

**Resolution on the  
Fairfax County Fiscal Year 2019 Advertised Budget**

**DRAFT**

**Budget Committee Recommendation for  
Members Consideration on March 22, 2018**

Respectfully submitted to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Tim Thompson, President  
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

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27 **A. INTRODUCTION**

28 The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (The Federation) is a 77-year  
29 old umbrella community organization representing over 40,000 Fairfax County  
30 residences in every magisterial district.

31 As homeowners, our members are acutely aware that about 65%<sup>1</sup> of the Fairfax  
32 County FY2019 Budget is dependent on real property taxes, primarily residential.

33 The Federation is also aware that changing demographics in the county—combined  
34 with failures by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Government to provide  
35 adequate funding of their various mandates and responsibilities—have multiplied costs  
36 and shifted the burden of maintaining our quality of life, infrastructure, and Fairfax  
37 County Public Schools (FCPS) to the county, and disproportionately to homeowners.  
38 This abdication of responsibility needs to be strongly addressed by all stakeholders in  
39 the county. But, while awaiting redress, the Federation cannot permit degradation of  
40 our essential services, including our schools, in order to support a diversified economy  
41 and a bright economic future.

42 The Federation continues to support revenue diversification in order to fund schools  
43 and county services. Diversification could not only slow increases in property tax rates  
44 (while still supporting strong community investment), but also promises to improve our  
45 fiscal position by making the county's financial health less dependent on a single  
46 economic sector.

47 Federation members recognize that our lifestyle comes at a cost, but continue to insist  
48 that the following critical needs are addressed by the budget and the Board of  
49 Supervisors in FY2019 and successive years:

- 50 (a) continued excellence of FCPS, which serve as a magnet for growth and  
51 provide the underpinning of the county's economic health;
- 52 (b) safe and secure communities with a reasonable safety net for residents and  
53 families with mental, physical, or substance abuse issues, or are homeless,  
54 or are living in poverty;
- 55 (c) adequately maintained and staffed parks, recreational facilities, and libraries;  
56 are
- 57 (d) responsive, transparent and proactive governance, financial planning and  
58 oversight, including maintenance of the county's AAA bond rating;
- 59 (e) improvement of environmental quality, recycling and pest management.

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<sup>1</sup> Fairfax County Executive Budget Presentation on the FY 2019 Advertised Budget Plan, February 20, 2018, p. 14.

60 **B. FINDINGS**

61 **I. Revenues**

62 **WHEREAS**, the changing needs and demographics of the county and schools are  
63 reflected in rising property tax rates and additional fees directly affecting homeowners  
64 that disproportionately increase the tax burden on homeowners; and

65 **WHEREAS**, under the “Dillon Rule”, counties in Virginia have limited authority to  
66 raise and collect revenue compared to rights granted to cities, but the Board of  
67 Supervisors has not fully implemented the authorities available to it, including (but  
68 not limited to): (1) adopting a zoning ordinance to assess and impose transportation  
69 impact fees on by-right commercial or mixed-use development to defray costs of  
70 reasonable road improvements, and (2) raising the Business Professional  
71 Occupational Licenses (BPOL) tax, while maintaining a rate competitive with  
72 surrounding jurisdictions; and

73 **WHEREAS**, the maximum advertised tax rate may be lowered but not raised, and a tax  
74 rate that is set too low can stifle the ability of citizens to discuss the proper balance of  
75 taxes and services, can remove the flexibility of the Board of Supervisors to respond to  
76 demonstrated needs, and may lead to precipitous tax raises in future years to address  
77 known needs such as FCPS, Metro, and other lines of business.

78 **II. Compensation and Benefits**

79 **WHEREAS**, high quality services in the county require a professionally-trained  
80 workforce; and

81 **WHEREAS**, appropriate compensation levels are a key element in building and  
82 maintaining a skilled workforce; and

83 **WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors has appointed a committee to examine county  
84 employees’ compensation in a holistic manner, taking into account current and  
85 potential retirement and benefit plan options.

