

**Report
of the
Commission to Study
Efficiency & Economy
In Government**



**Scott T. Gibson,
Chairperson**

July 8, 2008



HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Government and Community Relations
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County Executive's Commission on Efficiency and Economy in Government

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Terence Cox – Controller for **Alcore, Inc.**, an aerospace manufacturer. His financial background includes interaction with some of the largest Fortune 100 companies including Boeing, General Electric, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman.

Rajiv K. Goel – Attorney with the firm of **Offit, Kurman, Yumkas and Denick, P.A.** and is a partner in the firm's estate planning and elder law department. He is a former member of the University of Maryland System Board of Regents.

M. Pilar Gracia, Esq. – An attorney in local private practice, as well as Counsel to **Williams Scotsman, Inc.** of Baltimore. She is a member of the Trial Court Judicial Nominating Commission for District Four - Harford County and a former Board member of Harford Family House, Inc.

Howard S. Klein – Vice President and General Counsel of **Klein's Family Markets**. His responsibilities include personnel, property management and public relations for the business. He is also a Director of Carrollton Bancorp of Baltimore and a member of the McDonogh School Development Committee.

Sheryl Davis Kohl – President of **Beacon Staffing Alternatives, Inc.** The company provides temporary staffing services to companies in the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan area. She is also a former Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly – 2005 – 2006, representing District 34 for Harford and Cecil Counties.

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Thomas C. Mottley – Co-owner of **RKS Realty, Inc.** a commercial real estate company. He is former co-owner of family entertainment center, Mottley Group LLC. He is also a member of various community and civic organizations throughout Harford County.

John J. Mulhern, Ph. D. – Professor Mulhern is Director of Professional Education and a member of the FELS Institute of Government at the **University of Pennsylvania.**

Ted Pibil – Currently president of Bel Air based **“Blogs at Work, Inc.”** an online communications company specializing in online intelligence, brand promotion and brand protection. His career in the information technology industry spans more than 15 years.

Charles “Bud” Ramsay – A resident of Harford County since 1968, Mr. Ramsay is a retired partner of **Famous & Spang Insurance Agency.** He served as a member of the Harford County Budget Advisory Council for twelve years and is past president of the Aberdeen – Havre de Grace Community Planning Council.

Alfred W. Redmer, Jr. – A lifetime resident of the State of Maryland and former Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly from Baltimore County. Additionally Mr. Redmer served as **Maryland Insurance Commissioner** from 2003 – 2006. More recently, Mr. Redmer served as Chief Executive Officer for **Coventry Health Care of Delaware, Inc.,** a managed care organization serving members in Delaware, Maryland, southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

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July 8, 2008

The Honorable David R. Craig
Office of the County Executive
220 S. Main Street
Bel Air, Maryland 21014

Dear County Executive Craig:

As Chairman of the Commission on Efficiency and Economy in Government (hereinafter and in its Final Report referred to as “Commission”), I am pleased to present you with our final report of findings and recommendations.

Our charge, as we saw it, was to identify inefficiencies in the County Government’s current operations and to suggest remedies as appropriate. We did not envision this Commission making futile recommendations to cut X dollars in a certain program, in fact, we fully realized that in order to generate efficiency the County may have to spend more to invest in technology.

The work of this Commission is not intended to place blame on any group or individual. Many of the problems facing government developed slowly over decades. It is this Commission’s sole intention to shine new light on those areas of concern and offer possible solutions.

This Commission began its work by reviewing the County’s entire operations through written material, hearings, and one-on-one meetings. After months of thorough review the Commission convened work sessions to review our notes, discuss areas of concern, and develop potential solutions.

While we set off to create department specific reports, we quickly came to realize that the problems facing individual departments are not unique but rather symptomatic of a bigger problem facing government as a whole. As such, you will find that the enclosed report is not organized by department, but rather by the overarching concern.

Lastly, I would caution that this report should not be looked at as a complete semblance of the Commission's thoughts. It is merely an attempt to summarize them in as thorough a manner as possible. The Commission welcomes an opportunity to meet with you and the members of your cabinet to flesh out these ideas more fully.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I remain,

Sincerely,

Scott T. Gibson, Chairman
Commission on Efficiency and Economy in Government



Findings of the

Commission to Study Efficiency

& Economy In Government

Through Executive Order 07-04, which was signed on November 1, 2007, Harford County Executive David R. Craig created the Commission to Study Efficiency and Economy in Government. Our charge, as we saw it, was to identify inefficiencies in the County Government's current operations and to suggest remedies as appropriate.

The Commission began this task by reviewing the entire operations of Harford County Government through written material, hearings, and one-on-one meetings. It was during this review that we were able to identify inefficiencies that should to be addressed. While some inefficiencies were being noticed for the first time due to our fresh perspective, some were pointed out to us by Department Heads that were looking for ways to solve them.

Once the review was complete, the Commission held several meetings discussing its findings and brainstorming solutions. The product of these conversations is contained in this report.

These recommendations are broad reforms to procedures, which should, if enacted, generate future savings. They are not, however, simple cost savings. You will not find recommendations to cut 10%. In fact, some recommendations require spending now for technology in order to save in the future.

REFORM THE CULTURE OF GOVERNMENT

In his book *Bureaucracy*, renowned political scientist James Q. Wilson defines organizational culture as “a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organization” (91). Wilson asserts that just as personality governs how an individual will respond to a situation, organizational culture will govern how an organization responds to a situation. In Harford County’s context, this means that how Harford County will respond to new challenges, or for that matter the recommendations contained within this report, will be governed by its culture. That is why it is crucial that the Craig Administration work diligently to reform the culture of government in order to emphasize innovation, efficiency, accountability and creative thinking.

In order to reform the culture of government, one must be able to understand the elements that caused that culture to develop over time. According to Wilson, a particular culture develops, in part, because of three factors: the predisposition of its members, the state of the technology of the organization, and the situational imperatives the organization is facing (93). After careful review, it appears that many employees are pre-disposed to preferring maintenance of the status quo over innovatively solving problems, that the County’s use of technology is limited at best, and that the imperative to change the County’s processes could stand to be better defined.

