



Washington County

M A R Y L A N D

FY 2024

CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE BUDGET

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This document is a “brief” look at the 2024 Washington County budget. We hope it will enhance your understanding of how Washington County is organized, the services it provides, and the funding sources used to provide those services. Our purpose is to deliver to the citizens of Washington County the very highest quality of services as efficiently and economically as possible, making every dollar count.

Major budget changes for County operations include funding for education, law enforcement, and emergency services.

The County Commissioners thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

100 West Washington Street
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
www.washco-md.net

Washington County, Maryland Board of County Commissioners



President John F. Barr



Vice President Jeffrey A. Cline



Commissioner
Randall E. Wagner



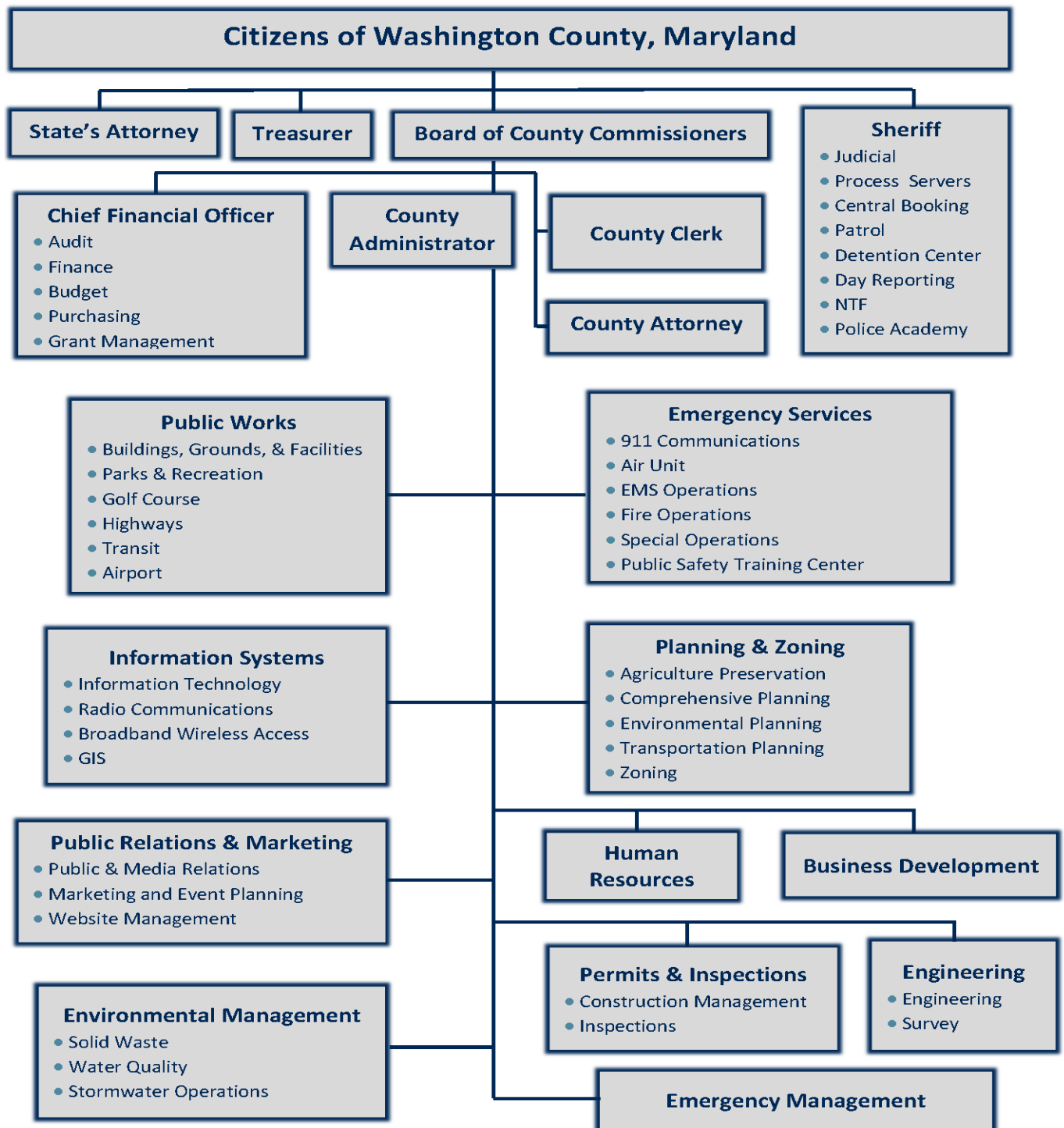
Commissioner
Wayne K. Keefer



Commissioner
Derek Harvey

Organizational Overview

The County is a corporate body which performs all local government functions in Washington County except those performed by the nine incorporated municipalities within Washington County. Both executive and legislative functions are vested in the elected, five-member Board of County Commissioners of Washington County. The Board may only exercise such powers as are conferred upon it by the General Assembly of Maryland, including authorization to issue debt to finance its capital projects. County Commissioners are elected on a countywide basis and serve four-year terms.



Overview

Washington County is located in northwestern Maryland, bordered by Pennsylvania to the north and West Virginia to the south. It is bordered on the east by Frederick County, Maryland, and on the west by Allegany County, Maryland. Washington County is approximately 70 miles from Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland. Two major highways, Interstate 81 – running north and south; and Interstate 70 – running east and west, cross within Washington County’s borders. The County is a body corporate and politic; and is a mid-size, multi-service local government serving the needs of approximately 154,937 residents with nine incorporated municipalities.

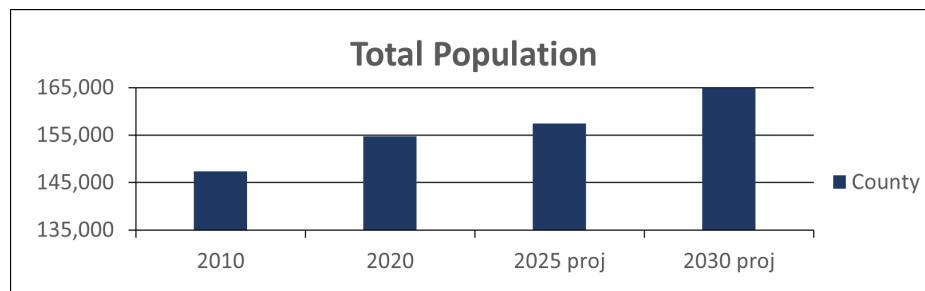


Garis Shop Road Bridge

Under public local law both the executive and legislative functions of the County are vested in the elected, five-member Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (Board). The County Commissioners are elected on a countywide basis and serve four-year terms with no term limits. As authorized by the County Code, the County Commissioners appoint the County Administrator, County Clerk, and Chief Financial Officer. Other elected County funded positions include County Sheriff, State’s Attorney, and Treasurer.

