



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
County Executive

# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## Office of the County Executive

April 5, 2021

The Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Chair  
Prince George's County Council

The Honorable Joanne C. Benson, Chair  
Prince George's County Senate Delegation

The Honorable Erik L. Barron, Chair  
Prince George's County House Delegation

Dear Chairs Hawkins, Benson and Barron:

In accordance with Chapter 431 of the 2003 Laws of Maryland, I have enclosed a copy of the report entitled *The Annual Report on School Facilities Surcharge in Prince George's County – FY 2020 Report*. As you may recall, the school facilities surcharge increased, in general, from \$5,000 per unit to \$12,000 per unit, effective on July 1, 2003. Since then, surcharge rates have increased incrementally each year according to the State law that mandates the annual adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The report briefly covers the administration of the school facilities surcharge process, the amount of fees collected, an itemization of expenditures, and the accumulated surcharge balance for FY 2020.

I want to thank the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement and the Office of Finance for providing the school surcharge-related information and preparing the report.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Angela D. Alsobrooks  
County Executive

Enclosure

cc: Members, Prince George's County Council  
Members, Prince George's County Senate Delegation  
Members, Prince George's County House Delegation

# The Annual Report on School Facilities Surcharge in Prince George's County

## FY 2020 Report

Chapter 431 of the 2003 Laws of Maryland (HB 487) increased the school facilities surcharge from \$5,000 per unit to \$12,000 per unit for applications filed on or after July 1, 2003 for new residential construction projects. The law also stipulates that the surcharge be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) growth starting from FY 2005. In addition, Section 10-192.01(g) of Article 17 – Public Local Laws of Maryland required the Prince George's County Executive to prepare an annual report on the school facilities surcharge to the Prince George's County Council, the County's Senate Delegation, and the County's House Delegation. The report shall include (1) accountability measures undertaken by the County, (2) the amount of fees collected, and (3) an itemization of expenditures.

### Accountability

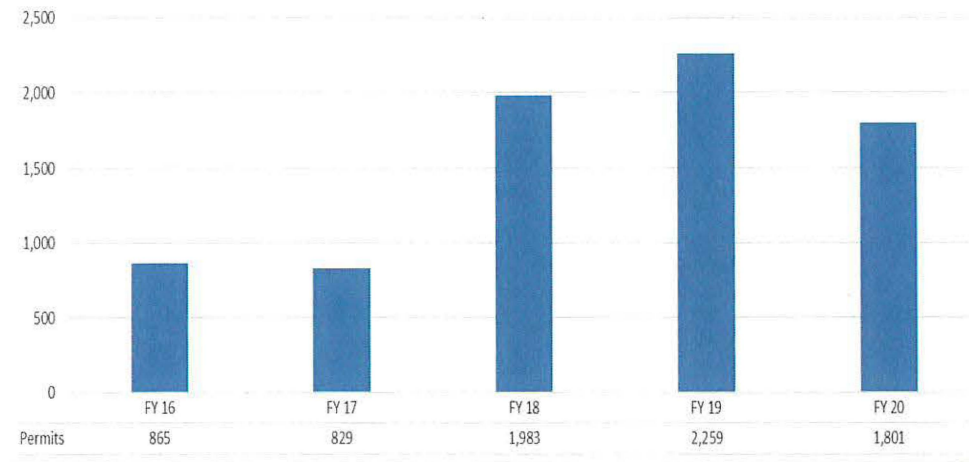
The County's Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) administers the school facilities' surcharge collection process. Effective July 1, 2020, the school facilities surcharge fee was established at \$9,741 for buildings located between Interstate Highway 495 and Washington, D.C. or abuts an existing or planned Metro station and \$16,698 for all other locations (CR-55-2019). As required under State law, the surcharge does not apply to mixed retirement developments, elderly housing, or any property located in an infrastructure finance district approved prior to January 1, 2000. Moreover, the surcharge does not apply to a single-family, detached dwelling that is built or subcontracted by an individual owner in a minor subdivision, with the intent of using it as the owner's personal residence, and it does not apply to a single-family dwelling built by the Foundation for Applied Construction Technology for Students. Multifamily housing units designated as student housing within 1.5 miles of the University of Maryland, College Park campus are also exempted from the surcharge.

