

# Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) - Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review Summary

## Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget

Expenditures by Fund Type					
Fund	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
General Fund	\$ 37,066,300	\$ 39,195,400	\$ 42,577,900	\$ 5,511,600	14.9%
Recoveries	(23,927,500)	(23,927,500)	(16,030,700)	7,896,800	-33.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,138,800</b>	<b>\$ 15,267,900</b>	<b>\$ 26,547,200</b>	<b>\$ 13,408,400</b>	<b>102.1%</b>
Category					
Category	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	\$ 19,941,800	\$ 21,054,400	\$ 22,261,200	\$ 2,319,400	11.6%
Fringe Benefits	6,700,600	6,817,100	8,351,500	1,650,900	24.6%
Operating Expenses	10,423,900	11,323,900	11,965,200	1,541,300	14.8%
Recoveries	(23,927,500)	(23,927,500)	(16,030,700)	7,896,800	-33.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,138,800</b>	<b>\$ 15,267,900</b>	<b>\$ 26,547,200</b>	<b>\$ 13,408,400</b>	<b>102.1%</b>
Authorized Staffing - All Classifications					
Fund	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	Change	% Change	
General Fund	308	308	0	0.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	

## FY 2023 Proposed Budget – Key Highlights

- Increased Compensation: Decrease in staff attrition and salary lapse, FY 2022 merit increases: \$2,319,400
- Increased Fringe: Compensation adjustments and higher fringe rate: \$1,650,900
- Increased Operating Cost: \$1,541,300. Due primarily to increases in consulting contracts for the Clean Lot program to support the County's beautification and litter reduction efforts, commercial inspections and engineering services. In addition, funding increased due to technology cost allocation charge, communication services and training.
- Decreased Cost Recoveries: (\$7,896,800) due to the elimination of Solid Waste Management Enterprise Funds for DPIE expenditures.
- Revenue increases are reflecting a strengthening economy resulting in increased residential and commercial construction activity, including several mega projects in the production pipeline in the County, following the slowdown caused by the pandemic in prior years, and recent increases in permit and license fees.
- Authorized Positions: Remain unchanged from FY 2022 approved levels: 308
- Vacancies (As of 4/1/22): 49 FT General Fund positions (40 Funded/9 Unfunded)
- Supplemental FY 2022 Budget Request: \$2,129,100 for the Permitting and Licensing System (PLS) implementation. Additional funding to cover two (2) merit increases for eligible employees which were budgeted in Non-Departmental – Contingency in FY 2022.
- Other:
  - High overtime expenses due to attrition as a result of consistent separation from resignations, retirements etc., which have outpaced the Departments efforts to fill vacant positions.
  - DPIE is struggling to retain and recruit to fill vacancies to address work backlog and increased service demands in a timely manner due to salary structures that are not competitive with neighboring jurisdictions and a lengthy hiring process that takes at least six (6) months, and longer if few candidates apply. This has resulted in the inability to meet necessary workload demands and procedural deadlines and more customer complaints regarding longer wait times for services.
  - DPIE is seeking inspection contract services to augment the staffing shortages.
  - The planned partnership with the County's Police Department Aviation unit helicopter and drones to view violations in remote areas of the County from the air.

- Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic Impact – See additional details on the report attached and the Department’s First Round Responses.
  - The Homeowners’ Center for processing permit applications has been delayed. The agency has implemented the Virtual Permit Center so customers can use the walk-through permit process.
  - All plan reviews are conducted online with a web-based system.
  - Permitting and licensing activity are gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels, as well as construction inspection.



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## Office of Audits and Investigations

April 19, 2022

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Mel Franklin, Chair  
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED)

THRU: Turkessa Green, County Auditor *JWG*

FROM: Alex Hirtle, Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst *AH*

RE: Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE)  
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review

#### Budget Overview

The FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (“DPIE” or the “Agency”) is approximately \$26.5 million, representing an increase of approximately \$13.4 million, or 102.1%, over the FY 2022 Approved Budget after recoveries. The increase is primarily due to reductions in recoverable expenditures from the Enterprise Funds, increases in the fringe benefit rate, and increases in compensation costs due to merit increases and decreases in staff attrition and salary lapse. Additionally, there is an increase in operating costs for the Clean Lot program to support litter reduction efforts and increases in contracts to augment Inspections Division staffing and engineering consultants. In FY 2023, the Agency’s proposed funding is derived from the Stormwater Management Fund (~\$16.03 million, or ~38%), and the General Fund (~\$26.55 million, or ~62%). DPIE recoveries have been eliminated from the Solid Waste Enterprise fund in the FY 2023 proposed budget.

