Productivity Improvements

Montgomery County strongly encourages its departments and agencies to identify and implement productivity improvements within their budgets. Such initiatives are essential, especially in difficult fiscal times when agencies and departments are called on to significantly reduce costs and preserve essential services. Below is an identification of productivity initiatives implemented by departments during FY12 and FY13 or planned for FY14. Some examples of productivity improvements departments are encouraged to implement include:

- Process re-engineering initiatives
- Implementing a new IT application
- Public-private partnerships that maintain services at lower cost or achieve higher service levels
- Consolidating programs
- Reorganizations
- Contracting out services or, alternatively, bringing contracted services in-house, to reduce costs
- Increasing use of volunteers
- Re-negotiating maintenance/license agreements
- Re-configuring programs to generate increased revenues
- Reducing publication costs by placing more information on the web and producing fewer hard copies
- Introducing employee incentives (within personnel guidelines)

Board of Appeals
❖ - The Board utilizes volunteer office help to try to meet statutory deadlines.

    - Office paper is recycled for use as scratch pads and notepads.

    - Correspondence and information are transmitted electronically.

Cable Communications Plan
❖ In FY13, FiberNet construction funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be completed. The number of locations serviced by the County's high-speed communications network will increase by 32 percent. This expansion along with consistent efficiencies in network operations by the Department of Technology Services management team will lower the FiberNet per site operating costs by one percent.

Circuit Court
❖ The Circuit Court implemented civil settlement conference under a Differentiated Case Management (DCM) plan. Data gathered from this new procedure will be used to govern future modifications.

❖ The Court developed a database to track the efforts of court evaluators in their review and evaluation of custody and visitation issues raised in family cases. This data will be evaluated and the results discussed to ensure efficient use of evaluator resources.

❖ The Court is planning to undertake a number of other analyses to better understand and improve services, including:
  - Collecting and analyzing foreclosure filings and terminations on a monthly basis to provide insights on potential modifications to case processing that may be required to accommodate the Court's caseload.
  - Evaluation of a pilot program initiated by the Maryland Sentencing Commission to determine whether an automated sentencing guideline system offers a more efficient way to perform a core Court function.
  - Examining case processing performance by case sub-type to identify whether certain sub-types consistently close within or over standard time.
  - Establishing a feedback system where concerns or errors uncovered are discussed with all appropriate personnel.

Community Use of Public Facilities

❖ Implemented an integrated document and on-line imaging and work flow process to track and file community use requests. As a result community use scheduling request are distributed for processing more quickly and facilitates more responsive customer service.

❖ Created a CUPF specific Alert Montgomery option to enhance accuracy and timeliness of customer communications regarding the status of community use during periods of inclement weather.

❖ Implemented an intranet based air-conditioning and heat turn-on request/modification form available to MCPS and CUPF staff to place last-minute requests and changes for processing by MCPS Energy Management office. New process facilitates timely communications and helps MCPS better manage utility usage and improve customer service to both community users and MCPS staff.

❖ CUPF and MNCPPC continued to align field permitting practices and use technology to add customer options and share information. In FY13 CUPF will also assume a greater role in scheduling special events on Park regional fields, achieving another milestone in one-stop services.

❖ CUPF will redesign the department's web portal to be consistent with new County requirements. The new design should enable customers to navigate the website more easily.

Consumer Protection

❖ OCP continues to improve its business licensing program by initiating the first of a multi-step database enhancement. Currently, OCP's business licensing unit utilizes four distinct databases. In FY12, OCP finished the first of a three stage process to consolidate databases. OCP's Second Hand Personal Property Licenses have been transitioned with an improvement in productivity while minimizing user error with built-in business rule validation.

❖ OCP has maximized its consumer education outreach initiatives by utilizing a new interactive Live Discussion platform. OCP is able to reach a limitless audience, maximize resources, and address hot topics in real time.

❖ OCP continues to leverage its resources with the contribution of over 2,500 hours from its volunteer staff. OCP expanded its use of this valuable resource by providing training to volunteers allowing them to participate in off-site consumer education outreach events. OCP received a NACo Award for creating an electronic data base for its volunteer recruitment program.

