



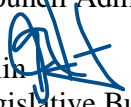
THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

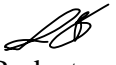
Office of Audits and Investigations

October 29, 2021

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

FROM: Lavinia A. Baxter 
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) FY22 YTD
Programmatic/Operations Briefing

Council staff, at the request of Chair Hawkins, has arranged for representatives from the Department of Public Works and Transportation to provide an operational update on key programmatic initiatives the Department is undertaking. In this memorandum, many of these issues are reviewed and potential questions identified.

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- Roadway Maintenance and Funding
 - Sidewalk repair/replacement, resurfacing, patching, potholes.
 - Special Services – Street tree trimming, emergency tree removal services
- Traffic Fatalities (Vision Zero Initiative);
- Staffing issues/retention;
- The Consolidated Transportation Plan;
- Sustainability
 - Transit/Transportation
 - Transportation Demand Management
 - Electric Vehicles
 - Flooding and Storm Drain Maintenance

In addition to the key issues noted above, identified through the review of prior years' budget discussions, Chair Hawkins has requested responses to the following questions:

1. What improvements are being made to the systems used to evaluate roadway conditions?
2. How are we progressing towards the goal of eliminating fatal motor vehicle and pedestrian crashes by 2040?
3. If this initiative was running at full throttle, what would it look like?

Road Construction and Maintenance:

The Department of Public Works and Transportation ranks #1 among County agencies for 311 complaints. According to the Department's Office of Highway Maintenance, historically the top citizen complaints have been potholes, litter and tree maintenance. In recent years, the County administration and County Council has focused on making sure that the Department has had sufficient funding to maintain the County's 2,000 miles of roadway. In FY 2022, road resurfacing was funded at \$5M less than in FY 2020, yet the Department was able to resurface the same number of miles (35) of roadway- similar to the FY 2020 expenditures.

Key questions:

- What were the factors which allowed the Department to resurface more miles of roadway in FY 2018 as to subsequent years?
- How much funding is needed to return us to FY 2018 levels of service for road maintenance?
- What strides have been made since the inception of the litter and illegal dumping task force?

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	2020 Actual	FY 2021 Projected	FY 2022 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Roadway maintenance expenditures (millions)	\$23.9	\$20.0	\$29.5	\$24.0	\$24.0
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
Service request calls	4,772	6,368	3,684	3,700	3,800
Resolved service request calls	4,144	5,921	3,440	2,500	2,500
Miles of roadways resurfaced	55	31	35	35	35
Impact (Outcome)					
Pavement Condition Index rating on arterial/collector County-maintained roadway	54	51	56	55	55

Table 1 FY 22 Performance Measures

- Staff uses a Pavement Assessment Management System (PAMS) methodology to evaluate asphalt condition. The foundation of PAMS is field data obtained using a high-tech pavement management vehicle, which measures and records the condition of roads; evaluating them on surface roughness, environmental stresses, and structural condition. Based on the resulting pavement condition index (PCI) rating, which is measured 0-100 (worst to excellent), staff uses the objective measurements to develop an initial list of roads to receive a resurfacing treatment. Once a street is suggested, field evaluations are conducted to confirm or negate the results. The goal is to apply the right surface treatment at the right time based on the results of the overall pavement evaluation. The Department would like to complete a new field assessment of PCI in the next two years. Cost of materials has increased substantially.

Vision Zero Initiative:

In 2019, Prince George's County joined cities and counties across the nation in an initiative to make our streets safe for everyone. The overall goal is to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2040. The countywide strategy focuses on road and transportation design for all roadway users, including the most vulnerable, people who walk and bike. The principles of Vision Zero have been integrated into every aspect of the Department. In 2020, a steering committee, which meets regularly (monthly initially and now quarterly), was launched to bridge partners at the state and local levels to carry out an action plan toward the goal of zero traffic-related serious injuries and death. The safe systems approach emphasizes "6 E's": Education, Emergency Response, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation and Equity. Efforts are modeled along the philosophy that people are human and we all make mistakes so how can we mitigate the most severe consequences through roadway design. Progress is tracked concerning the 38 actions on the Department website and through activities. According to the Department, resource decision making is data driven and information about crash locations, the high injury network and projects are available publicly.

