

# Strategic and Fiscal Policies

This Section includes Strategic Policies and Fiscal Policies. Both are critical to the government's operations to achieve efficient and effective service deliveries while maintaining a strong fiscal stewardship.

Strategic Policies .....	21
Fiscal and Financial Policies .....	27



## STRATEGIC POLICIES

### The County Government Vision and Strategic Plan

Our proud priorities represent the County Executive's approach to governing built on the foundation of data driven performance that inspires collaboration and is transparent and results oriented.

We know that with our budget, there are limitations to what we can fund each year. But the reason we will maintain a AAA bond rating for two of the three bond rating agencies on a \$5.8 billion budget is because we make intentional and focused decisions that will positively impact the lives of Prince Georgians.

#### **Vision – Prince George's Proud**

To attract and retain the most experienced workforce who will use innovative technology to provide efficient, effective services to our citizens. We will collaborate with our stakeholders to develop solutions that are data-based and rely on best practices to address complex challenges within the County and the region. We will have a world-class education system, safe communities and a robust economy that creates jobs and opportunities for all and increases the commercial tax base to ensure we can provide the services our residents deserve.

#### **Mission**

- Through internal and external partnerships and collaboration, we will enhance government services to ensure that we are meeting or exceeding the needs of our residents, visitors and businesses. We will strategically implement initiatives within the six policy focus areas critical to the long-term success of our County and demonstrate we are Prince George's Proud.

#### **Principles**

- Providing transparent government that is accountable to those we serve.
- Improving and enhancing technology within the government to ensure that services provided to constituents are efficient and effective.

- Implementing education reform that puts the focus back on children, teachers and families to ensure that our learning environments, in and out of the classroom, are conducive to meeting the educational needs of our children.
- Building a robust economy that creates jobs, attracts services that our County needs and increases the commercial tax base, allowing the government to no longer balance our budget on the backs of those we serve.
- Focusing on infrastructure investments such as road improvements, revitalization of inner beltway communities and development around our Metro stations that provides more opportunities for our citizens to live and work here, as well as travel within the County and not just in and out of it.
- Investing in people by providing better access to affordable, preventative healthcare, educating citizens on principles of healthy living and providing more options for treatment of addictions and mental health challenges.

#### **Priorities**

1. Education
2. Safe Neighborhoods
3. Economic Development
4. Healthy Communities
5. Quality of Life Supported by High Performance Government
6. Youth Development

#### **Agency Plans**

Agency plans define: (1) how the agency aligns with, and will work on, accomplishing the County's vision and (2) the agency's intended impact on customers. To accomplish this, each agency has included in its section of this book its mission, core services, goals, objectives and strategy statements. The Strategic Focus was added in FY 2013 to indicate short-term priorities of each

agency based on the organization's overall strategic priorities.

### **Performance Measures**

Performance measures are provided for each objective to illustrate a quantitative picture of the services delivered to customers and their impact. This information is important to evaluate the current status and possible improvements to carry out the County's vision and agency plans. To accomplish this, performance measures indicate each objective's resources, tasks, services, production, efficiency, quality and impact. Five categories of performance measures provide this information: input (resources), output (workload, demand and production), efficiency (how well resources are utilized given the output), quality (accuracy, timeliness, and customer service) and outcome (impact).

### **Performance Budgeting**

In the strategic plan, agency plans and performance measures provide a clear strategic direction and a comprehensive quantitative picture of the services the County delivers to its customers. Performance-informed budgeting uses this information to justify and evaluate the allocation of resources and seeks to better match funding with the strategic focus and maximize the utility of limited resources. As a result, the allocation of resources can better facilitate the agency's ability to meet its plan and the County's vision and its ability to positively impact its customers.

### **Budget Prioritization**

The budget development process requires prioritizing services and programs to ensure limited resources are dedicated to meeting the most important needs of the County. Agencies identify and prioritize each of their services and programs to facilitate decision-making. A vetting process occurs first with the Office of Management and Budget and then with the County's leadership team. A collaborative decision making process takes place when all priorities are considered in the context of current conditions, data trends, emerging priorities and past funding decisions. It is through broad prioritization of services by leadership, combined with the budget priorities established by each agency, that the

resources can be appropriately allocated, and all service areas be better served.

### **On-going Improvement of the Performance Management System**

Performance Management is utilized as a tool to facilitate decision-making and improve service delivery. The Performance Management System is predicated on the commitment to provide focused analyses of complicated processes and concepts effecting the efficiency of governance and well-being of the community. This system is dynamic, adapting to address whatever priorities need attention at the time, and tailoring business processes to effectively analyze the concept and provide recommendations for improvement.

