

# 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.

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## STRATEGIC POLICIES

### The County Government Vision and Strategic Plan

Our 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. The County strives to maintain a AAA bond rating from two of the three bond rating agencies on a \$5.9 billion budget by continuing to make intentional, prudent, and focused decisions that positively impact the lives of Prince Georgians.

#### Vision -ELEVATE

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 first class education system, equitable 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 seven, Policy Focus Areas critical to the long-term success of our County and demonstrate commitment to Elevate Prince George's County.

#### Principles

- Transparent government that is accountable to those we serve.
- Improve/enhance technology within the government to ensure that services provided to constituents are efficient and effective.

- 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. First Class Education
2. Public Safety and Accountability
3. Economic Growth and Development
4. Environment
5. Equitable Communities
6. Transportation and Infrastructure
7. Collaborative Government

#### 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

The Countywide 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, Countywide 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 can be better served.

CountyStat serves as the County's centralized performance management and accountability division, ensuring that Countywide priorities are operationalized through measurable goals, structured reporting, and data-driving decision-making. CountyStat partners with agencies to align performance measures, operational activities, and fiscal resources with the County Executive's strategies priorities. The division facilitates structured performance analysis, executive reporting and cross agency coordination to improve service delivery, transparency, and operational efficiency across the County.

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

CountyStat has implemented significant structural, governance, and operational enhancements to modernize the County's performance management framework. Performance Management continues to serve as a tool to facilitate executive decision-making and improve service delivery. The system remains dynamic and adaptable, addressing evolving priorities while tailoring business processes to provide actionable analysis and recommendations.

Major elements include:

- Structure CountyStat sessions/meetings focusing on priority objectives/areas;
- Structure priority alignment review/analysis and reporting frameworks;
- Standardize agency mission goals, strategies, and performance measures;
- Track analyze, recommend, and communicate monthly report;
- Maintain a bi-annual agency performance assessment process;
- Standardize Countywide data governance and methodologies.

Major FY 2026 achievements include:

- Established a formal CountyStat reporting structure clarifying roles, communication channels, and executive escalation pathways;
- Developed standardized reporting templates to improve consistency and executive level briefings;
- Created and implemented a bi-annual agency performance assessment process to evaluate agency progress and alignment with leadership priorities;
- Developed and published a CountyState playbook onboarding framework, and data handling guide;
- Restructured the performance rework methodology to improve clarity and operational relevance;
- Initiated the priority alignment project requiring agencies to submit Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) tied directly to leadership priorities;
- Continued execution of the data dictionary program to improve data validity and reliability;
- Maintain performance data across 41 County agencies and quasi-governmental entities;
- Maintain and submitted required federal reporting for U.S. Treasury and federally funded programs including from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA);
- Provided ongoing training and technical assistance in forecasting and performance analytics;
- Collaborated on targeted cross-agency operational improvement initiatives.

In FY 2027, strategic focuses will include:

- Executive Dashboard Modernization: Development of centralized dashboards providing real-time KPI monitoring and trend analysis;
- Predictive and Proactive Analytics: Expansion of forecasting and scenario-based modeling to support budget planning and risk identification;
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) Review and Reform: Countywide workflow analysis and process redesign recommendation;
- Performance-Based Budget Integration: Embedding KPIs into fiscal planning and executive review processes;

- Data Governance and Quality Certification: Implementation of standardized data validation and methodology review framework;
- Rapid Response Performance Reviews: Short-cycle diagnostic reviews for high priority operational challenges;
- Agency Data Literacy and Capacity Building: Continued expansion of KPI development and forecasting training;
- CountyStat All-Hands Performance Summit: Launch of an annual Countywide summit convening agency leadership performance and executive stakeholders to review progress on priority alignment, share best practices, highlight high-performing initiatives, reinforce accountability standards, and set performance expectations for the upcoming fiscal year.

### Long-term Outcome

Through these efforts, CountyStat will continue evolving into centralized performance intelligence and analytics partner for executive leadership, strengthening transparency, accountability, and operational excellence across all County agencies.

## 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 Countywide vision is listed below along with the aligned budget in FY 2027.

