



ROGER D. EATON

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
& COUNTY COMPTROLLER

PRESERVING THE PUBLIC TRUST

AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024
CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FL

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Message from Roger D. Eaton, Your Clerk and County Comptroller



The Clerk's office consistently introduces new services, enhances existing ones, and garners praise from the community for the dedication and hard work of our staff. As your Charlotte County Clerk of Court, I take great pride in the skill and commitment demonstrated by my team every single day.

In 2024, I was awarded the Pacesetter Award by the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce. While this prestigious recognition is awarded to individuals who exemplify excellence within their community and the highest standards, the Pacesetter Award recognition is truly awarded to our entire office rather than a single person. Since taking office, I have been a strong advocate for a team-first approach, continually emphasizing the value of teamwork, communication, and mutual trust. This commitment ensures our office continues to serve with compassion, expertise, and efficiency in support of our community.

This past year, our office introduced an innovative, streamlined permit application process that enables electronic recording of commencement notices directly into our Official Records from the county building permit department's system. This advancement saves time and expense for county offices, local contractors, and all Charlotte County citizens.

As we continue enhancing and expanding the services we provide local citizens, we remain steadfastly committed to doing so without increasing our budget. Fiscal responsibility is a top priority in our office. For the eighth consecutive year, we have successfully reduced our budget. As a result, in 2024 our office returned over \$1 million in taxpayer funds to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners, despite the challenges of rising staff healthcare costs and higher Florida Retirement System rates.

Since I took office in 2017, your Clerk's office has returned more than \$5.9 million in taxpayer funds to the Board of County Commissioners, all while expanding the services we offer to the citizens of Charlotte County. Our excellent staff, coupled with the implementation of cutting-edge technology systems, has allowed us to achieve both cost savings and enhanced services for everyone.

The Comptroller Division of your Clerk's Office is responsible for managing all investments for Charlotte County funds. Our financial team works diligently to ensure the safety, liquidity, and profitability of these investments. In the past fiscal year, we successfully managed a Charlotte County investment portfolio that earned \$47.4 million. Since I took office in 2017, the funds overseen by your Clerk's office have earned more than \$120 million.

For the 38th consecutive year, your Clerk's office has been honored with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association. This prestigious award is the highest recognition in the field of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Achieving it reflects the outstanding efforts of our Comptroller Division staff.

In 2024, our office not only excelled in the workplace but also remained dedicated to supporting our community after work hours. We continue to partner with the Animal Welfare League (AWL) through our "Eaton Eats" program, which collects food donations for AWL. Our Jury Pay Donation Program allows jurors to donate their jury pay to the Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (CARE) instead of receiving their same-day cash pay. This past year, we also raised funds for Virginia B. Andes and My Autism Connection, Inc. Additionally, in honor of Veterans Day throughout the month of November, we offered FREE passport photos and certified copies to all veterans and active military personnel.

While your Clerk's office set a high bar for excellence in 2024, room for further improvements always remain. Rather than resting on our laurels, we will continue to innovate, modernize, provide additional, more convenient services for Charlotte County -- all while remaining fiscally responsible toward our taxpayers.

For more information about our office, and to access all of our services, please visit us at CharlotteClerk.com.

Sincerely,

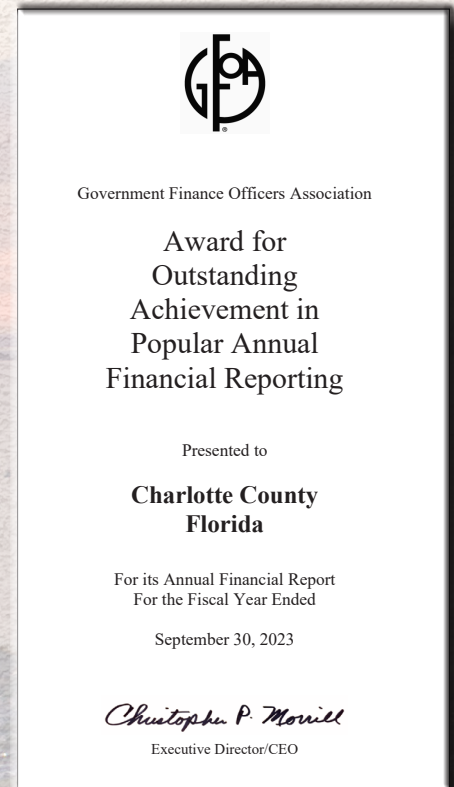
A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger".

Certificate of Achievement

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to Charlotte County, Florida for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal.

An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. This is the third year Charlotte County, Florida has received a Popular Award. We believe our current report continues to conform to the Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and we are submitting it to GFOA to determine its eligibility for another Award.

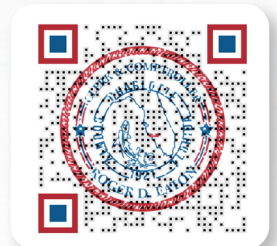


About This Report

"Preserving the Public Trust" is an overview of the finances of Charlotte County's government which includes the Board of County Commissioners, Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector.

Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court & County Comptroller, Roger D. Eaton, is proud to present the Charlotte County Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. The purpose of the PAFR is to provide a user-friendly summary of the financial position of Charlotte County, Florida and other interesting information for citizens who want a better understanding of the County's finances. The financial information in the PAFR is derived from Charlotte County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The ACFR details the County's financial position and operating activities each fiscal year presented in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

The numbers in the PAFR come from an audited source but they are presented in a summarized, unaudited non-GAAP format that is more accessible to the public. Citizens who wish to review the audited, full disclosure statements can refer to Charlotte County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report on Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court & County Comptroller's website at http://charlotteclerk.com/Reports/ACFR_2024.pdf



About the Clerk & Comptroller

The Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's Office is responsible for safeguarding public records and public funds. The Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller is independently elected and accountable to Charlotte County residents by performing several functions.

CONSTITUTIONAL & STATUTORY DUTIES

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



The Clerk safeguards all court records. The Clerk processes all court documents, attends court hearings, and manages submitted evidence. The Clerk is also responsible for collecting and dispersing all court related monies and manages jurors.

- **41,482 Cases Filed**
- **43,350 Jurors Summoned**

COUNTY RECORDER



The Clerk is responsible for processing and maintaining all official public records, such as mortgages, deeds, wills, marriage licenses, and liens. Citizens may also apply for their U.S. passport at the Clerk's office.