Major elements include:

- CountyStat sessions focusing on priority objectives;
- Development of agency mission, goals, priorities, strategies and performance measures;
- Monthly reporting – tracking, analyzing, recommending and communicating.

Major FY 2025 achievements include:

- Convened over eight CountyStat Sessions, taking a deep dive into the elevated priorities which include beautification, flooding, permitting, procurement, reducing time to fill and reducing violent crime;
- Initiated a data dictionary program aimed at improving validity and reliability which required agencies to maintain and submit formal records of the methodology, calculation and rationale for their performance plans;
- Maintained data for 40 County agencies, including other quasi-governmental agencies as well;
- Maintained and submitted data required by the U.S. Treasury for federally funded American Rescue Plan Projects as well as;
- Began and ongoing project to educate agency personnel on how to better forecast their data using basic statistical methodologies and held office hours to help them implement what they learned.

In FY 2026, strategic focuses will include:

- Perform CountyStat sessions on the top initiatives for transparency and accountability;
- Continued countywide data collection and analysis;
- Continued execution of the data dictionary program, ensuring thoroughness and accessibility of content as well as consistency in formatting across agencies;
- Thorough analysis of workflow service level agreements with recommended changes to those agreements; and
- Continued conveyance of data forecasting techniques, helping agencies with their data literacy.

## Funding by Priority Area in Support of Vision and Goals

The County's budget is a plan to allocate and spend funds in support of achieving the Government's strategic policy focus areas. Each major area of the vision is listed below along with the aligned budget in FY 2026.

### 1 – Education

The FY 2026 approved budget continues to support the County's goal of excellent education. The FY 2026 budget includes \$3.0 billion in funding for the Board of Education, an increase of \$151.8 million or 5.4% over the FY 2025 budget. Funding for the Board constitutes 61.3% of all General Fund spending in the FY 2026 budget. The County's contribution represents an increase of \$59.8 million over FY 2025 (from \$909.8 million to \$969.6 million) and meets the minimum local share contribution required by the State. The approved budget includes a net increase in employee compensation negotiated commitments; post-employment benefit increases; continued support of universal pre-kindergarten; program continuation of immersion programs as well as providing additional student-based budgeting resources to the schools. In addition, the FY 2026 budget includes \$42.6 million for the Alternative Construction Financing Program to support payments on behalf of the Board of Education under the Non-Departmental budget.

The County's local effort funding requirement under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act is determined through the prism of the major State formula aid programs which are each driven by unique formulas

based on wealth indicators and pupil populations. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act made several changes to local funding requirements, most significantly by requiring counties to provide the local share of each major education aid formula beginning in FY 2023. Previously, counties were only required to fund the local share of the Foundation formula.

The FY 2026 approved capital budget contains County funding in support of systemic repairs to schools in need of roofs, boilers, windows, piping, HVAC and elevators along with construction planned to continue for New Northern Adelphi Area HS, William Schmidt Educational Center, High Point HS and the Suitland HS Annex Replacement. Additionally, the budget includes funding in FY 2026 for Stand-Alone classrooms to address the capacity issues within the schools. The Board of Education continues a public-private partnership (P3) to support construction of new schools.

In addition, the FY 2026 approved budget includes \$143.0 million for the Community College, a \$6.3 million or 4.6% increase over the FY 2025 budget. The approved budget supports the College's strategic efforts toward operational efficiency, student life-cycle services, full implementation of the Pathways program, campus-wide technology upgrades and the Promise Scholarship Program which provides free tuition for graduates of County Public Schools and County residents. The CIP budget includes funding to support construction related to Marlboro Hall renovations, Novak Field House's roof and design for the Dr. Charlene Mickens Dukes Student Center. Area improvements under the College Improvements project will include replacing mechanical, life safety, environmental temperature building controls, roofs, carpet, signage, lighting, roadways/parking lots and upgrades to interior spaces.

The approved FY 2026 operating budget for the Memorial Library System is \$37.8 million, an increase of \$253,500 or 0.7% over the FY 2025 budget. Operating funds are provided for the Books from Birth Program, after-school programming and expenses for the new Langley Park Branch. FY 2026 capital funding supports a boiler replacement at the Oxon Hill branch, the replacement of a condensing unit at the Greenbelt branch, public restroom renovations at the Fairmont

Heights branch and furniture and technology upgrades at various branches.

