



Permitting Services

APPROVED FY24 BUDGET

\$41,662,896

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

249.03

 RABBIAH SABBAKHAN, DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT


The Department of Permitting Services' (DPS) primary mission is to promote the health, safety, welfare, and economic well-being of residents, businesses, and communities in Montgomery County. The Department provides timely, professional, transparent, and consistent review and processing of plans and permits and inspections of structures, rights-of-way, and development. DPS protects the public through application and enforcement of national, State, and local codes for fire and life safety, electrical, mechanical, energy, accessibility, building, and other public safety and zoning codes. DPS protects residential and business communities and users of public rights-of-way through inspections of work within public rights-of-way to assure adherence to approved site plans and special exceptions. DPS strives to promote economic well-being and customer service through ongoing process improvements, timely response, and service, while ensuring that structures are safe for occupants and visitors, sustainable for future generations, and that development is consistent with requirements to protect the environment.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total approved FY24 Operating Budget for the Department of Permitting Services is \$41,662,896, an increase of \$595,847 or 1.45 percent from the FY23 Approved Budget of \$41,067,049. Personnel Costs comprise 79.50 percent of the budget for 243 full-time position(s) and no part-time position(s), and a total of 249.03 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 20.50 percent of the FY24 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following are emphasized:

-  **A Growing Economy**
-  **A Greener County**
-  **Easier Commutes**
-  **Effective, Sustainable Government**

INITIATIVES

-
- ★ The Executive Regulations for the adoption of the Fire and Life Safety codes are in progress.
 - ★ Working on the adoption of the 2021 International Residential Building, Mechanical, and Fuel Gas codes.
 - ★ DPS is exploring a new software product that will enable users to upload legal documents that are recorded in the Land Records. This will reduce time for approval and recordation and give the County better oversight and control of the documents.
 - ★ DPS is currently changing the method in which Use and Occupancy certificates are provided to customers. The Department will allow anyone with an online account and the application number to access the certificate and print it themselves. This will save staff time and provide improved customer service.
 - ★ In FY24, DPS will seek an independent financial advisor to conduct a comprehensive rate study to determine appropriate rate levels and fund balance target range. The advisor will have proven experience in establishing fee structures and a background in building and land development services in connection with licensing and permitting of development, construction, and related activities.

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

- ★ DPS developed Power BI dashboards tailored to division needs. The dashboards are connected directly to DPS servers and provide close to real-time updates on the status of transactions. Managers use the dashboards to monitor and assign tasks to their team members and to obtain monthly productivity data. In FY24, the department will maintain the existing dashboards and develop additional dashboards to provide DPS leadership daily visibility into DPS overall performance.
- ★ DPS is proactively processing fire code compliance permit renewals for permits to better prioritize inspections.
- ★ Land Development continues cross-training plan review and inspection staff to be multifunctional, saving the customer time and effort. For inspections, this effort will reduce the number of trips to a single site, helping to save time and protect valuable environmental resources.
- ★ DPS provides in-person and virtual training of commercial plan review and inspections staff with respect to changes in International Building Code, proposed new permitting system database, "wireless" permit applications, and updates to Department Policies and Procedures.
- ★ DPS will upgrade the current ePlan system which will facilitate process improvements and modifications to ePlan processes. The system will integrate service needs developed over time to accommodate changes in the industry and departmental needs.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Barbara Suter of the Department of Permitting Services at 240.777.6244 or Katherine Bryant-Higgins of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2764 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below (where applicable), with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY23 estimates reflect funding based on the FY23 Approved Budget. The FY24 and FY25 figures are performance targets based on the FY24 Approved Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY25.

The department combines department and applicant time components when measuring "total time to issue a permit." These times may

be impacted by satisfaction of related preconditions such as sediment control submissions, approvals, and outside agency approvals.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Administration

Central Services Unit

The Administration program provides policy development and leadership for all programs within the Department.

