

Santa Cruz County

Fiscal Year 2003-04
Proposed Budget



Presented by
Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

Santa Cruz County

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The cover art celebrates the work of Karen Thuesen Massaro,
2003 Santa Cruz County Artist of the Year.



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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May 19, 2003

AGENDA: May 20, 2003

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2003-04 PROPOSED COUNTY BUDGET

Dear Members of the Board:

This letter transmits the 2003-04 County Administrative Officer's Recommendations for the Proposed Budget for your consideration during the 2003-04 Budget Hearings scheduled to begin Monday, June 16, 2003. The County Administrative Officer's Proposed Budget for all County funds for 2003-04 totals \$354,572,877, a decrease of \$20,141,243 from the current year, and the 2003-04 General Fund totals \$312,518,451, a decrease of \$4,542,431.

The 2003-04 Proposed Budget reduces services in virtually all areas largely as a result of economic constraints and cost increases which cannot be fully financed by the current level of revenues. This gap in financing is addressed through a reduction in the number of County positions and the associated level of services delivered by County government.

The Proposed Budget recommends a reduction of approximately 180 positions throughout County government in every functional area. The majority of these position reductions are a result of the financial constraints resulting from cost increases coupled with limited increases in general purpose revenues. In certain instances, positions are reduced due to the loss of State or federal revenues, grants and outside agency funding, or declining departmental revenue that can no longer sustain the staffing resources. Approximately 75% of the positions slated for deletion are currently vacant primarily as a result of the hiring freeze imposed in early January, 2003. Vacant positions are scheduled for deletion July 1, 2003 and filled positions are proposed for deletion August 1, 2003.

The major cost increases in the 2003-04 Proposed Budget include negotiated salary increases, increases in worker's compensation and unemployment insurance as a result of State legislative changes, and increases in retirement costs for law enforcement and other employee units due to negotiated changes in benefits and PERS rate increases. Decreases are projected in certain general purpose revenues including interest earnings and sales taxes, which are offset by modest increases in property taxes, vehicle license fees, and County overhead. No growth is projected in transient occupancy taxes.

The Proposed Budget continues the reductions in County staffing and programs associated with the loss of the County's utility tax in March, 2002, as well as reductions in State funding for health and human service programs due to the late passage of the 2002-03 State budget.

The Proposed Budget incorporates a portion of the budget proposals in the Governor's January, 2003 Proposed State Budget, but does not take into account the new proposals and realignment plan included in the Governor's May Revision to the State Budget that was issued on May 14, 2003. Adjustments will need to be made at a later date to address the actions taken to address the State's historic deficit.

THE COUNTY BUDGET - MORE MANDATES THAN MONEY

The County's 2003-04 Proposed Budget represents a balanced budget plan for the coming year that addresses the County's local fiscal constraints and limited revenue options. Priority has been given to public safety functions and to the County's mandated responsibilities. Approximately 90% of the growth in the County's general purpose revenues has been allocated to the functions within the public safety departments, including adult and juvenile detention. In several areas, increases in departmental fees and new service charges have been proposed to cover the actual cost of services.

County departments have continued to retool their services and "roll back" new programs or operational enhancements that were added in the past few years. They will continue to prioritize their departmental services to ensure that mandated requirements are met while engaging the best business practices to ensure cost effective operations.

In this regard, the 2003-04 Proposed Budget continues to be based on a set of principles and values that promote a stable and balanced service delivery system for the County:

- ✓ Conforming the County's service delivery goals to the resources available;
- ✓ Ensuring the availability of basic public safety and safety net services by budgeting ongoing revenues for high priority and mandated services;

- ✓ Maintaining a highly professional, experienced and skilled public workforce by minimizing employee layoffs, facilitating interdepartmental transfers, and exploring employee retirement incentive programs;
- ✓ Providing administrative support functions at their most efficient and effective level; and,
- ✓ Utilizing limited local discretionary funds to finance the unique public needs of Santa Cruz County residents and strategically managing our resources to prepare for future revenue losses.