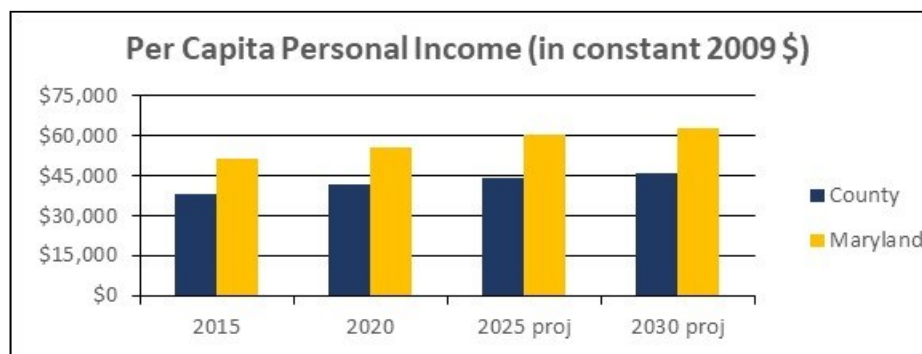
Demographics

Washington County is home to an estimated 154,937 residents and currently ranks 11th in population and 14th in population growth in the State of Maryland. Between 2010 and 2020, Washington County grew in total by 2.31% or by an annual average of 0.21% per year compared to the State of Maryland, which grew in total by 4.61% or an annual average of 0.42% per year.



Source: MD Department of Planning and U.S. Census.

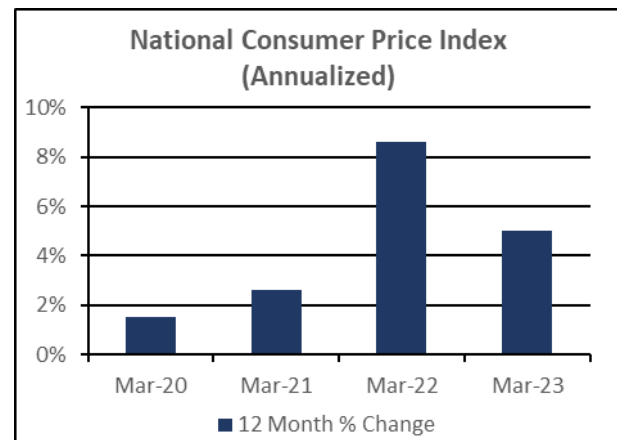
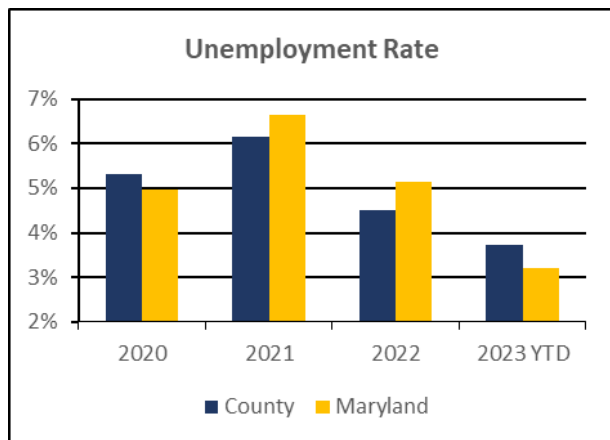
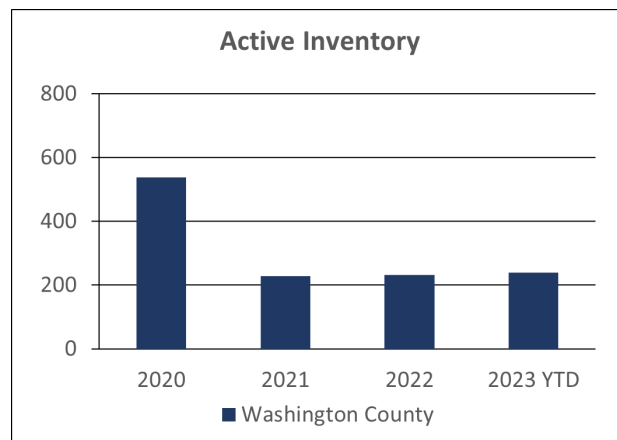
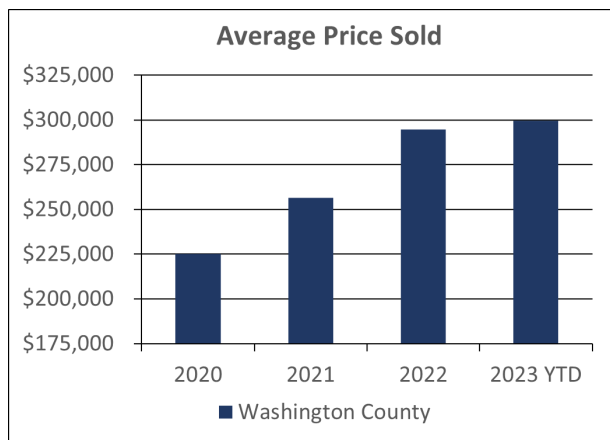
Between 2010 and 2020, Per Capita Personal Income for Washington County residents has increased by 18% or by an annual average of 1.64% per year. The Per Capita Personal Income is projected to increase by 1.1% annually through 2025. Per Capita Personal Income for the State of Maryland increased 12.5% from 2010 through 2020 or an annual average of 1.14% per year.



