

State and Local AEC Snapshots: Baltimore County, Md.

Posted At : April 13, 2015 9:42 AM | Posted By : Evan Halperin

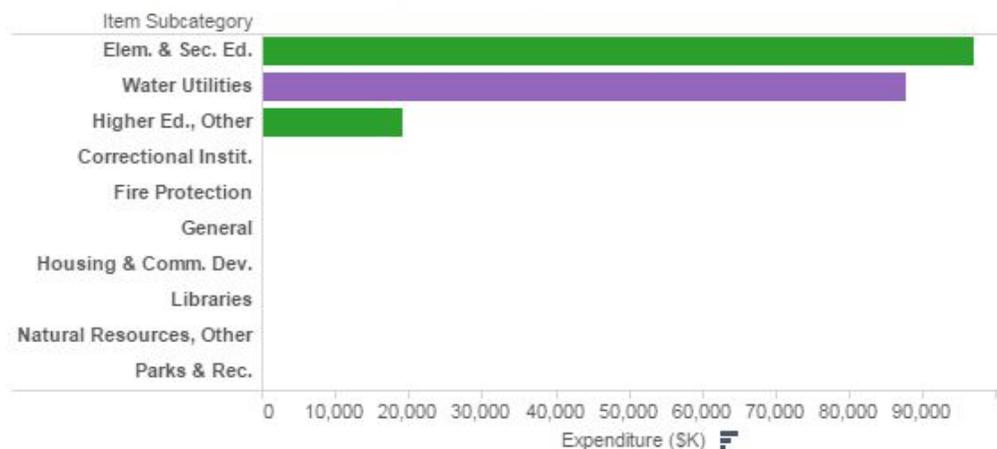
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You know Baltimore County's capital project plan is big when the Maryland Stadium Authority is the agency **administering the project**. How big? More than \$1 billion big.

In 2014, Baltimore County Executive Director Kevin Kamenetz **unveiled an aggressive \$1.1 billion school renovation plan**. More than 80 percent of the county's schools are more than 40 years old, and school populations are expected to grow, despite the county's 0.7 percent population growth rate.

In fiscal year 2014, **Baltimore County** spent \$97 million on construction within elementary and secondary education, and an additional \$19 million within higher education. Elementary and secondary spending is up from \$84 million in fiscal year 2011, and the numbers are expected to rise dramatically with the billion-dollar capital project plan coming to fruition.

Top 10 Expenditure Subcategories (\$K) (Most Recent Year)



It is no secret that local governments tend to favor local vendors when it comes to AEC contracts, but this doesn't mean that a company based outside of Maryland or Virginia has no chance of winning a piece of the \$1 billion pie. Vendors should be aware that the Maryland Stadium Authority has publicly stated that it is "not restricting it [contracts] just to local firms," but "part of the desire of the program is to maximize local participation."

Another unknown result of the county's massive education infrastructure overhaul is the effect it will have on surrounding counties or even neighboring states. Many counties and cities across the country have dilapidated schools in dire need of renovation or replacement, but lack funding to pay for the upgrades. Baltimore County brought the \$158 million education bond to voters in November 2014. It was the largest voter-approved referendum in the county's history. Additional localities may take a similar route to put more money toward education.

A quick glance at the county's surrounding Baltimore area shows a similar picture. **Howard County's** top construction expenditure in fiscal year 2014 was elementary and secondary education, at \$71 million. **Anne Arundel County** spent nearly \$131 million on elementary and secondary education construction, also its highest

expenditure. While education and construction on education-related projects are typically top spending areas for counties, it is clear that education spending has taken even greater priority in Maryland.

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