In FY 2020, DPIE issued 1,801 new residential building permits (single-family dwellings<sup>1</sup>), a decrease of -458 permits, or -20.3% below the FY 2019 level. **Exhibit 1** shows the numbers of permits issued from FY 2016 to FY 2020. Permits issued per month in FY 2020 averaged 150, which is above average level for the past five years. **Exhibit 2** illustrates the comparison of the monthly permits issued from FY 2016 to FY 2020.

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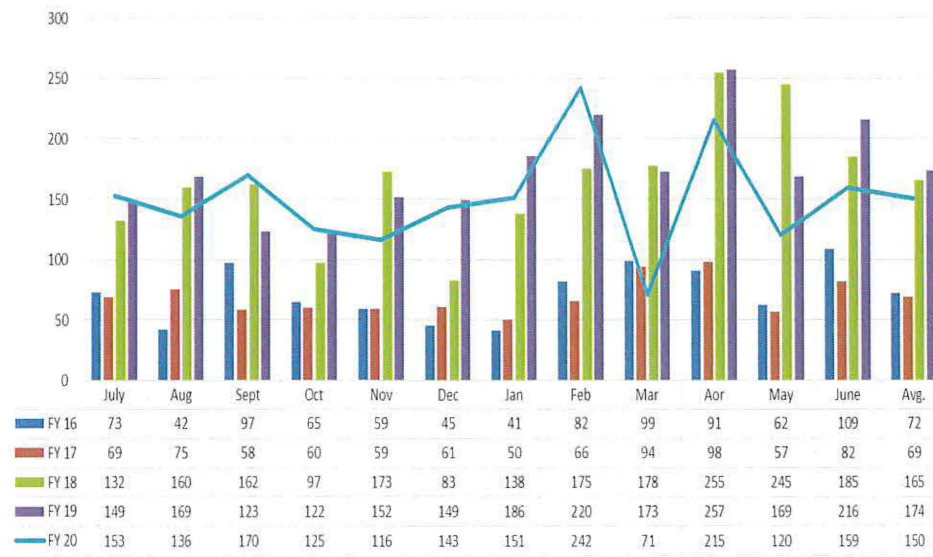
<sup>1</sup> Single-family houses constitute the majority of the residential building permits issued by DPIE in general. The number serves as an important indicator but cannot be used to directly calculate school surcharge revenue because: (1) the timing of surcharge collection and permit issuance differs in some cases; (2) the number of permits includes revisions, which do not generate school surcharge revenue; and (3) the number does not include other types of residential housing, which generate school surcharge revenue based on the number of units instead of the number of permits. The increase reflected herein is as a result of all residential zoning districts being incorporated into the total.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Single-Family House Permits Issued**  
**FY 2016-2020**