THE STATE BUDGET - A HIGH STAKES PROPOSITION

The recently released May Revision of the Governor's Proposed Budget for 2003-04 presents a relatively risky new spending and deficit reduction plan to address the State's \$38 billion estimated budget shortfall. Many of the budget proposals are continued from the Governor's January, 2003 Budget and others are proposed to facilitate Legislative agreement and a timely budget resolution. All indications are, however, that bipartisan support does not exist at this time for the Governor's proposals. A significant amount of negotiations and compromise will need to take place in a short time frame for the Governor's plan, or an alternative budget, to receive the two-thirds required vote of the Legislature.

Against the backdrop of political uncertainty, there are very real and practical problems that may thwart the best efforts of the Legislature and the Governor. These include, among many others, threatened lawsuits or voter initiatives regarding tax or fee increases, Wall Street's requirement for a dedicated funding source to repay any debt, the State maintaining its cash flow if the Budget is not enacted by the end of June, and several troubling assumptions about revenues and expenditures.

From the County's perspective, the Governor's May Revision has several elements that have extreme downside risks to the County. With the County's dependence on the State's financing for mandated services, and the State's ability to "borrow" or "take" local government discretionary funds at any time, the County's future is intrinsically tied to the success or failure of the State's management of its historic deficit. This places the County in great peril.

In addition, there are reductions proposed in the May Revision that will have an immediate cost or revenue loss to County departments which will require additional downward adjustments to the County's budget if enacted. From the standpoint of future years, the proposals in the Governor's May Revision contemplate that unspecified "structural reforms" will be considered to address what is likely to be another, large State budget deficit that will surely impact the County's budget for many years to come.

Some of the significant proposals in the Governor's May, 2003 Budget Revision include:

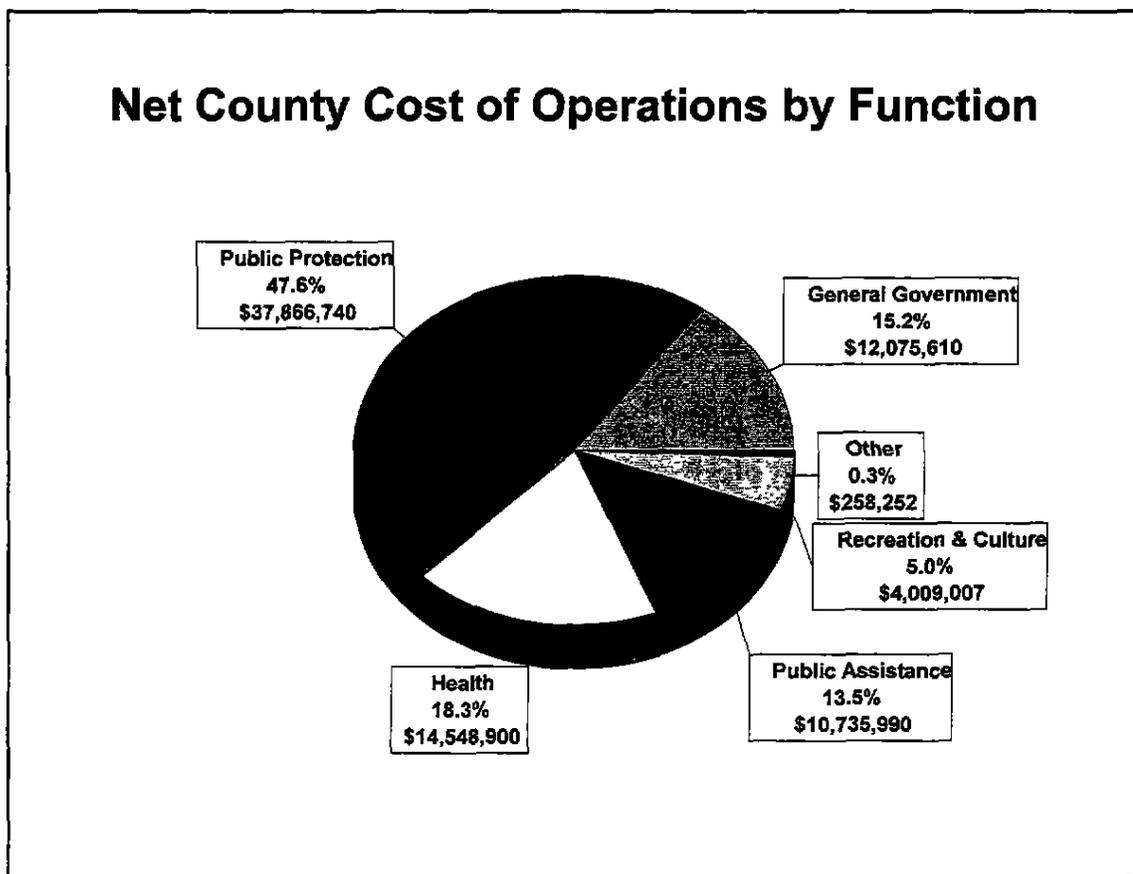
- Vehicle License Fees** - The Governor now supports maintaining the commitment to local governments to continue this critical financing source. However, based on the most recent information from the State Department of Finance, there will be a "gap" in this financing due to the timing of the "trigger". This could result in a one-time reduction in revenues of \$3-5 million to both the County's General Fund and the Realignment Fund unless the State continues the VLF "backfill" for the transition period, an action that is not contemplated or budgeted in the May Budget Revision. The increased vehicle license fees are also threatened by a potential lawsuit or voter referendum.
- Realignment** - The May Revision includes a \$1.7 billion scaled-down version of the realignment plan proposed in the January Budget, to be funded by tobacco tax increases and an increase in the high-income tax rate. Although there is merit to considering realignment of many of these programs, there is the inherent risk of program and caseload costs outpacing program revenues, and the instability of the revenue sources proposed as financing for these programs. In addition, the accuracy of the State's estimate for the base financing requirements of the realigned programs is questionable. Finally, if the cigarette and/or income tax increases are not enacted, the program costs may still be transferred, leaving counties with the financial liability for these critical services.
- Health and Human Services Funding** - Services to our most vulnerable populations have already been reduced due to prior State Budget reductions and local financing constraints. The May Revision continues the January proposals for further reductions in health services, including a reduction in Medi-Cal provider rates of 15%, and reductions in Medi-Cal optional benefits including adult dental, optometry, hearing aids, and physical therapy. County shares of costs for other health and human service programs will also increase under the realignment proposal discussed above. Reductions in these areas will only further weaken the health and human services safety net already at risk through local reductions and constraints in emergency and other supportive services.
- Mandate Reimbursements** - The May Revision continues the deferral of constitutionally guaranteed mandate reimbursements which will cost the County approximately \$2.3 million for the current year and \$1.4 million for 2003-04. The Revision also proposes to suspend 34 mandates and repeal portions of the Open Meeting Act in 2003-04, and proposes to repeal the suspended mandates in 2004-05. The May Revision includes no time frame for the repayment of prior or current year mandate claims, and does not include funding or any payment plan for other mandates that are not proposed to be suspended or repealed.

- Child Support Automation Penalties** - The Governor has proposed that counties pay 25% of the federal government's child support automation penalties. For Santa Cruz County the cost is approximately \$450,000 in unbudgeted general funds for 2003-04. These are penalties that have been historically paid by the State and should not be transferred to counties.
- Transfer of Court Fines** - This proposal would transfer a certain portion of court fines to the State to backfill the State's General Fund. The very preliminary estimate of revenue loss for Santa Cruz is \$250,000 although the components of the transfer are very unclear at this time. These funds would not provide any direct benefit to our local courts. The statewide estimate of the revenue transfer is \$31 million.
- Public Safety** - The Governor continued his commitment to public safety by proposing stable funding for most local law enforcement programs. It is important to note, however, that local fiscal constraints have required some reductions to public safety departments since they receive the vast majority of discretionary funds. In this regard, full replacement funding for the vehicle license fees - the second largest source of local discretionary funds - is necessary to ensure the continued support of public safety programs.
- Transportation** - The proposed transfer of Proposition 42 funds and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds will result in a significant reduction in the Department of Public Works road maintenance and rehabilitation budget for several years. These impacts are reflected in the County's 2003-04 Proposed Budget. The Proposition 42 funds are not proposed to be repaid until 2009.
- Redevelopment** - Although not highlighted in the May Revision, it is our understanding that the Governor is proposing to transfer \$250 million in RDA funds to the State General Fund escalating to \$1 billion in 15 years. This would seriously impact Redevelopment efforts for the County of Santa Cruz and its four cities, and turn back many years of economic development and affordable housing plans. The Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency estimates a revenue loss for 2003-04 in the range of \$1.5 to \$2 million.