#### Supplemental FY 2022 Budget Request

In FY 2022 the Department expects to request a supplemental amount of \$2,129,100 for the Permitting and Licensing System (PLS) implementation. An additional budget request is needed to cover two (2) merit increases for eligible employees which were budgeted in Non-Departmental – Contingency in FY 2022.

#### Approved Fiscal Year 2022 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2023

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Compensation	\$ 20,709,821	\$ 19,941,800	\$ 21,054,400	5.6%	\$ 22,261,200	\$ 2,319,400	11.6%
Fringe Benefits	7,378,184	6,700,600	6,817,100	1.7%	8,351,500	1,650,900	24.6%
Operating Expenses	8,263,295	10,423,900	11,323,900	8.6%	11,965,200	1,541,300	14.8%
Sub-Total	\$ 36,351,300	\$ 37,066,300	\$ 39,195,400	5.7%	\$ 42,577,900	\$ 5,511,600	14.9%
Recoveries	(24,879,400)	(23,927,500)	(23,927,500)	0.0%	(16,030,700)	7,896,800	-33.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,471,900</b>	<b>\$ 13,138,800</b>	<b>\$ 15,267,900</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>\$ 26,547,200</b>	<b>\$ 13,408,400</b>	<b>102.1%</b>

## **Compensation, Staffing and Recruitment**

- For FY 2023, compensation expenditures are budgeted at approximately \$22.3 million, and represent an increase of approximately \$2.32 million, or 11.6%, over the FY 2022 Approved Budget, primarily due to merit increases, and decreases in staff attrition and salary lapse. The Agency anticipates accruing \$1,468,500 salary lapse in FY 2023. Compensation costs in the amount of approximately \$9.6 million is proposed to be recovered from the Stormwater Management fund in FY 2023.
- FY 2023 proposed compensation includes funding for 295 out of 308 full-time employees, eight (8) personal service contracts for hearing officers and seven (7) temporary/seasonal employees. As of March 10, 2022, there are 49 General Fund vacant positions, 40 of which are funded and nine (9) unfunded. Of the approved FY 2022 staffing complement, the Department is currently recruiting 22 positions, a selection has been made on 13 positions, five (5) positions are on hold, there are eight (8) positions requesting approval to fill, and the remaining vacancies are currently in the recruiting/interviewing process. A listing of the vacant FY 2022 and proposed vacant FY 2023 general funded positions are shown in Dpie's response to *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Q.3, Attachment 1 and Q.10 Attachment 2*.

### **Authorized Staffing Count**

	<b>FY 2022 Approved</b>	<b>FY 2023 Proposed</b>	<b>Change Amount</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
Full-Time	308	308	0	0.0%
Part-Time	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

- Overtime in FY 2022 is being projected at \$399,847, or \$90,147, over the FY 2022 approved amount. Proposed FY 2023 overtime expenditure is \$391,800.
- The Agency is reporting several factors leading to high overtime expenses, largely as a result of attrition, due to the consistent separation from resignations, retirements etc., which have outpaced the Department's efforts to fill vacant positions. The Agency is struggling to retain and recruit staff to fill vacancies in a timely manner due to salary structures that are not competitive with neighboring jurisdictions. Currently, Dpie's Inspection Division needs additional inspector positions to be filled to meet inspection demands, and the Division is advertising a solicitation for inspection contract services to augment the staffing shortages.
- Dpie's attrition rate as of March 1, 2022 is 8.9%, and their anticipated attrition rate for FY 2023 is expected to be 7%, with the key factors contributing to the current attrition level as: employee resignations, regular retirements, and terminations.
- The Agency is reporting some of the following in its efforts to address attrition and retention:
  - Offering potential candidates' salaries comparable to OHRM's recommendations for the Construction and Property Standards Inspectors.
  - Considering offering incentives such as education and training reimbursement programs.
  - Flexible work schedules.
  - Allowing Inspectors to take home their County-assigned vehicles if they reside in the County.

- Awaiting finalization of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) compensation study for the Engineer class of work to use as a guide to retain Engineers and offer potential candidates a comparable salary.
- DPIE submitted a Compensation Study request dated December 27, 2019, through the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) to OHRM for the Engineer class of work (grades G23-G26-G30). Dpie met with OHRM on January 14, 2021 to discuss the engineer compensation study process, and OHRM is currently in the process of gathering data to finalize their analysis. In October 2021, Dpie reserved and provided OHRM with funding information to support an occupational study of the Engineering Technician class of work to analyze classification and compensation.