During the pandemic, Prince George's County and counties across the country saw a rise in traffic fatalities. We have been confronted even more clearly by the limitations and opportunities provided by our built environment. Regrettably, Prince George's County reflects the nationwide trend. "While Americans drove less in 2020 due to the pandemic, National Highway Traffic Safety Agency's (NHTSA) early estimates show more people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes—the largest projected number of fatalities since 2007. NHTSA's research suggests that throughout the national public health emergency and associated lockdowns, driving patterns and behaviors changed significantly, and that drivers who remained on the roads engaged in more risky behavior, including speeding, failing to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Traffic data indicates that average speeds increased throughout the year, and examples of extreme speeds became more common, while the evidence also shows that fewer people involved in crashes used their seat belts. We are grappling with understanding how the risks to vulnerable road users might have changed recently and how we can effectively respond while continuing to make improvements."¹

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/2020-fatality-data-show-increased-traffic-fatalities-during-pandemic>

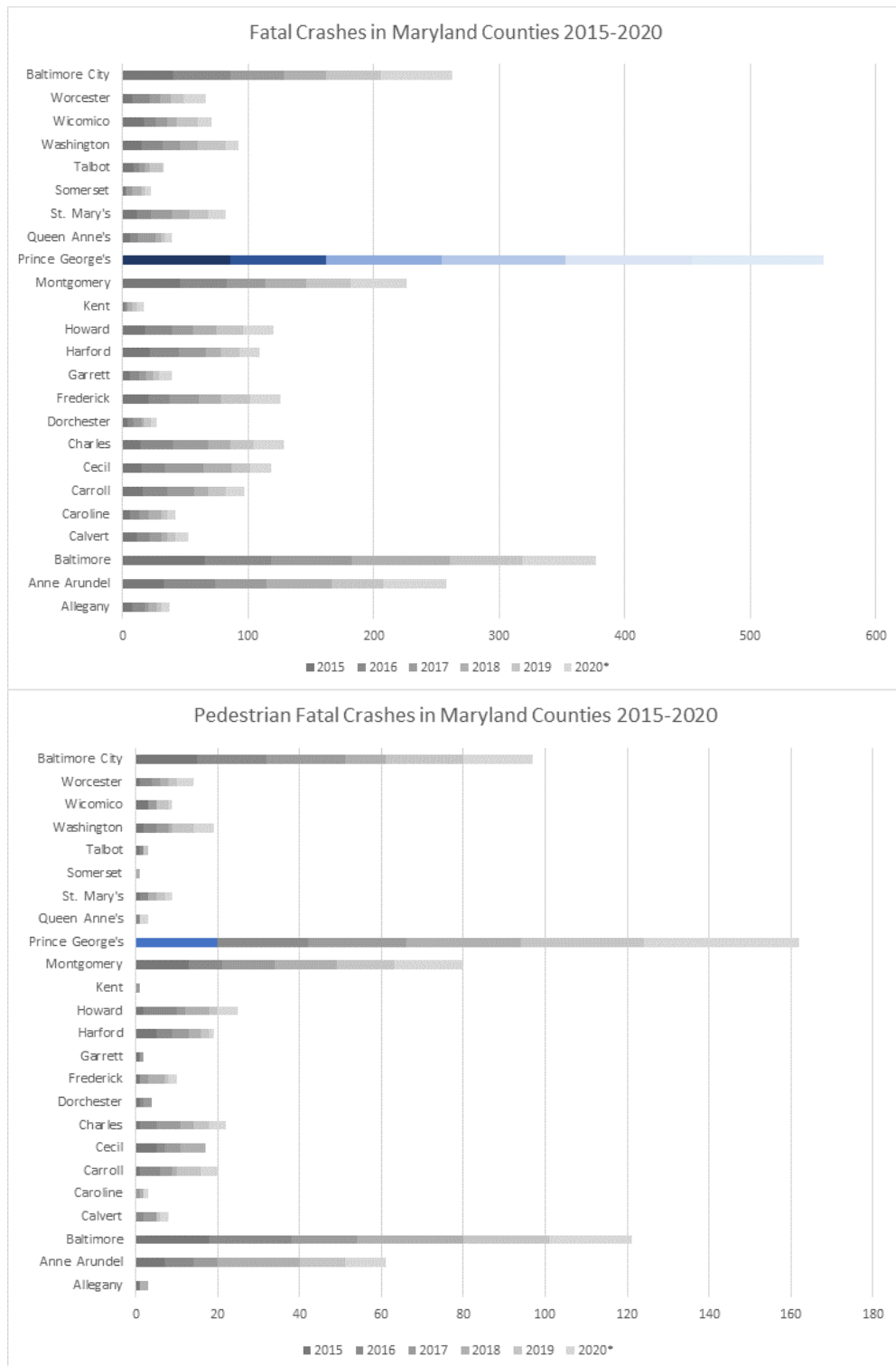


Figure 1 Maryland Department of Transportation

Staffing/Retention:

The Department reports issues relating to employee recruitment, retention and attrition. The most recent historical trend shows an unaudited projection of a 38.5% attrition rate for the Department (through FY 2021).² Data from the department shows that a number of senior employees are eligible to retire from the Office of Highway Maintenance. The Department's Office of Administrative Services is using succession planning to ensure that key field and engineering positions are filled as they become available.

