



Maryland
Department
MDP
of Planning

Strategic Plan

2015-2018

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Cover Photos

Top: Town of Berlin, MD
Second from Top: Maryland Farm
Third from Top: Carroll Creek Linear
Park, City of Frederick
Bottom: Smith Island Pier



David R. Craig
Secretary of Planning



Wendi W. Peters
Deputy Secretary

1. Who We Are

The Maryland Department of Planning (Planning) serves the state by providing technical assistance, program guidance, data analysis and outreach to local governments. We assist state agency partners and provide timely data to the private sector and the general public. The work of the department reflects the priorities and direction of the Hogan Administration. There is a heightened focus on efficiency and collaboration while emphasizing economic development, flexibility and respect for local authority.

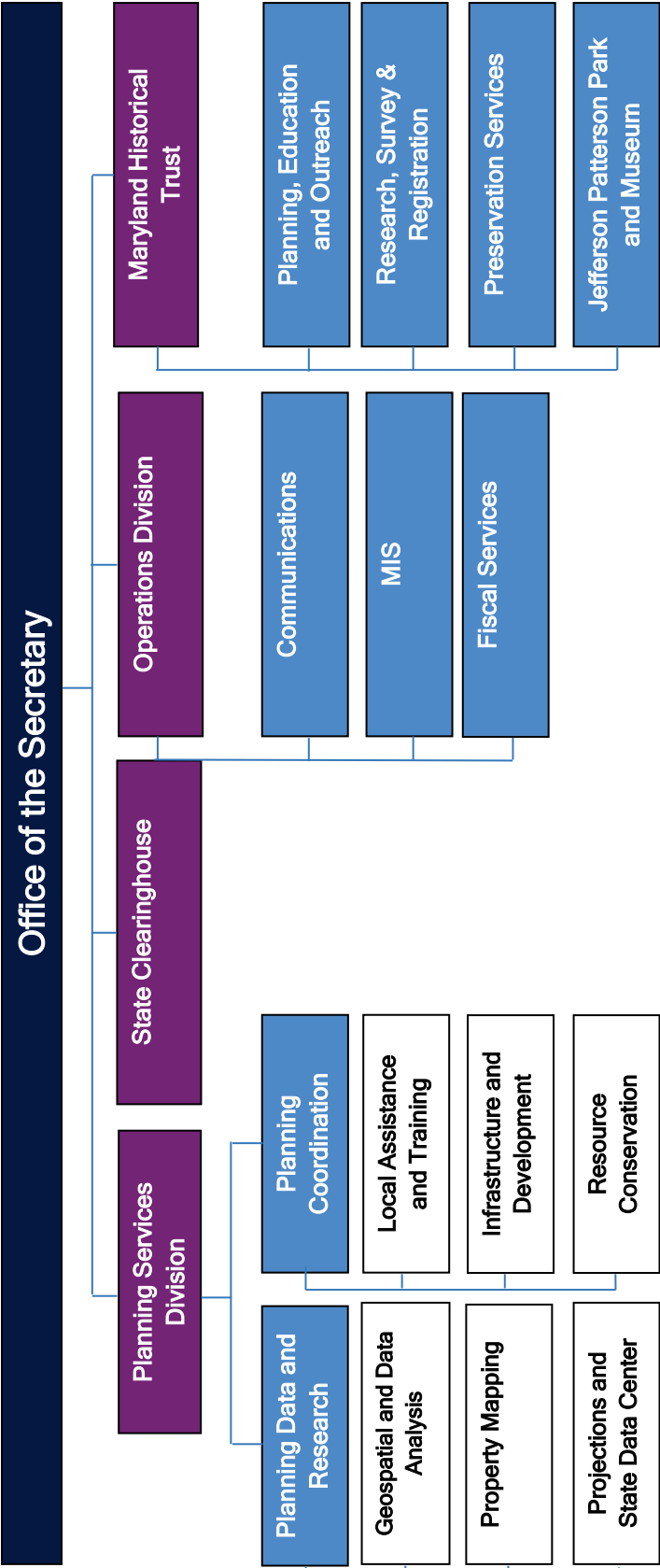
Leadership

The department is led by the Secretary of Planning, David Craig. The secretary directs the department to coordinate its programs, expertise and resources to energize and revitalize Maryland's existing communities and preserve its rural, cultural and natural resources. The secretary's leadership team is made up of the Deputy Secretary Wendi Peters, Chief-of-Staff Brandon Wright and assistant secretaries of Planning's divisions including Robert McCord, Esq. (Operations and Communications), Stuart Sirota, AICP (Planning Services), Linda Janey, J.D. (Clearinghouse) and Elizabeth Hughes, Acting Director of the Maryland Historical Trust (the Trust). Together, the leadership team under the direction of the secretary is responsible for implementing Planning's strategic plan by providing the direction and guidance to staff necessary to achieve the plan's goals.



Secretary Craig consults with Kevin Smalls, planning director for the Town of Bel Air.

Maryland Department of Planning Organizational Chart





Planning staff meeting with municipal and county planning directors.

The Organization

The Maryland Department of Planning serves its constituent base with 147 employees organized in four divisions: Planning Services, the State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Assistance, Operations and the Maryland Historical Trust.

Through **Planning Services**, Planning completes more than 200 technical assistance projects for counties and municipalities in a typical year. Planning services provides support in reviewing or drafting more than 60 comprehensive plans and/or ordinances for local governments each year. It also collects, analyzes and publishes social, economic and geographic information and maintains the digital maps of the state's 2.3 million parcels.