### 1 – First Class Education

The FY 2027 proposed budget continues to support the County's goal of excellent education. The FY 2027 budget includes \$3.0 billion in funding for the Board of Education, an increase of \$20.8 million or 0.7% over the FY 2026 budget. Funding for the Board constitutes 59.8% of all General Fund spending in the FY 2027 budget. The County's contribution represents a decrease, of \$852,200 million under FY 2026 (from \$969.6 million to \$968.7 million) but meets the minimum local share contribution required by the State. The proposed budget

includes a net increase in employee compensation negotiated commitments; post-employment benefit increases; continued support of universal pre-kindergarten; Special Education services; as well as providing additional student-based budgeting resources to the schools. FY 2027 is the fifth year of the local effort requirements under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act in which the County's local share is run through the prism of the major State formula aid programs which are each driven by unique formulas based on County wealth indicators and pupil populations. In FY 2025, energy and telecommunication tax collections were no longer included as additional contributions above the mandated local share per an approved change in State law. In FY 2027, the County is funding \$42.0 million for Alternative Construction Financing payments on behalf of the Board of Education under Non-Departmental

The FY 2027 proposed 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, High Point HS and the Suitland HS Annex Replacement. Additionally, the budget includes funding in FY 2027 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 2027 proposed budget includes \$147.1 million for the Community College, a \$1.1 million or 0.8% increase over the FY 2026 budget. The proposed 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 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget includes funding to support construction, for the Dr. Charlene Mickens Dukes Student Center project, design work for the Lanham Hall/Duke Student Center Parking Garage, and initial design work for a Campus Concept Master Plan for the Southern Region Campus. Funding is provided for 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 proposed FY 2027 operating budget for the Memorial Library System is \$38.9 million, an increase of \$1.1 million, or 2.8% over the FY 2026 budget. Operating funds are provided for the continued investments in key early literacy initiatives such as Books from Birth Program, and, after-school programming. The FY 2027, CIP funds will support a boiler replacement at the Oxon Hill, branch, replacement compressors at the Spauldings branch, elevator upgrades at Fairmount Heights and Upper Marlboro branches, and information technology upgrades. The Hillcrest Branch Replacement project has been accelerated. Site studies and land acquisition are planned in FY 2027.

## 2 – Public Safety and Accountability

Prince George's County remains committed to providing safe communities for citizens, residents, and visitors. The FY 2027 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 2027 proposed budget funding totals \$1.1 billion, an increase of \$75.1 million, or 7.5%, over the FY 2026 budget.

The proposed FY 2027 budget for the Fire/EMS Department includes two recruit classes (totaling 100 ) and additional funding to support 46 new sworn positions. Funding will support clothing allowances, vehicle repairs, 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 the new Code Compliance Division (transferred from the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement's former Enforcement Division).

The proposed budget for the Police Department includes funding for three recruit classes of 50 (totaling 150 ), one recruit class of experienced police officers (totaling five), as well as funding to support overtime costs, equipment maintenance, and software technology for crime fighting efforts.

In FY 2027, the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) will continue their 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 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. Funding sources for the PAB and ACC can be found under the General Government section of the proposed book.

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

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 2027 to support additional vehicle maintenance cost.

The Office of the State's Attorney's receives funding to support interpreter fees to better serve all language speakers in need of assistance.

The six-year CIP budget includes FY 2027 funding for the continued construction at District VI Police Station; additional funding for the multi-year Facilities Master Plan; the continuation of the National Harbor Public Safety Building project, and continue construction on the Detention Center Housing Renovations for housing units 14 and 15. Funding is also included for the Office of Homeland Security to update the County's radio communications infrastructure and refresh public safety radio communication equipment.

### 3 – Economic Growth and Development

The success of the County will be measured by the government's ability to grow the local economy. In 2012,

the County launched the Economic Development Incentive (EDI) fund with an investment of \$50.0 million in conditional and conventional loans to attract and retain businesses. To date, the County has awarded \$53.7 million in EDI funding for 72 projects. This investment has created 685 County jobs and retained 6,347. Cumulatively, EDI funding has leveraged over \$1.38 billion dollars in total project investment in the County. The FY 2027 proposed budget includes \$9.0 million from this fund to continue investing in the economy.

The FY 2027 budget continues to provide General Fund operating support for the County's economic development agencies totaling \$11.0 million for the Economic Development Corporation, Financial Services Corporation, Experience Prince George's Employ Prince George's, and the Arts and Humanities Council. Additionally, \$1.5 million is provided for two programs to support small and local businesses including the Local Business Assistance Program (\$1.0 million) and the Surety Bond Program (\$500,00). The Redevelopment Authority's capital budget supports the continued construction of the Glenarden Apartments and the Suitland Manor redevelopment projects. The Glenarden Apartments project projecting gross sales revenue to be an estimated \$10.1 million.

### 4 – Environment

The County seeks to instill a sense of pride in all residents by developing an anti-littering campaign as part of the overall beautification efforts. This campaign supports enforcement, infrastructure, and policy changes. The efforts promote pride throughout the County and encourage residents, visitors, and businesses to protect and preserve the environment. The County remains dedicated to improving the quality of the environment and ensuring the sustainability of resources for future residents.