Source: MD Department of Planning and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

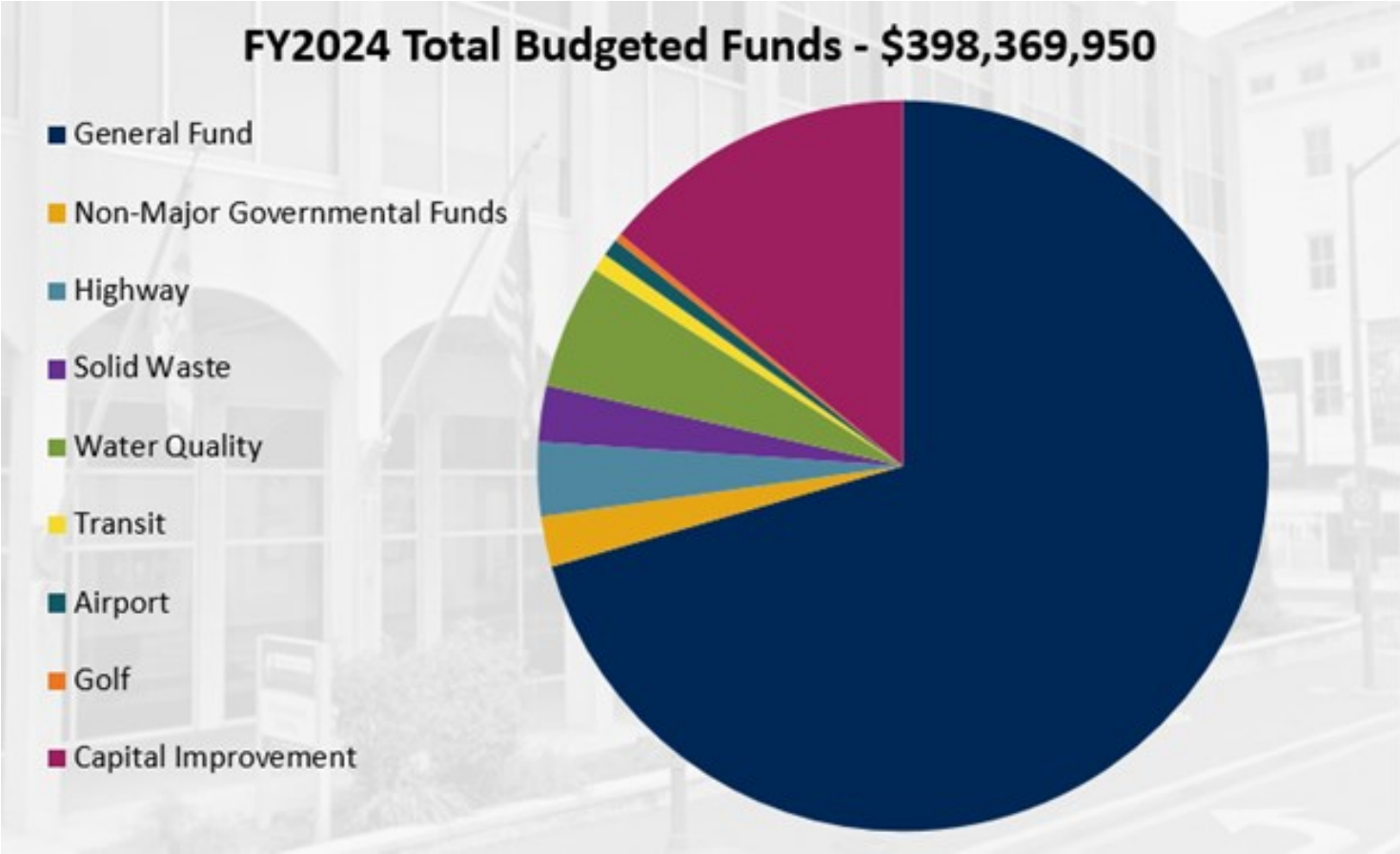
Economic Indicators

Real estate and unemployment activity represent important economic indicators that greatly impact the County's economy, planning, permits, construction, and revenue activity. Therefore, the County tracks monthly changes to better analyze past performance and future growth. The graphs below indicate improvement in housing statistics with a continued increase in the average selling price of \$299 thousand and less active inventory on the market. Unemployment continues to decline from the COVID-19 pandemic high of 11.4% in April 2020 to 3.4% in February 2023. Consumer prices across the nation have risen 5.0% annually since March of last year, the smallest 12-month increase since the period ending May 2021.



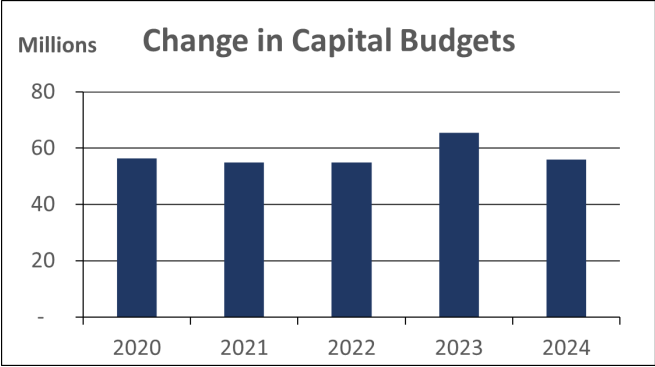
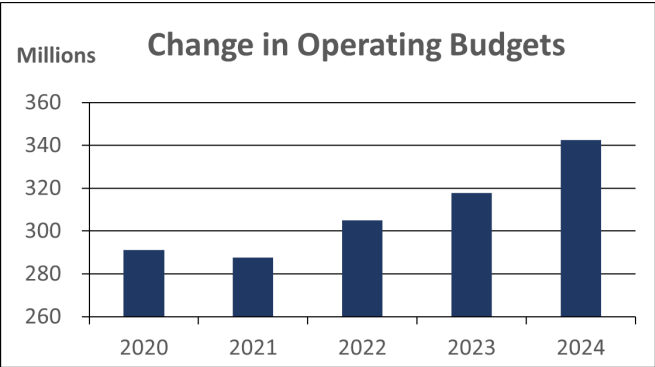
Sources: Maryland Realtors Association; Realtytrac.com; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation.

Budget Overview



Total Budget History

Washington County’s history over the past several years for operating and capital budgets are shown in the tables below in millions. Operating budgets have generally increased by an average of 3% per year, the exception to that being fiscal year 2021 in which a decline in budgeted grants were a primary factor. Capital budgets vary from year-to-year due to the level of major construction activity, mandated funding requirements, grants and other contribution amounts, and capital priorities of the County. The capital budget increase in fiscal year 2023 was due to an increase in one-time funding for infrastructure projects from federal CARES Act and ARPA funding.



Budget Summarization

Washington County budgets are summarized and compared to prior years on the following pages and are discussed throughout this budget message. The fiscal year 2024 budget continues our work to prudently manage the County's fiscal bottom line while strengthening our schools, protecting our citizens, and investing in future jobs and a growing tax base. The fiscal year 2024 proposed budget includes adjustments to budget requests that were made to ensure that expenditure growth is sustainable and increasing at the same pace as revenue growth.