While the Commission recognizes that culture develops over long periods of time and changes slowly; it also recognizes that reforming the culture of government is critical to the successful implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The Commission is confident that the following actions will help set the stage for lasting reform:

Reward Innovative Thinking

It is understandable that employees are predisposed to maintaining the status quo based on how they are evaluated. As it stands currently, employees are evaluated to determine if they meet expectations or not. There is no reward for going above and beyond one's normal job functions. While this is done to prevent partiality, it may also be done to the detriment of creative thinking.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to maintain the impartiality of annual evaluations and to reward innovative thinking, the Commission suggests the Department of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Office of Budget and Management Research and the Department of Law, work to develop an Administrative Policy on Innovative Thinking. This policy should lay out a formal procedure for employees to make recommendations regarding work flow processes, for management to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposal, and for the employee to be financially rewarded for offering the idea.

An example of the good ideas that can come from a policy like this was given to the Commission by Mr. Kearby of the Department of Public Works. Before meeting with the Commission, Mr. Kearby asked his staff if they had any ideas on how the County could be more efficient. They came up with the following list of ideas, all of which the Commission recommends the County investigate and implement:

1. Use temporary and/or consultant personnel to augment the organization during peak periods or major projects.
2. Automate inspection and project status reporting.
3. Outsource material testing.
4. Incorporate "green building" aspects for reduced operating costs and energy efficiency.

5. Consider closing some or all County owned gas stations and establish corporate accounts with existing commercial gas stations which would result in the purchase of fuel at a fleet discount, save on construction and maintenance costs for County owned fuel stations, save on annual tank testing, meter calibration, repairs, and record keeping and eliminate environmental liabilities.
6. Consolidate pool vehicles at Fleet Management to use as loaners for service or other temporary needs rather than various departments of functions maintaining an internal vehicle pool.
7. Increase permit fees for SEC permits & SWM permits. Particularly for sites that are active for longer than 12 months.
8. Allow County employees to opt out for the EOC calendar. It seems that a lot of the calendars get discarded as soon as they come in the mail.
9. Go to the open market (Best Buy, Circuit City, internet vendors) for basic IT items such as software, plug & play peripherals such as printers, cameras, flash drives, etc. The current system with ISmart is expensive and slow.
10. Set all printers to default to double-sided in order to save paper.
11. Extend the time for IT replacement (refresh) for PCs and laptop computer from two years to three or four years. If the computer is still operational, allow County employees to purchase them or offer for purchase to County based non-profit organizations and finally offer any unsold computers through normal surplus property auction.
12. Extend qualification period for career ladder promotions from one to two years.

Make More Upper-Level Managers Accountable to the County Executive

Currently, the only department to have a deputy director that serves at the pleasure of the County Executive is the Department of Law. All other deputy directors are classified. As classified employees, these deputy directors are afforded tremendous job protection which makes it harder for County Executives or even department heads to hold them accountable. The Commission personally witnessed a mentality among certain deputy directors that County Executives and County Councils come and go, but that deputy directors are here to stay. Given the extreme authority of these positions, the Commission believes it is important that they be

held personally accountable to the individuals the electorate has entrusted to run government and craft policy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends the County Executive and the Department of Law propose a Charter amendment to make deputy directors exempt employees. Deputy Directors should be appointed by the County Executive with the confirmation of the County Council. All exempt employees who serve at the pleasure of the County Executive should meet with him regularly, at least quarterly to review goals, and progress.

Make Departments More Accountable for Performance

The performance measurement system currently used by the Department of Administration is ineffective. It fails to truly measure productivity and accomplishment. In order to develop efficiency, Harford County Government needs an accurate way of determining that its departments are actually making progress.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission suggests a new system to measure productivity and accomplishments be established. Prior to the start of each fiscal year, each department head should be required to submit to the County Executive a plan for the year that lists the departments goals, objectives and measureable benchmarks. Progress should be evaluated quarterly. Once a plan is approved and established it should be posted on the internet for public review, with updates each quarter tracking the department's progress.

At the end of the year, the County Executive should, with help from the Office of Budget and Management Research, evaluate department directors based on the department's progress and that evaluation should determine any merit raise.

This process should then be translated to employees to ensure individual performance.

Require Accountability from the Board of Education

The Board of Education is taking up an increasingly larger piece of the County's budget while enrollment is declining. The County Executive and the County Council have lamented over the fact that they have little control over how money is spent.

RECOMMENDATION: Harford County Government should require the Board of Education to submit to an audit and operational review, similar if not more extensive than the one performed by this Commission. If the Board of Education fails to participate in such a venture, then the County should not fund anything more than maintenance of effort.

Reform the Budget Process to Award Efficiency Not Spending

Currently, departments are forced to spend what is appropriated by the end of their fiscal year or face the complete loss of what is appropriated and a reduction in funding for future years. This leads to the bad management practice of spending every nickel of what is appropriated, regardless of necessity.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends a comprehensive review of current procurement and budgeting practices and a thoughtful modification of existing budget and appropriation laws to remove incentives to spend every dime.

Further, the Commission suggests that the County should require its departments to undergo a zero-based budget on a rotating basis, so all agencies can go through the process within four years.

Lastly, the Commission recommends the County Code be revised to require that all fund balance revert to the Capital Fund and not the General Fund.

Effectively Managing Time

Upon reviewing the County's budget, one cannot help but notice that wages are one of the biggest expenses. If the County truly wants to be efficient, it must take great strides towards ensuring that payments are based on an accurate record of hours worked, and that employees are using their time on the clock effectively. The following recommendations should help with this regard.

Automate Timekeeping Systems to Make them more Efficient and Accurate

Upon the Commission's review of how departments track and manage time worked, it became apparent that changes to this process need to be made. The time keeping system is archaic at best and relies heavily on the good faith assumption that employees are working their full shifts.

Currently, each department receives paper time sheets from payroll a week after the pay period has begun, which is also a week before they are due back to payroll. These timesheets have spaces to record the time each employee worked for each day in that time period. Pay periods cover two weeks, so these sheets must be completed and submitted every other Friday.

The department's timekeeper must then ask each employee to report variances in their work schedule and to turn in paper leave slips when applicable. If an employee uses sick leave, then the timekeeper must ensure that a doctor's note is received otherwise time must reported as an occurrence per Administrative Policy 1300-46. We emphasize that this is, for the most part, the only official record of time worked, as most departments do not have daily time sheets or time clocks.