### **Fringe Benefits**

- In FY 2023, Fringe Benefit expenditures are proposed at approximately \$8.4 million, representing an increase of approximately \$1.7 million, or 24.6%, over the FY 2022 approved budget level, as a result of the compensation adjustments and higher fringe rates.

### **Revenues**

- Revenue totals reflect actual and projected collections of building and grading permits, street use permits, business and other license revenues.
- FY 2021 actual revenues were \$34.0 million, estimated FY 2022 revenues of \$30.4 million, and projected FY 2023 revenues of \$30.6 million each. Revenue increases reflect a strengthening economy resulting in increased residential and commercial construction activity in the County following the slowdown caused by the pandemic in prior years. Other drivers of the increase in revenues are attributed to:
  - Implementation of a 10% increase in some permit and license fees in February 2022.
  - Updating the Building Valuation Data (BVD) permit fee multipliers by the International Code Council (effective April 2022), to ensure permit fees are more realistic estimates of the value of construction costs.

### **Operating Expenses – General Fund**

- FY 2023 General Fund operating expenditures are proposed at approximately \$11.97 million, and are comprised of the following major items:

■ Operating Contracts Services	\$8,009,600
■ Office Automation	2,480,900
■ Vehicle Equipment Repair/Maintenance	400,000

- The accompanying table compares the FY 2023 Proposed Budget operating expenses for the General Fund with the FY 2022 Approved Budget operating expenses. In nine (9) of the categories, the FY 2023 Proposed Budget increases planned spending from the FY 2022 approved budget level, and in three (3) categories spending is proposed to decrease. Proposed spending levels remain unchanged for four (4) categories in FY 2023 from the FY 2022 approved budget level. Three (3) categories do not include any funding for the FY 2022 and FY 2023 Fiscal Years and are included for the purpose of historical reference. *See table on the following page.*

- The amounts previously budgeted in FY 2021 under the line item Allowances, for the monthly stipend for each member of the Nuisance Abatement Board (\$12,000), has been moved to the Miscellaneous line item beginning in FY 2022.

General Fund Operating Objects	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved Budget	FY 2023 Proposed	FY 2022 - FY 2023	
				\$ Change	% Change
Operating Contracts Services**	\$ 5,631,559	\$ 6,730,900	\$ 8,009,600	1,278,700	19.0%
Office Automation	1,483,366	2,351,600	2,480,900	129,300	5.5%
General & Administrative	1,649	10,200	63,500	53,300	522.5%
Vehicle Equipment Repair/Maintenance	386,609	362,500	400,000	37,500	10.3%
Training	21,073	197,900	218,800	20,900	10.6%
Telephone	266,854	218,400	235,300	16,900	7.7%
Office and Operating Equipment Non-Capital	-	-	6,300	6,300	N/A
General Office Supplies	74,266	170,000	173,600	3,600	2.1%
Printing	3,294	25,900	27,500	1,600	6.2%
Office Equipment Rental/Lease	203,345	207,800	207,800	-	0.0%
Gas & Oil	83,322	115,000	115,000	-	0.0%
Miscellaneous*(Previously Allowances)	-	12,000	12,000	-	0.0%
Advertising	81	2,700	2,700	-	0.0%
Allowances *(Moved to Miscellaneous in FY 2022)	7,700	-	-	-	N/A
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	56,467	-	-	-	N/A
Information Technology Equipment Non-Capital	12,119	-	-	-	N/A
Periodicals	29,839	7,000	5,100	(1,900)	-27.1%
Membership Fees	1,104	7,500	5,100	(2,400)	-32.0%
Data/Voice	624	4,500	2,000	(2,500)	-55.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,263,271</b>	<b>\$ 10,423,900</b>	<b>\$ 11,965,200</b>	<b>1,541,300</b>	<b>14.8%</b>

\*\*Note: Amount revised per Agency and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) collaboration. See revised Attachment #3 and #4 of DPIE's First Round Response.

Source: FY 2023 First Round Budget Response, Attachment 3 (Revised)

- Proposed FY 2023 Operating Contracts are increasing by approximately \$1.3 million from the Approved FY 2022 amount due to OMB's approval of DPIE's revised enhancements, which includes On-Call Plan Reviewers, Contractual Plan Reviewers, Limbic IT Support, Limbic Momentum System Implementation, and Inspection Scheduling.