- **132,492 Official Records Recorded**
- **5,405 Passports Processed**
- **1,196 Marriage Licenses Issued**

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND TREASURER



As Comptroller, the Clerk maintains the County's financial records and prepares the necessary financial statements. Additional roles as Comptroller include investing of the county's funds, monitoring its debt, receiving and reporting the County's revenues and the processing and pre-audit of all County invoices prior to payment. The Clerk performs internal audits and investigates cases of fraud, waste and abuse of the operations and financial records of Charlotte County and also audits all court appointed guardianship cases.

- **\$1.1B Tax Dollars Managed & Invested**
- **\$440.1M Invoices Audited & Paid**
- **\$79.8M Grant Funds Tracked & Monitored**
- **498 Guardianship Audits**

CLERK TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



The Clerk prepares and maintains public records of Commission meetings and serves as custodian of county resolutions, ordinances, and contracts. The Clerk also administers the Value Adjustment Board for citizens wishing to contest their assessed property value.

- **66 Board Meetings Attended**
- **623 Value Adjustment Board Petitions Filed**

Constitutional Officers



ROGER D. EATON
CLERK & COMPTROLLER

- Responsible for safeguarding public records and public funds as Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller



PAUL L. POLK
PROPERTY APPRAISER

- Determine and assess all property value within the county



BILL PRUMMELL
SHERIFF

- To serve and protect our community



LEAH VALENTI
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

- Designated to administer elections and voter registration within the county



VICKIE POTTS
TAX COLLECTOR

- Responsible for the collection of local and state taxes

Board of County Commissioners



JOE TISEO

DISTRICT 5



STEPHEN R. DEUTSCH

DISTRICT 4



KEN DOHERTY

DISTRICT 1



CHRISTOPHER CONSTANCE

DISTRICT 2

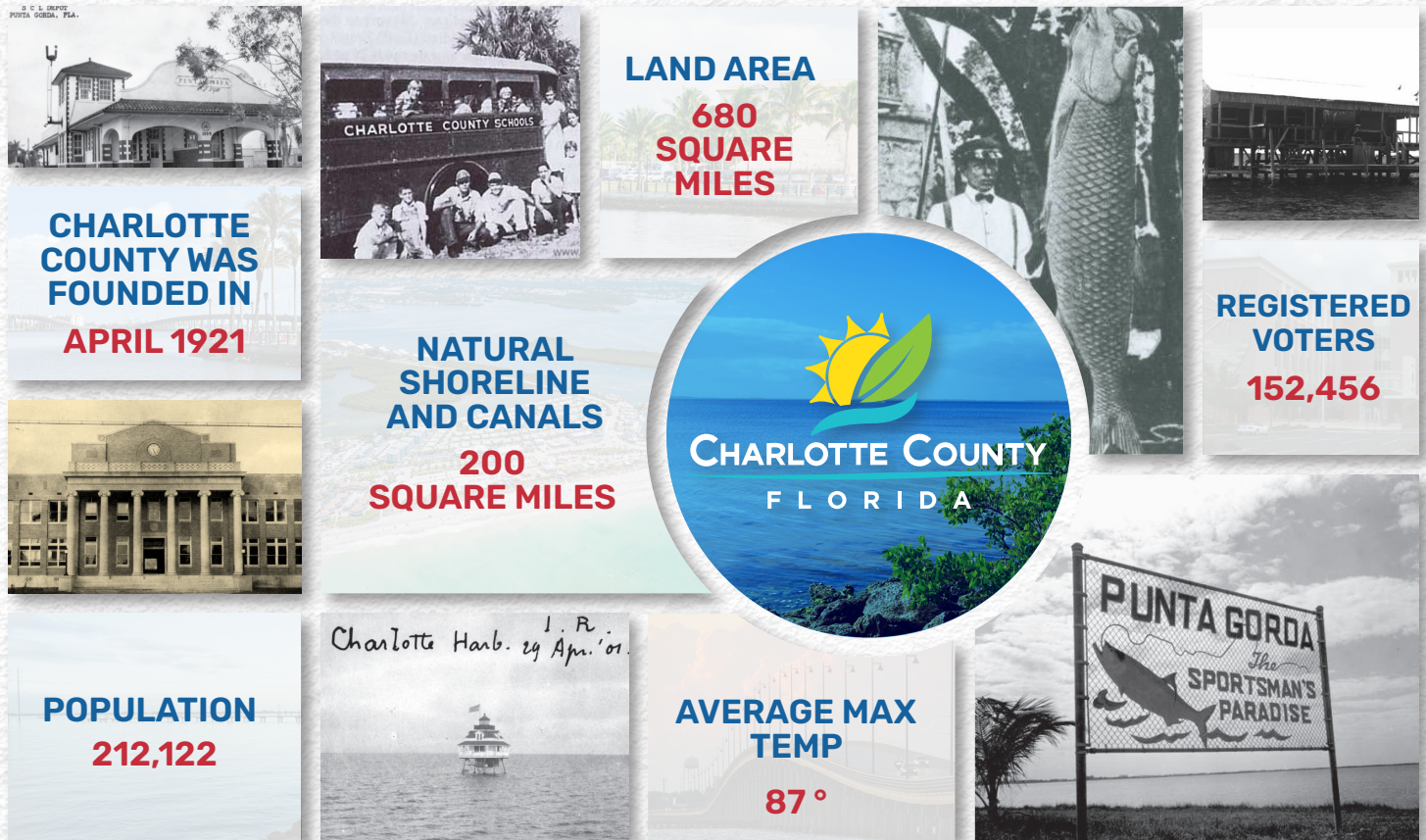


BILL TRUEX

DISTRICT 3

History of Charlotte County

Charlotte County was founded in April of 1921, located on the southwestern Florida coast, and was named for the Bay of Charlotte Harbor. Punta Gorda is the only incorporated city in Charlotte County. Charlotte County has a population of approximately 212,000 on 680 square miles of land and over 200 miles of natural shoreline and canals. Charlotte County's largest industries are professional and business services, trade, transportation and utilities, construction, education and health services, financial activities, leisure and hospitality, and other unclassified services.



The County is a political subdivision and a charter county of the State of Florida established by and operating pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Florida, Article VIII, Section 1(g). The Florida Constitution provides for "home rule" county charter government when approved by the voters through referendum. Charlotte County voters approved a charter form of county government effective January 1, 1986. The charter was amended in November 1992, November 1998, November 2010, and November 2016 and November 2022. Counties operating under charters have all the powers of local self-government not inconsistent with general law, or with special law approved by vote of the electors.