The administrative staff are specialists responsible for a full range of administrative, financial, and budgetary tasks, including daily operations, revenue collection (fees and development taxes and charges), reporting and management, automation, human resources, fleet management, training, safety, quality assurance, legislative coordination, space management, historic files maintenance, and management services.

Information Technology

DPS' Office of Information Technology (DPS-IT) leverages technology to deliver better services to the department that enables staff and the public to access their resources at their convenience anywhere at any time. The IT unit's mission is to provide a robust and secure IT infrastructure to support mission-critical applications, mobile computing, and desktop support employing industry best practices. The IT unit has embarked on an IT modernization project to enhance multimedia improvement by enabling Microsoft Teams telephony and conference rooms. The IT unit will incorporate teamwork and technology enhancement with TEBS to access their services and provide IT services to help DPS achieve its mission. IT services will include, but will not be limited to, IT desktop and server support, land use, and cloud application.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Percent of screenings passed with fewer than 2 returns to the customer	94%	98%	95%	95%	95%
Percent of inspections passed - all divisions	87%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Percent of customers satisfied with DPS services	98%	91%	92%	93%	94%

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	11,764,741	24.13
Increase Cost: Avolve Maintenance	285,540	0.00
Add: Comprehensive Rate Study	150,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Increase Maintenance Cost for INfor, Avolve and Opentext	8,986	0.00
Decrease Cost: Back Out One-Time IT Expense	(2,000,000)	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	549,217	1.00
FY24 Approved	10,758,484	25.13

Commercial Building Construction

The Commercial Construction program is responsible for ensuring public safety through the effective application of commercial building, structural, electrical, mechanical, fire-safety, accessibility, and sustainability construction codes and standards. As the "First Preventers," this is accomplished through plan review and construction site inspections to facilitate compliance with

approved plans and regulations. This program processes applications for and issues building, mechanical, fire protection, and electrical permits. The program also handles construction complaints during natural and other disasters and assists in disaster recovery.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Number of permits receiving final approvals	10,720	10,868	10,870	10,900	10,930
Commercial Permits - Percent of inspections completed on the scheduled day	98.7%	98.2%	98%	98%	98%
Percent of plans receiving a complete first review within 30 days	98.8%	89.5%	90%	91%	92%

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	6,923,581	52.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	493,017	0.00
FY24 Approved	7,416,598	52.00

☀ Customer Support & Outreach

The Customer Support and Outreach Division is responsible for all administration and issuance of building, land development, and zoning-related permits, applications and licenses, information requests, pre-design consultations, and other specialty services. This Division was formed to provide a multi-prong approach to enhance the methods in which our services are delivered and to provide enhanced communication for our clients. This heightened focus on service will include empowerment of staff to act as facilitators rather than regulators.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Number of applications processed (at intake) by permit technicians ¹	61,293	51,124	51,500	51,800	52,000
Percent of screenings completed (plans ready for review) within 2 business days	60.0%	73.0%	75.0%	78.0%	80.0%
Percent of customers satisfied with DPS Customer Service Division	94.5%	97.0%	97.0%	98.0%	98.0%

¹ Starting in FY22, the data parameters have been corrected to include only permits processed by permit technicians (as opposed to all). That explains the decrease in FY22 compared to previous years.

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	4,708,983	43.90
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	241,544	0.00
FY24 Approved	4,950,527	43.90

☀ Land Development

The Land Development Division is responsible for ensuring the protection of the County's land and water resources, the protection of the environment, and the safety of residents and businesses through its engineering and inspection functions related to storm water management; sediment control; floodplain management; special protection areas; storm drain design and construction; roadside tree protection; tree canopy enhancement; well and septic system reviews and approvals; record plat approval; and work in the public right-of-way.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
------------------------------	-------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	-------------

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Total number of public right of way permits issued (roadside trees, driveways, plats, et al.)	3,488	3,478	3,480	3,500	3,520
Number of Sediment Control inspections completed	15,239	18,959	19,000	19,250	19,500
Number of roadside tree plan reviews	1,354	1,796	1,800	1,850	1,900
Percent of Sediment Control inspections that pass inspection indicating a compliant site	95.5%	95.6%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Successful Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Delegation of Review of Sediment Control and Storm-Water Management ¹	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A

¹ Sediment Control Delegation reviews are performed biennially.