### **Recoveries – General Fund**

- FY 2023 proposed recoveries are approximately \$16.0 million, a decrease of \$7,896,800, or 33.0%, below the FY 2022 Approved Budget level. The significant decrease is due to the elimination of recoveries in the Enforcement Division from the Waste Management Enterprise Fund. *A breakdown of Estimated FY 2022 Recoveries compared to the FY 2023 Proposed amounts can be viewed on the recoveries chart located in the First Round Responses, page 9, Question 20.*

## **Highlights**

- The majority of the Agency's budgetary resources are utilized for staffing, permitting and licensing, site/road plan review, building plan review, construction standards inspections, and code enforcement activities.
- Some of DPIE's major achievements in FY 2022, to date, include the following:
  - Amazon permits - opened three sites in one day
  - National Capital Business Park - Upper Marlboro
  - Six Public School P3 projects
  - WMATA Headquarters – New Carrollton
  - M-NCPPC Headquarters - Largo
  - Doctors Hospital Behavioral Health Unit - Lanham
  - Greater Laurel Hospital - Laurel
  - Hampton Park Mixed Use Redevelopment - Landover
  - Target - Upper Marlboro
  - Schultz Affordable Housing for Retirement - Upper Marlboro

Please refer to the Agency's *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Responses Q.21-* for a complete list and specifics of the Agency's major program successes and achievements in FY 2022, to date.

- The Agency is reporting the following issues in FY 2022 which have impeded planned progress, and could further inhibit FY 2023 planned program performance and operations, and possible options to address some of the issues:
  - High employee turnover rate, unfilled vacancies, and a hiring process that takes at least six (6) months and longer if few candidates apply, to address work backlog and increased service demands. Possible solutions include:
    - Alternative recruitment methods targeting college students.
    - Hiring contract plan review agencies to augment staff.
    - The need for an expedited hiring program and a higher salary structure to recruit and retain staff.
  - Need to cross-train staff in water and sewer planning to avoid reliance on one individual, which is being hindered by unfilled vacancies.
  - Lack of consistent and adequate funding for the Clean Lot program.
  - Start of the Green Building Code Review process in April 2022. Currently the Agency does not have hired staff for this function.
- The Agency is reporting that it's most important program goals and objectives for FY 2023 are:
  - Filling vacant positions in a timely manner and retaining staff;
  - Continuing the replacement of the legacy permitting system;
  - Full implementation of Residential Third-Party Inspection Program;
  - Contracting third-party inspectors for the smaller commercial projects;
  - Updating legislation to notify home purchasers of unpermitted construction;
  - Demolishing unsafe and blighted buildings;
  - Developing and implementing Green Building Plan Review, as required by Zoning Rewrite;
  - Developing an understanding of new zones by implementing changes in the permitting and enforcement; and

-  Participating with Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and other Counties to evaluate technical and code requirements pertaining to climate resilience.
- The Agency is reporting that some of its current and planned partnerships include those who:
  -  provided design review and permitting services virtually and in coordination with other County agencies;
  -  utilize the County's Police Department Aviation unit helicopter and drones to view violations in remote areas of the County from the air;
  -  participated in virtual meetings hosted by the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to facilitate streamlined permitting of new projects;
  -  partnered with Maryland Building Industry Association to review changes in legislation, codes, design criteria, and process streamlining for permitting land development and building projects;
  -  partnered with the M-NCPPC to publish more floodplain layers on PG Atlas;
  -  collaborate with the Fire Department for commercial building, fire inspections, and damage investigations;
  -  partnered with DOE and DPW&T to address NPDES MS4 consent decree; and
  -  met with both the City of Bowie and the City of Greenbelt to discuss the short-term rental process.

The full list of partnerships can be viewed on DPIE's *First Round Responses, Question 21e*.

- DPIE reports that overall, 79.9% of cases received by CountyClick (3-1-1 Call Center) were closed on time in FY 2021, based on individual service level agreements (SLAs). The majority of calls received involved:
  -  Residential Property Concerns – 7,951 cases (69.3% on-time closure rate)
  -  Rental License Inspection (single family)- 3,733 cases (96.3% on-time closure rate)
  -  Rental Issues, Apartment Unit – 1,461 cases (89.7% on-time closure rate)
  -  Vacant Property Concerns – 1,130 cases (87.3% on-time closure rate)
  -  Rental Issues, Single Family Home – 1120 cases (73.1% on-time closure rate)

The full chart of information displaying the Agency's 3-1-1 & CountyClick data for FY 2021 can be viewed on DPIE's *First Round Responses, Question 23*.