The County, pursuant to its home rule powers, may enact county ordinances not inconsistent with general law. Legislative control is vested with a five-member Board of County Commissioners, each of whom is elected to a four-year term. The day-to-day operational direction of the County is the responsibility of the appointed County Administrator. The operation of other specific government functions resides with five constitutional officers elected to four-year terms. They are the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector.

County Highlights and Initiatives

Babcock CCSO District 5



BABCOCK CCSO DISTRICT 5 AND FIRE STATION 9

Under a Master Development Order with Babcock Ranch Holdings, the shell portions for new Fire Station 9 and CCSO District 5 have been completed. In April 2024, both properties were transferred to Charlotte County as the new owners. Interior buildout of both buildings has already started with a completion date set for January 2025. The interior work includes a combined total of 24,000 square feet of space.

Fire Station 9



LANDFILL SCALE HOUSE (ZEMEL ROAD)

Landfill Scale House



The construction of a new scale house has been completed and handed over to the Solid Waste Division, where it is now fully operational. This scale house features express automated lanes for customers, including the City of Punta Gorda and Waste Management, enabling these entities to enter and exit efficiently without delay. The previous scale house location will continue to retain one scale designated for future natural disaster scenarios, specifically for use by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel and contractors. This arrangement will facilitate the processing and monitoring of storm-related debris without disrupting normal operations at the scale house, thereby enhancing traffic flow during post-storm events.

Property Taxes

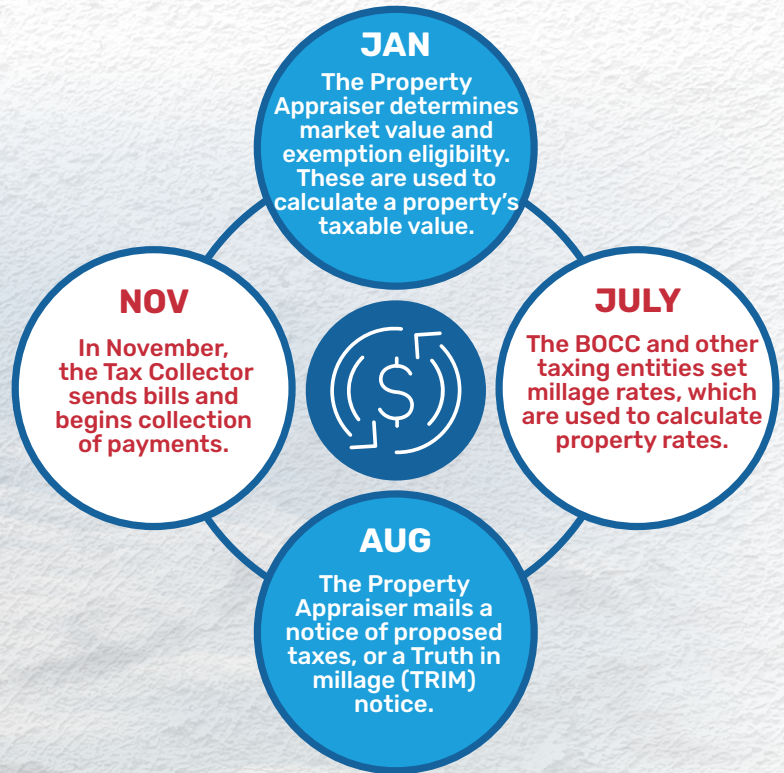
PROPERTY TAXES ARE THE COUNTY'S PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE

The County's total direct tax rate for the fiscal year 2024 remained constant at 12.2092.

The Property Appraiser certified total taxable assessed value of \$26.8 billion in 2024, a 13.1% increase from the prior year. The increase in the taxable assessed value equates to approximately \$35.4 million in property tax revenues. The median single-family sale price decreased from approximately \$364 thousand in the prior year to approximately \$359 thousand in fiscal year 2024.