86 **III. Public Safety**

87 **WHEREAS**, the FY2019 Advertised Budget includes about \$7.5M for Public Safety,  
88 which funds 32 positions; and

89 **WHEREAS**, these funds support staffing for the South County Police Station; the  
90 Diversion First Initiative; a police department reorganization, the county’s Gang  
91 Prevention Initiative; the replacement of expiring SAFER grant funds for fire and  
92 rescue; and the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association.

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93 **IV. Education Funding and School Transfer**

94 **WHEREAS**, Fairfax County’s continued economic growth and strong property values  
95 both depend in part on the excellence of its public schools, a fact which is regularly  
96 recognized by the Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Economic  
97 Development Authority, who cite FCPS as one of the primary reasons businesses  
98 relocate to Fairfax County; and

99 **WHEREAS**, the FCPS Advertised FY 2019 Budget focuses on improving FCPS’  
100 market position with regard to teacher and staff compensation, which is vital in  
101 attracting and retaining the finest educational personnel; and

102 **WHEREAS**, even assuming these investments in FY 2019, FCPS teacher salaries will  
103 only reach the previous year’s market average; and

104 **WHEREAS**, FCPS School Board Policy 8258.2 states that “it shall be the goal of the  
105 Fairfax County School Board that school facilities be renovated on a 20- to 25-year  
106 cycle”; and

107 **WHEREAS**, FCPS utilizes more than 800 temporary classrooms, and under current  
108 Capital Improvement Plan cash flow utilizing bond funding of \$155M per year, school  
109 facilities are replaced or updated every 37 years on average; and

110 **WHEREAS**, FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand, County Executive Bryan Hill, and  
111 their respective staffs have expanded FCPS and County collaboration and cooperation  
112 admirably by jointly presenting a unified fiscal forecast presentation.

113 **V. Public Works and Environment**

114 **WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors approved the “Cool Counties Pledge” committing  
115 to specified reductions in greenhouse gases (GhG) by 80% by 2050 compared to 2005  
116 recorded levels; and

117 **WHEREAS**, the County is expected to collect \$45.5M from the consumer utility tax in  
118 FY2019;<sup>2</sup> and

119 **WHEREAS**, the County has only identified \$300K in projects which pertain to  
120 greenhouse gas reduction and/or energy use improvements; and

121 **WHEREAS**, FCPS has saved over \$17M on expenditure of \$7.5M since February  
122 2014 under their energy management program; and

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<sup>2</sup> E-mail from Joe Mondoro to Flint Webb at [C.Flint.Webb@Leidos.com](mailto:C.Flint.Webb@Leidos.com) on 26 February 2018. The e-mail shows that the County received \$45,204,598 from the Consumer Utility Tax in 2017 and estimates that they will receive \$45,533,608 in FY2019 in their Advertised Budget. The e-mail also identifies three projects related to GhG reductions totaling \$260,685 of expenditures. It should be noted the expenditures did not include funding of Kambiz Agazi’s office.

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123 **WHEREAS**, the county has reduced GhG, but not to the agreed upon levels; and

124 **WHEREAS** the FY 2019 Advertised Budget includes funds for eradication of the native  
125 Fall Cankerworm and is not recommended by the County Urban Forestry Management  
126 Division and is opposed by many residents.

127 **VI. Transportation**

128 **WHEREAS**, a robust and affordable transportation system provides economic, health,  
129 and social benefits for county residents, businesses and visitors; and

130 **WHEREAS**, a financially feasible transportation plan with innovative, environmentally  
131 sensitive “smart growth” tools including mixed-use and transit-oriented development,  
132 walkable and bikeable corridors, and regional connectivity makes the county attractive  
133 to new residents and employers; and

134 **WHEREAS**, overhead utilities decreases the aesthetic and functional value of our  
135 'Complete Streets network' by contributing to the degradation of the community's view  
136 shed, property values, and taking space from non-vehicular amenities; and

137 **WHEREAS**, strategic long-range plans that include a diversity of transportation  
138 improvement projects as small as sidewalk improvements and as large as rail  
139 expansions serve to enhance the natural environment, preserve the existing urban  
140 canopy, and protect high air and water quality.