- DPIE is reporting that the voluntary and anonymous web-based Customer Satisfaction Survey shows overall service ratings of 2.3 (FY 2020), 2.7 (FY 2021), 2.6 (FY 2022 YTD), on a scale of 4, which equates to a C+ overall rating for FY 2020-2021 and which has remained a C+ in FY 2022 YTD. Staff Professionalism and Courtesy has earned the highest ratings of a B+. Ease of using ePlan/ProjectDox, Time to Complete Service, and Ease of Obtaining Assistance by Website and Phone had the lowest ratings with a grade of C+.
- DPIE has provided details on specifics related to the implementation of certain legislation affecting the Agency as follows:
  - **Rental License Registration** – CB-011-2018 - Short Term Rental Bill – Provide application intake, code enforcement compliance and maintain statistical information for short term rentals.
    -  The Enforcement Division short-term rental and multi-family rental have transitioned their operations to the new Momentum licensing process.
    -  This new online process allows customers to apply for rental licenses 24/7 which makes applying for rental unit licenses easier, significantly increasing licensing requests.
  - **Small Wireless Facility Permitting** – CB-058-2019 - An Act Concerning Small Wireless Facilities (for the purpose of authorizing and regulating the installation and implementation of

certain small wireless telecommunications facilities in the County).

- Implementation of the small wireless facility permitting process requires technically skilled and trained staff to ensure code compliance, apply appropriate fee calculations, and meet "shot clock" requirements as prescribed by law.
- Resources will be required to train customers, respond to customer inquiries promptly and provide them with technical assistance.
- **Green Building Code Implementation** – CB-013-2018 - An Act Concerning the Zoning Ordinance.
  - Although this code has not been implemented, this code will go into effect after the countywide Section Map Amendment (SMA) is approved.
  - DPIE will have to establish, review, create inspection procedures, and hire staff to conduct Green Building Code review compliance.
  - Implementation of the Green Building Code requires additional staff and training to review building permit applications and plans and to perform construction inspections.
  - DPIE included an enhancement budget request for more engineers and inspectors as this legislation is expected to be implemented by Spring 2022 but required staff has not been approved.
- **Noise Ordinance** - CB-018-2018 An Act Concerning Noise Control
  - A total of \$25,300 budgeted for FY2021 for Noise Abatement, but due to COVID-19, meters were not procured, and training did not take place.
  - In FY 2022, a total of \$150,000 was budgeted, and three (3) noise meters were procured, and 20 employees are expected to be trained. Total for equipment and training is \$83,400.
- **Short-term Rentals**- CB-011-2018 An Act Concerning Short-Term Rentals.
  - DPIE is responsible for licensing, inspecting, and enforcing the County Code as it relates to short-term rental units.
  - The Agency works in conjunction with municipal governments to ensure all County Code requirements are met.
  - The Agency has an obligation and will use the municipal tax differential to provide services to municipalities that either do not license short-term rentals, or make a request for the Agency to provide these services.
- **Updating provisions of the County's Building Code to conform to the National Electrical Code (2017 edition)** - CB-020-2021
  - The code change is mandated by legislation for the building plan review and inspections divisions and will require training, code books, and supplemental material for the staff.
- **DPIE Subpoena Power for additional enforcement to effectuate service of subpoenas**- CB-056-2021
  - This legislation will require the Agency to obtain the services of the Sheriff's Office or a company that serves subpoenas. The anticipated cost will not be significant, and the agency is in the process of putting the contract out for bid.
- **Creating a Use and Occupancy Verification Letter**- CB-63-2021
  - The legislation adopts an additional fee for the investigation and issuance of the Use

and Occupancy Verification Letter. The fees allow DPIE to offset the cost of manhours required to complete the inspections.