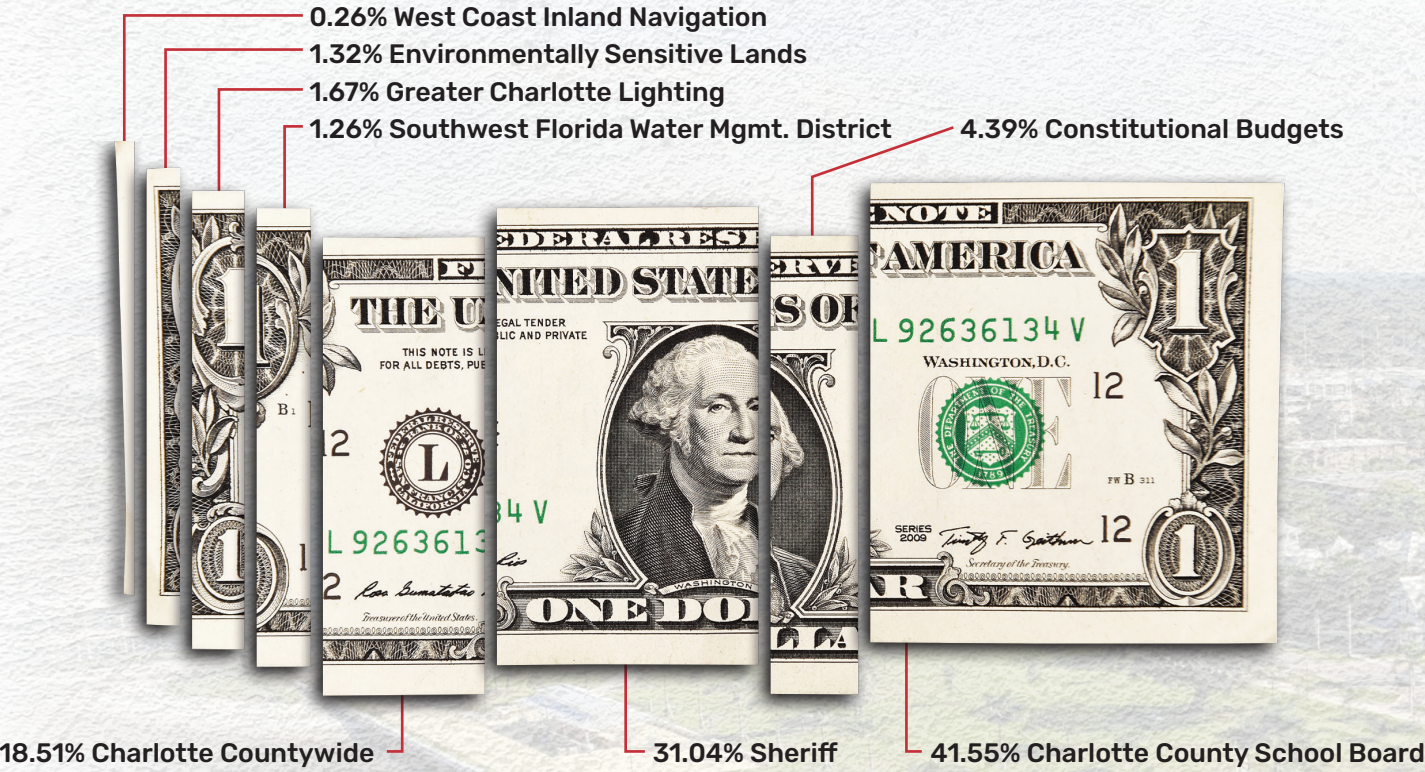
SAVE OUR HOMES - ASSESSMENT CAP ON HOMESTEAD PROPERTY

'Save our Homes' is an amendment to the Florida Constitution that took effect in 1995. It limits the annual increase in the assessed value of homesteaded properties to 3% or the change in the National Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is less.

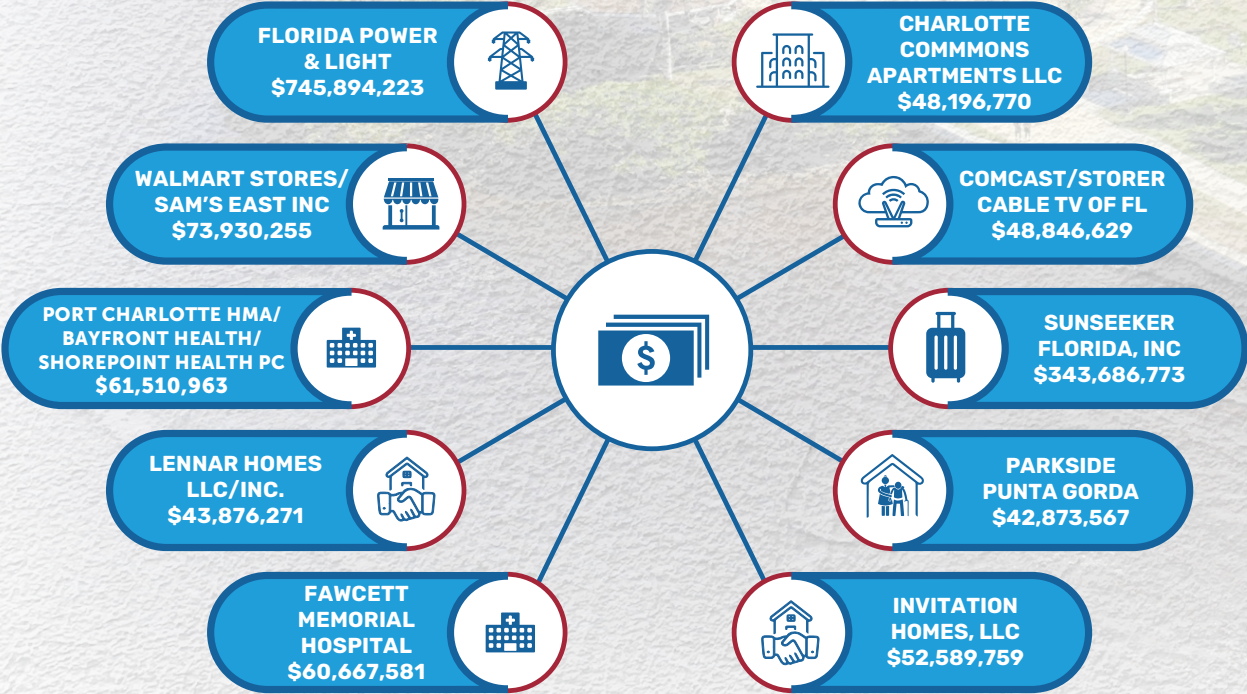


PROPERTY TAXES LEVIED THROUGH THE YEARS	
2024	\$315,843,689
2023	\$280,456,410
2022	\$254,025,832
2021	\$233,964,971
2020	\$220,527,401
2019	\$207,765,221
2018	\$195,660,270
2017	\$182,646,391
2016	\$155,604,597
2015	\$160,801,841
2014	\$156,240,662

How Your Tax Dollars will be Spent in Fiscal Year 2025



PRINCIPAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS (TAXABLE ASSESSED VALUE)



Charlotte County Statistics



PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS



Charlotte County School Board
Board of County Commissioners
ShorePoint Health
Publix Supermarkets
Fawcett Memorial Hospital
Wal-mart Associates, Inc.
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office
Cheney Brothers
Millennium Physician Group
Home Depot

2,456

1,391

1,342

1,228

1,162

976

777

550

368

350



ANNUAL BUDGET

\$1,145 Million in 2024

AVERAGE HOUSING LISTING PRICE 2024

\$389,000 (Per Realtor.com)

AVERAGE HOUSING SALE PRICE

\$359,000 (Per Realtor.com)



POPULATION

212,122



PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

16,834



MEDIAN AGE

60



UNEMPLOYMENT

3.8%



PERSONAL INCOME PER CAPITA 2023

\$55,332 (Per EDR)



DEBT

\$31,221 (Outstanding Debt Per Capita)

Statement of Net Position

The Statement of Net Position is presented in more detail in Charlotte County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The summary shown here is a high-level summary that presents total assets plus deferred outflows less liabilities and deferred inflows, with the difference reported as net position.

The county's activities are presented in two categories: governmental activities and business-type activities. Governmental activities include most of the county's core services such as administration, building, public safety and public works. Property taxes and state shared revenues finance most of these activities. Business-type activities consist of Water and Sewer Utility and Landfill, which is primarily financed through user fees and charges.