Attrition Rate Historical Trend					
	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020*	FY 2021+
# of Total Separations	30	26	32	24	17
# of Filled Positions	325	325	332	362	352
Rate of Attrition	9.5%	8.0%	9.6%	6.6%	4.8%
* As of July 1, 2019, + As of March 1, 2021					

Table 2 Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Review

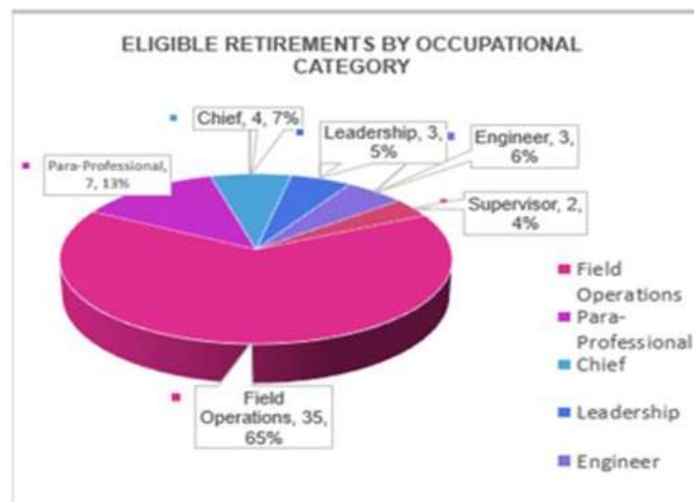


Figure 2 Eligible Retirement Data from DPW&T

The Consolidated Transportation Plan:

In 2020, the County Executive and County Council provided to Governor Hogan their Annual Priority List for the 2021-2026 State Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). Top among the priorities were the Purple Line, I-95/I495 Managed Lanes Study and the NEPA process, the Baltimore-

² Memorandum to Chair of the County Council from Audits and Investigations Staff, Dated April 22, 2021 regarding – Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Review

- *MD 4 at Suitland Parkway* – A new contractor Kiewit was awarded the project on September 9. Design plans are currently being revised. Design is currently 15% complete.⁴

Sustainability:

Key Transit & Transportation Operation Initiatives:

Under the leadership of former Director Terry L. Bellamy, the Department focused its attention on launching much needed transit and transportation enhancements. These initiatives have been welcomed by the public. Services added during this fiscal year include:

- **Saturday Service** – Due to public demand, on November 7, 2020 the Department launched County-wide Saturday service. This expanded service to 6 days a week to compliment WMATA operations.
- **Mobility on Demand/PGC Link** – designed to reduce traffic while providing on-demand public transportation to locations underserved by fixed transportation routes. These routes use smaller vehicles during the day or during the off-peak hours. In July 2021 a pilot program was launched in the *Fort Washington area*.

