



MCRA
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Mission Statement

To enrich lives and improve the welfare of the community.

Vision Statement

Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) is committed to growing a sustainable network that:

- Is nationally, regionally and locally recognized for its offerings and performance.
- Is dedicated to achieving higher environmental standards.
- Continues to offer new and innovative programs and services for the benefit of the community and our team.

MCRA is committed to the following core values:

1. Genuine Smile
2. Do-Anything Attitude
3. Deliver Excellence

MCRA - OVERVIEW

The Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA), created in 1957, is an instrumentality of Montgomery County, Maryland and a public corporation. The MCRA was established to construct, improve, equip, furnish, maintain, acquire, operate, and finance projects devoted wholly or partially for public use, good, or general welfare. A six-member Board governs the MCRA, with five members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The sixth member – the Chief Administrative Officer of Montgomery County or designee – serves in a non-voting, *ex-officio* capacity.

The two primary activities of the MCRA are to operate self-supporting facilities and to finance public facilities. On the operations side, the MCRA manages its golf course system comprised of nine golf courses along with the Montgomery County Airpark. The operated facilities generate various forms of revenue, which are used to fund MCRA operations and to provide for facility improvements. A portion of the operating revenues are used to retire any debt associated with operated facilities.

On the public financing side, the MCRA issues bonds to raise capital, to acquire land or other property, or to pay construction costs for Montgomery County facilities. Through a financing partnership with a broad range of County agencies, the MCRA has supported important public purposes as far reaching as economic development, education, transportation, health and human services, recreation, and the arts. The agencies' lease payments are used by the MCRA to retire the debt obligations.

Montgomery County Revenue Authority – 2024 Highlights

The Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) remained committed to its mission through new initiatives and continued partnerships. The golf industry saw an increase in rounds of 2.2% nationally in 2024. Rounds of golf increased by 0.9% locally, according to industry data. The MCRA golf courses experienced an increase in rounds of 8.5%

MCRA Golf Initiatives

The MCRA's golf course system, operated under the flag of MCG, hosted 495,554 rounds in 2024 at its nine golf courses. This was an increase of approximately 42,000 rounds from the previous year.

- **Community Assistance and Event Programs**
 - The MCRA maintains its commitment to the Salute Military Golf Association, which focuses on rehabilitating local wounded warriors through the game of golf, by offering clinics and reduced fees throughout the year for members of the organization.
 - Over 700 rounds of golf were donated to the Montgomery County Public Schools program.
 - Sligo Creek Golf Course's free-to-attend "Music in the Park" drew record crowds this year, offering the community a safe and fun event every Friday throughout the summer.
 - *Community Day of Support – 2024 was the 10th year of this event which brings together golfers, community businesses and local celebrities for a daylong event at Northwest Golf Course. This year's event raised \$10,000 for the First Tee of Greater Washington and \$10,000 to Salute the Military Golf Association*

- **Family Golf**
 - The MCRA's popular Family Golf program, which is offered at all nine MCG courses throughout the summer, was an overwhelming success for community members interested in activities suitable for the whole family. This program consisted of:
 - \$15 rates for all families offered Monday – Friday at any time at our 9-hole courses and after 5 pm on our main 18-hole courses. Weekend Family Golf rates were available after noon at our 9-hole courses and after 5 pm at the 18-hole courses.
 - A "course within a course" is set up for juniors and new players to the game to make it much more fun and enjoyable, along with family friendly scorecards.

- **FootGolf**
 - Northwest and Sligo Creek Golf Courses were the first FootGolf courses established in the DC Market in 2016.
 - FootGolf is a combination of soccer and golf whereby a player kicks a soccer ball and follows the rules of golf.
 - In 2024, this program continued to shrink. We are currently reviewing this program for FY25

2024 MCG Academy

- The MCG Academy's four-tiered Adult Clinic program has served more and more golfers each year since branching out from the golf industry's Get Golf Ready program over 7 years ago. Levels 1 and 2 offer expert instruction to beginners, while levels 3 and 4 help more experienced players develop new skills and lower their scores.
- Four of our Academy sites offered ladies-only programs at Level 1 and 2, for women more comfortable with that learning environment.
- Our Adult programs maintained a 95% fill rate this year, even with more than 10% growth in the number of sessions offered. The Academy instructed over 1,750 adults in 2024.
- MCG Teaching Professionals also taught over 10,000 Private Lessons across all 9 of the MCG Golf Courses.