The largest portion of Charlotte county's net position is the net investment in capital assets. This amount consists of the County's land, buildings and improvements, equipment and infrastructure, less any outstanding debt used to acquire the assets.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES OF NET POSITION AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 AND 2023 (\$000'S)

		Governmental Activities		Increase (Decrease)	Business-Type Activities		Increase (Decrease)
		2024	2023		2024	2023	
ASSETS	Current & Other Assets	\$912,294	\$785,784	\$126,510	\$330,543	\$291,565	\$38,978
	Capital Assets, Net	\$999,121	\$968,255	\$30,866	\$443,044	\$417,812	\$25,232
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,911,415	\$1,754,039	\$157,376	\$773,587	\$709,377	\$64,210
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS		\$71,422	\$70,224	\$1,198	\$5,208	\$6,018	(\$810)
LIABILITIES	Current & Other Liabilities	\$91,303	\$93,120	(\$1,817)	\$40,588	\$34,931	\$5,657
	Long-Term Liabilities	\$342,539	\$367,101	(\$24,562)	\$126,066	\$144,454	(\$18,388)
	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$433,842	\$460,221	(\$26,379)	\$166,654	\$179,385	(\$12,731)
DEFERRED INFLOWS		\$44,680	\$24,088	\$20,592	\$3,312	\$1,245	\$2,067
NET POSITION	Net Investments In Capital Assets	\$937,895	\$898,954	\$38,941	\$360,377	\$320,793	\$39,584
	Restricted	\$470,473	\$401,798	\$68,675	\$104,546	\$105,554	(\$1,008)
	Unrestricted	\$95,956	\$39,203	\$56,743	\$143,905	\$108,417	\$35,488
TOTAL NET POSITION		\$1,504,314	\$1,339,955	\$164,359	\$608,828	\$534,764	\$74,064

Governmental assets increased \$157.4 million due to an increase in cash and investments of \$117.3 million which is attributable to significant increases in ad valorem tax received and interest income. Total governmental liabilities decreased \$26.4 million, primarily due to a decrease in unearned revenue from receipt of Hurricane funds and a decrease net pension liability. FRS Trust Fund investment earnings reported increased earnings which resulted in an decrease of net pension liability state-wide.

Statement of Activities

SUMMARY OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 AND 2023 (\$000'S)

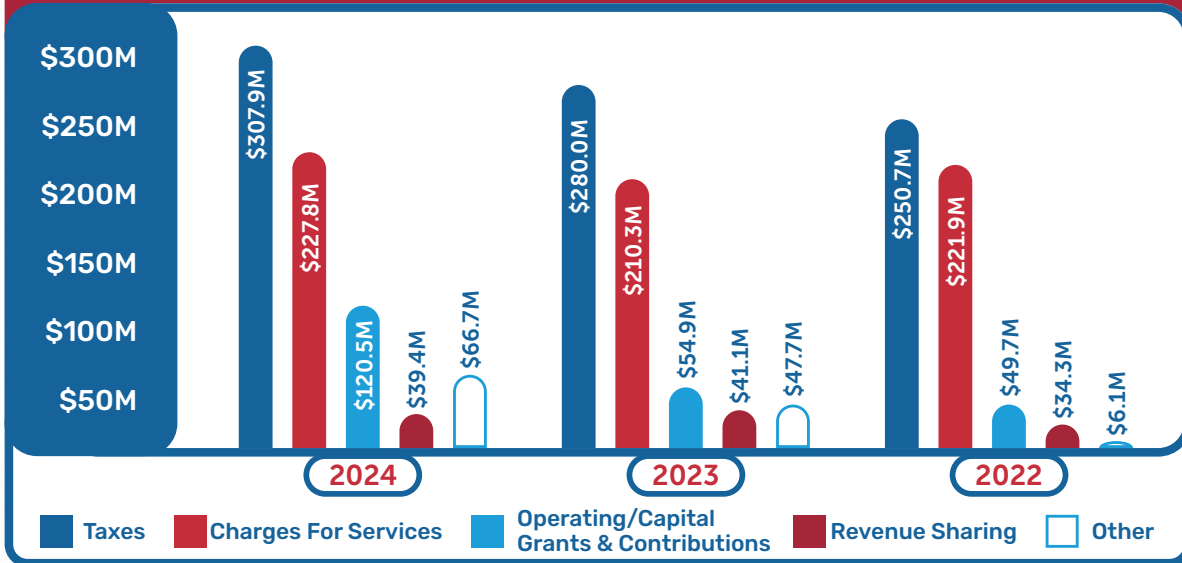
REVENUES		2024	2023	Increase (Decrease)	Percent Change
PROGRAM REVENUES					
Charges for Service		\$389,893	\$360,390	\$29,503	8.2%
Operating Grants & Contributions		\$74,595	\$31,990	\$42,605	133.2%
Capital Grants & Contributions		\$45,908	\$59,447	(\$13,539)	-22.8%
GENERAL REVENUES					
Taxes		\$307,782	\$279,978	\$27,804	9.9%
Other		\$122,878	\$100,716	\$22,162	22.0%
TOTAL REVENUES		\$941,056	\$832,521	\$108,535	13.0%
EXPENSES		2024	2023	Increase (Decrease)	Percent Change
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES					
General Government		\$163,155	\$139,957	\$23,198	16.6%
Public Safety		\$204,814	\$199,780	\$5,034	2.5%
Physical Environment		\$15,955	\$19,765	(\$3,810)	(-19.3%)
Transportation		\$98,894	\$156,734	(\$57,840)	(-36.9%)
Economic Environment		\$6,247	\$5,417	\$830	15.3%
Human Services		\$35,692	\$27,809	\$7,883	28.3%
Culture & Recreation		\$43,782	\$38,975	\$4,807	12.3%
Interest on Long-Term Debt		\$1,992	\$2,338	(\$346)	(-14.8%)
BUSINESS-TYPE ACTIVITIES					
Water & Sewer		\$91,066	\$85,205	\$5,861	6.9%
Solid Waste		\$41,034	\$42,684	(\$1,650)	(-3.9%)
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$702,631	\$718,664	(\$16,033)	(-2.2%)
Changes in Net Position		\$238,425	\$113,857	\$124,568	109.4%
Net Position - Beginning		\$1,874,719	\$1,760,862	\$113,857	6.5%
Net Position - Ending		\$2,113,144	\$1,874,719	\$238,425	12.7%

Statement of Activities, often referred to as an income statement, reflects all of the financial activity of Charlotte County, running the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024. This statement presents information to show how the County's net position changed during the year as a result of financial activity. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as an indicator of whether the County's financial position is improving or deteriorating. As of September 30, 2024, Charlotte County reported a total net position of \$2,113 million which is an increase of \$238.8 million, or 12.7 %, in comparison to the prior year. The following includes governmental and business-type activities of the primary government and can be found in the Statement of Activities of the Charlotte County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