The **State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Assistance** ensures that financial and non-financial assistance projects operating within Maryland are consistent with state and local laws, regulations and guidelines. The clearinghouse annually circulates nearly 1,000 projects worth more than \$1.4 billion to state, regional and local agencies and reports on their consistency with state and local policy.

Operations is responsible for the administrative support for the department such as financial, information technology, procurement and logistics. The communications section coordinates outreach to promote the department's initiatives and services in order to develop and strengthen relationships as well as support the administration's legislative and policy initiatives. The unit also focuses on educational opportunities as part of our outreach and administers grants.

The **Maryland Historical Trust** is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. The Trust serves as Maryland's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and provides direct assistance to a broad base of local, state and federal stakeholders in the identification, protection and enhancement of heritage resources. The Trust administers a variety of historic preservation grant, loan, and tax credit programs including the Sustainable Communities Tax Credit which leverages private investment in the rehabilitation of both commercial and residential historic properties. The Trust also administers and oversees operations of the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Calvert County, which includes the Maryland Archeological Conservation Laboratory.

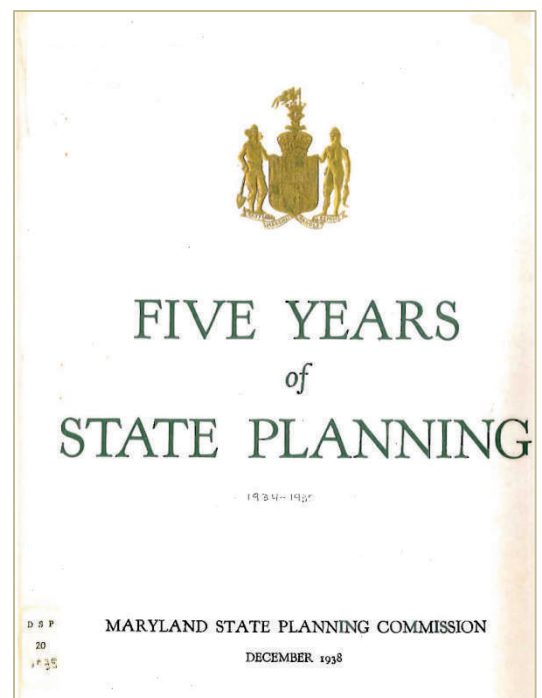
Our History

The history of state land use planning in Maryland goes back further than most states in the U.S. In 1933, the Maryland General Assembly created the first state planning commission in the country to coordinate Depression-era public works programs of the National Resources Planning Board and the Works Projects Administration. During its first ten years, the commission – which was the precursor to a state department – developed one of the first capital improvements programs in the nation, a mapping system covering the state and a program to provide medical care for the indigent.