## **2 – Safe Neighborhoods**

Prince George's County remains committed to providing safe communities for citizens, residents and visitors. The FY 2026 budget continues to support various crime prevention reduction initiatives, technology to improve responsiveness and safety and recruit classes to maintain the County's sworn ranks. The FY 2026 approved budget funding totals \$995.5 million, an increase of \$60.9 million, or 6.5%, over the FY 2025 budget.

The approved FY 2026 budget for the Fire/EMS Department includes two recruit classes (totaling 95 recruits) and additional funding for overtime costs. Funding will support clothing allowances, gas and oil and will provide for volunteer and emergency technician recruitment and retention efforts. The Office of Homeland Security receives funding to support public safety radio, records management, dispatch services and data voice for backup computers.

The approved budget for the Police Department includes funding for two recruit classes of 50 (totaling 100 positions), two recruit classes of experienced police officers (totaling 10 positions), as well as funding to support overtime costs, equipment maintenance and software technology for crime fighting efforts.

In FY 2026, the Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee will enter their fourth year of operations. The Police Accountability Board works in partnership with law enforcement agencies to develop strategies and recommendations to improve matters of policing, including, but not limited to, imposing effective discipline for proven police misconduct, implementing independent oversight of police policies and practices and increasing police accountability. The Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) seeks to improve police customer service and community responsiveness to citizens' complaints of police misconduct through the establishment of effective independent oversight of the police disciplinary process and its outcomes.

The Department of Corrections' approved budget funds two recruit classes of 25 new officers (totaling 50 positions) to the department and supports inmate food, transportation and medical service contracts. There is additional funding allocated for reentry services and behavioral health services for inmates.

The FY 2026 approved budget for the Circuit Court includes funding to support victim safety and offender accountability in cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking through the Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) grant and additional funding for jury fees. The Office of the Sheriff's budget supports continuing efforts to reduce outstanding warrants, with a focus on violent criminals and to reduce repeat domestic violence calls. Funding is provided in FY 2026 to support a new Psychologist to help with mental health within the Sheriff's Department. Funding for the Orphans' Court supports efforts to increase the number of decedents' assets and guardianships with assets intact through having one sitting judge review caseload and dockets. The Office of the State's Attorney's receives funding to support interpreter fees for the rise in court cases.

The six-year CIP budget includes FY 2026 funding for the continued design and construction of the District VI Police Station; additional funding for the multi-year Facilities Master Plan; construction for the Prince George's Homeless Shelter project will begin; renovations and roof replacements for various fire stations; and continued construction on the correctional center medical unit and detention housing units. Funding is also included for various courthouse renovation projects such as a refresh of the Marbury Wing.

## **3 – Economic Development**

The success of the County will be measured by the government's ability to grow the local economy. The Economic Development Incentive (EDI) fund started in 2012 with an investment of \$50 million to support conditional and conventional loans to attract and retain businesses. To date, the County has awarded \$53.6 million in EDI funding for 71 projects. This investment has created 8,682 County jobs and retained 6,345. Cumulatively, EDI funding has leveraged over \$1.37

billion dollars in total project investment in the County. The FY 2026 approved budget includes \$9.0 million from this fund to continue investing in the economy.

The County will continue its efforts to grow the residential, commercial and industrial construction economy by creating efficiencies in the permitting and inspections processes. The FY 2026 approved budget includes funding for contracts for third-party plan reviewers and online applications maintenance for current system modules. The budget includes additional permitting, inspections and site road modules for the permitting and licensing system for the Department of Permitting, Inspection and Enforcement to manage permit applications, short-term rental programs and improve the quality of commercial building inspections. Funding totaling \$3.5 million is included in the budget for continued support of the permitting and licensing system. Additionally, funding is allocated for two new investigator positions to support the County's Rent Stabilization program.

In addition, the approved budget also supports the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Redevelopment Authority's efforts to focus on expanding access to a broad range of quality housing, promoting and increasing the supply of affordable housing, and enabling families to become self-sufficient. In support of that, the FY 2026 proposed budget contains \$20.2 million from the Housing Investment Trust Fund for the Workforce Housing Gap Financing Program. Additionally, the proposed budget funds a consultant contract to create standard operating procedures and implementation guidelines for the Permanent Rent Stabilization and Protection Act.

#### **4 – Healthy Communities**

Recently, the Regional Health and Human Services Center (HHS) opened and serves as a centralized focal point for the delivery of services to older adults, persons with disabilities and family caregivers. The headquarters building will co-locate the administrative offices of the Health Department, the Department of Family Services and the Department of Social Services.