County Revenue and Expense

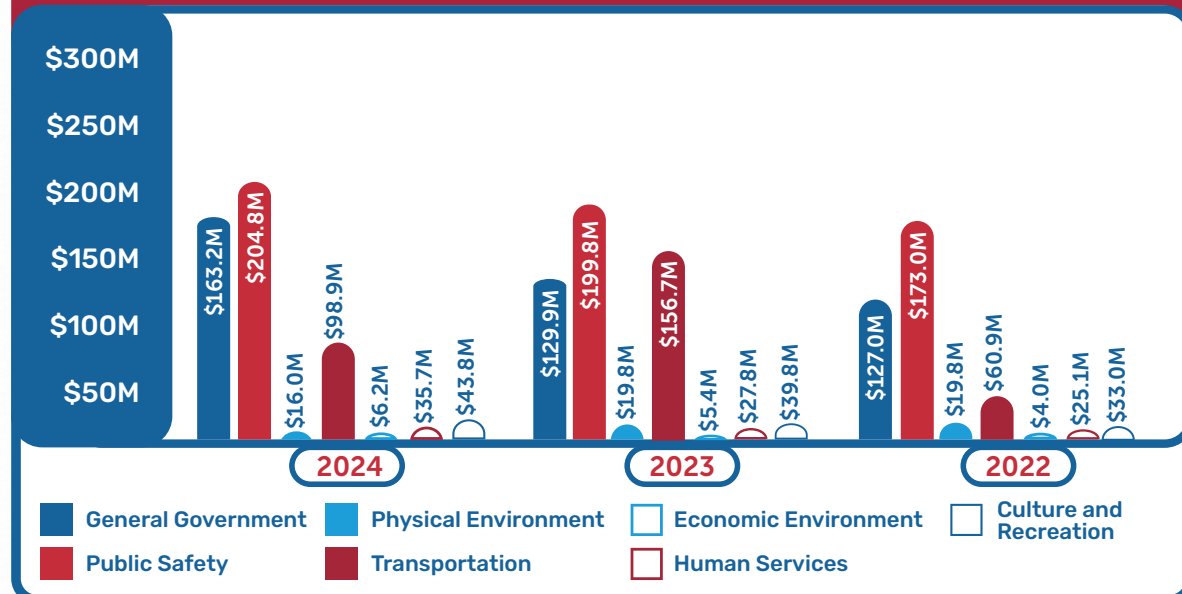
Taxes generate almost half of the governmental activities revenue for the county. This includes ad valorem property taxes, gas tax, communication service tax, tourist development tax, 1 cent local option sales tax, ½ cent sales tax and revenue sharing.

REVENUE TRENDS FY2022 - FY2024



In fiscal year 2024, the county incurred \$702.6 million in expenses, with almost half being spent on public safety and general government functions. There was a large decrease in Transportation in the current year due primarily to Hurricane Ian debris removal in fiscal year 2023.

EXPENSE TRENDS FY2022 - FY2024



General Fund

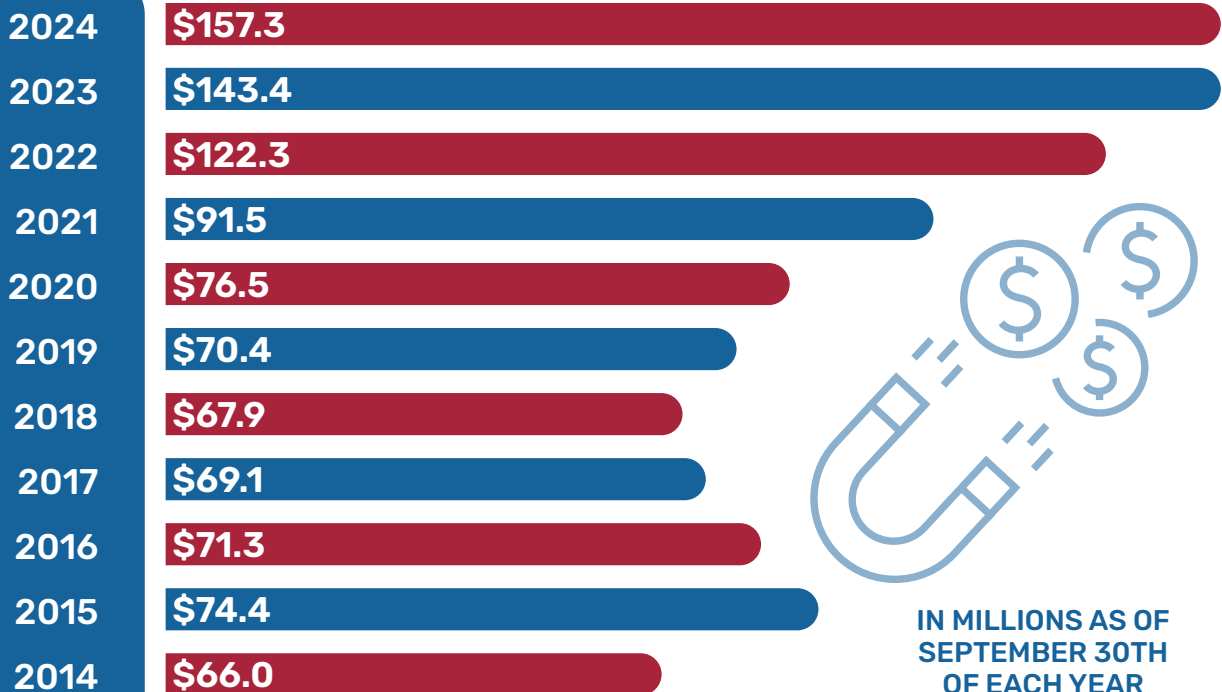
The General Fund is the operating funds for the principal governmental activities of the County. The ending fund balances as of September 30, 2024 was \$157.3 million. The increase in the General Fund from 2024 over 2023 is primarily due to significant increases in ad valorem tax and interest income.

