We have taken action to address these inequities:

- The testing clinic on the Golden Mile transitioned this year to serve as our first Health Department Equity Office to provide access to health department services to underserved populations. Services include Medicaid enrollment, WIC, and information sessions and outreach on Maternal Health and Wellness and Adult Chronic Disease Prevention for diabetes and colon cancer. The Health Department has also initiated a grass-roots effort to identify needs and develop actions to address maternal health disparities.
- I am proud to have invested in the Heritage Center being developed by AARCH, Frederick's African American historical society, so future generations will better understand our history.
- To ensure fairness and opportunity in county procurement, we recently initiated a disparity study. We want Frederick County Government to lead by example and to be a great place to do business or work for everyone.
- After creating an Office of Equity and Inclusion last year, in 2022 we established an Equity and Inclusion advisory committee to ensure an ongoing community voice. We have hired bilingual public outreach staff in our Communications Department to support community outreach efforts, and to make sure county services are known, available, and utilized by everyone who needs them.



- Our Office of Economic Development has advanced the EmPower Program to support our minority businesses and to develop minority business leaders. This year, they offered an Employer Toolkit to help employers do a self-assessment of their workplace culture and to improve their Diversity Equity and Inclusion efforts.

- We have worked hard to create a welcoming, affirming environment and that includes spaces in our parks for people with different abilities. As we build and update parks, we are including adaptive playgrounds

and equipment. The recreation center at the Rock Creek School is the County's first adaptive recreation program space, making sports and other fun programs available to children and people of different ability levels. As the signs at all our County parks note, everyone is welcome here!

We can all be proud of our efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in county government and beyond. We are not truly successful until everyone has the opportunity and ability to live the good life in Frederick County.

## Libraries

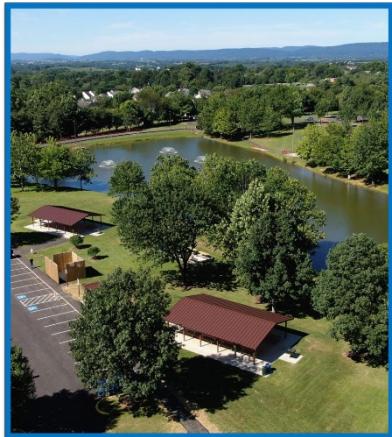
Our public libraries are gems and provide amazing programming and opportunities for life-long learning – from our youngest community members who enjoy fabulous story times and interactive programs to our older adults participating in book clubs and history events. With online options, curbside pickup, free Wi-Fi, and great programming, our libraries are an essential part of our community.

We continue to build beautiful new branch libraries that recognize local history and meet community needs. During my time as County Executive, we have opened new branch libraries in Walkersville and Myersville and we have renovated and expanded existing library space and services in Point of Rocks with the support of the Fry family. This year, we broke ground on a bigger and better Middletown Library, which had been talked about for at least 20 years, and we are continuing to engage the community in discussions for a new West Frederick City branch library.



## Parks

There truly is something for everyone in our parks – walking and biking trails, nature centers, fishing, youth and adult sports, history, summer camps, exercise classes and all kinds of special events, including the Egg Roll, The Great Pumpkin Patch, and Bark in the Park.



I am proud to have jump-started park construction during my administration in response to community demand. Our beautiful, well-maintained parks are loved by residents. Last year, we had over 3.7 million visitors to our county parks. That's an amazing number of people enjoying the good life in a county park!

- This year we opened the newly refurbished Middletown Park, including a new amphitheater, playgrounds, pavilions, pond features, park signage, sports fields, and more. A new skate board park/pump track is included in the park's renovation and is expected to begin construction in spring 2023.
- Phase II of Old National Pike District Park, located between New Market and Mt. Airy, will add picnic shelters, basketball courts, a new tennis and pickle ball area, and will convert two existing fields to turf fields. The project is currently pending construction, with Phase II of the construction funded in FY23. The project should be completed 12-18 months after construction begins.
- The Richard W. Kanode Farm Park begins design in the coming year. Mr. Kanode gifted his farm to the county to create a unique park that will reflect on our rich agricultural heritage and include more passive activities, such as trails, camping, fishing, and more.
- We will preserve a piece of our Frederick County history with a project to expand and update the Rose Hill Manor Park Carriage Museum. In addition, we are enhancing the display that focuses on our County's agricultural heritage and equipment.