In this area, the health and human service agencies continue to restructure their service delivery and administrative structures to correctly align staff with

functions and utilize grant funding. These efforts have ensured that there will be no diminution of social services, particularly to the most vulnerable and at-risk populations.

The approved FY 2026 budget for the Department of Family Services continues to support increased access to intervention programs for at-risk youth and families via the administration of disconnected youth, childhood hunger and home visiting programs. Funding continues to support the Disability Training Apprenticeship, Options Counseling, Senior Environmental Assistance and Domestic Violence Human Trafficking programs. Funding in the Health Department supports efforts to help underinsured County residents with Health Assure. Funding also supports the addition of one Systems Analyst, to support the electronic medical records system, one Nurse Practitioner to support the HIV clinic and one Budget Management Analyst position. The Capital Improvement Plan for Health Services will include \$13.2 million dedicated to health facilities renovations at the Dyer Regional Health Center and the Largo Administration Building.

The Department of Social Services general and grant funding will continue to support the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Community Solutions in partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools. This program targets at-risk youth based on needs related to attendance, academic performance and a school progress index. In FY 2026, funding will be available for the Warm Nights Shelter to support the day-to-day operations of the resident services on a 24/7 basis and support for the Child Welfare Services division. Funding continues to support the Child Advocacy Center, Maryland Money Market Double Value Coupon, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to Health Program, Emergency Homelessness and the Child Protection Education Unit and the Prince George's Child Resources Center - Family Connects Program. Additional funding will be provided to support three security guards for the Promise Place and Shepard's Cove shelters.

Through agency appropriations and the discretionary grant programs, the County Government will continue its services to support the elderly, at-risk youth, those with no or substandard health insurance, and many others in need.

Finally, the County will continue to provide \$4.4 million in support to the County developmental disability administration (DDA) service providers. Funding for this effort is included in Non-Departmental - Grants and Transfer Payments.

## **5 – Quality of Life Supported by High Performance Government**

In FY 2026, the County continues its investment into various environmental programs to improve the quality of life and support Federal and State mandates. The approved FY 2026 funding for the Local Watershed Protection and Restoration Enterprise Fund totals \$23.8 million, a decrease of -\$343,000 or -1.4% under the FY 2025 budget and supports various operating expenses needed to meet federal and state water quality mandates to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The County also continues its investment in the Stormwater Management Enterprise Fund. In FY 2026, there is \$116.5 million to support DOE and DPWT. This is an increase of \$3.7 million or 3.3% over the FY 2025 budget. The capital program includes funding for the Clean Water Partnership.

The Solid Waste Management Enterprise Fund totals \$134.7 million, an increase of \$9.5 million or 7.6% over the FY 2025 budget. The budget supports recycling, composting, and County beautification efforts. Funding is provided to support the bulky trash collection program and address concerns of illegal dumping.

The FY 2026 approved budget also includes increased General Fund resources for veterinary services at the kennel and consulting services to support climate change program priorities. Funding also supports the purchase of kennel cage covers to improve the health and safety of staff, visitors and volunteers. There is \$2.75 million allocated in the capital program for renovations at the animal shelter.

The approved budget includes funding for the Department of Public Works and Transportation for expanded beautification and litter removal efforts and to assess, maintain and rehabilitate County roadways. The installation of new roadways and improvement to sidewalks, crosswalks and automated pedestrian signals is funded to reduce the number of pedestrian fatalities

and collisions on County-maintained roadways. Additionally, funding in DPWT supports service costs for TheBus transit services, the purchase of additional electric buses and charging infrastructure, Vision Zero traffic safety initiative, the Clean Lots Program, snow removal services and three new positions (Engineer 4G, Engineer 5G and Equipment Operator 2G) to support agency needs.

## **6 – Youth Development**

In FY 2026, the approved budget includes \$1.0 million to support the Summer Youth Enrichment Program (SYEP). The program capacity is normally facilitated through County, public and private partnerships and provides summer jobs for youth ages 14-24 and a job readiness program largely run by Prince George's Community College.