❖ OCP continues to decrease its reliance on paper while maintaining efficient delivery of services. OCP's latest enhancement resulted in a paperless facsimile system whereby all OCP staff have immediate online access to incoming facsimiles.

Correction and Rehabilitation

❖ Pre-Trial Services (PTS), in cooperation with the Department of General Services, added a third work crew to Pre-Trial Services' Alternative Community Services program, added 15-20 County work sites for Court ordered offenders to complete community service obligations.

❖ Developed six supervisory Resident Supervisor III (equivalent to Sergeant in Detention services) positions at Pre-Release and Re-Entry Services (PRRS) in concert with the employee representative to improve safety and security at PRRS and to reduce overtime costs.

❖ Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) received "Artists and Scholars in the Community" recognition for arts and humanities therapeutic programs for inmates located in the Crisis Intervention Unit.

County Attorney

❖ Converted Debt Collection Access database to MS SQL database including all queries and reports. This conversion will maintain data integrity and integrate the Debt Collection database with the new case management system.

❖ Reconfigured the accounting procedure for posting debt collection into the new ERP Oracle accounts receivable system. The new process will allow the office's Debt Collection Unit to post payments and populate the appropriate accounting codes more effectively and make reporting of debt collection data more effective and efficient.

❖ Replaced all office web pages to be part of the new County portal. The new web pages will be consistent with the County's standard and search features.

❖ Installed new multifunctional printer/scanner for the Health and Human Service's (HHS) Unit that enables the users to scan documents directly into the Enterprise Imaging System for redaction.

❖ Automated a fax system in order to convert incoming faxes as emails and/or PDF attachments. Users can open fax as e-mail and save them into the case management system if needed.

❖ Replaced analog dictaphone system for paralegals to a digital recording system that can be imported and transferred as .mp3 files.

County Executive

❖ Updated CountyStat's public calendar system to allow public users to receive automated meeting notifications via an online subscription that integrates with all major digital calendar platforms or via a RSS feed.

❖ Reconfigured CountyStat's internal data management practices to reduce its digital footprint on County servers and thereby reduce server costs and system burden.

Economic Development

❖ DED worked with 58 companies during FY12 that were interested in starting up, expanding, or relocating to the County. Of those projects, 45 transactions were closed successfully. The 45 companies that signed commitments to locate or expand in Montgomery County are projected to retain and create 11,358 jobs, lease over 685,000 square feet of office space, and generate $521 million in capital investment over the next 3-5 years.

Emergency Management and Homeland Security

❖ Developed tool kit to assist departments in the preparation of their Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).

❖ Improved use of WebEOC during emergency events, through increased monthly drill testing.

Environmental Protection

❖ Began translations of watershed outreach and education materials into Spanish using in-house expertise to reduce time and production costs.

❖ Enhanced Street Sweeping Program by converting from once per year residential street sweeping to twice per month arterial street sweeping to increase total miles swept and total amount of material collected without increasing expenditures. The twice monthly frequency is necessary to receive credit for treatment of impervious surfaces and pollution reduction to meet stormwater permit requirements.

❖ Expanded participation in watershed outreach and education activities organized by and for the Latino community.

- ❖ Launched the Stream Stewards Volunteer program to solicit and involve residents in watershed outreach and stewardship opportunities to meet stormwater permit requirements. Since January 2012, 54 volunteers have donated 345 hours of service through the Stream Stewards program.

- ❖ Provided training for professional designers and contractors to improve RainScapes projects submitted through the rebate program and reduce County staff time revising plans.

- ❖ Worked with Friends of Sligo Creek to implement a new direct e-mail pollution reporting method that allows a quicker response to water quality issues.

Finance

- ❖ Cost Savings: In September 2012 saved the County $2.5 million in real cash flow debt service costs by refunding $23.4 million of general obligation and MEDCO parking bonds (over 10% savings). At the same time, Finance issued $295 million in new GO bonds. One week later, in conjunction with Montgomery County Revenue Authority, refunded $8.4 million in bonds and saved over $1 million (or 13.6%). In May 2012 the Department of Finance issued $24.1 million in new and $13.8 million in refunding bonds for the Bethesda Parking Lot District. The savings on the refunding bonds was $2.2 million, or 13.7%. At the end of June 2012 Finance issued $37.8 million in Water Quality Protection Charge Bonds to help pay the capital costs related to the County's MS4 water quality permit. Overall, the Department is continually analyzing refunding opportunities to save County funds.

