



THE 2026 COMPREHENSIVE BUDGET GROWTH SHOULDN'T OUTFRAN THE PLAN.

We must be responsible with your tax dollars while building the infrastructure that keeps up with our growth and strengthens our communities.

THE FACTS — FY2026 (What was adopted)

- ✓ **Total General Fund:** \$595,081,500 — a 6.0% increase over the prior year. Adopted May 20, 2025.
- ✓ **Education:** \$263.97 million (44.4% of General Fund) — an \$11.24M increase, exceeding maintenance of effort by \$8.9M. Includes a \$850K CSM increase totaling \$12.17M.
- ✓ **Sheriff's Office:** \$138.97 million (23.3%) — an \$8.39M increase. Converted 8 part-time positions to full-time.
- ✓ **County Government Operations:** \$106.26 million (17.8%) — a \$6.18M increase.
- ✓ **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) FY2026–30:** \$1.02 billion — covering schools, roads, parks, water/sewer, stormwater.
- ✓ **Property tax rate held flat at \$1.141/\$100** of assessed value for the 12th consecutive year. Income tax unchanged at 3.03%.
- ✓ **A \$40K transfer funded the Healthy Families Home Visiting Program** after state funding delays.
- ✓ **Water/Sewer fund:** \$60.8 million. Average quarterly residential bill rising from \$234.67 to \$244.33 (4.1% increase).

THE FACTS — FY2027 (In progress now)

- ✓ FY2027 budget work sessions are underway through April 28, 2026. Public hearing April 29. Adoption target: May 12, 2026.
- ✓ Residents had until March 31, 2026 to submit feedback via the county's budget engagement page.
- ✓ March 17 session covered Water/Sewer, Recreation, Landfill, Stormwater, Environmental Services, Inspection and Review, Cable, and Community Reinvestment funds.
- ✓ New EMS and special operations stations are being proposed for high-growth areas to address rising call volumes.
- ✓ Maryland is cutting federal pass-through funds — county leadership has explicitly acknowledged the need to budget conservatively given federal and state uncertainty.

THE GAP

A \$1.02B capital program sounds like a plan. But water won't be complete until 2030–2035. Roads are behind growth. Schools are overcrowded. **The Capital Improvement Program is the right size; the timeline isn't.**
Residents are paying today for infrastructure they won't see for a decade.

A BILLION-DOLLAR CAPITAL PLAN MEANS NOTHING IF THE TIMELINE IS A DECADE BEHIND THE GROWTH WE ALREADY APPROVED.

CHERYL'S 5 BUDGET POSITIONS



TIE EVERY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROJECT TO A DELIVERY DATE PUBLICLY

The \$1.02B CIP is real. But a capital plan without published completion milestones is a wish list. Every major project needs a public-facing schedule, with annual updates.



MATCH DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS TO INFRASTRUCTURE READINESS

The county has a growth problem and a budget problem for the same reason: developments are approved before the infrastructure to support them is funded. Break the cycle.



PROTECT EDUCATION FUNDING; PROVIDE MORE THAN JUST THE MINIMUM AMOUNT REQUIRED

Exceeding maintenance of effort by \$8.9M in FY2026 is the floor. The Comprehensive Budget must treat education as a growth investment; not a compliance checkbox.



BUILD A FEDERAL CONTINGENCY BUFFER

County leadership acknowledged federal and state funding uncertainty in FY2026. The FY2027 budget must include a contingency reserve; not just optimism that grants will clear.



SHOW RESIDENTS THE REAL COST OF GROWTH

Every budget should include a plain-language accounting of what growth approvals from the prior year will cost in infrastructure over the next five years. No more surprises in the CIP.



SMARTER GROWTH