Key questions:

- What were the ridership numbers for the pilot program?
- Is there any discussion of expanding the program into Brandywine, Bowie and Clinton?

- **Battery Bus Electrification Program** – DPW&T is leasing four (4) batteries per bus from Proterra. The Department now has a total of 15 electric buses.
 - In FY 2019 the Department was awarded a total of \$2.2M in federal funding to purchase four electric buses and associated charging equipment.
 - In FY 2021, a total of \$5.1 million was funded by the FTA to procure 4 additional electric buses, 3 plug-in chargers and 1 pantograph charger
 - The estimated cost of a full fleet and infrastructure transition is \$78.1M with an additional cost of \$6.6M for workforce development.
 - Charging stations have been installed at D’Arcy Road Bus Facility
 - The Department plans to purchase 11 electric buses by the end of 2021 and another 13 in 2022.

Key questions:

- What drove the Department to lease batteries as opposed to purchasing the batteries outright?
- What is the strategy and possible timeline to achieve a full electric fleet? What are the driving factors?

⁴ <https://mdot-sha-md4-intrs-at-md337-pg6185116-maryland.hub.arcgis.com/>

- **Ridesmart Commuter Solutions** – Under the leadership of new program manager Stacy King, the Ridesmart program has been revamped with renewed emphasis on marketing and outreach. Designed to support residents and employees of Prince George’s County with commuter programs that are free and pay rewards, this program provides free support to County employers to establish expand and refine commuter benefit programs.

Key question:

- How does the department plan on measuring the successes of the revamped program? How will success be measured?

- **TheBus** – Over the course of the pandemic, the Department continues to see a significant reduction in mass transit ridership with TheBus service as compared to Paratransit services. The chart below shows that through the month of October, ridership is down almost 80%.

Key questions:

- Is there an expectation that ridership will return to pre-pandemic levels?
- What is the department doing to who attract riders?

TheBus Ridership

Date	Ridership	Percent Down
10/5/21	4,197	-61%
10/6/21	4,074	-62%
10/7/21	4,943	-54%
10/8/21	4,460	-58%
10/9/21	2,304	-78%
10/11/21	3,908	-63%
10/12/21	4,588	-57%
10/13/21	4,531	-58%
10/14/21	4,367	-59%
10/15/21	4,345	-59%
10/16/21	2,212	-79%

Table 3 October Data from RAPT-DEV

ParaTransit Trips

Ridership Counts	10/18	10/19	10/20	10/21	10/22
General Purpose	63	90	73	94	13
Dialysis	74	39	75	34	45
OTP	94.64%	77.14%	72.86%	93.06%	94.44%
Total Call-A-Bus Trips	137	133	148	128	58

Table 4 October Data from RAPT-DEV

Flooding and Storm Drain Maintenance:

In March of 2021, the Department created the Office of Storm Drain Maintenance led by Associate Director Charlie Griffith. This office is focusing on key initiatives such as channel maintenance, restoration, managing levees, ponds, and storm drains countywide. According to the Department, there are over 700 ponds that are due to be upgraded.

Key Question:

How is the Department doing in meeting State mandates for pond restoration?

Areas of Focus for the Department:

According to the Department's 2020-2021 Annual Reports, some of the Department's area of focus are the following:

- Vision Zero
- Pond Restoration/Storm Drain Maintenance/Flood Mitigation
- Zero-emission vehicles and installation of electric charging stations
- Succession Planning/Retirement Eligibility