FUND BALANCES REPORTED

	2024	2023	2022
NONSPENDABLE	\$921,021	\$866,714	\$831,620
RESTRICTED	\$5,036,322	\$7,643,742	\$5,716,809
COMMITTED	\$375,000	\$187,500	
ASSIGNED	\$13,155,028	\$10,155,118	\$3,355,653
UNASSIGNED	\$137,793,627	\$124,544,524	\$112,388,597
TOTAL	\$157,280,998	\$143,397,598	\$122,292,679

The fund balance classifications used are:

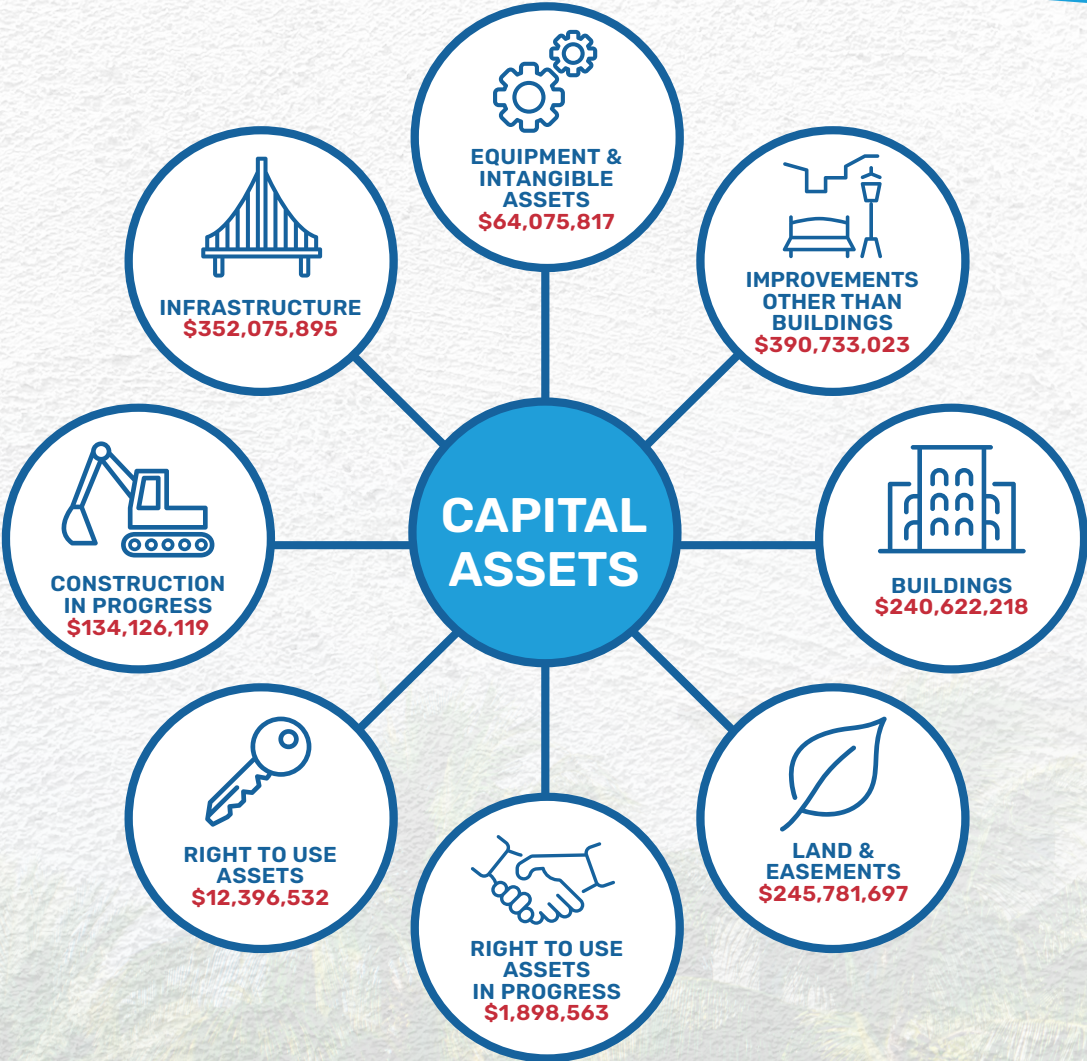
- Nonspendable – funds that cannot be spent, such as prepaid items, inventory and advances to other funds.
- Restricted – Resources that are used based on constraints from other parties, such as grantors, creditors, contributors or laws and regulations.
- Assigned – amounts the County intends to use for a specific purpose.
- Unassigned – amounts that have not been assigned or restricted.



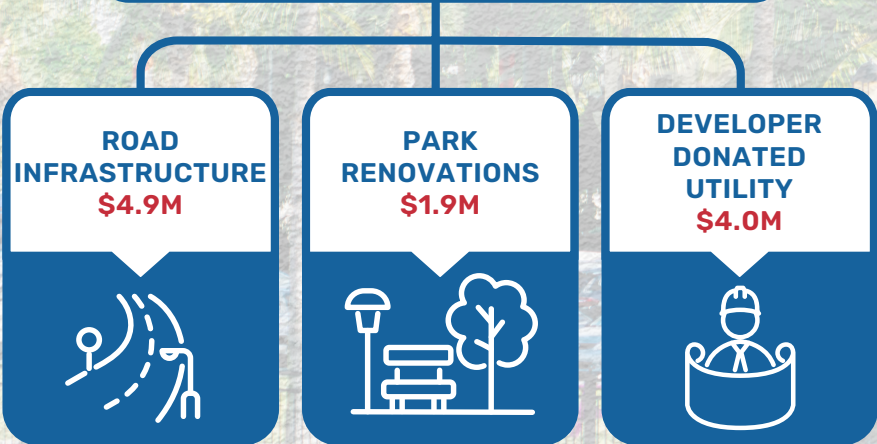
Capital Assets

The County’s capital assets for its governmental and business-type activities as of September 30, 2024 amounted to \$1,442.2 million, net of accumulated depreciation. The overall increase in the County’s capital assets, net of depreciation for fiscal year 2024 was approximately \$56.1 million over the prior year. The County’s capital assets include land, buildings, improvements, equipment, infrastructure, as well as construction in progress.

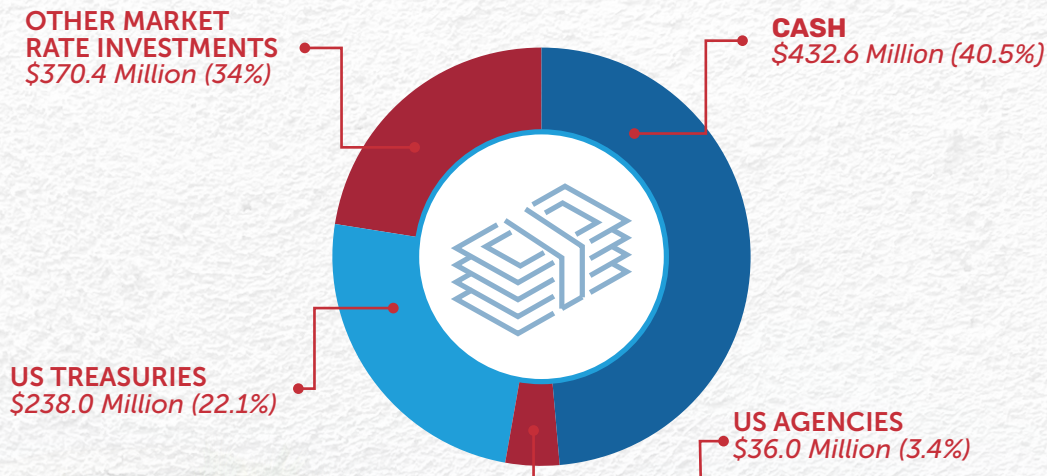
The overall increase in capital assets from 2023 to 2024 was \$120.0 million with an increase in accumulated depreciation of \$65.9 million, for a net change of approximately \$56.1 million.