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	6,524,110	48.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	1,095,105	5.00
FY24 Approved	7,619,215	53.00

Residential Construction & Fire Code Compliance

The Residential Construction staff is responsible for ensuring public safety through the effective application of residential building, structural, electrical, mechanical, and energy conservation codes. This is accomplished through technical plan review and inspection processes.

The Fire Code Compliance staff is responsible for ensuring compliance with adopted National Fire Codes and Standards, the Montgomery County Fire Code, and the Maryland State Fire Prevention Codes in existing buildings. This is accomplished through reviews and preventive inspection processes for businesses, schools, multi-family buildings, healthcare facilities, places of worship, and all other commercial buildings or occupancies.

The Division staff respond to and investigate code violations and aid in recovery during disasters and other incidents.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Percent of service requests completed within 3 business days	99.0%	92.1%	93.0%	94.0%	95.0%
Percent of commercial establishments in compliance with the Fire Code	61.3%	78.5%	79%	80%	81%
Number of inspections performed by Residential and Fire Code Compliance FCC inspectors	49,599	69,820	69,900	70,000	70,100
Number of residential plan reviews performed	9,657	9,491	9,500	9,550	9,600
Residential Permits - Percent of inspections completed on the scheduled day	99.0%	99.4%	99%	99%	99%

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	6,173,208	46.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	373,980	0.00
FY24 Approved	6,547,188	46.00

Zoning and Code Compliance

The Zoning and Code Compliance Division protects the quality of life, public health, safety, and welfare of Montgomery County. This is accomplished through the effective application and enforcement of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance

development and use standards; Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) certified site plan requirements; and emergency vehicle access review and approvals. Division Staff perform zoning reviews of plan applications prior to permit issuance, conduct inspections and investigations while ensuring compliance of M-NCPPC certified site plan projects and responding to service requests across multiple disciplines within its authority.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Number of zoning, well and septic, and fire department access reviews	33,090	32,427	31,000	31,200	31,500
Percent of MNCPPC active site plans in compliance every 10 days	92%	94%	95%	96%	97%
Percent of Zoning service requests started and responded to the customer within 48 hours	96%	87%	95%	96%	97%

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	4,972,426	35.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(601,542)	(6.00)
FY24 Approved	4,370,884	29.00

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Approved FY24	%Chg Bud/App
PERMITTING SERVICES					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	22,650,667	24,436,707	23,958,882	26,110,430	6.9 %
Employee Benefits	6,330,604	6,454,742	6,366,793	7,009,753	8.6 %
Permitting Services Personnel Costs	28,981,271	30,891,449	30,325,675	33,120,183	7.2 %
Operating Expenses	4,515,018	10,175,600	9,262,596	8,542,713	-16.1 %
Permitting Services Expenditures	33,496,289	41,067,049	39,588,271	41,662,896	1.5 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	240	243	243	243	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	245.90	249.03	249.03	249.03	—
REVENUES					
Building Permits	29,976,294	28,742,198	26,292,133	25,865,408	-10.0 %
Electrical Permits and Licenses	5,129,813	5,130,914	4,914,973	4,907,130	-4.4 %
Fire Code Enforcement Permits	2,226,560	3,101,062	2,509,934	2,548,228	-17.8 %
Grading/Storm Drains/Paving/Driveway Permits	4,591,291	3,431,353	4,369,966	4,075,018	18.8 %
Occupancy Permits	619,573	583,903	559,650	498,435	-14.6 %
Other Licenses/Permits	402,080	300,225	422,959	314,662	4.8 %
Sediment Control Permits	3,681,565	3,083,491	3,481,155	2,798,592	-9.2 %
Sign Permits	238,260	237,701	176,933	197,600	-16.9 %
Special Exception Fee	188,845	206,228	206,229	189,052	-8.3 %
Stormwater Mgmt and Water Quality Plan Fee	237,476	270,483	255,227	248,396	-8.2 %
Well and Septic	479,923	415,414	473,041	315,194	-24.1 %