By 1959, legislation created the State Planning Department, broadening its areas of concern to include the state's water resources and the protection, development and maintenance of Assateague Island. The department has had various names since then, at one point the Maryland Department of State Planning, the Maryland Office of Planning and, in 2000, the Maryland Department of Planning.



Early publications of the Maryland State Department of Planning.



Maryland's first state planning commission publishes *Five Years of State Planning* in 1938, outlining the state's vision for Maryland.



An aerial view of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in St. Leonard (Calvert County) showing the Maryland Archeological Conservation Lab in the lower right corner.

2. Our Mission

The Maryland Department of Planning collaborates with state agencies, local governments and the private sector, providing assistance and data so that each community can shape their future in a way that reflects local values, honors its heritage and presents opportunities for Maryland to flourish.

Planning facilitates the coordination of planning efforts statewide.

Using a statewide focus, the professionals at Planning work to harmonize planning across jurisdiction boundaries and provide technical assistance to local planning organizations and state agency partners. With full consideration for local concerns, Planning promotes consistency with broader statewide objectives in order to maximize return on public investment.

Planning works with state agencies and local governments to:

- Align plans and programs in order that state resources are invested in the most effective and efficient manner;

- Establish shared priorities so that efforts and availability of capital and program resources are coordinated – and to maximize predictability for private sector choice and investment;

- Ensure that government actions support appropriate private sector investments to the greatest degree possible.

This will encourage private sector choices that reinforce established public objectives in these areas.

Planning provides essential planning data, information and analysis for the state of Maryland.

By utilizing its depth of GIS talent and technical capability, Planning identifies and maps areas currently targeted for growth, reinvestment, and conservation – those where local governments and state agencies share objectives and are already targeting capital and program resources or plan to do so in the future.

Planning plays an important role in preserving Maryland's heritage and conserving its natural resources.

As part of Planning, the Maryland Historical Trust (the Trust) assists Marylanders to identify, protect, and enhance historic sites and archeological resources. The Trust's ongoing program activities include the identification and evaluation of historic

properties; protection and environmental review; educational outreach; and financial assistance. The Trust also administers a range of financial assistance programs, including the Maryland Heritage Areas and Sustainable Communities Tax Credit programs, that succeed in both conserving the state's non-renewable heritage resources while at the same time stimulating job creation and economic growth.

In addition to historic and cultural resources, Planning works in close coordination with partner agencies including the Maryland Department of the Environment and Maryland Department of Natural Resources to identify, conserve and protect natural and agricultural resources.



MDP holds listening sessions throughout the state to hear from local officials and planning staff as well as residents. Here is pictured a group in Frostburg.

3. Guiding Principles and Values

The Maryland Department of Planning sees Maryland's cities, towns and communities as attractive, vibrant places. We stand ready to assist communities in their plans to add value to their landscape and provide opportunity to their residents and other stakeholders. The natural, cultural and historic resources of our communities are catalysts that strengthen and renew economic and community development.

Local government and those they serve invest time and resources in creating a shared vision for the future of their communities. We understand that they are in the best position to achieve these local aspirations through comprehensive plans, ordinances and design implementation. There is not one solution that fits every challenge across Maryland, and Planning recognizes that successful solutions require balancing concerns of various stakeholders.

Planning also has a responsibility to provide guidance for the direction of state resources most efficiently across jurisdiction lines. In doing so, we strive with the highest professionalism and integrity to respect local desires and help each jurisdiction implement their vision and achieve their goals consistent with respect for people and place.



A vibrant town center in Bethesda, MD.

4. Vision

Planning supports the administration's efforts to change Maryland for the better.

Planning, guided by good planning principles, strives to promote Maryland's business friendly environment in a way that achieves economic vitality and is consistent with our obligation to environmental stewardship.

Planning works with state and local partners to publicize and market targeted areas, objectives, and private sector opportunities.

Planning respects local land use authority and seeks to inspire and support local vision.

Planning will lead as a premier resource and center of planning excellence.

Planning holds itself to high standards supportive of customer service.

Planning strives to be a leader in facilitating and strengthening partnerships between key state agencies.