Over the next few weeks the Legislature will be responding to the Governor's proposals and will be developing their own versions of a State Budget. As discussed above, it is uncertain whether a final spending plan will be approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor prior to the deadline of June 15. We will provide your Board with regular updates on the State Budget as new developments occur and will advise your Board of any recommended adjustments to the County's 2003-04 Proposed Budget as part of the Supplemental Budget.

2003-04 PROPOSED BUDGET AND THE ALLOCATION OF NET OPERATING COST

The allocation of the 2003-04 Net Operating Cost in the amount of \$79,494,597 by area of Government in the Proposed Budget is as follows:



SUMMARY OF THE 2003-04 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The following provides a summary of recommendations and budget reductions contained in the 2003-04 County Budget. The Proposed Budget does not include any adjustments based on proposals in the Governor's May Revision to the State Budget.

Health and Human Services

- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the Human Resources Agency (HRA) eliminates 81.5 positions throughout the Department. Fifty-three of these positions were eliminated mid-year due to reductions in the 2002-03 State Budget. These reductions will impact services including child welfare, eligibility, social work, and supportive services. Agency capacity to provide services to the Veterans community and to respond to the rising demand for probate conservatorships will also be limited as a result of proposed staffing reductions.
- ◆ The proposed budget for the Health Services Agency (HSA) eliminates 30.75 positions that affect programs throughout the Agency. This level of reduction will require the agency to re-prioritize service delivery to accommodate the lower capacity of their programs.

Specific program impacts include field nursing services, health education and prevention; clinic services such as family planning, occupational health, and radiology services; and mental health/substance abuse services for both children and adults. The budget includes increased permit fees to support existing Environmental Health programs as well as efforts to cap abandoned wells, monitor water quality, and continue coordination with other communities on water management.

The budget includes implementation of the Healthy Kids program, which provides for universal health and dental coverage for children starting January 1, 2004. This innovative program is a partnership with the First 5 Commission, the Community Foundation, the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, the Medical Society, United Way, and other community stakeholders.

- ◆ The Child Support Services Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with San Benito County to create the new Santa Cruz/San Benito Regional Department of Child Support Services in October, 2002. As a result of the regionalization, DCSS was exempted from the 5.5% State budget reduction that was imposed upon other counties. Various cost increases, however, have required the Department to propose the elimination of five positions to stay within its State allocation. The Department will continue to provide quality customer service in North and South County.

Criminal Justice

- ◆ The Proposed Budget recommends a reduction of 21.5 positions in Probation and 2 positions in Juvenile Hall. Of the Probation positions, 16 are recommended for elimination due to the loss of State grants, including the Challenge Grant, the Mentally Ill Offender Grant, and the Domestic Violence Grant. The loss of these positions is partially offset by the addition of 4 new grant funded positions. An additional 10.5 positions are recommended for elimination due to the County's fiscal constraints.

These reductions will increase caseloads and will expand the number of cases which receive minimal supervision. The department will evaluate all activities to ensure that mandated services continue to be provided.

- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the Sheriff's Department provides for a net reduction of 2 positions in the Operations Bureau while financing salary increases and the new 3% @ 50 retirement program. The Budget maintains front line law enforcement services and supports the continuation of community policing efforts through the Sheriff's service centers located throughout the County.

The Budget also provides for the full operation of all County detention facilities and endorses the development and use of alternatives to sentencing and incarceration including work release and community service.

- ◆ In the District Attorney's Office, the Proposed Budget provides for the reduction of 6.5 positions in investigations, consumer affairs, and administration due to the loss of grant revenues and financial constraints. Notwithstanding these reductions, the District Attorney's Office will continue their responsibility to prosecute all criminal cases, with particular emphasis on child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, consumer affairs and environmental protection. The District Attorney's Office is also in the process of training its staff to transition to a new automated case management system, which is anticipated to be operational in June, 2003.