- ❖ Cost Savings and Process Re-engineering Initiative: In FY13 Finance implemented the Homestead Tax Credit Program which will verify and monitor resident compliance to ensure that only owner occupied residential dwellings receive the County's Homestead Credit and Property Tax Credit. Through October 2012 Finance has reviewed 1,956 accounts and identified over $5.4 million potentially owed to the County.

- ❖ Cost Savings and Process Re-engineering Initiative: Implemented the Take Home Vehicle Tax Reporting system to automate and streamline the take home vehicle use tax reporting. The Department implemented the Bag Tax Registration and Payment system on time which is responsible for the collection of approximately $1 million annually from nearly 1,000 vendors.

Fire and Rescue Service

- ❖ Saved hundreds of thousands of dollars by hiring over 80 pre-certified, trained personnel who graduated from two-month recruit classes, rather than the standard six-month classes.

- ❖ Fire Code Compliance implemented an internal quality assurance program in which quality assurance personnel developed checklists to streamline the inspection process.

- ❖ Worked with Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department to develop a staffing pilot program which enhances weeknight and weekend basic life support transport capacity in downtown Silver Spring.

Fleet Management Services

- ❖ Over the past year cyclical counts (physically counting one-twelfth of all stock each month) have been added to the parts room schedule which has given renewed attention to detail in the parts room inventory. During its FY12 year-end inventory, DFMS had 42% greater accuracy over the FY11 inventory.

- ❖ In order to lower accident and injury rates of Fleet Services staff, mandatory Toolbox Talks have been initiated as an informal group discussion among employees within each section that focus on particular safety issues.

- ❖ In an effort to enhance training opportunities for staff, DFMS is building a relationship with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to utilize vacancies in their technical training facility as available. DFMS continues to offer a variety of technical training to its mechanical staff as required.

- ❖ Transit Preventive Maintenance (PM) Program Enhancements – Improved on-time PM performance. Due to various productivity enhancements, the Federal Transit Administration required 80% on time mark has recently been achieved.

General Services

- ❖ Piloted a project through an Energy Performance Contract to provide for facility improvements funded solely through energy savings.

- ❖ The Office of Procurement designed a no-cost web-based workflow management system web-based solution that allows the Operations Sections to communicate and track contract lifecycle information using a customizable dashboard which displays various contract indicators.

- ❖ The Transit Equipment Section (TES) within DFMS has been working to improve its on-time Preventive Maintenance (PM) performance. Due to various productivity enhancements, DFMS achieved the FTA required 80% on time mark.

Health and Human Services

- ❖ Environmental Health Regulatory Services was able to reduce overtime by 16 percent in FY12 by eliminating after hours calls from the Fire Department regarding fires that occur at establishments and consolidating weekend special events. The Environmental Health Regulatory Services program performs the proper inspection to the facility the following morning before it is reopened after fires.

- ❖ The Tuberculosis (TB) Control Program continues its partnership with the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, to implement usage of a new blood test (QFT). The QFT provides increased sensitivity and accuracy, resulting in a decreased number of people needing X-rays and treatment for latent TB infection. As a result, the TB Control Program was able to eliminate a backlog of over 400 people waiting for treatment of latent TB infection. It has brought Montgomery County, which consistently has the highest rate of TB in the State, into a state-of-the-art realm of TB treatment.

- ❖ In 2012, the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center doubled the number of childcare providers trained to 1,258; the number of providers receiving technical assistance and consultation services increased by 1,200. Health consultation services continued to increase in FY12 with 5,373 child care providers receiving visits, telephone consultations, or training. Referrals and service to families in the Infants and Toddlers Program increased in FY12 by 277. ChildLink program referrals were up in FY12 by 188.

- ❖ Child Welfare Services (CWS) was able to increase the number of children placed with relatives after they were removed from their parents' custody for safety reasons. This was a result of having more family involvement meetings before children are removed from their home. The parents can invite relatives or other supportive people, and CWS works with the extended family to design a plan where the child is safe. Relatives now have a guardianship subsidy (equal to foster care rates) so there is no financial barrier to taking relatives' children. Kinship providers were given custody and guardianship by the courts for 60 children. The total number of children in out of home placement was reduced by five percent to 474.