- **Robust Junior Golf Programs**
 - MCG Junior Summer Camps were again sold out at most properties in 2024.
 - The MCG Junior Tournament series again hosted spring, summer, and fall events for 3 different age flights, for both Boys and Girls.
 - The MCG Golf Academy maintains a successful, long-standing partnership with The First Tee of Greater Washington, D.C., which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2024. MCG Academy instructors hosted 385 juniors this year in Life Skill and Golf Skill programming at Laytonsville, Needwood, Northwest, Sligo Creek, and Little Bennett.
 - MCG launched a new level Junior Program for 5 properties that introduced an even broader group of individuals with benefits of lower cost, shorter classes and more location opportunities. This class brought in over 180 new juniors to the game.

- **Academy Initiatives supported nationally**
 - The Operation 36 Junior Development Program was piloted at Falls Road in 2023 and added Northwest and Needwood as facility participants in 2024.
'Op 36' offers our junior golfers a clearly defined, structured developmental path from newcomer/beginner to high school and college-ready golfer. In its first two years 180 to 200 golfers have utilized the program.
 - MCG Academy launched two successful 2-day, 36-hole Junior Tournaments for the first time at MCG courses, sanctioned by the Junior Golf Scoreboard ranking system for college eligible competitive High School golfers.

Junior League Team Golf



- MCG Junior League promotes child and family participation. Teams accepted registrations from the usual sites, Needwood, Falls Road, Northwest, Little Bennett in 2024, along with new registrations from Rattlewood, Laytonsville and Sligo. Sligo was able to field Spring and Fall teams in both 13U and 17U; and became a host match site in 2024. Participation totaled 300 registrations for the year in the two age divisions.
- The 17 & under Division was revitalized under a new 2-person scramble team format and grew from 36 to 56 players in its first year.

Agronomy and Environmental Stewardship at MCRA Golf Courses

In 2024, MCRA golf courses upheld their commitment to important environmental initiatives, while delivering excellent playing conditions largely attributed to the use of modern maintenance practices that have evolved over the years. We continued on our journey of agronomic data collection to better understand how our practices can be fine-tuned to maximize the impact of our teams' efforts and hopefully reduce our future inputs of products and labor required to produce the same result.

Greens aeration – as we continue to learn more about how we can create the best greens with the least impact on the customer, a concerted effort was made to start utilizing less disruptive solid-tine aeration practices on greens. As a result, we can integrate more sand into the greens profile using less labor. We will continue to monitor this program to ensure that this practice can be sustained over the years without affecting putting green surface performance.

Total organic matter testing – our superintendents use Total Organic Matter testing to measure the buildup of organic material in putting greens, helping them fine-tune maintenance practices including fertilizer use, topdressing regimens, and cultivation.

Measuring clipping volume – Each time we mow selected greens, we measure the collected clippings to track grass growth. This helps us evaluate its impact on green speed, nutrient needs, organic matter accumulation, topdressing requirements, and whether to adjust fertilization or growth regulators for optimal playing conditions.

Data dashboard – We created a dashboard to input and visualize many of the data we are collecting, but also developed it as an enhanced resource that displays predictive disease models, growing degree day accumulation, turfgrass growth potential, and other information that allows our team to make better-informed decisions about managing threats of disease, insects, and other pests.

Environment: MCG's nine courses have significantly benefited from their partnership with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP), achieving "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" status at all properties—a distinction held by only about 750 golf courses worldwide. This certification reflects MCG's dedication to environmental stewardship across several key areas:

1. **Wildlife Habitat Enhancement:** MCG courses have created and preserved wildlife habitats, supporting biodiversity and attracting beneficial species.
2. **Water Resource Management:** The courses have implemented measures to protect water features, such as establishing vegetative buffers, and have conducted water-quality testing to ensure the health of aquatic ecosystems.
3. **Sustainability:** By continuing to plant low-input or disease-tolerant grasses at our courses and designating over 10% of their 2,500 acres as "no mow" areas, MCG has reduced maintenance costs, minimized fuel emissions, and promoted diverse wildlife habitats.

4. **Community Engagement and Education:** MCG actively educates golfers about sustainability, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility and awareness.

These initiatives not only enhance the environmental quality of the golf courses but also improve operational efficiency, underscoring MCG's commitment to sustainable practices.