Planning collaborates with policy makers and provides expertise and objective advice to agencies, commissions, and communities throughout Maryland.





The vision for Maryland's communities is cast by their elected officials and residents. State agencies, such as MDP, provide assistance to these local efforts.

5. Strategic Goals

The following goals will guide Planning's overarching direction over the next three years and beyond. Objectives are identified for achieving each goal, which in turn include specific actions for how each objective will be achieved.

Goal 1: Planning will expand its technical assistance to local planning organizations and state agency partners.

Planning has the experience and expertise to provide valuable and insightful commentary as well as technical assistance.

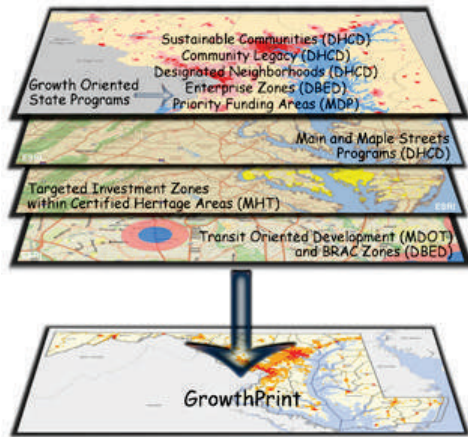
Planning has traditionally provided assistance through various means including coordination with local planning organizations as well as development of educational tools, such as its Models and Guidelines publication series. We will place a greater emphasis on providing expertise through use of staff and technology in addressing local planning issues. We will strengthen relationships with agency partners – particularly the Maryland Department of Transportation (Transportation), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (Natural Resources), Maryland Department of the Environment (Environment), Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Housing) – and look for opportunities to collaborate on initiatives that increase our combined effectiveness.

Objective 1: Planning will become a center of planning excellence

As part of its commitment to expanded technical assistance, Planning will take steps to raise its visibility among local jurisdictions as a valuable go-to resource. We will focus on establishing new and improved programs aimed at helping jurisdictions achieve their planning objectives.

Actions:

- Expand outreach via listening tours (starting immediately and ongoing).
- Substantially expand educational and training resources and communicate the benefits of employing best planning practices, models, and tools (starting immediately and ongoing).
- Create a Local Government Planning Resource Center (start planning immediately and launch within 12 months).



MDP assembles data that sheds light on the landscape of Maryland and then creates visually accessible maps that help local government evaluate the data.

Objective 2: Planning will enhance and expand its ability to provide timely and useful information for decision-making.

Planning will improve the functionality of the department’s Maryland Data Center, and expand and improve accessibility to its data and mapping products.

Actions:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of existing procedures and practices for improvement in effectiveness and efficiency (Within 6 months).
- Improve the availability and timeliness of digital map products and data for existing and potential users (Within 18 months).
- Explore the development of potential new interactive tools for external users (Within 3 years).

Objective 3: Support and enhance the vitality of communities and neighborhoods.

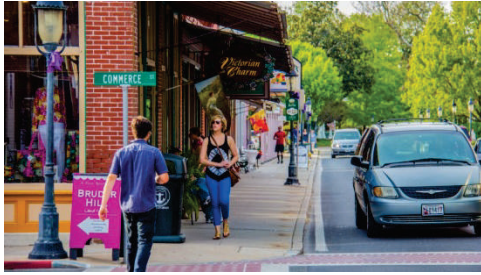
As Maryland continues to grow and develop, MDP will be a key partner to local governments in advancing planning practices and initiatives that help communities become more vibrant and dynamic.

Actions:

- Increase focus on supporting revitalization and redevelopment efforts in existing communities throughout Maryland through best planning practices (starting immediately and ongoing).
- Encourage the design of new communities that integrate land use and transportation in ways that support and enhance local desires (starting immediately and ongoing).
- Identify more effective ways to provide staff resources to partner on local initiatives that support infill and redevelopment in existing communities (starting immediately and ongoing).



The Hyattsville Arts District is a stunning example of local government revitalizing its town center with the assistance of state programs and support.



Downtown Berlin on the Eastern Shore.

Goal 2: Planning will support state and local efforts to improve Maryland's business climate and economic prosperity.