- ❖ In FY12, as a result of the Behavioral Health and Crisis Services reorganization, the Clinical Assessment and Transition Services (CATS) Program rapidly expanded services, both in terms of coverage and types of services provided. CATS also developed new programming without interruption in client care or quality of services.

- ❖ The Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) purchased and implemented an automated system (i.e., Univeral Participant Tracking - UPT) that allows customers at senior congregate meal sites to use a magnetic card swipe system to sign in for meals. The UPT system is used in several other SNPs nationally, and enhances both the accuracy of data and reduces staff time and expenditures.

Human Resources

- ❖ Delegated outside advertising to departments to expedite the hiring process and improve billing and invoice tracking process.

- ❖ Expedited recruitments by allowing one week recruitments for large volume recruitments.

- ❖ Expedited the selection process by allowing direct placement on the Eligible List when five or fewer applicants apply for a job and meet minimum qualifications.

Intergovernmental Relations

- ❖ IGR staff member attended lobbyist training offered by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo).

❖ IGR staff member became a Certified Public Manager through a program offered by the Council of Governments.

Legislative Oversight

❖ As a result of Report 2012-2, the Council President sent a letter to the Board of Education requesting that the MCPS routinely provide the Council with specified fiscal information related to the school system's pension and group insurance funds.

❖ Sponsored a graduate student from University of Maryland School of Public Policy who worked as a volunteer research assistant on an OLO report as part of his course assignments.

❖ Increased use of web access to OLO products, thereby reducing printing costs.

Liquor Control

❖ DLC has assumed the work of entering daily deposits into the ORACLE system from the Treasury Division of Finance relieving their personnel from manually entering individual deposits to different banks daily from Liquor Control created spreadsheets. DLC no longer creates spreadsheets, using that time to enter deposits into ORACLE resulting in more timely entry information. Treasury still oversees the reconciliation of accounts.

❖ The Retail Division has leveraged a feature in the new point-of-sale system that has eliminated the need for one of the telephone lines in each store resulting in a savings of approximately $550 per month.

❖ DLC completed their move to the new warehouse in Edison Park. The warehouse is climate controlled to preserve product integrity, eliminates the need for storage at satellite locations, and has optimal track configuration for product safety.

Management and Budget

❖ Increased early review of capital budget project specifications as a tool for identifying key cost drivers and controlling costs.

❖ Increased use of benchmarking analysis when reviewing budgets.

❖ Launched Wave 2 of Hyperion Implementation for the FY14 Operating Budget load which for the first time included position budgeting using eBusiness Human Resources (EBS HR) data.

❖ OMB continues to build, modify, and test Hyperion's Public Sector software, which will replace OMB's decision support, Future Fiscal Impacts, Six-Year Fund Displays, and Operating Budget Production System. Implementation is targeted for Summer 2013.

Permitting Services

❖ Completed upgrade to Hansen 8 which allows on-line permit applications.

❖ Developed an inspections quality control program and technical training programs through new field supervision.

❖ Developed e-copy for approved plan submittal for rights-of-way and sediment control to reduce paper, improve efficiency, and reduce scanning costs.

❖ In coordination with Fire and Rescue Service, established procedure to issue occupancy capacity certificates eliminating the need for applicants to seek approvals from multiple departments for permit closure.

❖ In coordination with the department of Housing and Community Affairs, initiated establishment of code references such that single visits by the departments can efficiently address multiple cross-agency violations eliminating the need for duplicative and unnecessary inspections.

❖ Successfully launched fire protection systems inspections unit for new permitted construction reducing inspection scheduling times from 4-6 weeks to 24 hours.

Police

- ❖ Successfully deployed the E*Justice report writing and trained all officers to use, making police report writing nearly paperless.

- ❖ Outfitted all patrol officers with ETix devices, which increases the operational efficiency in performing traffic stops as well as linking information from these stops into a regionalized database to enhance investigative capability.

- ❖ Civilianized investigators in the Backgrounds Unit, returning sworn personnel to other resposibilities.