## **General Government Changes**

General government agencies as a group experience a -\$1.3 million decrease in funding (outside of Internal Service Funds) primarily due to compensation and fringe benefit adjustments, a decrease in recoveries from other funds and a decrease in general administrative and operational costs. The approved budget supports the following initiatives:

- Continued administration of the County's electronic filing/case management system that allows 24/7/365 access to online filings of complaints, financial disclosure statements and lobbyist registrations.
- Continued maintenance and sustainability of the PGC311 customer relationship management system.
- Funding for an additional Administrative Assistant 3G to manage the Fair Election Fund and other County-mandated tax credits, grants and incentive programs in the Finance Department.
- Continuation of the Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee.
- Additional funding for the Board of Elections to support a General Clerk position for election records maintenance.

- Funding for public safety promotional exams and mental health/psychological exams to support the Police Accountability Law requirements.
- Reducing acts of discrimination within the County to positively impact economic development.
- Funding for outreach to County-based businesses to provide current and prospective vendors with technical assistance as well as the recruitment of diverse businesses within the County.
- Additional funding in the Office of Finance to support a new Accountant position
- Additional funding in the Office of Management and Budget for a new Budget Management Analyst position to support the Grant Indirect Cost Rate Pilot program to access new revenue sources.
- Funding for personal service contractors to train staff and manage the Supply Schedule in the Office of Procurement.
- Funding in the Office of Central Services to support the Land Acquisition and Real Property (LARP) division for real estate development, lease management and managing the County's occupancy needs.

## FISCAL AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

The financial integrity of the County government is of utmost importance. The financial policies are a key element to maintaining this integrity. These financial management policies are designed to ensure the fiscal stability, provide long-term sustainability, and guide the development and administration of the annual operating and capital budgets, as well as the debt program.

The objectives of these fiscal policies are to:

1. Fund stable and sustainable public services to citizens and ensure the County's fiscal integrity is maintained.
2. Enhance the policy-making ability of the County Executive and County Council by providing accurate, reliable and timely information about County operations to guide important decisions which have significant fiscal impact.

3. Set forth operational principles that achieve a structurally balanced budget and maintain the County's AAA bond rating, while minimizing the cost of funding core government services and financial risks.
4. Ensure the appropriate use of all County funds through a sound financial system and strong internal controls.
5. Employ revenue policies that diversify revenue sources and expenditure policies that distribute the cost of government services fairly; provide adequate funds to operate desired programs and services; and make effective use of all applicable and appropriate sources of funding.

To meet these objectives, the County's policies are divided into seven general categories. These categories include: 1) Financial Planning Policies, 2) Revenue Policies, 3) Budget Management Policies, 4) Fund Balance Policies, 5) Debt Management Policies, 6) Cash Management/Investment Policies and 7) Financial Reporting Policies.

### 1. Financial Planning Policies

#### KEEP THE COUNTY IN A STRONG FINANCIAL CONDITION

The County will continue to maintain sound cash and financial management. Several approaches and models are employed to guide the County in this process. These models assist in revealing possible structural imbalances and provide an opportunity to take corrective actions. As a result, the County can further ensure the efficient use of public funds over the long term.

One approach to accomplish this is achieving and maintaining a balanced budget for all funds. A balanced budget means the total money the government receives in one year, including other financing sources such as transfers in and use of fund balances, is equal to the amount it spends on goods, services and debt payments that year. In addition, the County follows a variety of policies to maintain a healthy balance sheet and to maximize cash management strategies. In balancing the budget, the County considers the nature of the revenues (sustainable, one-time, program specific, etc.) and the

anticipated spending needs of the program or activity in the out-years.

### **LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The County implements its long-range financial planning policies using two methods - (1) the legislative approval of its six-year capital improvement program (CIP) budget and (2) internal financial forecasting and modeling. These practices are essential to plan for potential liabilities early and allocate resources accordingly. This ensures that County policies and/or decisions do not lead to unexpected financial burdens and measures the fiscal impact of present-day decisions on long-term outcomes. The County plans to strengthen its multi-year fiscal planning in FY 2026 to maintain its long-term financial sustainability.

#### **1. Capital Improvement Program**

The County develops and adopts a six-year CIP each year. This plan is approved by the County Council through the annual budget adoption process.

#### **2. Internal Financial Forecasting and Modeling**

Various forecasting and debt models are used during the County's planning process. These models include six-year revenue, expenditure, and fund balance projections for the general fund, and 30-year debt affordability models. These models are typically updated twice a year and as needed. They take into consideration several critical factors, including national and local economic outlook data, anticipated changes in federal, State and local laws and policies, and long-term governmental obligations. Assumptions include anticipated cost of living and merit increases for employees, maintaining adequate staffing levels across the government, rising health care expenses for active and retired employees, capital spending, risk management, pension and other long-term debt obligations.