After all of this is done, the timekeeper manually enters the time worked each day onto the time sheet assuming, unless otherwise reported by the employee or the employee's supervisor, that eight hours were worked each day.

Next the time keeper must manually calculate and record each employee's hours worked, leave hours requested, and total hours to be paid. Grand totals for each page need to be calculated (i.e. the timekeeper must add the total hours worked for each employee listed on the page to calculate a grand total hours worked for the page, etc). Lastly, the time keeper must manually add up all of the figures to develop the grand totals of hours worked, hours of leave requested, and hours of leave to be paid for the department.

Once the manual calculations are finished and the timesheets are filled out, the totals from the paper timesheets then need to be keyed into the payroll system. If an employee takes leave or if there is a holiday, those leave totals are keyed-in for the applicable employee. For example if a holiday falls within the pay period, the timekeeper must manually key eight hours of holiday pay for each employee within the department.

Once the timekeeper finishes inputting the data for each employee, the aggregate totals for each type of leave taken during that time period must be entered into a separate screen. The

system then checks the aggregate totals against the individual totals to ensure that the numbers balance.

Once everything balances, the timekeeper signs the timesheets and submits them to the department head for approval. The department head must then review the time sheets to ensure that they are accurate and sign them. Payroll will not accept a stamp signature or allow the department head's secretary to sign on behalf of the department head. The original time sheets must then be physically delivered to payroll by close of business.

Complicating matters some is that time entry can only be done the Friday morning that timesheets are due but no later than noon.

While this system has, in some ways, met the needs of the County, it clearly presents some problems that should be addressed in order to improve the efficiency and economy of government. When there is not a good system, cheating is encouraged. While we do not wish to suggest or appear to suggest that the County's workforce is dishonest, clearly a time accounting system is only as accurate as the information put into it. We are hopeful that under the current system a manager would notice large discrepancies in time worked, however, we are not confident that they would notice all discrepancies.

It is important that time worked be accounted for accurately, because even a small discrepancy can have a big fiscal impact. For example, a Senior Assistant County Attorney earning \$47.88 per hour could be off by 20 minutes each day due to coming in a little late and leaving a little early. That discrepancy would cost the County \$79.79 for that week. If it happened throughout the whole year, it would cost \$4,149.00.

Also of concern is how much time the current system requires of the administrative staff because of the lack of automation. With the advent of "*punch-in/punch-out*" systems that

integrate with payroll systems, there is no need for half of the steps involved in the County's current system.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends the County automate its timekeeping system. The Department of Human Resources in conjunction with the Department of Treasury, and Office of Information Systems should develop an RFP to procure a program that would allow employees to clock-in and that integrates with payroll software in order to automatically record time worked.

Implementing this type of system would drastically reduce the amount of time spent inputting time worked into the payroll system. Rather, timekeepers would only have to enter overrides to account for errors, such as when someone forgets to clock-in or is working off-site.

Automating timekeeping will also allow the County to get better control of overtime by eliminating exception punches. Managers will be able to easily zero in on who is earning overtime, and how often they are earning overtime. This will allow managers to analyze if there is a systemic cause for overtime, and if so address the problem.

It is further recommended that the County procure the time management module of Cyborg. This module, which is part of a software program currently used by the County, would allow employees to request, and supervisors to approve leave through the network. Once the leave request is approved, it automatically inputs the information into the payroll system. Essentially this eliminates the need to manually input leave and update totals into the payroll system.

In addition to solving the problems discussed above, implementing these recommendations will provide other benefits to the County. Reasonably, this type of program will be able to generate attendance reports. These reports will provide useful information to

managers for reviewing staff performance. Also, it should allow the County to print out a manifest of who is in the building should there be an emergency.

*Timekeepers and Managers Need to be Better Trained
on How to Record Time and Grant Leave*

One problem noticed throughout the Commission's review of Harford County Government, is there is a lack of consistency with respect to how departments record time and grant leave. Some departments stick to the minimal guidelines required by law, while others are overly generous most likely due to lack of knowledge. An example of this is the calculation of overtime. If an employee works 10 hours a day Monday through Thursday, that should be considered the employees 40 base hours and no leave should be recorded on Friday. The employee should simply be marked as not here. Some agencies require that same employee to put in for leave on Friday, thereby paying the employee for 40 base hours and 8 overtime hours.

RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Human Resources with the Department of Treasury, should work to develop a training program on proper timekeeping and payroll submission procedures. All employees authorized to grant leave or submit payroll should be required to attend.

Efforts Should Be Made to Eliminate Regular Overtime

From the Commission's review it appears that some agencies are regularly paying overtime or awarding comp-time to employees. This is indicative of two inefficiencies: poor scheduling that builds overtime into the schedule so that the agency can meet its needs, or failure

on the part of management to manage when, how, and why employees are earning overtime. The first inefficiency can and should be mitigated through modifying schedules.

RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Treasury should prepare a report of agencies that regularly pay overtime. Based on that report, the Department of Human Resources should work with identified agencies to develop schedules that lessen overtime, but are consistent with existing labor agreements.

To eliminate the second inefficiency and ensure that any overtime earned is necessary, managers should require pre-approval to work through lunch or work beyond eight hours. This pre-approval should be documented in writing and state why the over-time was necessary. If over-time continues to be awarded regularly, management should analyze workload distribution, staffing levels, and perhaps performance.

Reform Procurement Procedures

Amend the Harford County Code to Reflect Today's Economy

Upon the Commission's review of the Department of Procurement, it became apparent that past administrations have made minimal efforts to ensure that the dollar amounts associated with purchasing limits reflect the impact of inflation. This has resulted in purchasing limits that are unjustifiably low for today's economy, and which make the procurement process needlessly burdensome. The current purchasing limits also appear quite low when compared to other local jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION: Based on this, the Commission recommends the Administration submit legislation to change the purchasing limits as follows:

- Increase the single quote threshold from \$500 to \$1,500.

- **Increase the Formal Bid threshold from \$10,000 to \$25,000.**
- **Increase the RFP threshold from \$2,500 to \$25,000.**
- **Increase the Board of Estimates threshold from \$25,000 to \$100,000.**

Additionally these limits should be tied to the CPI so that they automatically adjust along with the value of the dollar.

Increase the Use of Procurement Cards

One of the problems with the current procurement process is the lengthy and burdensome paperwork, which includes purchase orders, invoices, direct vouchers (commonly referred to as DV's), checks and postage. This system usually results in slower payments to vendors, which prevents the County from negotiating better discounts and rebates.