Public Information

- ❖ The MC311 Call Center continues to handle approximately 40,000 calls a month, and the customer satisfaction rating is 78 percent. Further enhanced the MC311 Customer Call Center in August 2012 by extending hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, in August 2012 to better serve customers using existing resources. This was possible due to the increased number of service requests created by customers through the MC311 web portal, which increased call-taking efficiency. Also worked with DTS to launch the mobile-enabled MC311 web portal, and participated in the open government initiatives that give users a high level overview of MC311 performance and service request data. In the first two years of service, MC311 handled more than one million calls.

- ❖ Media relations, graphics, and web management staff continue to handle requests from departments.

Public Libraries

- ❖ Successfully hired over 60 new employees to fill new and vacant positions, creating a new centralized training model to efficiently train them, ensuring they are ready to provide high-level customer service sooner, and minimize disruptions to customer-service operations.

- ❖ Implemented an online account renewal system (reducing paper and processing time).

- ❖ Implementing new service models at library branches that improve customer service, speed of transactions, and accuracy. Examples include moving the location of book returns, consolidating service desks into one location, and having librarians walk throughout the library branch to help customers (similar to the way service is provided in retail stores).

Solid Waste Services

- ❖ As a result of a new ash management system being used at the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), there will be less water in the ash residue, reducing its weight. Weight reduction is estimated to be about 2 percent by weight of incoming tons processed at the RRF. This will reduce the weight of ash managed under the Out-of-County haul program resulting in an annual savings of $400,000 to $500,000 per year.

- ❖ The County Council has approved Executive Regulation 7-12 which sets a new recycling goal for the County to recycle 70 percent of waste generated by 2020. The regulation specifies that the County will adopt the State of Maryland methodology per the Maryland Recycling Act to measure the County's recycling, and will include the Source Reduction Credit used to calculate the Waste Diversion Rate.

- ❖ Coordinated and integrated whenever feasible the execution and completion of recycling outreach, education, training, and evaluation tasks. Designed the majority of all artwork and other educational materials internally using InDesign software. Total estimated savings for FY13 and FY14 is approximately $56,000.

- ❖ The Transfer Station now markets and sells used vehicle batteries and used oil. Revenues from the sales of these commodities are estimated to be over $50,000 per year.

- ❖ Began issuing tickets to individuals caught scavenging scrap metal from the curbside collection program. Individuals are assessed a $600 fine for the violation.

- ❖ Continue to work with non-profit organizations to give away usable latex and blended bulked paint. Additonally, there is a no cost "paint store" where residents can pick up free paint. This effort helps reduce the overall cost of the program.

State's Attorney

❖ The State's Attorney's Office continues to recruit undergraduate and law school students to volunteer as interns who screen District Court criminal cases, assist in preparing cases for trial, contact witnesses, and gather evidence. During the Spring 2012 semester the office had 32 interns who worked a total of 9,216 hours or the equivalent of 4.45 FTEs. In the Summer of 2012 the office had 41 interns who worked 17,160 hours or 8.28 FTEs.

Technology Services

❖ Conducted a number of mobile computing initiatives, including: a pilot project to evaluate the use of mobile computing devices in the workplace; a new mobile support website; mobile support help desks, and upgrading key wireless access Internet points in County facilities providing enhanced connectivity options for employees and associates.

❖ Implemented new Web Portal Content Management System greatly improving usability of the County's web site.

❖ Provided project management, development, application engineering, systems engineering and quality assurance support for the Integrated Justice Information Systems program, including the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Corrections and Rehabilitation Information Management System (CRIMS) application. The work done on the part of the County resulted in enhanced solution functionality to the end-users resulting in increased productivity and critical data usage and outcomes.

Transportation

❖ Implemented DOT's Navigation Guided Plowing Project using navigation devices to guide drivers on snow plow routes, resulting in more efficient effort. The project was awarded the NACO Achievement Awards for 2012 and the County Engineers Association of Maryland Award of Merit for 2012

❖ Expanded use of salt brine in pre-treating 966 lane miles of primary/arterial roads in the winter to reduce costs of mobilizing staff and equipment

❖ Two teams developed concepts to recover funds from damage done to County traffic signals due to traffic accidents and selling County scrap metal