Projects: In 2024, several important projects were completed at our golf courses:

- **Bunker rebuilds:** – As a part of our ongoing bunker rebuild program, we choose a small number of bunkers to rebuild in-house each winter to prevent the need for a large-scale project. This year, we rebuilt bunkers at Falls Road, Laytonsville, Crossvines, Rattlewood, Hampshire Greens, Northwest, and Little Bennett.
- **Driving Range improvement:** Little Bennett increased the number of driving range mats that can be used during closure periods of the grass tee.
- **Tee Levelling** – Select tees were stripped, levelled, and replaced with improved turfgrasses at Rattlewood and Little Bennett.
- **Asphalt Work:** The ongoing repair/replacement of deteriorated asphalt continued in 2024 with replacement work at Falls Road, Laytonsville, and Rattlewood.
- **Bridge Deck Replacement:** Wood decking was replaced on all the cart path bridges at Northwest.
- **Drainage Projects:** Several minor yet crucial drainage improvements were made across our golf courses to remove bird baths in fairways and roughs, enhancing playability and reducing turf loss during summer rains.
- **Irrigation Upgrade:** The complete electrical/communication network for the Northwest GC irrigation system was replaced with a modern control system (Rain Bird IC) that allows improved control, reliability, and new diagnostic capabilities at this 27-hole facility.

Montgomery County Airpark

The Montgomery County Airpark (Airpark), acquired in 1960, is owned and operated by the MCRA through a 99-year lease dating back to 1959. The MCRA maintains sole control over 30 acres on the northwest end of the Airpark property and is exploring ideas on how to best develop that land. Currently, the MCRA subsidizes the annual operating losses for the benefit of the County and the community. The goal of this new development, and the revenue streams it would provide, is to make the Airpark self-sustaining.

As owner and federal grant sponsor, the MCRA secures state and federal funding for the Airpark and is responsible for the runways, taxiways, navigation aids, and other common areas. The fixed base operator (FBO) offers services to support aeronautical activities including fueling, aircraft storage, aircraft maintenance, flight training, and related services. After an 18-year lease with an aviation services company ended, DC Metro Aviation Services took over as the FBO. At the end of 2024 they have completed a Hangar renovation project on their oldest T hangars.

Currently, 167 aircraft are based at the property. The Montgomery County Airpark's 4,200-foot runway has three instrument approaches and is the closest "jetport" to the nation's capital. A portion of the traffic is of the commercial type or air taxis consisting of a variety of modern-day aircraft such as Cessna Citation, Lear Jet, Beechcraft (both jet and turbine), and Falcon Jet. The Airpark is also home to an air taxi firm that specializes in transporting organ transplant teams and organs as well as air travelers to various destinations on the east coast and the Midwest on a regular on-demand basis.

In March of 2024, the MCRA completed the purchase of an adjacent property to the Airpark. Future work will include rerouting the access road on the property and moving utilities to increase the safety of aircraft operating at the Airpark. This has been on the Airport Layout Plan for many years and is the culmination of lots of teamwork and negotiations. The next large project at the airpark will be upgrading the runway lighting to a more efficient LED system.

The County Council is forming an Airpark Citizens Advisory Committee has been meeting on the third Tuesday of every month and will submit an annual report to the County Executive, County Council, and the MCRA regarding data on noise complaints, itinerant and local flight operations, and recommendations of the committee regarding operations, safety, community impact, and other community concerns. To assist in that endeavor, the MCRA has subscribed to a service that will provide the data needed by the committee to make informed recommendations.



According to 2023 economic data supplied by the Maryland Aviation Administration, the Airpark provides the following direct, indirect, and induced benefits to Montgomery County:

- 188 jobs
- \$13,604,000 in personal income
- \$13,946,000 in business revenues
- \$2,550,000 in State and Local tax revenues

Financing Activities

The MCRA remains committed to long-term sustainability. Beyond diligent budget management, a major strategy is to reduce overall liabilities. In January 2018, leveraging a favorable interest rate landscape, the MCRA replaced its interest rate swaps on a \$17,168,000 principal balance. This will save MCRA approximately \$32,000 per year in debt service payments through the remaining life of the bonds. Final maturity occurs in December of 2027. In addition to its own debt, the MCRA carries more than \$39.4 million in debt related to projects around the county, which is not considered part of the county's debt service calculation.

Additional projects include:

- Montgomery College Arts Center
- Montgomery College Silver Spring Parking Facility
- Montgomery College Goldenrod Building



Montgomery College Arts Center