Summary for All Funds

	FY23 Approved	FY24 Proposed	FY23 vs. FY24	
			\$ Change	% Change
Operating Funds:				
Major Operating Funds:				
General Fund	\$262,814,130	\$281,060,350	\$18,246,220	6.94%
Highway Fund	11,769,470	13,042,150	1,272,680	10.81%
Solid Waste Fund	9,056,160	9,874,630	818,470	9.04%
Utility Administration Fund	5,128,950	5,937,750	808,800	15.77%
Water Fund	1,209,420	1,755,960	546,540	45.19%
Sewer Fund	12,092,680	13,863,400	1,770,720	14.64%
Pretreatment Fund	472,860	345,600	(127,260)	(26.91)%
Public Transit Fund	2,885,310	3,133,780	248,470	8.61%
Airport Fund	2,180,910	3,095,120	914,210	41.92%
Black Rock Golf Course Fund	1,186,120	1,356,720	170,600	14.38%
	\$308,796,010	\$333,465,460	\$24,669,450	7.99%
Restricted Funds:				
Hotel Rental Tax Fund	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0%
Cascade Town Centre Fund	157,650	132,450	(25,200)	(15.98)%
Agricultural Education Center Fund	248,270	290,100	41,830	16.85%
Grant Management Fund	451,420	525,670	74,250	16.45%
Inmate Welfare Fund	547,320	564,090	16,770	3.06%
Gaming Fund	2,491,000	2,295,370	(195,630)	(7.85)%
Land Preservation Fund	2,458,250	2,519,700	61,450	2.50%
HEPMPO Fund	584,570	573,110	(11,460)	(1.96)%
Contraband Fund	5,070	0	(5,070)	(100.00)%
	\$8,943,550	\$8,900,490	\$(43,060)	(.48)%
Total Operating Funds	\$317,739,560	\$342,365,950	\$24,626,390	7.75%
Capital Improvement Plan	\$65,402,000	\$56,004,000	\$(9,398,000)	(14.37)%
Total Budgeted Funds	\$383,141,560	\$398,369,950	\$15,228,390	3.97%

General Fund

A summary of the budgeted 2024 revenues, with a comparison to the current budget year is shown in the table below. A more detailed listing of General Fund Revenues is available at the Office of Budget and Finance and will also be available in the Annual County Budget Book.

General Fund Revenue Summary				
	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Property Tax	\$143,377,150	\$134,863,130	\$8,514,020	6.31%
Local Tax	125,344,810	116,792,510	8,552,300	7.32%
Interest Income	1,900,000	600,000	1,300,000	216.67%
Fees	5,155,200	5,223,900	(68,700)	(1.32%)
Intergovernmental	5,283,190	5,334,590	(51,400)	(0.96%)
	\$281,060,350	\$262,814,130	\$18,246,220	6.94%

The General Fund revenue projections are based largely upon the following assumptions:

1. Property tax estimates are based on information provided by the State Department of Assessment and Taxation.
2. Local tax revenue projections are based on an analysis of local & State trends and projections.

Based upon the above assumptions, review of revenue patterns and future projections, General Fund revenues reflect an increase of 6.94% or \$18 million over the 2023 budget. Following is a detailed discussion regarding the major changes affecting General Fund revenues:

Property Tax revenue increased by 6.31% or \$8.5 million in FY24. This increase is directly related to an increase in the real estate assessable base, which is based on information provided by the State of Maryland Department of Assessments & Taxation. The property tax rate is \$0.928 per \$100 of assessed value.

Local Tax revenue reflects an increase of \$8.6 million. The income tax budget is based on current and prior year revenues, and assumes a 3% income growth for current withholdings, final reconcilements of prior year withholdings will decrease to normal levels and other distributions based on a three year average. The budget includes an assumed disparity grant of \$2.7 million.

Intergovernmental revenue decreased by \$51,400.

Major Tax Rates		
Type	Rate	Basis
Real Estate:	\$ 0.928	\$100 assessed value
Income Tax:	2.95%	Taxable Income

General Fund

General Fund expenditures increased in total by \$18 million or 6.94% for 2024. This increase funds costs for education, public safety, internal transfers, and other governmental programs. The information below highlights major expense categories and also provides, to the left, the percent of total budget and dollars associated with the category.



General Fund

As shown in the following table, expenditures by function show a 6.94% or \$18,246,220 increase over 2023.

General Fund Expenditures By Function				
	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Education	\$122,823,130	\$122,525,360	\$297,770	0.24%
Public Safety	75,366,870	67,332,940	8,033,930	11.93%
Intergovernmental Transfers	20,459,160	17,398,540	3,060,620	17.59%
Debt Service	15,779,240	15,279,990	499,250	3.27%
General Government	27,659,360	22,618,360	5,041,000	22.29%
Courts	7,372,690	6,401,710	970,980	15.17%
State Agencies	6,156,520	6,250,870	(94,350)	(1.51%)
Community Programs & Services	1,000,000	774,000	226,000	29.20%
Public Works & Permits	2,731,310	2,551,840	179,470	7.03%
Parks & Recreation	1,712,070	1,680,520	31,550	1.88%
	\$281,060,350	\$262,814,130	\$18,246,220	6.94%

Expenditure highlights are as follows:

1. Board of Education—hold harmless and fund \$1 million above maintenance of effort.
2. Adjusted salary scale for grades 12 and under.
3. Increased incentives to fire and rescue volunteer companies.
4. \$1,332,000 more to Capital Projects.
5. \$520 thousand to fund one-time 1% COLA for retirees.
6. A step of 2.5% and COLA of 1% for employees.

General Fund Expenditures By Object				
	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Full Time	\$45,999,060	\$40,290,910	\$5,708,150	14.17%
Part Time	2,503,420	2,163,960	339,460	15.69%
Overtime	1,621,460	1,355,530	265,930	19.62%
Fringe Benefits	32,315,400	27,327,060	4,988,340	18.25%
Personnel Requests	712,400	725,860	(13,460)	(1.85)%
Operating	196,701,830	189,722,970	6,978,860	3.68%
Capital Outlay	1,206,780	1,227,840	(21,060)	(1.72)%
	\$281,060,350	\$262,814,130	\$18,246,220	6.94%

Capital Improvement Funds

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) details the County's current projected capital improvement needs and financing sources that supports the County's current and future population and economy. The capital plan does not authorize the expenditure of funds. Rather, the funds for capital projects are appropriated annually in the County's operating and capital budgets.

The combined Ten-year Capital Improvement Program includes Fiscal Year 2024 budget and expenditure projections for the next 10 years; the total capital request for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2033 is \$562,602,000.

The Capital Improvement Program is a separate budgeting process within the annual operating budget. The CIP process is used to plan, budget, and finance the purchase and/or construction of large capital infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and other fixed assets. The County uses this process to ensure these assets are aligned with its strategic direction and that the funds are well spent.



