



Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission  
Report to the County Board

FY 2022 Proposed Budget

Budget Area:	Department of Environmental Services (DES)
FAAC Reviewers:	Peter Robertson, Gillian Burgess, Claire Noakes
Date of FAAC Action:	March 16, 2021

**FAAC Opinion:**

FAAC recognizes the special challenges faced by the Department, where 65% of the employees continue to show up in person to carry out the Department's many important missions. Given the overall budget challenges faced by the County, FAAC believes that the County Manager's recommendation of a 1% reduction overall is appropriate. Maintaining the County's infrastructure is paramount to public health and the environment, public safety, and quality of life in the County, and continued investment in infrastructure (and associated operations) in future years will be critical.

FAAC Recommendation #1			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the County Manager's proposed budget for the Department of Environmental Services.			
Vote	Yes: 7	No: 1	Abstain: 2
Comments	Abstentions were due to concerns that the portion of the vehicle registration fee allocated to PAYGO is not being prioritized for pedestrian and bicycle safety as the Board committed to do when the decal fee was raised in 2010.		

**Future Considerations:**

1. FAAC looks forward to seeing DES focus its work through an equity lens and implement Vision Zero.
2. FAAC encourages DES to evaluate maintenance response times and take affirmative steps to create a proactive maintenance and monitoring framework, particularly for sidewalks. Proactive monitoring will address needs and create more equitable results.

## Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission

3. FAAC supports DES's recent analysis of the impact of climate change on the needs of the stormwater system and recommends that DES continue to evaluate the impact of climate change on the long-term construction and maintenance needs of other facilities and systems, such as through accelerated degradation of materials due to weather extremes.
4. FAAC encourages DES to continue its efforts to develop performance measures that go beyond measuring output or workload, and in particular to develop performance measures that align with applicable targets in the County's comprehensive plan elements and other related master planning documents. FAAC encourages DES to revise its performance measures to better reflect variables that are within DES's control, and to better describe or indicate where factors that are outside of DES's control (weather, cost of raw materials demand or consumption patterns, etc.) have impacted a particular performance measure. This is particularly apparent due to dramatic changes related to the COVID pandemic.
5. FAAC is pleased that the County/DES continue to invest in improving the County's stormwater system (consistent with FAAC's previous recommendations on this issue) and recommends that such investment continue consistent with previously approved bond funding.
6. FAAC notes that many government entities and jurisdictions, including the U.S. EPA and the State of Maryland, are using GIS/mapping tools to help them better address environmental justice issues. FAAC recommends that the County also use its GIS and mapping capabilities to address environmental justice issues in the County to a greater degree.