## Public Safety

Living the good life includes feeling safe in our communities. Frederick County is a safe community due to good planning and the hard work and dedication of our public safety employees. That doesn't happen by chance. I am proud to support our public safety agencies with the training, equipment and staffing needed to keep us safe.

- In June of 2022, we opened the new Northgate Fire Station, improving service to a large geographic area so we can reach people faster when they need assistance.
- During the course of my administration, we added more than 200 firefighter/EMTs to the ranks of the Division of Fire & Rescue Services, and boosted their budget by over 82%, with the greatest change within the Division of Fire and Rescue Services being the transition to 24/7 tactical staffing.
- In 2022, we were awarded another SAFER Grant, which will allow Frederick County to add an additional 32 uniformed firefighter/EMTs to our Division of Fire & Rescue Services. This will bring the total number of career firefighter positions to 572.
- We recently graduated the 14th recruit class in 8 years – a remarkable achievement! We have added firefighters/EMTs to our ranks to improve the safety of our firefighters who work every day in dangerous conditions; and, to improve our response times and deliver a higher level of service to our citizens.
- Over the past eight years, 44 positions have been added in the 9-1-1 center to meet the needs of our growing community. Our Division of Emergency Management is using innovative technologies to improve the call center's efficiency, effectiveness, and access. Frederick County was one of the first in the nation to accept text messages to 9-1-1. Our staff is leading the way as Maryland counties move to new technologies, like accepting videos and adding advanced translation capabilities.
- Law enforcement, courthouse security and corrections are provided by the Frederick County Sheriff's Office. Our sheriff deputies work hand in hand with municipal law enforcement agencies in the City of Frederick, Brunswick, Thurmont, and Mt. Airy. Currently, the Frederick County Sheriff's Office is in the process of implementing body worn cameras. A new 15,000-square-foot medical unit is under construction at the Adult Detention Center, which will allow for better care for incarcerated individuals, isolation for contagious disease, as well as provide medical, dental and mental health treatment areas.
- In 2022, and in compliance with State law, we appointed the first ever Police Accountability Board.



## Transportation

People want to get across town, or wherever they need to go, on safe roadways. People are looking for options, including living and working in walkable communities, taking transit, and utilizing bikeways and trails for recreation and to get to work. A high quality of life requires easy access to jobs, food, and health care.



- In 2022, we kept our award-winning transit services fare free to reduce barriers and to ensure that everyone can get to the places they need to go.
- I was very excited to learn that Frederick County will receive \$167M in federal infrastructure funding to improve and widen US 15 through the City of Frederick. This was the largest new project funded in the state of Maryland's recently released Consolidated Transportation Plan.

## Financial Strength

Frederick County is blessed with a strong, diverse economy, generating revenue for Frederick County's budget. Conservative budgeting and financial policies have allowed Frederick County to build our reserves to record levels of 9%. This forward thinking has given Frederick County the financial means to maintain our full range of services, support our schools, boost our local economy and help our constituents.

- The General Fund budget is based on existing tax rates for both County property taxes (\$1.06) and income taxes (2.96%). Property tax rates have remained constant for Fiscal Years 2016-2023. There have been no tax rate increases during my two terms of office.
- This year, the County reduced income taxes by 7% for households earning \$100,000 or less in taxable income and expanded the senior tax credit and adopted a veteran's tax credit.
- Because of our diverse business community and its resilience, as of August 2022, the average unemployment rate for the County was 3.9 percent, while the average unemployment rate for the State of Maryland was 4.4 percent.
- The FY23 budget makes a record investment in public education with \$35M in new funding for our K-12 public schools. This investment includes \$33.4M in ongoing operating dollars to ensure the best teachers and staff in our classrooms, to support recovery from the pandemic, and to deliver positive educational outcomes for students.
- The County's AAA ratings from Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service, and S&P Global Ratings reflect ongoing and consistent growth, primarily in the commercial sector; increased employment; tax base growth; strong, well-embedded and sustainable management practices coupled with established fiscal policies; and a low debt burden. The County is preparing to visit the bond rating agencies in early 2023.