Source: Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement

**Exhibit 2**  
**Monthly Single-Family House Permits Issued**  
**FY 2016-2020**

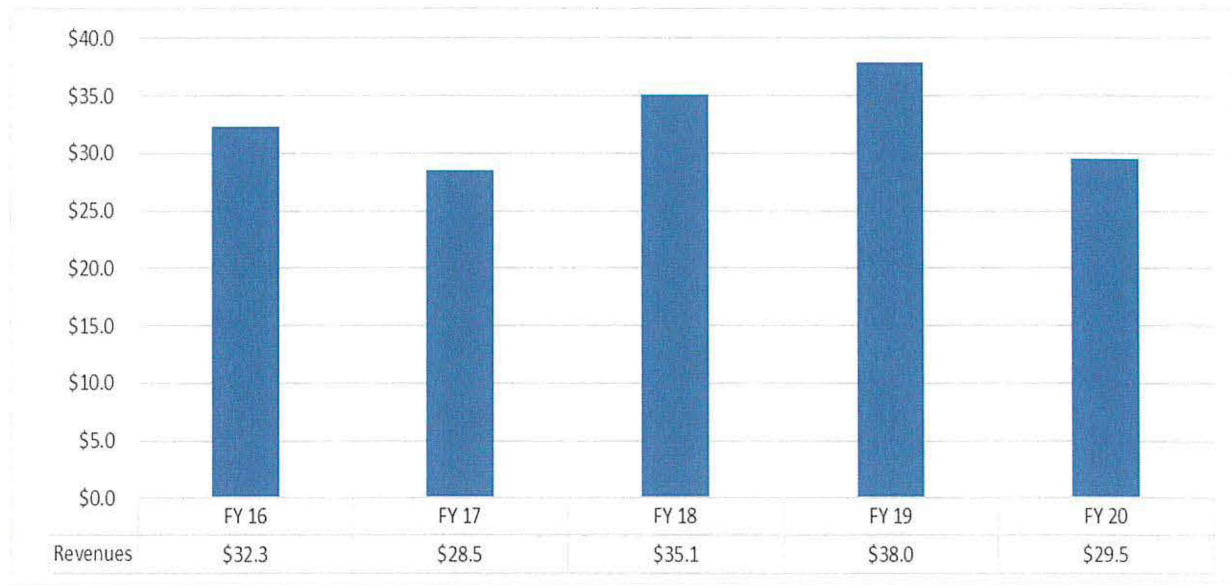


Source: Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement

## Fees Collected

In FY 2020, the County collected approximately \$29.5 million in school facilities surcharge revenues, which represents a -\$8.5 million, or -22.3% decrease compared to the FY 2019 collection of \$38.0 million. **Exhibit 3** provides the historical trend for school facilities surcharge revenues collected by the County during the past 5 fiscal years.

**Exhibit 3**  
**School Surcharge Revenue**  
**FY 2016-2020**



Source: Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement

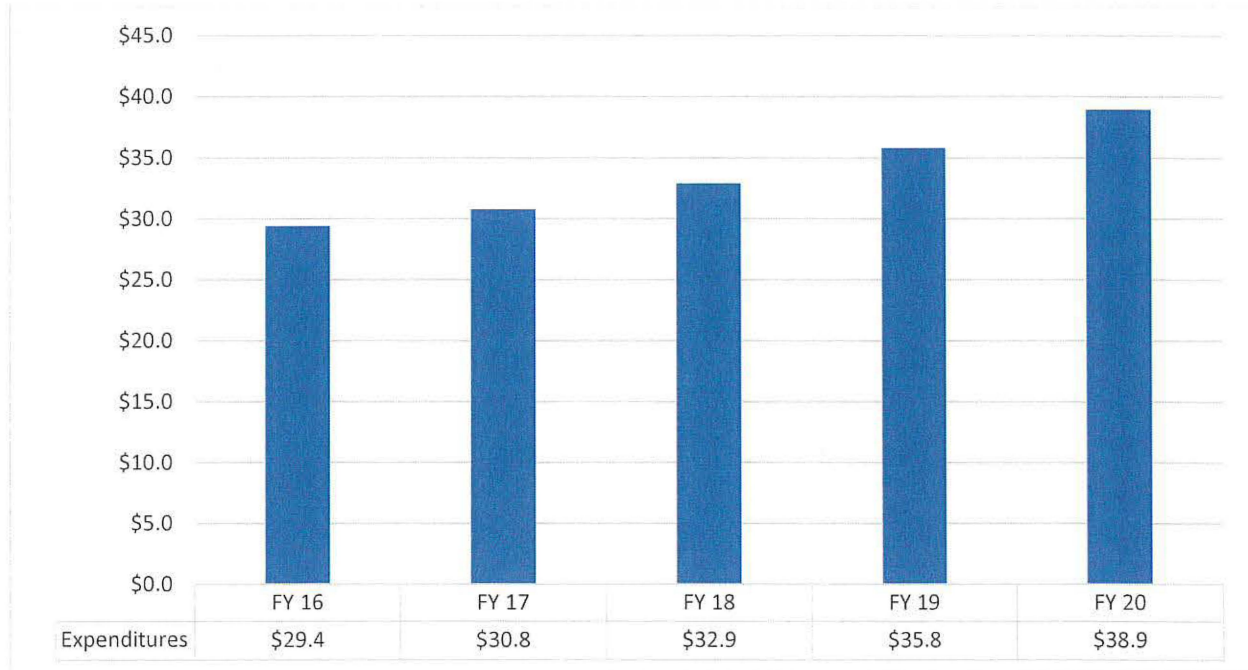
## Expenditures

In FY 2020, \$38.9 million of school surcharge revenue was spent on debt service for bonds issued for various school construction projects. Since FY 2000, the County has been using the school surcharge revenues to support a portion of new debt issued for school projects. **Exhibit 4**<sup>2</sup> shows the annual expenditures from the school facilities surcharge account for the past 5 fiscal years.