RECOMMENDATION: To help alleviate these problems, the County should increase its use of procurement cards. The use of these cards would lessen paperwork and postage, and ensure prompt payments. A study done by the Department of Procurement estimated that this change could save the County roughly \$600,000 per annum. Policies should be designed to limit and block certain types of purchases to prevent abuse.

Review the Effectiveness of ISmart Contract

One of the complaints repeated by many departments was that while the ISmart program may be beneficial for large IT purchases, it is slow and expensive for basic little purchases such as plug and play peripherals.

RECOMMENDATION: The County should consider establishing a price threshold for ISmart and utilize local open market for smaller IT purchases.

The Purchase of Meals

The Commission has concerns that there has been an increase in the number and cost of “working” breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. One department appears to have a regular meal meeting with upper-management. This practice should be curtailed or used sparingly.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends the purpose of these meals be reviewed, and strict protocols be established to help determine when it is appropriate to have a paid “working” meal.

Better Management of Facilities

Implement the County Executive’s Global Plan

The Commission is concerned by the number of leased properties the County is using as office space for agencies. It is clear to the Commission that leases will cost the taxpayers more than the cost to construct a facility that can adequately house County government. Operating out of multiple locations also presents a number of operational inefficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION: While the Commission is aware the County Council has defeated Bill 08-19, the Commission’s recommends the County proceed with the Global Plan as proposed to the Council by the County Executive.

In order to re-consider the bill, changes should be made to the financing provisions. One such change the County should consider is leasing the site to a builder/developer for an extended term at nominal rent, subject to a matching term County lease of the office building. The County would prepare the building spec in conjunction with its architects and then put the project out to “bid”. The winning bidder would be required to build the facility and manage the building for the term of the lease. This would have several advantages: a) the Landlord would

be responsible for all maintenance and upkeep, b) the County would not have to rely upon its bonding authority to build the building, freeing up borrowing capacity for other projects like water, sewer and road improvements, c) the County could essentially abandon the facility at the end of the original term, if the facility becomes too antiquated at the end of the term, and d) an LED certified owner-developer would essentially manage the project and market-driven forces would drive out superfluous costs.

Centralize All Construction Under One Agency

Specialized new construction projects tend to have problems which require retrofitting because no one in construction management has a thorough understanding of things like food prep, health department requirements or wireless internet needs. At the same time, Harford County is writing checks to the Board of Education for construction projects with very little oversight.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider combining the County and HCPS construction management into one County-wide department. The benefit is that there will be combined expertise from both departments and eliminating some of the administrative overhead of running two separate departments. The newly formed department will still function as an agent of the Board of Education for school projects.

Review and Adjust the Old Highlands School Lease

One property issue that concerned the Commission was the lease arrangement for the old Highlands School Building. Apparently, the previous administration arranged to lease the building to the Highland Community Association for \$1 a year, with the County paying for

building maintenance costs. The agreement also allowed them to sub-let and lease space to various agencies, including the United States Postal Office. Most troubling is that Harford County actually pays \$50,000 a year to rent space in this building which it owns and maintains.

RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Law and the Department of Procurement should renegotiate this lease so the County is not paying to lease its own property. If the County still wants to contribute to the Highlands Community Association it should be done as a grant-in-aid.

Facility Maintenance

As the needs of the County have grown, the number of county-owned facilities has increased to meet those needs and, with that growth, inefficiency has evolved by allowing individual departments to manage facilities that are in their domain. One example of this is the Division of Facilities and Operations, which operates in the Department of Parks and Recreation.

This Division has a redundant command structure for facilities management. By consolidating the facilities and maintenance operations that exist in various agencies, redundant management positions can be eliminated, best practice policies made uniform, inventory purchasing efficiencies implemented, and work more appropriately distributed.

RECOMMENDATION: Condense and centralize all facility maintenance functions under one agency in order to improve management efficiency and eliminate redundancy. Thought should also be given to whether or not this agency should be coupled with Capital Projects.

Centralize Maintenance Requests to Ensure Appropriate

Prioritization and Deployment of Resources

Throughout the study, the Commission noted the Division of Facilities and Operations neither routinely receives nor manages service requests in a centralized manner. Requests made by the various County departments are in fact currently communicated to the Division of Facilities and Operations by any one of several different methods. Such methods include telephone, facsimile and e-mail.

The current methodology may reasonably be characterized as inconsistent. Its relative success depends upon the ability of the responding facilities personnel to coordinate available resources. Such individualized efforts commonly result in the inappropriate prioritization of requests and/or the inefficient scheduling of associated responses. Similarly, neither the status nor the progress of a particular request is readily available or accessible.

RECOMMENDATION: The County should develop or procure a Centralized Service Request System “CSRS” which would enable the Division of Facilities and Operations to optimize prioritization, scheduling and tracking of requests. Such a system would ostensibly allow on-line access to the following features:

- *Request entries*
- *Default prioritizations*
- *Custom prioritizations (i.e. overrides of default prioritizations)*
- *Assignments of personnel*
- *Associated responses (i.e. remedial measures)*
- *Status reports*
- *Progress reports*

- *Custom reports (i.e. sources of request, types of request, actual times of completion, etc.)*

RECOMMENDATION: In the event of CSRS implementation, the Commission also recommends the County enact such policies as are reasonably necessary to require its mandatory use by all Departments. This type of procedure should also be put in place for other support service agencies, such as the Office of Information Systems and the Department of Law.

Prioritize Routine Maintenance to Lessen the Risk of Major System Break-Downs

The Commission has noted that the Division of Facilities and Operations does not ordinarily prioritize routine maintenance of Systems. The Division of Facilities and Operations instead allocates the vast majority of its available resources to reactive measures. That allocation commonly results in emergency repairs to such aging Systems as the Harford County Circuit Court House (Bel Air, MD).

The current methodology may reasonably be characterized as inefficient and/or uneconomical. Its relative failure arises from several diverse factors. Such factors include the underutilization of junior personnel of the Division of Facilities and Operations personnel and/or the proliferation of costly repairs.