### **INTERNAL SERVICE AND ENTERPRISE FUNDS**

The goal for internal service and enterprise funds is to provide certain services at rates that ensure self-sufficiency. An annual review of all programs that operate on an internal and enterprise fund basis is

prepared to ensure charges are not burdensome to the public or users, and that revenues continue in a self-supporting nature.

## **2. Revenue Policies**

### **DIVERSIFY REVENUES**

The County strives to broaden revenue bases and seek alternative revenues to fund programs and services. This mitigates vulnerability to reductions in programs and services due to economic downturns and decreases dependence on general taxes for government operations. This policy has become more important in recent years as the State continues to shift costs to local governments.

It is important to note that the County's ability to raise taxes is limited by a 1978 amendment to Section 817, Article VIII of the Prince George's County Charter. The amendment referred to as Tax Reform Initiative by Marylanders (TRIM) limits the County's ability to raise the property tax rate. However, the County is authorized to increase property tax rates based on Chapter 6 of the 2012 Laws of Maryland (Senate Bill 848). This law allows the County's real and personal property tax rates to be set higher than the rate authorized under the County's charter. The statute requires that any additional revenue generated because of the higher property tax rate is for the sole purpose of funding the approved budget of the local school system. In FY 2016, the real property tax rate was increased \$0.04 to \$1.00 per \$100 of assessable value. Additionally, the personal property tax rate rose \$0.10 to \$2.50 per \$100 of assessable value. All additional revenues generated from the tax rate increases are dedicated to the Board of Education. The increased property tax rates remain in FY 2026.

Due to the restriction of raising property tax rates only for education, it is essential for the County to seek other revenue sources and maintain an adequate level of fund balance to guard against financial uncertainties and risks.

### **USE CONSERVATIVE ASSUMPTIONS IN FORECASTING REVENUE GROWTH**

The fiscal integrity of a government is heavily dependent on the extent to which actual revenues meet or exceed expenditures. It is, therefore, essential that conservative

assumptions be used in forecasting revenues. During economic downturns, conservative revenue forecasts are particularly important because the slowdown in one sector of the economy can extend to other sectors, and in those circumstances, the County could experience a broader decline in revenues.

### **RELY ON CONTINUING REVENUE SOURCES**

Over the long term, a local government's fiscal health is greatly dependent on its ability to pay for current expenses with current revenues. Recurring expenditures should be funded from a stable stream of income, such as taxes, service charges and intergovernmental revenues, with little or no reliance on one-time sources. Non-recurring resources are allocated primarily to non-recurring expenditure items to ensure financial stability.

### **REVIEW USER FEES AND GRANT FUNDS**

The County completes an annual review of all user fees and charges to determine the extent to which the full cost of services is being recovered. The approval of changes to existing fees and new fees are approved as part of the annual budget process.

Grant funds are utilized to leverage County funds to supplement current programs and services. Inconsistent and/or fluctuating grants are not to be used to fund ongoing programs. Programs financed with grant funds are primarily budgeted in Special Revenue funds. Programs are adjusted to reflect the level of funding available.

### **ASSESS THE APPROPRIATENESS OF GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS**

Grant programs are often seen as ways to implement programs that are fully or mostly paid by other entities, usually the State or federal governments. However, some grant programs have limited life spans that require the County to pay for the full cost in subsequent years. The County will continue to implement only those grant-supported programs that balance important public services without unnecessary or unsustainable commitments of County funds in future years.

## **3. Budget Management Policies**

### **MAINTAIN PERIODIC FINANCIAL REPORTING AND MONITORING**

Financial reports in different formats are generated and systematically reviewed each month. Revenue collections and agency spending are monitored, and projections are updated on a regular basis. The County also closely monitors and analyzes changes in the national and local economies and in federal, State and local laws to take preventative measures in a timely manner against negative impacts. Projections and analytical reports are prepared periodically to facilitate management decisions. Particularly during challenging economic conditions and amid fiscal constraints, such periodic reporting and monitoring mechanisms are extremely important for maintaining the fiscal health of the County and allows the government to take needed fiscal actions in a timely manner.

### **MONITOR FRINGE BENEFIT COSTS**

County fringe benefit costs have been increasing, especially in the categories of pension and health insurance. As part of the effort to curtail health insurance costs, the County implemented mandatory prescription drug mail order and adjusted employee co-payments for generic prescription drugs in 2008. Additionally, several steps have been made to address growing pension costs over recent years, including increasing employee contribution rates and vesting time frame, modifying the retirement eligibility and establishing benefit caps. Additional measures will be explored in future collective bargaining negotiations.