In FY 2027, the County continues its investment into various environmental programs to improve the quality of life and support federal and State mandates. The proposed FY 2027 funding for the Local Watershed Protection and Restoration Enterprise Fund totals \$24.5 million, an increase of \$649,700 or 2.7% over the FY 2026 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 District Enterprise Fund of \$120.1 million in FY 2027, with an increase of \$3.6 million or 3.1% over the FY 2026 budget. The CIP includes funding for the Major Reconstruction Program, which will redesign, reconstruct, and rehabilitate major drainage and flood control projects throughout the County.

The Solid Waste Management Enterprise Fund totals \$139.9 million an increase of \$5.2 million or 3.9% over the FY 2026 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.

### **5 – Equitable Communities**

In FY 2027 proposed budget continues to include \$3.8 million for the University of Maryland Medical System (formerly Dimensions Health System), including resources for debt service payments for refunded debt. Joint efforts on behalf of the State and the County will ensure financial stability in the system. In FY 2025, 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, located at 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 population.

The proposed FY 2027 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 Community Developer, and one Nutritionist to support the Food as Medicine Program. The Capital Improvement Plan for Health Services will include \$9.1 million for repairs at the Cheverly Clinic, security, plumbing and HVAC upgrades at the Dyer Regional Health Center, and construction at the Greenbelt Health Center.

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 2027, 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 Child Welfare Services. Funding continues to support the Child Advocacy Center, Maryland Money Market Double Value Coupon, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to Health Program, Emergency Homelessness, the Child Protection Education Unit, and the Prince George's Child Resource Center- Family Connects Program. Additional funding will be provided to support operational costs for the Promise Place and Shepherd'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.

In FY 2027, the proposed 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 14-22 and a job readiness program largely run by Prince George's Community College.

Finally, the County will continue to provide \$4.6 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.

## 6 – Transportation and Infrastructure

The proposed 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 improvements 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 DPW&T supports service costs for TheBus transit services, Vision Zero traffic safety initiative, snow removal services, street sweeping, and tree services.

The proposed 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 2027 proposed budget contains \$21.2 million from the Housing Investment Trust Fund for the Workforce Housing Gap Financing Program and the Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program. Additionally, the proposed budget will support the County's affordable housing production goals by funding new affordable multi-family rental projects through the HOME Investment Partnership Program.

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 2027 proposed 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. In addition, funding in the amount of \$3.9 million will provide support for the permitting and licensing system.

## 7 - Collaborative Government

General government agencies as a group experience a -\$14.8 million increase in funding (outside of Internal Service Funds) primarily due to compensation and fringe benefit adjustments, and an increase in operational costs to support agency needs. The proposed 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.
- Continuation of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and Administrative Charging Unit (ACC). Resources totaling \$1.3 million are provided to the ACC, while the PAB is allocated \$818,200.
- Additional funding for the Board of Election to support improvement to safety and services at polling sites as well as additional temporary staffing from the gubernatorial election.
- 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.
- Funding for the Fair Election Fund which supports citizens to run for the office on strength of their ideas, supported by small donations from residents and others.
- Additional funding in the Office of Management and Budget for two funded new Budget Management Analysts to support operational needs.
- Increase resources for the Office of Law to support two new Associate County Attorneys and one Administrative Specialist to help with the growing case load.

- 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. One new Contractual Services Officer was added in FY 2027 to support the capital projects program.

## 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 restore the County's AAA bond rating with all three rating agencies, 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 increased \$0.04 to \$1.00 per \$100 of assessable value. Additionally, the personal property tax rate rose from \$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 2027.

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 is 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 retirement eligibility and establishing benefit caps. Additional measures will be explored in future collective bargaining negotiations.

Prudent fiscal management requires awareness of the forces affecting 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. For FY 2026, the County plans to assign \$10 million of assigned fund balance to an additional OPEB payment.

**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 \$236.5 million at the end of FY 2025 and is projected to be \$246.8 million in FY 2026, and \$248.5 million in FY 2027.

### **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 percentage remains at 5% of the general fund budget for FY 2027. This reserve is a continuing and non-lapsing source of un-appropriated 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 \$189.2 million at the end of FY 2025 (4%) and is projected to be \$246.8 million in FY 2026 (5%) and \$248.5 million in FY 2027 (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 \$338.6 million at the end of FY 2025. It is expected to be \$318.7 million in FY 2026 and \$315.3 million in FY 2027. 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. The County is committed to no use of unassigned fund balance in FY 2026 and FY 2027

### **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 \$1.79 billion, leaving a legal debt margin of \$7.00 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 2026 and FY 2027 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 2027, the proposed budget includes \$4.2 million in PAYGO funds. This includes funding for the Redevelopment Authority (\$1,236,000), Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) – MD 210 Improvement (\$8,077,500), 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 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. 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 2027, bimonthly financial reports will continue to be provided to elected

official and senior management to help make immediate budget and policy adjustments where needed.