Land Use and Parks

- ◆ The Proposed Budget recommends the elimination of 1.74 positions in the Agricultural Commissioner's Office due to the County's fiscal constraints. The Department is replacing 5 limited term seasonal Agricultural Biologist Aides with 3 year-round positions who will apportion their time between pest detection, pesticide use enforcement, and glassy-winged sharpshooter and sudden oak death activities. This deployment of staff will reduce staff turnover and maximize State revenues, but will strain the Department's ability to manage its various programs in a timely way.

- ◆ The proposed Planning Department budget includes a reduction of 3.25 staff which includes the transfer of 1 position to the Redevelopment Agency. The budget also includes the phase in of changes in planning fees to ensure that the County is fully reimbursed by applicants based on actual costs for project applications. The Department will also be fully implementing a new automated system to provide for administrative efficiencies and better permit tracking for all land use departments.

The Planning Department will continue to focus on customer service initiatives and structural reforms to the permit processing system, and will provide for a variety of Planning services through the continued operation of the two satellite permit centers in Felton and Aptos.

- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the Department of Public Works reflects various staffing changes and provides for a net reduction of 5 positions. As a result of reduced revenue, Public Works will focus on maintaining the various components of the County's infrastructure, including minimal road resurfacing, culvert replacement, bridge reconstruction, sanitation inflow and infiltration reduction projects, flood control operations and maintenance, expanded recycling programs and improvements to County landfill operations. The County is planning to transfer responsibility for maintaining the Pajaro River Levee system to the State by the end of 2003-04.
- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the Parks Department eliminates 4.25 positions and proposes additional reductions in extra help staffing. The budget reduces funding for various recreational services and programs and eliminates funding for Neighborhood Summer Drop-In Recreation Programs and Summer Recreation Grants.

Plans for 2003-04 include the installation of a co-generation system at the Simpkins Swim Center, which will greatly reduce electricity costs. The budget also provides for the completion of various projects at park sites throughout the County that are planned or currently underway.

General Government

- ◆ The Proposed Budget includes a reduction of 3 positions in the Information Services Department (ISD) which will reduce the level of staff resources for ongoing automation support and new initiatives for County departments. The Department will focus on improving the use of technology by County Departments and exploring options for reducing operating expenses.

Various infrastructure upgrades undertaken by ISD have been completed during 2002-03 and the County's network is ready for all future web and multimedia applications. For 2003-04, the ISD will continue to partner with customer departments to assess and evaluate new or replacement business and record keeping applications.

- ◆ The Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office reflects the cancellation of a program for Court related collections and the reduction of 1.5 positions due to fiscal constraints. These staff reductions will require greater efficiencies by remaining staff.
- ◆ The Assessor will continue to be the lead department in implementing the State-County Property Tax Administration Program (PTAP) which is designed to assist counties in completing property tax assessment activities. Grant funds in the amount of \$565,000 are received by the County to offset costs in various departments.
- ◆ The recommended budget includes funds to support the November 2003 Special Districts Election and the March 2004 Presidential Primary Election. Included in the March election are contests for President, U.S. Congress, the 11th and 15th State Senate Districts, the 27th and 28th State Assembly Districts, and on the local level, County Supervisor Districts 1, 2, and 5. Elections staff will be responsible for implementing the provisions of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which among other things, establishes voting system standards and new guidelines for accommodating persons with disabilities.
- ◆ The Proposed Budget includes a reduction of 3.5 positions in administrative, legal, and technical positions in the County Administrative Office, County Counsel and Personnel Departments. These reductions will require additional management efficiencies in order to provide the required level of internal support for County departments.
- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the Auditor-Controller's Office includes the deletion of 2 positions which will challenge the Department to maintain current operations. The Auditor-Controller will continue with county-wide improvements, including sponsorship of an electronic timecard project, and will be implementing new general accounting requirements.
- ◆ The Proposed Budget for the General Services Department provides for the reduction of 2 staff positions which will require the Department to continue improvements and efficiencies in its operations, including purchasing services and fleet operations. Through the Office of Emergency Services, a division of the Department, programs in Homeland Security and Hazard Mitigation will be expanded through the procurement of grant funds.