## **CONCLUSION**

Charter government has delivered open, honest and responsive government; engaging community stakeholders and the public to develop long-term innovative plans like Livable Frederick; and delivered our shared vision of a good life and the best place to call home.

We have outstanding public education, with unparalleled innovation. Our economy is diverse and thriving, so people can pursue their dreams and work where they live. We live in a safe community. And we share a vision for a bright future with opportunities for everyone.

Most of all, we live in a caring community that works together and rises to meet our collective challenges with spirit and grace, energy and commitment. 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=tP8deweFhHY>

It has been my honor to serve as Frederick's first County Executive. Together we have created a strong community and a great place to call home. We are living the good life!

Sincerely,



Jan H. Gardner  
Frederick County Executive

Attachments

## 2022 Legislation

<u>Bill Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Date Adopted</u>	<u>Vote</u>
21-12	Amend and Update Development Impact Fee and Public School Development Impact Fee	CM Donald	12-21-2021	7-0
21-13	Amend Elderly Individuals & Uniformed Service Members Property Tax	CMs McKay, Dacey, Hagen and Blue	01-18-2022	4-3
22-01	Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure for Certain New Residential Structures	Council President Keegan-Ayer	03-15-2022	5-2
22-02	Amendments to Chapter 1-7 of the Frederick County Code (Electrical Ordinance)	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	03-01-2022	7-0
22-03	Amendments to Ch. 1-19 of FCG (Zoning Ord.) - Update Certain Definitions Related to Agric. Uses	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	03-01-2022	7-0
22-04	Amendments to Ch. 1-6 of FCG (Building Code) - Create a New Exception for and to Define a Farm Stand	CMs Blue and Donald (on behalf of CE)	03-01-2022	7-0
22-05	Amendments to Ch. 1-19 of FCG (Zoning Ord.) - Add Critical Digital Infrastructure as a New Use	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	03-15-2022	7-0
22-06	Amendments to Ch. 1-19 of FCG (Zoning Ord.) - Revise and Clarify the Notification Requirements for Comprehensive Zonings and Rezonings	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	03-15-2022	7-0
22-07	Revisions to the Frederick County Employees Retirement Plan	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	04-19-2022	7-0
22-08	Revisions to the Frederick County Uniformed Employees Retirement Plan	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	04-19-2022	7-0
22-09	Establish a Police Accountability Board	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	04-19-2022	7-0
22-10	Amend the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance	CMs McKay and Hagen	Withdrawn	
22-11	Increase General Fund Mandated Reserve (Committed General Fund Balance)	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	06-21-2022	6-1
22-12	Facilities for Functions	CM Fitzwater	07-26-2022	7-0
22-13	Revisions to Section 1-16-106 of the Frederick County Code Subdivision Regulations - Water and Sewer Facilities	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	09-06-2022	7-0

22-14	Amendment to the Ethics Law	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	09-06-2022	7-0
22-15	Amendment to the Fred. Co. Employees Retirement Plan - Add One Retiree Member	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	09-20-2022	6-0-1
22-16	Amendment to the Fred. Co. Uniformed Employees Retirement Plan - Add One Retiree Member	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	09-20-2022	6-0-1
22-17	Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance	CM McKay	10-25-2022	6-1
22-18	Common Driveways	CMs Fitzwater and Blue	10-25-2022	6-1
22-19	General Obligation Bond Authorization	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	7-0
22-20	Amendments to the Frederick County Code Ch. 1-2 - Administration - Procurement and Contracting	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	7-0
22-21	Amendments to the Fred. Co. MD Code of Ordinances	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	7-0
22-22	Amend Frederick County Employees Retirement Plan - Cost of Living Adjustment	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	7-0
22-23	Amend Frederick County Uniformed Employees Retirement Plan - Cost of Living Adjustment	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	7-0
22-24	Private Park in the Resource Conservation Zoning District	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	10-25-2022	6-1
22-25	Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay District	Council President Keegan-Ayer (on behalf of CE)	Postponed	
22-26	Impact Fee Exemption for Relocating a Home	CM McKay	10-25-2022	7-0
22-27	Requirements to Build Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) and Changes to Sale or Rentals	CM Fitzwater	10-18-2022	4-2-1
22-28	Density Bonuses for Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)	CM Fitzwater	10-18-2022	5-1-1
22-29	Exemption for Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) From Development Impact Fees	CM Fitzwater	10-18-2022	4-2-1