RECOMMENDATION: The Division of Facilities and Operations should prioritize routine maintenance of Systems and exclusively dedicate its most junior personnel to carrying out these routine maintenance functions. Such a shift in focus would ostensibly allow the Division of Facilities and Operations to:

- *Increase productivity of its junior personnel*

- *Mentor that same personnel via increasingly complicated maintenance functions*
- *Identify maintenance issues at non-critical stages*
- *Resolve those same issues in a more timely manner*
- *Minimize significant repair costs*
- *Avoid major repairs to and/or replacement of Systems*

Better Management of Assets

Take-home Cars should be Limited

Upon the Commission's review of the County's fleet, we noticed that a number of positions are given the authority to take their cars home regardless of whether their job necessitated doing so. We understand that allowing an employee to take a car home is sometimes done for the sake of efficiency. However, it seems apparent that some employees are being allowed to take a car home as a mere perk. This should not be allowed.

RECOMMENDATION: The County should assemble a committee comprising of the Director of Administration, the Director of Procurement, and the Director of Human Resources to evaluate which positions are authorized take home cars and whether it is necessary for those positions. As a result of that review, the number of positions authorized to take home vehicles should be substantially reduced.

Develop a Car-Share Pool for Departments that Have Occasional Travel Needs

The Commission noticed that a number of Departments are reimbursing employees for mileage. The Commission also noticed that while some of the County's cars are regularly being used, some are underutilized.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to eliminate the need for employees to drive their personal vehicles and to ensure the County is maximizing the use of each car in the fleet, a pool of shared cars should be developed for departments to borrow as needed. The County should be able to create this car-share pool by reallocating take-home cars that are taken away through implementing the prior recommendation.

To encourage the use of these cars, the County should only reimburse mileage if a pool car is not available.

The Issuance of Cell Phones and Blackberries

The Commission understands it is necessary to issue cell phones to certain personnel due to the nature of their jobs; however, the list of who has cell phones seems excessive.

RECOMMENDATION: Harford County Government should assemble a committee comprising of the Director of Administration, the Director of Procurement, and the Director of Human Resources to evaluate which positions necessitate having a cell phone. As a result of that review, the number of cell phone contracts should be reduced to the bare minimum. Harford County Government should also consider using pagers as a more affordable substitute for cell phones wherever feasible.

Improve Inventory Procedures

Each department maintains an inventory of County property, which must be accounted for. It is virtually impossible to keep track of thousands of pieces of personal property spread over more than two dozen locations.

RECOMMENDATION: Harford County Government property inventories should be computerized and each department head/director should review, annually, property which is assigned to their department compared to what they actually have.

Overhaul the Office of Information Systems so that Departments Can Better Utilize Technology

To say that Harford County is not using technology to its advantage is an understatement; however, it appears the reluctance to use technology actually stems from a reluctance to work with the Office of Information Systems (OIS). Throughout this report a number of recommendations are tied to the enhanced use of technology; however none of these recommendations can be successfully implemented without revamping OIS.

These recommendations are geared toward making OIS a more nimble and service-focused organization. In order to achieve these goals, buy-in must occur and turf battles cease – from top down. Further, the Commission suggests that broad-scoped projects such as Metro Area Network (MAN) should be suspended until the proposed reorganizations take place. Quite simply, OIS needs to stop doing and start supervising contractors.

Reform OIS's Scope

OIS should change its focus. Currently, OIS focuses on designing and constructing projects in-house. It views itself as a gatekeeper/control point, and as such has earned a poor reputation.

RECOMMENDATION: This Commission believes that OIS should be a service bureau helping meet the needs of its clients. **OIS needs to make the transition from doing most work in-house to managing out-sourced contracts while maintaining a minimal staff to assist and facilitate those contracts.** Each department that has significant application support needs should have a dedicated systems engineer that is familiar with their department to assist with technology and application recommendations, facilitate deployment and ensure quality support. In other words, OIS needs to transition from technician to adviser. This will aid the County in keeping up with technology.

Once this recommendation is put in place, the Commission believes that is essential that all departments work with their assigned OIS adviser to assess their operations and look for areas to increase automation and the use of technology.

Reorganize OIS' Division of Computer Support

RECOMMENDATION: Internet Information Systems should be moved to the Department of Government & Community Relations.

The roll-out of the redesigned harfordcountymd.gov web site has taken entirely too long and is still incomplete. Most of the functions of the web site are communications related and should be controlled by the appropriate department. There will still need to be an open line of

communication to the IS department regarding web development plans/needs, integration to other web applications, etc. but IS should not be the gatekeeper.

In the short term, the Office of Government and Community Relations will need to work in the confines of the current in-house developed content management software for updating departmental content. They may also need to hire a contractor to facilitate needs-analysis and implementation of current departmental web site needs. However, in the long term, an off the shelf content management system should be purchased to take care of content publishing so that custom programming does not constantly need to take place.

RECOMMENDATION: Computer desktop, blackberry and help desk functions need to be facilitated with an out-sourced shop. A small group of in-house engineers should be maintained to handle hands-on support needs, but all other management and Level II support needs can and should be handled more efficiently by a third party.

Reorganize OIS' Division of Management Information Systems (MIS)

MIS will take more time to reorganize because of implementation timelines; however steps need to be taken now to make MIS more responsive to client (department and citizen) needs. MIS needs to be in active communication with the departments it serves to facilitate and encourage the use of technology and new applications that will greater serve the needs of the department.

Specifically, every effort needs to be taken now to get applications off of the mainframe computers. This includes FAMIS, ISIS, TRIS and Cyborg. **MIS should be actively helping departments identify custom off-the-shelf products that can replace these mainframe applications.** The current estimated seven-year timeframe needs to be and can be shortened.

It has also been suggested that as part of transitioning away from the mainframe, efforts would have to be made to re-purpose existing main-frame programmer analysts. This Commission does not believe it is necessary to make attempts to cross-train or re-purpose any mainframe programmer analyst's positions. Once mainframe applications are phased-out, those positions should be removed. New application maintenance can and should be out-sourced.

Better Use of Technology

Extend IT Replacement Cycle

RECOMMENDATION: Extend the time for IT replacement (refresh) for PCs and laptop computer from two years to three or four years. If computers are still operational, allow County employees to purchase them or offer for purchase to County based non-profit organizations. Finally offer any unsold computers through normal surplus property auction. Consideration should be given to replacing outdated PCs with laptops, which would allow for better mobility should the County have to relocate agencies or implement its Continuity of Operations Plan.