2024 MAJOR ADDITIONS



Treasury Management



TOTAL INVESTMENTS: \$1,077 MILLION

Cash and investments totaled \$1,077 million as of September 30, 2024. Cash includes bank deposits, money market accounts and highly liquid investments with maturities of less than 90 days when purchased. Investments consist of U.S. Treasury Notes, U.S. Government Agency Securities. Other investments consist of local government investment pools such as Florida Trust Day to Day, Florida FIT, Florida FI 1-3 fund and Florida Prime.

Charlotte County Debt

As of September 30, 2024, the County had total debt outstanding of \$149.8 million. \$68.5 million is due to governmental activities such as Environmental Lands, Stadium, Murdock Village, Beach Nourishment as well as road widening and paving projects. Business-type activities has \$81.3 million of which \$15.1 million is held in bonds maturing in October 2024. Water and sewer projects that have been funded through State Revolving Fund loans amount to \$66.2 million, some of which are paid through MSBU assessments and others paid from operating revenues.



Community Involvement

Through the efforts of our staff, the Clerk's office was able to donate a pile of supplies and raised \$2,000 to help our furry friends in need.



The Clerk's office proudly presented a donation check for \$1,800 to the Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic, Inc in support of Breast Cancer Awareness.

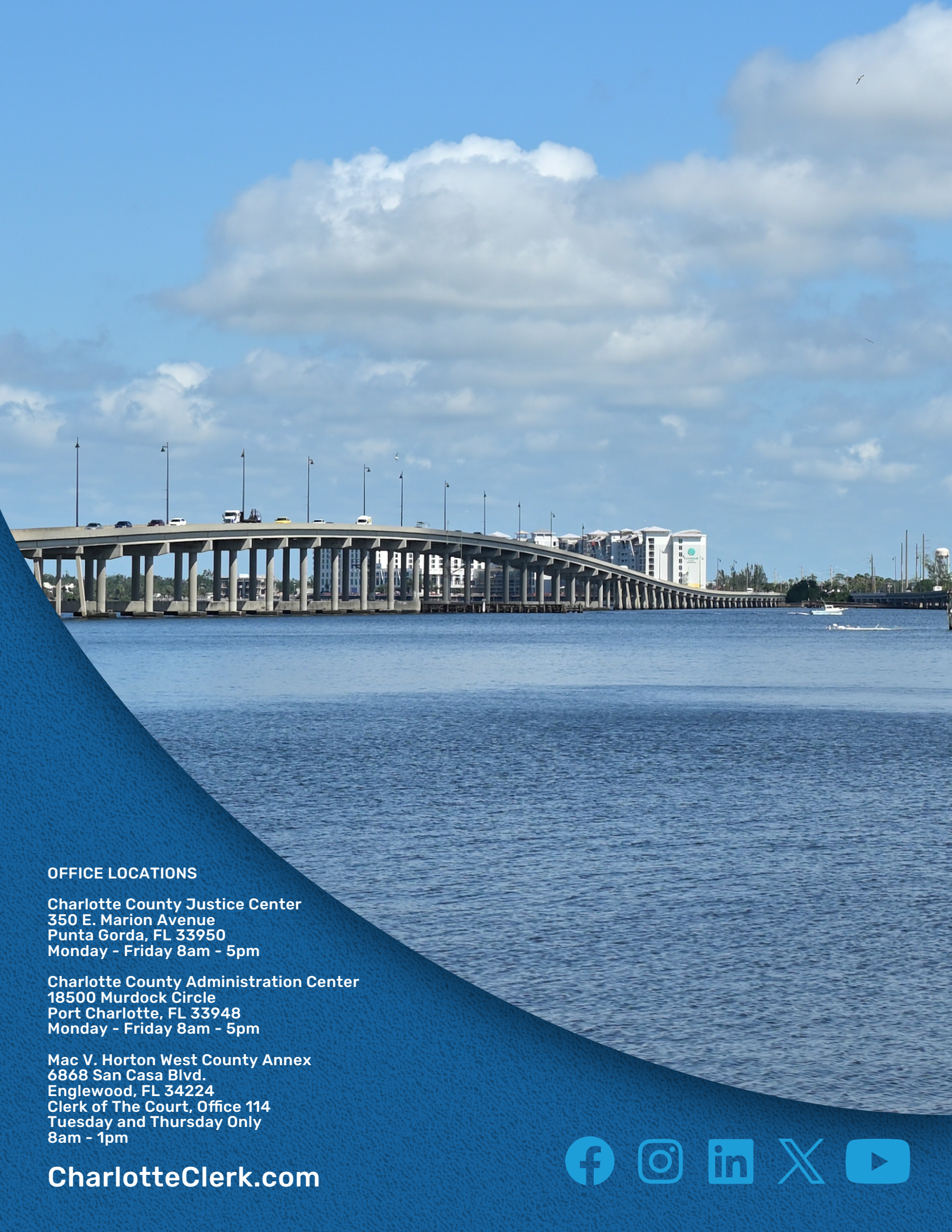
Community Involvement

With the help of Clerk staff fundraising the Clerk was able to present C.A.R.E. with a donation of \$1,800 in support of Domestic Violence Awareness.



Our Clerk, Roger D. Eaton, was awarded the prestigious Pacesetter Award from the Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce. This award recognizes individuals who set the standard for excellence in their field and community.





OFFICE LOCATIONS

Charlotte County Justice Center
350 E. Marion Avenue
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm

Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, FL 33948
Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm

Mac V. Horton West County Annex
6868 San Casa Blvd.
Englewood, FL 34224
Clerk of The Court, Office 114
Tuesday and Thursday Only
8am - 1pm

CharlotteClerk.com