**2022 Resolutions**

- Maryland Transit FY 23 Resolution and Grant Summary Form - Resolution No. 22-01
- Sale Of Surplus Real Property - Resolution No. 22-02
- Out of Sequence WS Amendment Case 21-28 - Resolution No. 22-03
- Declaration of Surplus Real Property Dearbought Parcel A - Resolution No. 22-04
- Hood College 2022 Economic Development Revenue Bonds - Resolution No. 22-05
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-27 - Resolution No. 22-06
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-29 - Resolution No. 22-07
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-30 - Resolution No. 22-08
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-31 - Resolution No. 22-09
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-32 - Resolution No. 22-10
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-33 - Resolution No. 22-11
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-34 - Resolution No. 22-12
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-35 - Resolution No. 22-13
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-36 - Resolution No. 22-14
- Fall 2021 Water and Sewer Amendment WS-21-37 - Resolution No. 22-15
- Installment Purchase Agreement - Gerwig - Resolution No. 22-16
- Installment Purchase Agreement - Bidle - Resolution No. 22-17
- Installment Purchase Agreement - Poole - Resolution No. 22-18
- Installment Purchase Agreement - Miller - Resolution No. 22-19
- Hazard Mitigation Plan - Resolution No. 22-20
- Amendment of 2009 Loan from Maryland Water Quality Financing - Resolution No. 22-21
- South Street Center - Senior Pilot - Resolution No. 22-22
- South Street Center - Family Pilot - Resolution No. 22-23
- Tax Levy for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 - Resolution No. 22-24
- Application for Funding from the Maryland CDBG - Resolution No. 22-25
- Crestwood Apartments Four LLC - Resolution No. 22-26
- Crestwood Apartments Nine LLC - Resolution No. 22-27
- Charter Amendment - County Council - Salary Resolution No. 22-28
- Charter Amendment - Right to Organize Resolution No. 22-29
- Declaration of Surplus Real Property-430 Pine Avenue – Resolution 22-30
- Hogan (Crestwood Manor) DRRA Amendment – Resolution 22-31
- Amending Resolution No. 20-02 - Resolution No. 22-32
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-01 - Resolution 22-33
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-02 - Resolution 22-34
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-04 - Resolution 22-35
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-05 - Resolution 22-36
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-06 - Resolution 22-37
- Spring 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-08 - Resolution 22-38

- Sugarloaf Extension Resolution 22-39
- Summer 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-09 - Resolution 22-40
- Summer 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-10 - Resolution 22-41
- Summer 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-11 - Resolution 22-42
- Summer 2022 Water and Sewer Amendments - Case WS-22-12 - Resolution 22-43
- Summer 2022 Water and Sewer Amendment - Case WS-22-13 - Resolutions 22-44
- Declaration of Real Property - 300 Scotty's Bus Lane - Resolution No. 22-45
- Adoption of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan - Resolution No. 22-46

#### **2022 Ordinances**

- Amendment to the Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance of FC, MD - Ordinance No. 22-01-001
- Frederick County Income Tax Rate Brackets - Ordinance No. 22-02-002
- Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance of Frederick Co. MD - Ordinance No. 22-03-003
- Park Place at Ballenger Creek PUD Rezoning Case R-21-01 - Ordinance No. 22-04-004
- Kenel Farm MXD Rezoning Case R-21-01 - Ordinance No. 22-05-005
- Extension of Certain Development Approval Periods and Deadlines Ordinance 22-06-006
- Comprehensive Zoning for the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Man. Plan - Ordinance No. 22-07-007