Public Safety Training Facility

A listing of the major capital projects to be undertaken or purchased in 2024 and the method of financing are listed in the summaries that follow.

Funding for capital projects can be obtained from any of the following sources:

Cash Sources:

Grants and Contributions include federal, state, and local contributions for specific projects or purposes. Examples include agency contributions, intergovernmental contributions, and developer contributions.

Cash is revenue transferred from various operating funds and is non-restrictive as to project funding. General sources can be from user fees, taxes, and other general revenue sources.

Taxes and fees include restrictive revenues such as transfer and excise tax. Revenues in these categories must be allocated to specific project categories and usually by specific allocation percentages.

Cash reserves represent excess cash saved over the past years from project savings and/or excess revenues.

Debt Sources:

Bonds are interest bearing debt issued by the County and include: 1) tax-supported debt for governmental activity supported by general tax dollars; and 2) self-supported debt supported by service fees, also known as double barrel bonds. Examples are landfill and utility operations.

The funding mix for the 2024 Capital budget is 75% cash, 21% tax-supported debt, and 4% self-supported debt.

Capital Improvement Funds

2024 Capital Improvement Expenditures				
Project	Cash Sources	Tax-Supported Debt	Self-Supported Debt	2024 Budget
Airport:				
Air Traffic Control Tower	700,000			700,000
Taxiway F Rehabilitation	6,000,000			6,000,000
Runway 9/27 Lighting and Signage	1,060,000			1,060,000
Terminal Building Expansion	600,000			600,000
Airport Projects < \$500,000	1,435,000			1,435,000
Bridges:				
Bridge Projects < \$500,000	1,956,000	32,000		1,988,000
Drainage:				
Stormwater Retrofits	700,000			700,000
Drainage Projects < \$500,000	50,000			50,000
Board of Education:				
Capital Maintenance - BOE	8,791,000	4,000,000		12,791,000
Replacement Elementary School	1,500,000			1,500,000
Hagerstown Community College:				
ACT Renovation	562,000			562,000
Second Entrance Drive Widening Project		1,040,000		1,040,000
D.M. Bowman Family Workforce T.C.	900,000	900,000		1,800,000
Public Library:				
Library Projects < \$500,000	25,000			25,000
General Government				
Systemic Improvements - Building	700,000			700,000
General Government Projects < \$500,000	678,000			678,000
Parks and Recreation:				
Agriculture Education Center Indoor Multi purpose Building	550,000			550,000
Parks and Recreation Projects < \$500,000	160,000			160,000
Public Safety:				
Patrol Services Relocation Renovation	250,000	850,000		1,100,000
Burn Building - PS Training Center		1,000,000		1,000,000

Capital Improvement Funds

2024 Capital Improvement Expenditures				
Project	Cash Sources	Tax-Supported Debt	Self-Supported Debt	2024 Budget
Public Safety (continued):				
Law Enforcement Vehicle & Equip Replacement	1,129,000			1,129,000
PSTC Tactical Village / Simulation Training Area	2,250,000			2,250,000
Public Safety Projects < \$500,000	1,108,000			1,108,000
Road Improvement:				
Pavement Maintenance and Rehab	822,000	4,178,000		5,000,000
Eastern Blvd Widening Phase I	1,500,000			1,500,000
Eastern Blvd at Antietam Drive Improvements	1,000,000			1,000,000
Professional Blvd Extended Phase III	1,500,000			1,500,000
Halfway Blvd Extended	3,000,000			3,000,000
Highway - Veh & Equip Replacement	1,284,000			1,284,000
Road Improvement Projects < \$500,000	610,000			610,000
Solid Waste:				
Solid Waste Projects < \$500,000	214,000		940,000	1,154,000
Transit:				
Transit Projects < \$500,000	165,000			165,000
Water Quality:				
Water Quality Projects < \$500,000	750,000		1,115,000	1,865,000
Total	41,949,000	12,000,000	2,055,000	56,004,000

The Ten-Year Capital plan for 2024 through 2033 by category is as follows (shown in millions):

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Education	17.718	25.368	27.651	42.516	21.264	14.560	14.973	16.278	20.007	27.850
Roads	16.632	12.541	15.486	13.910	15.116	15.759	15.525	13.431	13.002	11.081
Environmental	3.019	10.878	7.415	1.944	2.900	1.112	7.785	6.951	6.707	1.309
Transportation	9.960	5.785	17.805	2.771	1.012	0.635	3.924	0.868	2.337	3.440
Other	8.675	14.200	11.982	8.084	6.814	8.026	7.171	9.144	10.645	8.636
Total	56.004	68.772	80.339	69.225	47.106	40.092	49.378	46.672	52.698	52.316

Other Program Service Funds

Many other County programs and services are accounted for and financed outside the General Fund. For 2024 these funds total \$61 million. The nature of the revenue sources specifies that these monies be used for a specific activity. Hence, they are budgeted and accounted for in separate funds. Summary figures for each fund can be found in the table below each related section.

A. Environmental Services

The County has six funds which deal with environmental issues: Solid Waste, Utility Administration, Water, Sewer, Pretreatment and Land Preservation funds. These funds are used for operations, debt financing administration, closure and post closure cost, construction reserve requirements and cost of service financial modeling.

Major changes in these funds are summarized as follows:

1. The increase to the Solid Waste Fund is due to a projected increase in the waste stream based on current trends. The revenue increase will help to provide for additional lease agreements, leachate treatment, maintenance, a new position request and the employee step and COLA.
2. The increase in Utility funds is due to an increase in employee wages and benefits as well as inflationary pressure on supplies and materials. Water rates are projected to increase 4.7%. Sewer rates are expected to remain the same as FY2023.
3. The Land Preservation Fund has increased due to an increase in employee wages and benefits and an anticipated increase in grant funds for FY2024.

Environmental Service Funds				
	2024	2023	Change	
Solid Waste	\$9,874,630	\$9,056,160	\$818,470	9.04%
Utility Funds	21,902,710	18,903,910	2,998,800	15.86%
Land Preservation	2,519,700	2,458,250	61,450	2.50%
	\$34,297,040	\$30,418,320	\$3,878,720	12.75%



Antietam Water Trail Leiters Mill

Other Program Service Funds

B. Transportation Services

The County has three major transportation responsibilities including the County road system, County Commuter services, and the Hagerstown Regional Airport. The Highway Fund increased mainly due to the employee step and COLA. The Highway Fund is heavily supported by the General Fund. The Transit Fund increased based on use of CARES Act funds. The Airport Fund increased due to increased corporate rental rates as established by leases which have yearly built-in escalators. The Metro Planning Organization represents a regional organization hosted by Washington County and deals with major transportation planning and issues. The decrease in the regional organization is the result of a decrease in federal grants.