<sup>2</sup> Historical data is sometimes updated to reflect audited numbers.

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**Exhibit 4**  
**School Surcharge Expenditures**  
**FY 2016-2020**



Source: Office of Finance

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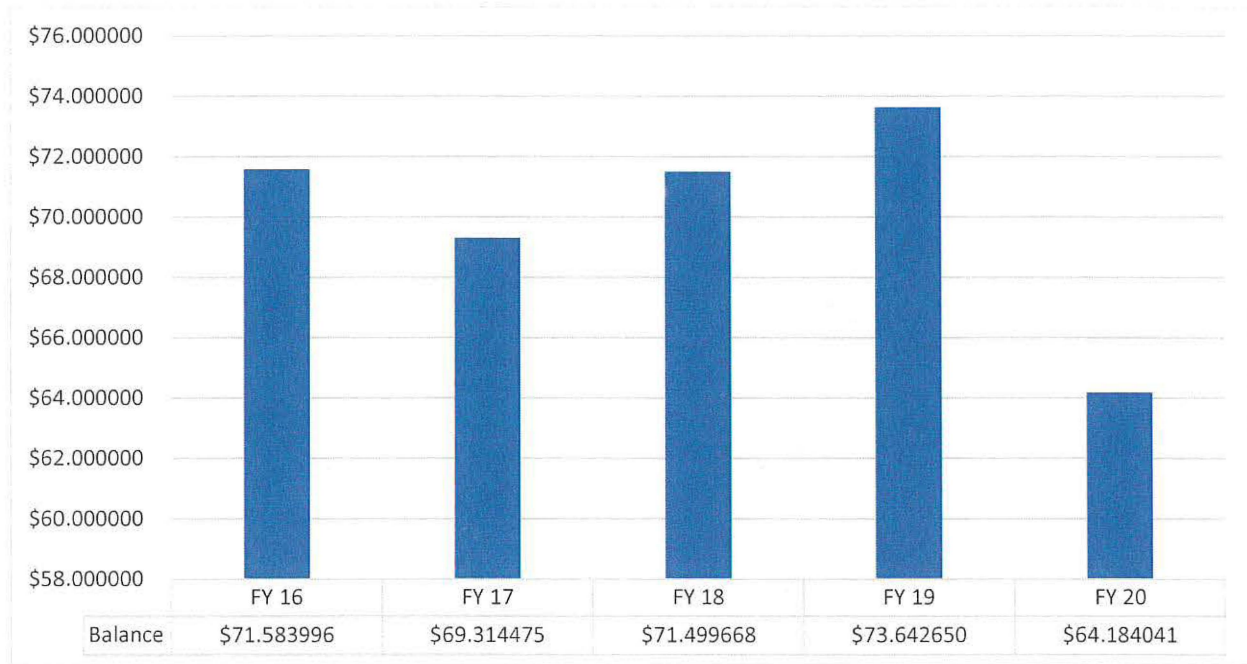
**Outstanding Debt**

As of March 2021, the County has an estimated \$397.2 million in school surcharge-supported outstanding General Obligation (GO) bonds. Including interest payments, an estimated \$521.1 million in school surcharge revenues are committed to debt service in the coming years. As the County continues to invest in new or expanded school buildings and renovate existing facilities, the outstanding debt supported by school surcharge revenues may continue to increase.

## Accumulated School Facilities Surcharge Balance

As of FY 2020, the County has an accumulated balance of \$64.2 million in school facilities surcharge revenues. **Exhibit 5** shows the accumulated balance history.

**Exhibit 5**  
**School Surcharge Accumulated Balance**  
**FY 2016-2020**



Source: Office of Finance

With the current debt service schedule and continued use of pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) funding, this balance reflects an overall decrease of -51.1%% after reaching its peak in FY 2008 at \$131.2 million. As the County continues to issue new GO bonds supported by surcharge revenues, as well as use the fund balance, the accumulated balance is expected to decrease in the immediate future. (See **Exhibit 6**).

**Exhibit 6**  
**School Surcharge Revenues, Expenditures, and Accumulated Balance**  
(\$ in Millions)  
FY 2016-2020