- ◆ For 2003-04 the County's Animal Control recommended budget provides funds for the County's share of the Santa Cruz County Animal Services Authority (ASA). The ASA, a joint powers authority formed in June 2002, is a partnership among the County, and the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley. The implementation of the ASA has reduced and stabilized the County's contribution for animal control and shelter services.
- ◆ The Proposed Budget provides for the reversion of approximately \$1 million to support other General Fund operations for 2003-04 and recommends no new Net County Cost for plant acquisition projects.

APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations set forth below do not represent adoption of the County Budget, but the approval of the budget estimates as a basis for full consideration at the time of final Budget Hearings scheduled to begin on June 16, 2003.

It is therefore recommended that your Board approve the figures in this document as those that constitute the Proposed County Budget for 2003-04 and order publication of the required notices, and set June 16, 2003 as the date the Public Hearings on the 2003-04 Proposed County Budget will begin.

Very truly yours,



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

cc: Each Department Head
Superior Court
Employee Organizations

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the County Administrative Officer's recommendations on the level of funding for all County departments and community programs for the 2003-04 fiscal year. The recommendations will be considered by the Board of Supervisors during final budget hearings which begin on June 16, 2003.

State law requires that the Board of Supervisors adopt a final budget, by resolution, specifying appropriations for each budget unit. Budget appropriations are constituted by various objects and sub-objects of expenditure, as listed in Section 29089 of the Government Code. Pursuant to Section 29090 of the Government Code, the Board may set forth appropriations in greater detail than required in Section 29089, and may authorize controls for the administration of the budget, as the Board deems necessary.

In the following document, the County Administrative Officer may in some cases recommend the adoption of additional controls for the administration of the budget, as provided for in Section 29090. Adoption of the budget as proposed by the County Administrative Officer includes adoption of any recommended additional controls. The Board of Supervisors will ultimately determine the County's funding priorities during budget hearings and may also authorize additional controls during budget hearings. Any additional controls adopted will be incorporated in the final resolution of adoption for the final budget, pursuant to Government Code Sections 29089 and 29090.

The 2003-04 Proposed Budget presents the County's budgets in alphabetical order. Each department or budget unit under the control of the department is identified by name and unit or index code. The budget presentation format is illustrated on the following page.

DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY:
Department Head or Agency Head:
Unit or Index Number:

Fund: (11)
Function:
Activity:

	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Appropriated</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommend</u>	<u>Change</u>
	<u>2001-02</u>	<u>2002-03</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>2003-04</u>	<u>2003-04</u>	<u>from 2002-</u>
			<u>2002-03</u>			<u>03 Approp.</u>
(1) Total Expenditures						
(2) Less Revenues						
(3) NET COUNTY COST						
(4) Positions						

DEFINITIONS

- (1) **EXPENDITURES:** The amount of monies or appropriations for the department or agency in question.
- (2) **REVENUES (FINANCING):** The non-property tax revenues attributable to the department, aggregated into categories according to sources.
- (3) **NET COUNTY COST:** The department's expenditures minus the department's revenues provides the Net County Cost of the department or that part of the department's total cost not recovered through fees, grants, and subventions.
- (4) **POSITIONS:** The number of positions associated with each budget unit in the department or agency in question.
- (5) **ACTUAL 2001-02:** The amount of expenditures and revenues and the resulting Net County Cost for the 2001-02 fiscal year.
- (6) **APPROPRIATED 2002-03:** The amount of expenditures that were authorized, revenues that were estimated, and the resulting Net County Cost for the 2002-03 fiscal year. These are the planning or controlling amounts for the department's operations.
- (7) **ACTUAL ESTIMATED 2002-03:** The estimated amounts that will actually be expended or received during 2002-03.
- (8) **REQUESTED 2003-04:** The amount of expenditures requested and revenues estimated for the 2003-04 fiscal year. This constitutes the department's budget request.
- (9) **RECOMMEND 2003-04:** The amounts recommended by the County Administrative Office for the 2003-04 fiscal year.
- (10) **CHANGE FROM 2002-03 APPROPRIATION:** The increase or decrease recommended by the County Administrative Office from the amount allowed for 2002-03.
- (11) **FUND, FUNCTION, ACTIVITY:** Categories for general government operations.

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