Planning has a unique role in supporting economic development in Maryland. Companies are increasingly looking to locate in places that are close to amenities, have adequate infrastructure, and that provide viable alternatives to long driving commutes. Planning is ideally positioned to work closely with state and local partner agencies in helping to identify and promote optimal place-based locations for new and existing businesses and employees.

Objective 1: Create opportunities for businesses to locate and stay in Maryland.

Planning will undertake new and enhanced planning initiatives that will become a valuable resource to existing and prospective businesses.

Actions:

- Coordinate with Commerce and Housing to integrate place-based planning principles with economic development activities (12 months and ongoing).
- Undertake an analysis of and create a web-based tool with Commerce for place-based business opportunities in locations with good access and proximity to services, infrastructure and markets (18 months).
- Support the development of on-line business-friendly resources (2 years).

Objective 2: Direct state resources effectively

Planning has an important role in helping to direct limited state resources in the most effective manner possible. This includes ensuring that state expenditures and investments support economic development, revitalization and resource conservation goals. We acknowledge that this can sometimes be a delicate balancing act and requires careful and thoughtful consideration combined with appropriate technical rigor and precision.

Actions:

- Identify opportunities for increased coordination and collaboration with other state agencies to ensure consistency and efficiency (immediate and ongoing).
- Identify new tools to indicate where new state projects and funding will maximize return on investment and minimize expense (18 months).



Construction of the Dundalk High School in Baltimore County.



The historic Kent Manor Inn on Kent Island in Queen Anne's County – An example of breathing new life into old places.

- Develop new materials that clarify how and why state resources and investments are directed to locations where appropriate infrastructure either exists or is planned (18 months).

Goal 3: Planning will enhance its ongoing efforts to preserve and protect natural, agricultural and historic resources.

Objective 1: The Trust will improve its framework for preservation by building its capacity and strengthening its networks statewide.

Actions:

- Connect to broader audiences by improving communication methods and messaging about historic preservation data, programs, success stories, and best practices (immediate and ongoing).
- Identify opportunities to reinvigorate the Trust's historic sites survey and inventory program and consult with local governments regarding their historic resource data needs (18 months).
- Streamline environmental reviews and better engage the public in the review process by improving online access to historic resource and project review information (24 months).
- Stimulate economic growth and job creation by leveraging private investment in heritage tourism development and historic property rehabilitation projects in existing communities (24 months).
- Improve the visitor experience at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum by completing the RITES Trail, Patterson Center, and Shoreline Erosion capital projects (4 years).



Objective 2: Planning will expand its coordination with the MDE and DNR in order to maintain the conservation of agricultural and natural resources.

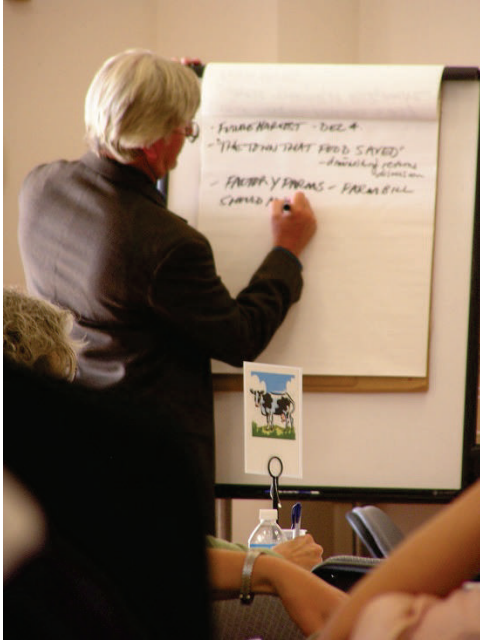
Planning provides comment and review while remaining focused on the importance of collaboration, respect for local authority and appreciation for the unique variety and balance of the natural attributes of each region.

Actions:

- Explore ways to improve flexibility and resolve differences in cases where there is disagreement (6 months).
- Coordinate with Environment and Natural Resources staff to identify and resolve areas of concern (18 months).
- Explore and develop new tools to help evaluate and prioritize conservation areas in order to maximize the return on public investment. (24 months).