Transportation Service Funds				
	2024	2023	Change	
Highway	\$13,042,150	\$11,769,470	\$1,272,680	10.81%
Transit	3,133,780	2,885,310	248,470	8.61%
HEPMPO	573,110	584,570	(11,460)	(1.96%)
Airport	3,095,120	2,180,910	914,210	41.92%
	\$19,844,160	\$17,420,260	\$2,423,900	13.91%

C. Other Services

Other various funds provide services and programs to County residents and range from recreation to human service type programs. Hotel Rental Tax and Gaming funds both increased based on activity projections in the current economy. Some proceeds from the sale of the Cascade Town Centre will provide an FY2024 appropriation of \$100,000 to the Community Center as well as funding for certain ongoing maintenance costs. The Agricultural Education fund increased based on projected utility and building maintenance costs. Both the Contraband and Inmate Welfare funds are funded with confiscated monies and inmate funds. The increase in Inmate Welfare is directly related to commissary and telephone spending trends and will be used to update software and equipment.

Other Program Service Funds				
	2024	2023	Change	
Golf Course	\$1,356,720	\$1,186,120	\$170,600	14.38%
Hotel Rental Tax	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0.00%
Cascade Town Centre	132,450	157,650	(25,200)	(15.98%)
Agricultural Education	290,100	248,270	41,830	16.85%
Grant Management	525,670	451,420	74,250	16.45%
Inmate Welfare	564,090	547,320	16,770	3.06%
Gaming	2,295,370	2,491,000	(195,630)	(7.85%)
Contraband	0	5,070	(5,070)	(100.0%)
	\$7,164,400	\$7,086,850	\$77,580	1.09%

Debt and Reserve Management

The County may only issue bonds under the authority given by the Maryland General Assembly. Currently the County may issue bonds in an amount up to \$70 million under Chapter 99. The projected amount of bonds applied under Chapter 99 as of June 2023 is \$41.9 million. The total unused authorization available is \$28 million.

Along with the Maryland General Assembly authorization, the County annually evaluates its debt capacity in conjunction with the budget process and the planning of its long-range Capital Improvement Plan. It measures the appropriate balance between the County's capital needs and its ability to pay for them. The County measures itself against other Maryland counties (peer group) and nationally accepted benchmark ratings for mid-size counties with the same rating and population. It sets maximum targets within the four main ratio targets. In addition, the County analyzes the impact of changing economic conditions on the recommended level of annual debt issuance.

As indicated in the table below, the projected debt ratios are estimated to stay below peer group and maximum level targets. The projections are intended only to provide a method of assessing the impact of issuing debt on a long-term basis. The County's debt affordability analysis is designed to: ensure that anticipated future debt is manageable from a fiscal and budgetary perspective; meet peer group ratio targets; avoid negative treatment by rating agencies in the form of downgrades; and keep borrowing costs to a minimum.

Projected Debt Ratios						
*Assumes debt issuance at \$16 million per year 2024-2026						
	2023	2024	2025	2026	Maximum Policy Target	2024 Peer Group Target
Debt per Capita	\$1,047	\$1,080	\$1,102	\$1,119	\$1,500	\$1,669
Debt as % of Fair Market Value	1.15%	1.18%	1.19%	1.20%	1.50%	1.53%
Debt Service as % General Fund Revenue	6.03%	6.44%	6.60%	6.60%	8.00%	6.66%
Debt Service per Capita as % income per Capita	0.17%	0.18%	0.19%	0.19%	0.50%	0.26%

Projected debt balances for the period ended June 30, 2023, including proposed borrowing scheduled for the current fiscal year, are presented below. The pay-off for the balances is projected to be 38% within the first five years and 68% in ten years. The benchmark for pay-off ratios (rapidity ratio) is 25% and 50% for five and ten years, respectively.

Projected Debt Balances			
	Tax Supported	Self Supporting	Total
Balance June 30, 2022	\$142,875,620	\$44,267,078	\$187,142,698
2023 Borrowing	12,000,000	7,072,170	19,072,170
2023 Payments	(10,634,912)	(3,854,773)	(14,489,685)
Balance June 30, 2023	\$144,240,708	\$47,484,475	\$191,725,183

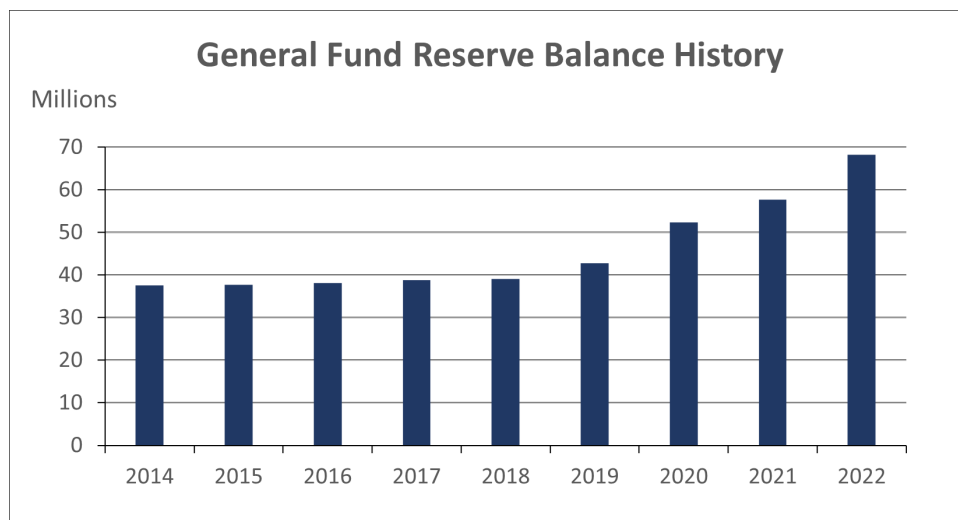
Debt and Reserve Management

The County is provided with a rating for debt issuance by three New York rating agencies. The County was upgraded in 2014 by Standard and Poor's from AA to a AA+. In addition, Fitch upgraded the County's rating from AA to a AA+ and Moody's from Aa2 to a Aa1 in 2015. These upgrades were based on several factors including financial and economic data. The County has maintained these ratings through the current year.