- **The Administrative Hearing Unit (AHU) Process** was created in response to legislation passed by the County Council in 2017 (CB-64-2017) to allow Hearing Officers to adjudicate citations issued for code enforcement for property standards and housing violations of County code, instead of waiting for the courts to hear the cases. This process serves to expedite the current judicial process in District Court for contested or unpaid citations. Program updates include:
  - From FY 2021 to date, the administrative unit has processed over 2,600 citations, totaling over \$1.2 million in assessed fines. The Agency collected approximately \$250,000 online with the remaining in various stages, such as default actions, and/or moved to civil citations, etc.
  - New legislation in 2021 allows the AHU to issue final dispositions and abatement orders directly, as opposed to forwarding cases to the Office of Law or District Court for abatement orders.
- **Nuisance Abatement Board** - A summary of the activities associated with the Nuisance Abatement Board are as follows:
  - Received: 51 hearing requests and Held: 48 hearings (3 cases withdrawn)
  - Fines Assessed: \$26,500 and Fines Collected: \$10,500 (in FY 2021 and FY 2022 YTD)
  - CasesAppealed and Disposition: 5 (Cases received for Judicial review)
- **Food Truck Vending Program**
  - DPIE issued licenses to renew two (2) food truck hubs, one (1) in Temple Hills and one (1) in Largo. Prior to the Pandemic, the County had at least six (6) food truck hubs, including locations in Greenbelt, College Park, and Upper Marlboro.
  - Some food truck vendors expressed concerns in the challenges of getting permits to provide services at vaccination or testing sites during the Pandemic. DPIE staff noted that permits were issued at the Six Flags vaccination site.
  - Owners are interested in working outside of hubs; however, due to current legislation, the food trucks are, in general, only allowed to operate within permitted hubs.

## **Workload and Program Management**

### ***Permitting & Licensing, Site/Road and Building Plan Review***

- Staffing in FY 2023 is projected to increase to 87 from a current complement of 83.
- The number of permits processed in FY 2022 to date are 26,480, and the estimated number in FY 2023 is 50,000. The number of permits issued in FY 2022 to date are 22,715, and the estimated number in FY 2023 is 45,000. Permit fees collected in FY 2022 to date is \$21.5 million, and the FY 2023 estimate is \$40.6 million.
- The Agency is reporting that despite the pandemic, the volume of permit plan reviews completed has been higher as compared to FY 2021. The Agency has observed a significant increase in residential building permit review. Some of this increase may be due to accurate counting of walk-through permitting, all done via ePlan this year instead of manual counting when utilizing the paper process in prior years.

- Site Road Permit Reviews:
  - ⊕ Experiencing delays: 4-week turnaround times are not being met, primarily in traffic engineering, due to several vacancies.
- Building Permit Reviews:
  - ⊕ Experiencing delays: 2-week turnaround times are not being met due to high volume and one (1) vacancy.
  - ⊕ In this fiscal year, more employees are taking vacation as they were postponed in the last two years due to COVID-19.
- The average timeframes for reviews have remained stable since FY 2021 for the following areas:
  - ⊕ Bond Reviews and processing
  - ⊕ Business Licenses at 1-2 days
  - ⊕ Special Utility Permits at 2-3 weeks
  - ⊕ Electrical Contractor Permits (online)
  - ⊕ Site/Road Major Cases Review at 4-5 weeks
  - ⊕ Site Road Utility Permits at 4-5 weeks
- The following relates to average timeframes for reviews (from FY 2021 to FY 2022 YTD)
  - ⊕ Plan Log-In, Screening and Case Number Assignment – slight increase from 1-2 days to 2-3 business days.
  - ⊕ Building Plan Reviews – increased from 4-6 weeks to 6-8 weeks.
- The Agency noted that full implementation of the Homeowners' Center for processing permit applications exclusively for homeowners has been delayed. However, the Virtual Permit Center has been established to enable customers to use the walk-through permit process.

### ***Inspections***

The Inspections Division provides regulation of construction, development, and grading activity in the County. This Division completes inspections of horizontal (site grading, stormwater management, road/bridge, and utility) and vertical (structural, electrical, mechanical, fire-life safety, energy, and accessibility) elements of new development or improved projects. The following sections comprise this Division: Site/Road Inspection, Residential Building Inspection, and Commercial Construction and Life Safety Section.

Please refer to the Agency's *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Responses Q.34, page 23* for additional description of the Division's sections/units.

- The Inspections Division has significantly recovered from the restrictions due to the outbreak of the pandemic by transitioning to virtual inspections with cooperation from the construction industry. Due to the use of remote devices, Inspections is currently operating at pre-Covid-19 levels with performing inspections and issuing violation notices.

### ***Building Inspections***

- Staffing for Building Inspections was at 58 (FY 2021), 51 (FY 2022 YTD), and is proposed at 55 (FY 2023).