Prudent fiscal management requires awareness of the forces effecting changes in the pension funds so that current and future liabilities can be met. The County strives to maintain a balance between providing quality healthcare benefits while also considering measures to control costs and limit future cost escalation.

### **CONTINUE RISK MANAGEMENT FUNDING**

Risk management costs have been increasing in recent years. The County's risk management strategy includes maintaining annual funding at or above the annual payments out of the risk management fund.

## BUDGET FOR LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

The County continues to contribute more funding than the annual PAYGO amount to retiree health benefits to meet the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirement and to gradually address the long-term funding of Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liabilities.

## 4. Fund Balance Policies

### MAINTAIN A GENERAL FUND CONTINGENCY RESERVE (COMMITTED RESERVE)

A Charter amendment adopted by the voters in November 2002 requires that the County maintain a contingency reserve for the General Fund. These funds are to be used as a possible source of funding in the event the County Council enacts emergency appropriations in response to unforeseen events. The reserve requirement is 5% of the General Fund budget. The contingency reserve was \$228.0 million at the end of FY 2024 and is projected to be \$237.1 million in FY 2025, and \$240.8 million in FY 2026.

### MAINTAIN A GENERAL FUND OPERATING RESERVE

To ensure a reasonable degree of stability in its programs over the long term, the County must have the budgetary flexibility to deal with events that can create instability such as emergency situations, severe economic fluctuations, or State and federal policy changes. Through FY 2023, the County policy was to retain an operating reserve equal to at least 2% of the general fund budget in addition to the contingency reserve. This percentage was increased to 3% in FY 2024 and 4% in FY 2025 with the final increase to 5% in FY 2026. This reserve is a continuing and non-lapsing source of unappropriated funds that can be used to offset the impact of one-time budget emergencies if a plan exists to replenish the reserves. The operating reserve was \$136.8 million at the end of FY 2024 (3%) and is projected to be \$189.6 million in FY 2025 (4%) and \$240.8 million in FY 2026 (5%).

### UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

The County has an unassigned fund balance created by a combination of effective expenditure controls and

higher-than-expected revenues during periods of strong economic growth from the last decade. This amount was \$358.5 million at the end of FY 2024. It is expected to be \$256.7 million in FY 2025 and \$198.8 million in FY 2026. In recent years, the County mitigated the combined impact of slower than normal growth of revenues due to the economic downturn and ongoing, non-discretionary expenditure needs by prudently using some undesignated fund balance both to provide one-time PAYGO funding for capital projects and to address fiscal challenges.

The fiscal challenge will likely remain in the near future as the moderate revenue recovery continues to not keep up with expenditure growth driven by collective bargaining agreements, fringe benefit cost increases, unfunded State mandates, and service needs. The County is in the process of taking corrective fiscal actions and developing multi-year strategies to protect its fund balance and restore balance between revenues and expenditures.

### MAINTAIN FUND BALANCE RESERVES IN OTHER FUNDS

Several important government functions are financed through funds other than the County's general fund, most notably the County's enterprise funds, internal service funds and special revenue funds (these fund types are described more fully in the Budget Guide section of this document). Although these funds are designed to be self-sustaining, they must contend with certain special factors that threaten their financial stability: they are much smaller than the general fund; they support specific, limited services; and they tend to rely on a narrower and less diverse set of revenue sources. For example, the Stormwater Management Enterprise Fund receives the bulk of its monies from an ad valorem property tax, making this fund vulnerable to potential fluctuations in that single revenue source. To minimize fiscal volatility in these funds, the County policy calls for maintaining adequate reserve levels in each fund group, as well as making needed expenditure reductions to restore a structural balance. The County also strives to maintain a positive fund balance in all special revenue funds.

## 5. Debt Management Policies

### MAINTAIN SOUND DEBT MANAGEMENT

The County is committed to keeping its debt level low despite rising needs for capital projects. Prince George's County debt level remains well below its self-imposed and statutory limits. Article 25A of the Annotated Code of Maryland states that the aggregate amount of indebtedness outstanding at the time of issuance shall not exceed 6% of the County's assessable base of real property plus 15% of the County's assessable base of personal property. In recent years, the County has successfully kept its net direct debt to assessable value ratio below 2%. The County's outstanding debt was \$1.76 billion, leaving a legal debt margin of \$5.87 billion.