Washington County Bond Ratings		
Rating Agency	Rating	Rating Description
Standard and Poor's	AA+	Rating reflects the County's strong management, strong budgetary performance and flexibility and low overall net debt.
Fitch	AA+	Rating reflects the County's financial flexibility, expenditure control and low debt burden.
Moody's	Aa1	Rating reflects the County's stable financial position due to conservative management, healthy reserve levels, and modest economic expansion.

Reserve Management

Reserve balances, or savings, are maintained by the County for various financial reasons including: reserves for catastrophic events; economic downturns; cash flow needs; mandated reserve requirements on capital for landfill capital costs; unanticipated Federal and State capital mandates; and rate stabilization monies for the utility funds. Operating targets vary from 17% to 25% of operating expenditures depending on the fund and type of activity. Reserve balances have helped the County weather recent downturns in the economy and still provide services to its citizens. The table below represents General Fund reserve balances.



Expenditures by Function

The percentage and dollar changes in a particular department budget as shown below may not always be a valid indication of the extent to which that department's real inflation adjusted resources are changing from prior years. This is often the case because:

1. Departments have unique items in prior years which are not renewed in the budget year (one-time projects, capital equipment purchases).
2. There could be significant changes in annual 'fixed costs' such as insurance, rental, or technology expenditures.
3. Departments could have new operating requirements for the budget year (new facility, new personnel, and mandated Federal and State regulations).

It is necessary to review each department's situation in some detail to fully comprehend the budget. For additional information, please refer to the detailed budget work papers available in the Office of Budget and Finance.

Department Expenditure by Function - 2024

	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
General Fund:				
Education				
Board of Education	\$109,070,360	\$109,070,360	\$0	0.00%
Hagerstown Community College	10,236,290	10,035,290	201,000	2.00%
Free Library	3,470,710	3,375,710	95,000	2.81%
Clear Spring Library Building	12,270	11,000	1,270	11.55%
Smithsburg Library Building	11,000	11,000	0	0.00%
Boonsboro Library Building	11,500	11,000	500	4.55%
Hancock Library Building	11,000	11,000	0	0.00%
Total Education	122,823,130	122,525,360	297,770	.24%
Public Safety				
Sheriff - Judicial	4,012,560	3,496,820	515,740	14.75%
Sheriff - Process Servers	158,360	137,880	20,480	14.85%
Sheriff - Patrol	16,069,440	14,577,540	1,491,900	10.23%
Sheriff - Central Booking	1,494,720	1,342,890	151,830	11.31%
Sheriff - Sheriff Auxiliary	50,000	50,000	0	0.00%
Sheriff - Detention Center	21,252,090	18,706,300	2,545,790	13.61 %
Sheriff - Day Reporting Center	506,400	492,280	14,120	4.46%
Sheriff - Narcotics Task Force	1,040,280	1,051,310	(11,030)	(1.05)%
Sheriff - Washington County Police Academy	59,840	59,840	0	0.00%
Civil Air Patrol	4,000	4,000	0	0.00%
Air Unit	73,970	32,350	41,620	128.66%

Department Expenditure by Function - 2024

	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Special Operations	214,110	233,870	(19,760)	(8.45%)
Fire & Rescue Volunteer Services	10,637,470	10,389,690	247,780	2.38%
911 - Communications	6,685,950	6,275,630	410,320	6.54%
EMS Operations	3,768,970	2,723,800	1,045,170	38.37%
Fire Operations	6,570,290	5,292,030	1,278,260	24.15%
Emergency Management	276,540	229,650	46,890	20.42%
Public Safety Training Center	960,350	750,140	210,210	28.02%
Animal Control Services	1,531,530	1,486,920	44,610	3.00%
Total Public Safety	75,366,870	67,332,940	8,033,930	11.93%
Operating and Capital				
Highway	10,096,340	9,285,350	810,990	8.73%
Solid Waste	450,000	450,000	0	0.00%
Cascade Town Centre Fund	0	0	0	0.00%
Agricultural Education Center	238,200	216,770	21,430	9.89%
Grant Management	387,640	313,390	74,250	23.69%
Land Preservation	53,530	41,380	12,150	29.36%
HEPMPO	5,130	5,700	(570)	(10.00%)
Utility Administration	702,970	517,110	185,860	35.94%
Water	750,570	230,040	520,530	226.28%
Transit	1,052,540	1,052,540	0	0.00%
Golf Course	433,690	319,710	113,980	35.65%
Municipality in Lieu of Bank Shares	38,550	38,550	0	0.00%
Capital Improvement Fund	6,250,000	4,928,000	1,322,000	26.83%
Debt Service	15,779,240	15,279,990	499,250	3.27%
Total Operating Transfers and Capital	36,238,400	32,678,530	3,559,870	10.89%
Courts				
Circuit Court	2,386,840	2,140,650	246,190	11.50%
Orphans Court	36,150	36,530	(380)	(1.04%)
State's Attorney	4,949,700	4,224,530	725,170	17.17%
Total Courts	7,372,690	6,401,710	970,980	15.17%
State Agency, Programs & Services				
Health Department	2,339,270	2,339,270	0	0.00%
Social Services	506,330	506,330	0	0.00%
University of MD Extension	279,040	264,180	14,860	5.62%

Department Expenditure by Function - 2024				
	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
County Cooperative Extension	38,730	38,730	0	0.00%
Election Board	2,266,090	2,384,260	(118,170)	(4.96%)
Soil Conservation	364,010	355,090	8,920	2.51%
Weed Control	317,550	317,510	40	.01%
Environmental - Pest Management	45,500	45,500	0	0.00%
Total State Agencies	6,156,520	6,250,870	(94,350)	(1.51%)
Community Programs & Services				
Total Community Programs & Services	1,000,000	774,000	226,000	29.20%
General Government				
County Commissioners	356,140	376,920	(20,780)	(5.51%)
County Clerk	166,260	147,960	18,300	12.37%
County Administrator	426,970	388,020	38,950	10.04%
Public Relations and Marketing	550,070	504,590	45,480	9.01%
Budget & Finance	1,974,160	1,755,880	218,280	12.43%
Independent Accounting & Auditing	80,000	70,000	10,000	14.29%
Purchasing	648,330	561,520	86,810	15.46%
Treasurer	526,120	560,900	(34,780)	(6.20%)
County Attorney	916,570	804,210	112,360	13.97%
Human Resources	1,377,590	1,170,100	207,490	17.73%
Central Services	131,230	131,220	10	0.01%
Information Technology	4,094,630	3,410,170	684,460	20.07%
Wireless Communications	1,619,950	1,466,020	153,930	10.50%
General Operations	3,602,840	1,417,090	2,185,750	154.24%
Planning and Zoning	1,466,580	1,300,920	165,660	12.73%
Zoning Appeals	59,290	55,740	3,550	6.37%
Martin Luther King Building	124,880	103,280	21,600	20.91%
Administration Building	330,410	319,080	11,330	3.55%
Court House	302,240	291,450	10,790	3.70%
County Office Building	236,330	230,510	5,820	2.52%
Administration Annex	124,630	75,500	49,130	65.07%