Better Budget Software

The preparation of the County's budget is a slow and cumbersome process that is hamstrung by the County's computer system. It is difficult to drill down into department expenditures because only one person is available to review these.

RECOMMENDATION: Harford County Government should procure a new computer system for real-time tracking of departmental expenditures. The system should have a dashboard that allows managers to get better reports and information.

Better Management Through Work Flow Software

The Commission noticed two (2) problems with respect to management of productivity. Some departments, such as the Department of Law, are currently employing no programs to keep track of what employees are working on or how long it takes them to do what tasks they are assigned. Other departments like the Department of Inspections, Licensing and Permits are using outdated programs.

RECOMMENDATION: The Office of Information Systems should work with department heads to identify and purchase software that records assignment of tasks, tracks progress, and accounts for time spent on projects. It is only through assessing this information that Harford County Government can truly hold its employees accountable and make appropriate staffing decisions. This software would be similar to the centralized request system that the Commission has recommended for the Division of Facilities and Operations.

Better Technology for Inspectors in the Field

Permits are pulled manually each day for inspectors and then filed at the end of the day. This is a tedious and unnecessary process.

RECOMMENDATION: Inspectors should have hand held computers which contain all necessary information and which allow them to enter data pertinent to each inspection. This will allow them to spend less time filing and more time in the field. Consideration should be given to retain a third-party consultant to study hardware and software needs for this recommendation.

*Expand the Web-Sites Capabilities to Allow the Public to Gather
Information and Conduct Business On-line Rather than In-Person*

While Harford County Government will never, nor should attempt to eliminate public visits, government should provide the public the ability to do more on-line business through the Harford County Government website. This will also provide the added benefit of allowing people to conduct business with the County 24 hours a day.

Applications for and records of licenses issued by the Department of Inspections, Licensing and Permits (e.g. cab driver, cab owner, tow trucks, pawn broker, etc.) should be placed on-line. Although it may not be possible to put animal licenses on-line, consideration should be given to extending the licensing period and allowing veterinarians to issue them on behalf of the County.

Human Resources should procure an on-line job application.

Inspection and project status reporting should be made automated and web-based.

All public meeting (e.g. community input meetings, zoning hearings etc.) dates and minutes should be easily accessible on-line. Citizens should also be able to easily learn the status of County projects on-line.

RECOMMENDATION: The Office of Information Systems should work with all department heads to identify other business services that can be placed on-line. In general, efforts should also be made to increase the amount of general information that is on the web-site.

Implement Paperless Archiving to Save Space and Make Records Access Easier

The County archives a tremendous amount of paper. In fact, these archives are so large they spill over to the basement of the historical society where they are held in countless boxes. This is very inefficient as it makes it nearly impossible to quickly retrieve old records.

RECOMMENDATION: The County Executive should issue an executive order requiring each department to work with OIS to develop a plan to e-archive documents.

Develop Use-Based Fees to Lessen General Fund Obligations **or Prevent the Growth of General Fund Obligations**

Tipping Fees and the Division of Environmental Affairs

Despite having a tipping fee, the Division of Environmental Affairs is not a completely self-sufficient enterprise fund. By allowing the general fund to subsidize its operations, the County is charging all residents the same regardless of usage. Residents and businesses that actively recycle and reduce the waste stream should be rewarded by paying less for landfill services.

RECOMMENDATION: The Administration should restructure tipping fees to diminish and eventually eliminate the Division's dependence on the General Fund. The administration should analyze General Fund savings realized and reflect that savings in a tax rate reduction.

The County also needs to re-evaluate what the Town of Bel Air is paying as a tipping fee. The existing process is not only inequitable, but leaves the bulk of County taxpayers subsidizing the Town's trash disposal.

Parks and Recreation Maintenance

The County is doing an admirable job of building and maintaining an extensive system of parks. This, however, comes at great cost.

RECOMMENDATION: Consideration should be given to creating a nominal use-based fee to be tacked onto Recreation Council registration fees. Revenue generated should be dedicated to park maintenance and upgrades.

Tie Fees to an Inflation Index

The Department of Inspections, Licensing and Permits charges user fees for many of its services. However, due to an unwillingness to increase fees the department depends more and more on the General Fund. When this happens it still costs the taxpayer, it just now costs taxpayers who are not using the service.

RECOMMENDATION: User-fees should be tied to an index like the CPI, that way they would increase as the cost of running the department increases. This would eliminate the need to vote to raise fees. It may also lessen General Fund expenditures resulting in the ability to lower tax rates.

*Increase Permit Fees for SEC Permits & SWM Permits, Particularly
for Sites that are Active for longer than 12 months.*

Lessen Potential Liabilities

Employee Drug Testing

While the Commission understands there are Constitutional issues involved and the Courts will not allow the government to randomly test all employees, it is clear that more employees should be in the random drug test pool.

RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Human Resources should work with the Department of Law to identify each classification that arguably can and should be tested.

Claims Management

The County has no formalized Risk Management review process that reviews nature, severity and frequency of incidents on a periodic (6 week) basis and considers whether proper procedures or training practices are in place to prevent a reoccurrence of this type of incident.

RECOMMENDATION: The County should create a Risk Management Review Committee to consider the totality of claims, their nature, severity and frequency, and review them in light of County procedures and policies to see whether claims are being reported timely, whether departments are following established procedures to prevent claims or whether individuals should be subject to progressive discipline for violating established County policy to prevent injuries or incidents on the job. The ultimate responsibility of this Committee should be to help modify practices to reduce incidences and severity of claims.

Safety Training

Safety training occurs on a “catch-as-catch-can” basis with little to no requirement for retraining or timely completion of training.

RECOMMENDATION: The Administration should implement a County-wide, web-based safety training program. The Administration should then tie the completion of evaluations and raises to the employee’s successful completion of training or annual re-training.

Office on Aging Volunteers

There is concern about liability as it relates to these volunteers, especially given the vulnerable nature of the population they serve.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to lessen potential problems volunteers should undergo some sort of background check and training, which outlines safe practices and procedures.