While the current debt level is well below the statutory ceiling, the County adopts a more restrictive internal policy that requires that the ratio of debt service to County source revenues not exceed 8%. The debt level needs to be monitored closely in coming years as debt service payments are projected to pick up in the foreseeable future due to anticipated new debt to fund CIP projects and the expiration of one-time resources in out-years. The County also follows a strategy of retiring debt rapidly to mitigate debt obligations in future years and refinancing existing debt where applicable to generate savings. The anticipated bond sales in FY 2025 and FY 2026 will be conducted in accordance with the County's debt policies.

In addition, the County has been utilizing alternative resources other than general obligation bond revenue to fund capital projects. It plans to continue to include school surcharge, telecommunications tax and PAYGO capital revenues in its future CIP programs. Budgeting PAYGO funds annually helps lower long-term debt burdens and allows the County to follow best practices recommended by bond rating agencies. In FY 2026, the approved budget includes \$12.5 million in PAYGO funds. This includes funding for the Redevelopment Authority - Suitland Manor project (\$1,236,000), support for a WSSC capital program for septic maintenance (\$160,000), Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) – MD 210 Improvement (\$8,116,200) and the Office of Information Technology CIP projects (\$2,000,000).

## 6. Cash Management/Investment Policies

### MAINTAIN SOUND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The County Council adopted its investment policy in September 1995 (CR-52-1995). The local policy was subsequently amended in September 1998 and February 2006 due to changes in the Maryland State law.

The policy applies to the investment of all unexpended or surplus funds of the County. These funds are accounted for in the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and include the general fund, special revenue funds, capital project funds, enterprise funds, debt service funds, internal service funds, trust and agency funds. The policy does not cover the investment activities of pension funds. The funds are administered by separate trustees.

The primary objectives for the management of County funds are to (a) protect investment principal in the overall portfolio, (b) ensure sufficient liquidity to meet all cash flow requirements which might be reasonably anticipated and (c) maximize investment return consistent with risk limitations and prudent investment policies.

These objectives are met by implementing the following policies:

1. The County's investment officials shall use the "prudent person" standard in the context of managing an overall portfolio, considering the probable safety of their capital as well as the probable income to be derived.
2. The investment officials involved in the investment process will refrain from personal business activity that could conflict with the proper execution of the investment program or which could impair their ability to make impartial investment decisions.
3. The County will diversify its investments by security type and institution. With the exception of U.S. Treasury securities, authorized pools and money market funds, no more than 50% of the County's total investment portfolio will be invested in a single security type or with a single financial institution.

4. To the extent possible, the County will attempt to match investments with anticipated cash flow requirements. The County will not directly invest in securities maturing more than one year from the date of purchase, except for the investment of bond proceeds which may be invested up to three years.
5. Regarding suitable investments, the County's investments will conform without exception to Article 95, Section 22 and Section 6-222 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
6. The County will maintain a system of adequate internal controls to be compliant with the investment program policy and procedures.
7. The County will hold periodic investment strategy meetings with officials and document the resulting investment strategy approved to meet the policy.

## **7. Financial Reporting Policies**

The County's accounting and financial reporting systems will be maintained in conformance with all State and federal laws, generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and standards of the GASB and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Each year, an independent accounting firm performs an annual audit and issues an audit opinion that is included in the County's published Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The County aims to achieve an unqualified audit opinion, meaning that the financial records and statement are fairly and appropriately presented. The County Government's FY 2024 ACFR received an unqualified audit opinion.

The County's ACFR is submitted to the GFOA Certification of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Reporting Program annually. The financial report should be in conformity with finance related legal and contractual provisions, disclose thoroughness and detail sufficiency, and minimize ambiguities and potentials for misleading inferences. It is important to note that the County has been participating in GFOA's Certification of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Reporting Program and Distinguished Budget Presentation programs for over 20 years.

The County's budget is submitted to GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Program annually. The budget should satisfy criteria as a financial and programming policy document, as a comprehensive financial plan, as an operation's guide for all organizational units, and as a communication device for all significant budgetary issues, trends and resource choices. The County's budget has received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for many years including FY 2025. Moreover, its FY 2015 budget received a special recognition from GFOA for its performance measures, making the County the only government in Maryland and in the DC metropolitan areas that received this special recognition that year.

Financial systems will maintain and enhance internal controls to monitor revenues, expenditures and program performance on an ongoing basis. In FY 2026, bimonthly financial reports will continue to be provided to elected officials and senior management to help make immediate budget and policy adjustments where needed.