A recreational biker on the scenic towpath of the C & O Canal in Western Maryland



MDP's Local and Regional Assistance planning staff provide technical guidance and even write comprehensive plans and ordinances in support of local government planning.

6. Implementation

This strategic plan will be used as Planning's blueprint for successful implementation. It will serve as a living document that evolves and adapts over time as conditions warrant.

Tracking Progress through Performance Indicators

Planning currently uses performance indicators to track progress of its programs and other activities. These include the following:

- Percentage of acres, parcels and dwellings developed within Priority Funding Areas (PFA)
- Number of acres preserved
- Number of plans and projects reviewed (by funding source) for consistency with state policies and requirements
- Number of statewide downloads of important tools
- Ratio of non-state investment leveraged compared to Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA) grant funds awarded
- Ratio of non-state residential and commercial investment leveraged compared to State rehabilitation tax credits awarded
- Number and value of federal and state undertakings reviewed annually
- Visitors to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum
- Number of artifacts and documents accessed and treated at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab)

During the second half of 2015, MDP's leadership team will undertake a comprehensive review of the key performance indicators and expand and modify them as necessary to align with the strategic plan goals, objectives and action items. Each item will be tracked in quantifiable and measurable terms on an appropriate periodic basis.

Financial and Operational Performance

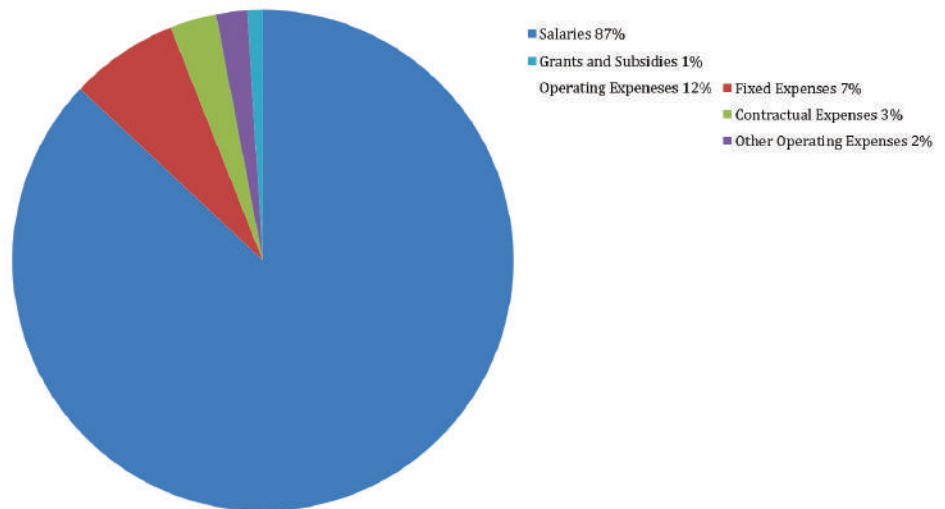
There was an increase in general funds of 9.5 percent in fiscal year 2015, however general fund expenses increased by 10.8 percent largely due to personnel cost increases. The department experienced a loss of nine Position Numbers (PIN) from fiscal year 2010 to fiscal year 2015. However, the department continues to find cost savings in consolidation of duties and responsibilities among existing staff.

MDP receives approximately \$23 million (fiscal year 2015) from the general fund. This amount includes \$10 million for the Sustainable Communities Tax Credit program. The general funds available minus the tax credit are comprised of salaries 87 percent (\$11.2 million), operating 12 percent (\$1.5 million) and grants and subsidies 1 percent (\$130,250).

The department received close to \$4.6 million in special funds. This includes \$3 million from Program Open Space, which funds the MHAA, an independent unit administered by the Trust, that oversees and funds 12 heritage areas with \$2.7 million in encumbered funds (for 12 operating grants and 49 project grants).

The Trust also received 97 percent of the department's federal funds that support the State Historic Preservation Office duties and included a Hurricane Sandy grant of more than \$1 million.

The department has been able to achieve cost efficiencies by organizational realignment, and this process is ongoing.



MDP's Fiscal Year 2015 General Fund Breakdown