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Approved FY24	%Chg Bud/App
Automation Enhancement Fee	159	0	0	0	—
Other Charges/Fees	1,847,764	870,994	2,050,022	1,600,479	83.8 %
Other Fines/Forfeitures	71,075	40,264	57,713	27,543	-31.6 %
Miscellaneous Revenues	20,235	0	0	0	—
Investment Income	69,879	288,370	1,642,610	2,595,390	800.0 %
Mechanical Construction Permit	1,992,263	1,829,425	1,925,645	1,680,824	-8.1 %
Information Requests	0	165,558	95,870	136,533	-17.5 %
Permitting Services Revenues	51,773,055	48,697,583	49,434,060	47,998,484	-1.4 %

GRANT FUND - MCG

EXPENDITURES

Salaries and Wages	0	0	0	0	—
Employee Benefits	0	0	0	0	—
Grant Fund - MCG Personnel Costs	0	0	0	0	—
Operating Expenses	2,960	0	0	0	—
Grant Fund - MCG Expenditures	2,960	0	0	0	—

PERSONNEL

Full-Time	0	0	0	0	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	—

REVENUES

State Grants	32,839	0	0	0	—
Grant Fund - MCG Revenues	32,839	0	0	0	—

DEPARTMENT TOTALS

Total Expenditures	33,499,249	41,067,049	39,588,271	41,662,896	1.5 %
Total Full-Time Positions	240	243	243	243	—
Total Part-Time Positions	0	0	0	0	—
Total FTEs	245.90	249.03	249.03	249.03	—
Total Revenues	51,805,894	48,697,583	49,434,060	47,998,484	-1.4 %

FY24 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
PERMITTING SERVICES		
FY23 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	41,067,049	249.03
<u>Changes (with service impacts)</u>		
Add: Comprehensive Rate Study [Administration]	150,000	0.00
<u>Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)</u>		

FY24 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Compensation Increases	1,272,153	0.00
Increase Cost: FY24 Compensation Adjustment	1,140,824	0.00
Increase Cost: Avolve Maintenance [Administration]	285,540	0.00
Increase Cost: Risk Management Adjustment	82,151	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Lapsed Positions	52,982	0.00
Increase Cost: Increase Maintenance Cost for INfor, Avolve and Opentext [Administration]	8,986	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	6,570	0.00
Decrease Cost: Retirement Adjustment	(49,448)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	(166,134)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY23 Personnel Costs	(187,777)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Back Out One-Time IT Expense [Administration]	(2,000,000)	0.00
FY24 APPROVED	41,662,896	249.03

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY23 APPR Expenditures	FY23 APPR FTEs	FY24 APPR Expenditures	FY24 APPR FTEs
Administration	11,764,741	24.13	10,758,484	25.13
Commercial Building Construction	6,923,581	52.00	7,416,598	52.00
Customer Support & Outreach	4,708,983	43.90	4,950,527	43.90
Land Development	6,524,110	48.00	7,619,215	53.00
Residential Construction & Fire Code Compliance	6,173,208	46.00	6,547,188	46.00
Zoning and Code Compliance	4,972,426	35.00	4,370,884	29.00
Total	41,067,049	249.03	41,662,896	249.03

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CC APPROVED (\$000S)

Title	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
PERMITTING SERVICES						
EXPENDITURES						
FY24 Approved	41,663	41,663	41,663	41,663	41,663	41,663
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY24	0	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)
Items recommended for one-time funding in FY24, including the Comprehensive Rate Study, will be eliminated from the base in the outyears.						
Labor Contracts	0	735	735	735	735	735
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	41,663	42,248	42,248	42,248	42,248	42,248