Effectively Managing Healthcare Costs

Increase Employee Contributions

Upon the Commission’s review of the County’s existing benefit plan structure, it was observed that the County’s contribution for benefits was far more generous than the average employer. Employees were purchasing some plans for as little as 1.8% of the premium. While

we recognize that an attractive benefit package is key to recruitment, employer contributions at this level are excessive and not sustainable given ever increasing healthcare costs.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends the County increase the employee contribution to make it more in line with the average employer contribution. While it may be necessary to phase this increase in over two years for existing employees, it should go into affect immediately for newly hired employees.

BENEFIT PLAN	CURRENT FY08		SUGGESTED FY09		SUGGESTED FY10*	
	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	CURRENT DEDUCTION	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	ESTIMATED DEDUCTION	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	ESTIMATED DEDUCTION
PREFERRED PROVIDER						
INDIVIDUAL	5.19%	\$ 10.00	7%	\$ 14.28	10%	\$ 21.42
PARENT/CHILD	4.04%	\$ 15.00	7%	\$ 27.14	10%	\$ 40.71
HUSBAND/WIFE	4.27%	\$ 20.00	7%	\$ 34.28	10%	\$ 51.42
FAMILY	4.35%	\$ 25.00	7%	\$ 41.42	10%	\$ 62.13
MD POINT OF SERVICE						
INDIVIDUAL	2.68%	\$ 5.00	5%	\$ 9.80	7%	\$ 14.40
PARENT/CHILD	2.08%	\$ 7.50	5%	\$ 18.61	7%	\$ 27.36
HUSBAND/WIFE	1.98%	\$ 9.00	5%	\$ 23.51	7%	\$ 34.56
FAMILY	1.80%	\$ 10.00	5%	\$ 28.41	7%	\$ 41.76
BLUE CHOICE HMO						
INDIVIDUAL	2.84%	\$ 5.00	3%	\$ 5.35	3%	\$ 5.62
PARENT/CHILD	2.28%	\$ 7.50	3%	\$ 10.17	3%	\$ 10.68
HUSBAND/WIFE	2.23%	\$ 9.00	3%	\$ 12.85	3%	\$ 13.49
FAMILY	1.90%	\$ 10.00	3%	\$ 15.52	3%	\$ 16.30

Employees Hired July 1, 2008 & After

BENEFIT PLAN	CURRENT FY08		SUGGESTED FY09		SUGGESTED FY10*	
	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	CURRENT DEDUCTION	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	PROPOSED DEDUCTION	% PAID BY EMPLOYEE	PROPOSED DEDUCTION
PREFERRED PROVIDER						
INDIVIDUAL	5.19%	\$ 10.00	12%	\$ 24.48	12%	\$ 25.71
PARENT/CHILD	4.04%	\$ 15.00	12%	\$ 46.52	12%	\$ 48.85
HUSBAND/WIFE	4.27%	\$ 20.00	12%	\$ 58.76	12%	\$ 61.70
FAMILY	4.35%	\$ 25.00	12%	\$ 71.01	12%	\$ 74.56
MD POINT OF SERVICE						
INDIVIDUAL	2.68%	\$ 5.00	10%	\$ 19.59	10%	\$ 20.57
PARENT/CHILD	2.08%	\$ 7.50	10%	\$ 37.23	10%	\$ 39.09
HUSBAND/WIFE	1.98%	\$ 9.00	10%	\$ 47.02	10%	\$ 49.37
FAMILY	1.80%	\$ 10.00	10%	\$ 56.82	10%	\$ 59.66
BLUE CHOICE HMO						

INDIVIDUAL	2.84%	\$ 5.00	5%	\$ 8.92	5%	\$ 9.37
PARENT/CHILD	2.28%	\$ 7.50	5%	\$ 16.95	5%	\$ 17.80
HUSBAND/WIFE	2.23%	\$ 9.00	5%	\$ 21.41	5%	\$ 22.48
FAMILY	1.90%	\$ 10.00	5%	\$ 25.87	5%	\$ 27.16

*FY 10 Assumes 5% Rate Increase

Participate in Proven Disease Management Programs that Offer Guaranteed ROIs

It came as no surprise to the Commission that healthcare was among the largest expenditures in the County’s budget.

Most insurers offer programs that help manage chronic disease thereby reducing the costs of future claims. These programs gather information based on claims data, and use that information to provide the employee with preventative health tips, and other useful information. Many of these programs are willing to guarantee that they will reduce future claims costs.

Enhance Wellness Program

Every dollar spent on prevention saves more in the long run in terms of medical claims. This is especially true now that healthcare inflation is outpacing cash inflation. This Commission believes it would be a wise for Harford County Government to invest in programs that get employees actively engaged in their health, fitness, and nutrition.

Begin Claims and Eligibility Audits

With healthcare costs rising at higher rates than inflation, healthcare benefits are going to become an even larger obligation for the County. That is why the Commission contends it is important to responsibly account for every dollar spent on healthcare.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission therefore recommends Harford County Government undergo annual claims and eligibility audits to eliminate the cost of errors and abuse.

Reorganization, Privatization, - Thinking Outside

Government's Box

Reform the Office of Risk Management

The Office of Risk Management is currently an individual division of the Department of Administration and is responsible for three (3) very different functions: employee safety, liability coverage, and inventory control. The Commission believes this placement creates duplication of effort in some areas and may also contribute to the perceived problems with employee safety training.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends dividing the current responsibilities of the Office of Risk Management as follows: safety functions should be placed under the Department of Human Resources, inventory control functions should be placed under the Department of Procurement, and general liability functions should be transferred to the Department of Law.

The Commission contends the adoption of this recommendation along with the adoption of the claims management recommendation outlined on page 29 will resolve most, if not all of the problems the County is facing with regards to employee safety.

Divide the Department of Public Works into Manageable Pieces

The Department of Public Works is clearly the largest agency in County Government covering the areas of Water & Sewer, Environmental Affairs, Highways & Engineering, and Capital Projects. The Commission is concerned that the department may be too large to manage by one Director.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends splitting the Department of Public Works into smaller more manageable agencies. This breakdown will be more fully explained in subsequent recommendations.

Develop a Single Agency to Handle Transportation

Currently, there are at least two agencies addressing the County's transportation infrastructure problems. The Department of Public Works is responsible for roads and engineering. The Department of Community Services is responsible for mass transit. The solution to the County's transportation infrastructure needs to be multi-modal and will be best solved by an agency that represents all modes of transportation.