- The Agency is reporting the following:
  - Complaints received/projected: 15,628 (FY 2021), 8,756 (FY 2022 YTD), and 16,000 (Est. FY 2023).
  - Building inspections conducted/projected: 224,731 (FY 2021), 119,319 (FY 2022 YTD), and 225,000 (Est. FY 2023).
  - Violations issued/projected: 977 (FY 2021), 555 (FY 2022 YTD) for FY 2022, and 1,000 (Est. FY 2023).
- Fines issued in FY 2021 were approximately \$1 million and are estimated to increase to \$1.2 million in FY 2023.
- The Collection rates for the building inspection function is 48% (FY 2021), and 37% (FY 2022 estimated). The Division monitors many violations and citations until cleared. Fines are also recorded among the Permitting & Licensing's records and must be resolved before permit issuance. Payments are collected by the Courts or received online.

### ***Enforcement***

The Division of Enforcement contains several sections that include Administrative Support, Residential Property Standards, and Zoning and Commercial Property Standards.

- In FY 2020 through FY 2021 inspections conducted were reduced due to COVID-19 safety protocols. The ability to conduct more inspections is due to the streamlined procedures utilizing the new Administrative Citation Process. Less time is needed to prepare cases for escalation, there are reduced re-inspections, and a quicker processing of the entire case. There is an expected reduction of cases referred to the Office of Law due to the shift to the Administrative Citation process as most civil cases will be related to the Zoning Code violation cases.
- The *table below* addresses the Enforcement Division's fines and shows that staffing levels have increased since FY 2021 from 65, to 63 in FY 2022 (YTD) and is proposed at 68 in FY 2023.

Category	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (YTD)	FY 2023 (Estimated)
# of Staff	65	63	68
# of Complaints Received	10,086	5,382	20,000
# Inspections Conducted	17,548	7,819	25,000
# Violations Issued	4,328	2,292	6,000
\$ of Fines Issued	\$415,600	\$429,000	\$1,000,000
\$ of Fines Collected	\$80,300	\$142,871	\$750,000
Fines Outstanding	\$335,300	\$286,129	\$250,000

- The number of violations issued FY 2021 were 4,328, and YTD for FY 2022 is at 2,292; estimated violations for FY 2023 is 6,000. Collection rates for the property standards inspection function are at 19% for FY 2021 and 33% for FY 2022 (estimated).

- Payments for citation fines are received using the County's online collection service. Citations with unpaid balances are forwarded to the Office of Finance, and liens are placed against the property. The Agency has not investigated adding unpaid balances to the annual tax bill of the property owner.

### ***Blight Eradication, Litter and Beautification***

- **Blight Eradication Program (DOE-CIP-ID# 8.54.0002)** Funding is used to demolish and acquire blighted properties in the Transforming Neighborhood Initiative (TNI) areas.
  - TNI has approximately \$0 remaining in the prior year budget.
  - The Housing Options & Planning Enterprises, Inc. (HOPE) is the vendor identified by the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to finalize rehabilitating blighted properties in the identified areas.
  - As of June 30, 2021, HOPE has submitted several invoices for payment, totaling \$171,678, which the Agency has processed. There is no remaining balance owed to HOPE.
- **Environmental Crimes** – CB-054-2018 – Provide assistance with the Environment Crimes Unit Team addressing major incidents of illegal dumping in Prince George's County.
  - Environmental Crimes are handled by the Agency's Enforcement Division which also participates with the environmental task force operating under the direction of the Department of the Environment (DOE). This task force identifies areas of the County where illegal dumping is most prevalent and utilizes task force members: Dpie, Department of the Environment (DOE), Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T), States Attorney's Office, and the Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD) to identify and charge the offenders.
- **Clean Lot Program** - The Agency is reporting that the estimated number of properties it will be monitoring in FY 2022 as part of the Clean Lot Program will be 1,500 vacant properties, 150 of which will be owner occupied properties. The number of properties in FY 2023 is projected to rise to 1,750 vacant properties, with 250 being owner occupied. Projected cost for FY 2023 is \$2 million, with liens of \$2.5 million. Estimated cost for FY 2022 is \$1.3 million, with liens estimated at approximately \$1.2 million. Proposed FY 2023 funding for the Clean Lot Program is proposed to be \$1,695,000. Specifics on the contractors and subtotals are included in the Department's Operating Contracts reported in *Attachment 4 of the First Round Responses*.

