

III. THE ROLE OF THE CIP IN IMPLEMENTING COUNTY PLANS AND POLICIES

A. Aspects of Plans and Policies Which Affect Capital Improvement Programming

1. The General Plan and Master Plan

The Amended General Plan for Prince George's County, approved by the District Council on March 16, 1982, emphasizes the provision and maintenance of public facilities in the developed portions of the County. The Plan also advocates that future development be encouraged in areas where adequate facilities are already in place, thereby reducing the need for costly capital expenditures. Toward this end, the General Plan defines an area beyond which suburban-level development would be allowed only after judicious consideration in conjunction with the Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan and the Sectional Map Amendment processes. The Plan provides guidance in relating this growth to essential transportation facilities. In addition, the Plan contains a Public Facilities Element, which describes existing and projected levels of service as well as basic public facility-related policies and guidelines.

Area and subregional Master Plans have been prepared for the entire County. These plans are more specific than the General Plan and are officially designated as General Plan amendments. Most of the Master Plans prepared since 1970 include recommendations for the staging of development. These staging elements estimate the rate at which new or partially developed areas will develop and forecast the needs for schools, libraries, fire stations, street improvements and other public facilities. The recommendations for the timing of the development, particularly in new areas, may be to defer development until a major public facility, such as an arterial link or a sewer main extension, is in place.

2. Comprehensive Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan

Since 1970, the County has been required to prepare and update annually a ten-year plan and program for the extension of water and sewer service. The Plan includes water and sewer systems maps which show those areas currently provided with public water and sewer service and those areas which will be provided with service during the next ten-year period, on a phased basis. The Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan is the principal County policy statement as to where, when and at what rate growth can be expected to occur. The Plan has been used as a major guide to Master Plan staging, and is considered in zoning decisions and the granting of subdivision approvals. The Plan is also the major guide to the programming of other public facilities in the CIP, particularly with respect to providing services to new development.

3. Comprehensive Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan

The County's Approved Comprehensive Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan for FY 1992-2001 was adopted by the County Council on July 28, 1992. The Plan is designed to meet the County's present and future needs for solid waste management programs and facilities. It identifies sources of solid wastes, provides for acceptable disposal sites and facilities and explores recycling and resource recovery possibilities. The Plan was developed through close cooperation among County departments and agencies. The CIP includes several projects recommended for implementation by the Solid Waste Plan.

4. **Stormwater Management Plan**

A Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan was adopted in September 1980. This Plan guides the actions of all County agencies for which storm drainage is a consideration. The Plan provides policy direction for review of the storm drainage capital improvement program and recommends new projects and procedures for correcting and preventing stormwater-related problems in the County.

B. Interpreting the CIP as a Guide to Public Action

The CIP provides information needed for short-range land use planning and development decisions and serves as a coordinating device for the planning of government agency facilities and services planning. It represents the County's commitment, and that of the semi-autonomous agencies, to provide public facilities in specific areas within the time period covered by the Program. Projects included in the first two years of the CIP are closely related to current development and can be expected to be carried out essentially as programmed. Projects shown in the later years of the CIP may be subject to modification either in scope or timing, based on the review of needs, the availability of funding, or other circumstances which cannot be predicted with certainty so far in advance.

1. **Use of CIP Information in Comprehensive Re-zoning**

The majority of re-zoning actions are now carried out through comprehensive re-zoning or the Sectional Map Amendment process. This involves the review of and amendment to the zoning of an entire area at one time. These reviews occur every two to six years and are intended to re-zone sufficient land to meet development needs for the next six to 10 years. Programmed public improvements are an important determinant of which areas will be suitable for developments during the time period covered by the Sectional Map Amendments. Conversely, the review of land requirements may lead to recommendations for public improvements needed to serve a developing area.

2. **Subdivision Approvals Based on Adequacy of Public Facilities**

The Subdivision Ordinance specifies that "the Planning Board shall not approve a subdivision plan if it finds that adequate public facilities and services do not exist or are not programmed for the area within which the proposed subdivision is located." The purpose of this requirement is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of local residents and to prevent excessive expenditure of public funds. This Ordinance is an important tool to prevent the premature subdivision of land and the resulting pressures to extend public facilities beyond the County's budget capabilities.

3. **The CIP's Role in the Coordination of Public Improvements**

The County's first CIP was published in 1967. Since that time, one of the objectives of County management has been to refine the CIP to make the programming of projects more precise in scope and timing. The intent is to provide reliable information about the availability of public improvements to both private sector and public sector decision-makers. Another objective is to improve coordination among the governmental bodies that provide and use public facilities. In the newly developing areas particularly, the availability of appropriate support facilities can be critical to the operation of a new project. Likewise, the capacity of existing roads, sewers and water supply lines is an important consideration in building or expanding public facilities in highly developed areas.