RECOMMENDATION: Therefore, the Commission recommends severing Harford Transit and the Harford Commuter Assistance Program from the Department of Community Services and severing Highways and Engineering from the Department of Public Works. These programs should then be combined to create an Office/Department of Transportation, which can offer holistic solutions for the County's transportation needs.

Create a Water Authority to Handle Water/Waste Water Issues

There are a number of problems with the management of the Division of Water and Sewer. Rather than helping businesses identify possibilities and solutions, the agency seems to be pre-occupied with telling businesses what they cannot do. Also troubling was that after this Commission's review, there did not appear to be one person in charge. Couple these management concerns, with the County's shortage of potable, treated water, and it is easy to see the need for radical change in this agency.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends severing the Division of Water and Sewer from the Department of Public Works and establish it as its own/office or agency. By doing this, the ultimate decision maker for the agency can focus exclusively on water and sewer and will not face distractions from other areas.

The County should also investigate the possibility of absorbing other municipal water departments into this agency. The County may even want to go as far as to investigate whether Baltimore City and Baltimore County would be interested in joining to develop a truly regional water agency, because water is a regional problem that will have a regional economic impact if not addressed soon.

Due to the fact the Division of Water and Sewer is an enterprise fund, thought should be given to whether this new agency should be established as a water revenue authority. One benefit to establishing this agency as an authority is that any debt it incurs is not considered a liability against the County. Given the County's great infrastructure needs and the likelihood that it would have to borrow to finance these needs, this benefit cannot be understated.

Also, by making this agency an authority, it is more likely that it will be paid for by its users rather than the general tax base.

Beyond whether the agency should be a department or authority, the County should investigate whether it should be privatizing some of the water and sewer operations. It is this Commission's belief that the County should maintain a small staff to set water policy and ensure that performance measures are being met, and privatize its daily operations. Our suggestion is similar to the way Marion County, Indiana reformed its Water Agency. In Marion County's experience, shortly after being found to be the most efficient public sector water agency by independent auditors, the County privatized water and brought down operating expenses by nearly 40%, without costing most employees their jobs.

Privatization does not simply eliminate jobs. Often the private contractor will hire most of the existing employees. Some employees, especially labor, will transfer to other agencies where they can fill vacancies and help with increased demand. Attrition will also diminish job loss.

This recommendation is consistent with the Commission's recommendations to develop use-based fees to lessen or prevent the growth of general fund obligations. Those recommendations can be found starting on page 27.

Privatize Daily Operations at the Bureau of Solid Waste Management

RECOMMENDATION: The County should consider privatizing the operations of the Bureau of Solid Waste Management, specifically the landfill. The issue of built-in overtime alone has brought the Commission to believe that privatization is now necessary. After privatization, the Deputy Director of Public Works should have a limited number of employees who can monitor the vendor's performance.

If the County resists privatizing this function, it should at least require a 3rd party review of the agency to determine if best practices are being utilized, and what if any efficiencies can be put in place. The Commission contends that this recommendation should be adopted in addition to its recommendation on tipping fees (p. 27)

*Privatize Payroll and Re-purpose Payroll Staff to Assist
in the Transition away from the Mainframe*

One of the Commission's earlier recommendations was to transition the County off of the mainframe system. When discussing this transition with the County Treasurer, he suggested that this would require additional staff to oversee the migration of data, test the new system, learn the new system and help train others on the new system. The Commission acknowledges that a transition away from the mainframe will require some accounting staff being dedicated to the transition. At the same time, the Commission notes that Harford County Government still handles payroll in-house, despite the increasing trend of outsourcing payroll.

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends outsourcing payroll to a private vendor, and then rededicating the existing payroll staff to working on the transition away from the mainframe. All payroll functions including payment calculations, garnishments, payroll deductions, check printing, and check distribution should be turned over to the private vendor.

Other Services That Can Be Outsourced

In order to prevent the County from growing its workforce, the Administration should decide what it will do internally with existing personnel and what it will outsource to private

vendors. To paraphrase the book *Reinventing Government* by respected public administration experts David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, Government can either steer the course or row the boat. Given the increased demands on government and the unlikelihood that government will be able to equally increase its resources to handle that increased demand, this Commission believes that the Government ought to focus on policy and performance oversight, allowing private contractors to do much of the actual service delivery.

In order to do this, Harford County Government must aggressively analyze its agencies to determine what services can be outsourced to private contractors. In his meeting with the Commission, the Honorable Stephen Goldsmith suggested that Marion County used the “*yellow book test*.” That is any service they could find in the phone directory would be outsourced.

Develop a Revenue Authority

This Commission believes that a revenue authority could truly help solve the ongoing infrastructure issues. For instance, a revenue authority could help with the perceived lack of commercial developable land “*outside of the gate*” because of zoning and infrastructure issues (e.g. Aberdeen lacks water and sewer capacity, Riverside (Brenmar) lacks direct access to water and sewer).

Clearly hook-up fees and tax base alone do not justify the outlay of huge sums of dollars to deliver infrastructure to off-base properties. A revenue authority could form public/private partnerships with the property owners “*outside the gate*”. The revenue authority would be a participant in the development project. The authority would pay for delivering water and sewer to commercially zoned land in exchange for a percentage of participation in the development joint venture. The percentage would be determined on the dollars cost of the public

improvements in proportion to current market value of the developable land.

The revenue authority's interest can be redeemed by the private participants in the joint venture for a predetermined capital recoupment fee, or the developer can choose to continue with the revenue authority as a joint venture participant for a period not to exceed 10 years.

A revenue authority could also maintain self-sustaining funds through the operation of parking garages in Bel Air, and through the purchase and operation of golf courses. The golf course model has proven to very successful in Baltimore County.

Aggressively Seek Out Federal and State Dollars

The County has very wisely chosen to engage a firm to help with federal matters, especially federal earmarks. The commission recommends that this same approach be taken at the State level.

The Adoption and Implementation of this Report

While the Administration has already publicly committed to sharing this report with the County Council, we would further recommend that the findings of this Commission be communicated to the public. In addition, we believe that it is imperative that the County develop and publicly communicate a policy/procedure for the review and implementation of this Commission's findings. The plan for implementation should detail tasks, the responsible agency(ies), and progress target dates. The Administration should make periodic progress reports available to the public for review. In four years, we urge the County Executive to re-establish a similar Commission to evaluate progress and identify new areas for improvement.

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