### **Vehicles, Equipment and Information Technology (IT)**

- As of March 14, 2022, the Agency reports that 41 vehicles out of 154, or 26.62% of its fleet, have met the replacement criteria of exceeding 100,000 miles and/or 10 years in service, and nine (9) have been deadlined. For FY 2023, 11 vehicles are projected to be eligible for replacement, with the number of vehicles budgeted to be replaced in FY 2023 being subject to the Office of Central Services' (OCS) determination.
- Proposed FY 2023 Equipment funding is approximately \$3.4 million primarily to support the costs associated with copier maintenance, PLS implementation and applications, and cloud storage. *See table below.*

	Description (Types and quantity of equipment purchased)	FY 2022 Equipment Cost (Purchased to date)	FY 2022 Equipment Cost (Planned to be purchased)	FY 2023 Equipment Cost (Proposed to be purchased)	Purpose for Request
	Vehicles				
1	Sedans and SUV's	Cost incurred by OMB/OCS	TBD by OMB/OCS	TBD by OMB/OCS	To replace aging and deadline vehicle inventory

	Description (Types and quantity of equipment purchased)	FY 2022 Equipment Cost (Purchased to date)	FY 2022 Equipment Cost (Planned to be purchased)	FY 2023 Equipment Cost (Proposed to be purchased)	Purpose for Request
	Equipment				
1	Copier Maintenance (DCA)	-	-	\$207,800	Copier rental for Agency
2	PLS Implementation/Online Apps, data, reports, dashboards (Limbic)	\$1,725,563	\$3,900,000	\$3,021,600	County's PLS System/DPIE's apps,data architecture
3	Cloud Storage (AWS)	-	\$150,000	\$150,000	Cloud storage
4	Johnson Controls Security Systems	-	\$8,290	\$9,300	Card Readers- Products (install new card reader)
5	11 vehicle mounts for tablets	-	\$17,540	-	Enhance Inspectors field mobility
6	Mobile Printers (TBD)	-	-	\$50,000	Mobile Printers for Inspectors
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,725,563</b>	<b>\$4,075,830</b>	<b>\$3,438,700</b>	

- The Agency is proposing approximately \$4.0 million in FY 2023 to fund Information Technology (IT) initiatives. *See table below.*

IT Initiative	Project Name	Summary of Project Purpose and Benefits	Year Initiated	Estimated Completion Date	Total Project Cost	Amount of funding spent to date	Proposed FY 2023 Funding Amount
1	Hosting & Proprietary Licenses for PLS (Infor)	PLS License Subscription & Maintenance	FY19	FY27	\$3,730,650	\$607,705	\$645,000
2	PLS System Implementation /Online Apps Modernization (Limbic)	Implement a new Permitting, Licensing, Inspections & Enforcement Systems/Online data apps	FY17	FY24	\$12,548,000	\$9,095,480*	\$3,021,600
3	Avolve	ProjectDox/ePlan migration to ProjectFlow software application to integrate with PLS, hosting, licensing, training, and maintenance	FY18	FY23	\$2,100,000	\$1,614,501	\$340,000
	<b>Total</b>				<b>\$18,378,650</b>	<b>\$11,317,686</b>	<b>\$4,006,600</b>

- The Agency has completed phase I, completed implementation of phase II, and is currently working on rollout and training schedules, as well as working on requirement gathering for phase III of the new Permitting, Licensing System (PLS)/Online data apps. *\*DPIE is planning on making a supplemental budget request of approximately \$2.1 million for the PLS implementation.*

### **COVID-19 Update**

- Personnel have welcomed the opportunity to telework and choose a hybrid-style schedule. Most employees held off on taking leave, but have resumed using annual leave this year. Illnesses due to COVID-19 have caused some challenges with employee availability.
- Inquiries regarding telework and alternative work schedules are often raised by interviewees. The strong desire by current employees to continue teleworking, coupled with greater efficiency, is considered a successful retention strategy for the Agency.
- The Pandemic has affected the Agency's budget in filling vacant positions, which also affected the FY 2023 budget. Staffing shortages impact the County's economic development by creating delays in the permitting process. The purchase of added cell phones has and will continue to increase subsequent fiscal budgets.
- The Agency has experienced changes in operations. The Homeowners' Center for processing permit applications has been delayed. The Agency has implemented the Virtual Permit Center so customers can use the walk-through permit process. Several inspection functions, in-person meetings, trainings, and hiring to virtual platforms.

A comprehensive response on the impact of COVID-19 on the Department can be viewed on DPIE's *First Round Responses, Questions 50-53*.