Department Expenditure by Function - 2024

	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Dwyer Center	32,310	32,280	30	.09%
Election Board Facility	106,350	98,580	7,770	7.88%
Rental Properties	6,020	6,020	0	0.00%
Senior Center Building	12,050	11,000	1,050	9.55%
Public Facilities Annex	89,810	85,380	4,430	5.19%
Business Development	837,560	749,760	87,800	11.71%
Women's Commission	2,000	2,000	0	0.00%
Diversity and Inclusion Committee	2,000	2,000	0	0.00%
Forensic Investigator	30,000	30,000	0	0.00%
Commission on Aging	1,064,530	967,760	96,770	10.00%
Museum of Fine Arts	136,620	124,200	12,420	10.00%
Total General Government	21,434,470	17,250,060	4,184,410	24.26%
Public Works and Permits				
Public Works	339,360	263,990	75,370	28.55%
Buildings Grounds & Facilities	2,391,950	2,287,850	104,100	4.55%
Engineering	2,972,620	2,656,260	316,360	11.91%
Permits & Inspections	3,083,670	2,712,040	371,630	13.70%
Total Public Works and Permits	8,787,600	7,920,140	867,460	10.95%
Parks and Recreation				
Martin L. Snook Pool	168,600	159,310	9,290	5.83%
Parks and Recreation	1,712,070	1,521,210	190,860	12.55%
Total Parks and Recreation	1,880,670	1,680,520	200,150	11.91%
Total General Fund	281,060,350	262,814,130	18,246,220	6.94%
Capital Improvement:				
Education	17,718,000	20,535,000	(2,817,000)	(13.72)%
Road Improvements	16,632,000	18,117,000	(1,485,000)	(8.20)%
Environmental	3,019,000	11,377,000	(8,358,000)	(73.46)%
Transportation	9,960,000	1,423,000	8,537,000	599.93%
Other	8,675,000	13,950,000	(5,275,000)	(37.81)%
Total Capital Improvement	56,004,000	65,402,000	(9,398,000)	(14.37)%
Environmental Funds:				
Solid Waste Fund	9,874,630	9,056,160	818,470	9.04%
Utility Administration Fund	5,937,750	5,128,950	808,800	15.77%

Department Expenditure by Function - 2024

	2024	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Water Fund	1,755,960	1,209,420	546,540	45.19%
Sewer Fund	13,863,400	12,092,680	1,770,720	14.64%
Pretreatment Fund	345,600	472,860	(127,260)	(26.91%)
Land Preservation Fund	2,519,700	2,458,250	61,450	2.50%
Total Environmental Funds	34,297,040	30,418,320	3,878,720	12.75%
Transportation Funds:				
Highway Fund	13,042,150	11,769,470	1,272,680	10.81%
HEPMPO Fund	573,110	584,570	(11,460)	(1.96%)
Transit Fund	3,133,780	2,885,310	248,470	8.61%
Airport Fund	3,095,120	2,180,910	914,210	41.92%
Total Transportation Funds	19,844,160	17,420,260	2,423,900	13.91%
Other Program and Service Funds:				
Cascade Town Centre Fund	132,450	157,650	(25,200)	(15.98%)
Ag Center Fund	290,100	248,270	41,830	16.85%
Grant Management Fund	525,670	451,420	74,250	16.45%
Contraband Fund	0	5,070	(5,070)	(100.00%)
Gaming Fund	2,295,370	2,491,000	(195,630)	(7.85%)
Golf Course Fund	1,356,720	1,186,120	170,600	14.38%
Hotel Rental Tax Fund	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0.00%
Inmate Welfare Fund	564,090	547,320	16,770	3.06%
Total Other Funds	7,164,400	7,086,850	77,550	1.09%
Total All Funds	\$398,369,950	\$383,141,560	\$15,228,390	3.97%

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why does the County require cash reserves?

A. Cash reserves are set aside to use in case of emergencies, cash flow, or for unexpected opportunities. These reserves can only be used according to the policy specifications. The County is a multi-million dollar corporation and like household finance, should have a savings account.

Q. I do not have any children, how do I benefit from tax dollars that go to education?

A. The role of our primary and secondary schools is to provide our young citizens the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be contributing citizens and productive workers in Washington County. They will be our future doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants, electricians, bankers, and taxpayers. Their ability to join the work force is key to the health and future of our economy, and their ability to be good citizens affects the livability of our community.

Q. How much tax dollars are spent on education?

A. General Fund monies of \$128.3 million are used to support various activities related to educational funding. These include operating funds and debt service costs. In addition to operational assistance, the County also provides funding through the Capital Improvement Plan to those various organizations. In fiscal year 2024, the Capital Improvement budget reflects \$7.5 million in additional local County funds for educational related projects. Total educational funding is \$135.8 million.

Q. What is the Constant Yield Tax Rate and how does it differ from the actual tax rate of the County?

A. The Constant Yield Tax Rate is the rate the County could set if it wanted to collect the same amount in property tax revenue as it had the previous year, after changes in property values are taken into account. State law requires the County to calculate and publicize the Constant Yield Tax Rate if it is less than the actual current rate, in order to make clear the amount of a budget increase that is attributable to rising property values. In years when the assessed values of properties go up, the Constant Yield Tax Rate is lower than the rate the commissioners set. The proposed property tax rate for FY2024 is \$0.928, and the Constant Yield Tax Rate is \$0.8929. That is \$0.0351 higher than the proposed rate.

Q. Why does the County Issue Debt?

A. Paying for needed infrastructure on a “cash” basis avoids interest costs associated with financing over a number of years. However, many large Capital Improvement budgets are too expensive to be paid from a single year’s budget, making financing necessary. Additionally, a principle called “intergenerational equity” suggests having the costs of capital improvements benefiting the public over 15 or more years to be borne by future generations, and not entirely by the current taxpayer.



This document is intended to provide an overview of Washington County's annual budgets. If you would like more information, please contact the Office of Budget & Finance at 240-313-2300. In addition, a full annual report is available within three months of final approval for the Annual County budgets.

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