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142 **C. REQUESTED ACTIONS**

143 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** based on all of the foregoing that the Fairfax  
144 County Federation of Citizens Associations urges the Board of Supervisors to take the  
145 following actions in adopting the FY 2019 Fairfax County Budget:

146 **I. Revenues**

147 (1) the Board of Supervisors should exercise all available authority to generate  
148 additional diversified revenue, including but not limited to: (a) ensuring the BPOL tax is  
149 competitive with surrounding jurisdictions, and (b) taking all necessary steps to collect  
150 impact fees and permitting fees; and

151 (2) the Board of Supervisors should pursue efforts to achieve city-county parity in  
152 taxing and other authorities, and should increase efforts, in concert with the FCPS  
153 School Board, to obtain an equitable share of funding from the Commonwealth and  
154 Federal government; and

155 **II. Compensation and Benefits**

156 (3) the Board of Supervisors should accept suggested employee compensation  
157 increases with the proviso that the Board of Supervisors publicly release the findings of  
158 its study on employee compensation and engage in a robust public discussion on the  
159 issue, with the purpose of ensuring our ability to retain and recruit a strong work force  
160 while maintaining financial sustainability; and

161 **III. Public Safety**

162 (4) the Board of Supervisors should adopt the increased Public Safety staffing and  
163 funding projections in the county's FY 2019 Advertised Budget; and

164 (5) the Board of Supervisors should restore second-year funds for the "Diversion First"  
165 program which promises to save both money and human life; and

166 **IV. Education Funding and School Transfer**

167 (6) the Board of Supervisors should accept the County Executive's recommendation to  
168 fully fund FCPS' requested transfer, to the extent possible given the constraints of  
169 other spending priorities; and

170 (7) the Board of Supervisors should begin to address FCPS' capital needs, while  
171 maintaining the county's AAA bond rating, by increasing FCPS' bond funding by \$25M  
172 per year as recommended by the County Executive; and



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173 (8) the County and FCPS should expand their collaborative approach to gain additional  
174 efficiencies where possible, such as in the areas of infrastructure, technology, and  
175 hiring/retention; and

176 **V. Public Works and Environment**

177 (9) the Board of Supervisors should prioritize the spending of the Consumer Utility Tax  
178 revenues on projects that reduce energy consumption in the county, including:

- 179 (a) funding a Sustainability Office to assure goals are met and reports on energy  
180 use are issued;
- 181 (b) funding energy projects with a less than 5-year payback period;
- 182 (c) funding FCPS' energy management program;
- 183 (d) the establishment of a revolving fund program for cost-effective homeowner  
184 energy projects;
- 185 (e) the establishment of a revolving fund program for cost-effective energy projects  
186 at small businesses; and

187 (10) the Board of Supervisors should not expend funds for Fall Cankerworm  
188 eradication but should use the budgetary savings for the control of non-native invasive  
189 forest pests and plants in order to improve the health of our forests and woodlands;  
190 and

191 **VI. Transportation**

192 (11) the Board of Supervisors should prioritize the expansion of regional transit  
193 capacity along key corridors and activity centers, including:

- 194 (a) Bus: Bus Rapid Transit and Fairfax Connector
- 195 (b) Rail: Virginia Railway Express and Metrorail
- 196 (c) Roadway: Route 1/Richmond Highway, Route 237, Route 7, State Route 50/Lee  
197 Highway
- 198 (d) Emerging Activity Centers: Chantilly/Centreville, Reston, Tysons, and Dulles;  
199 and

200 (12) the Board of Supervisors should prioritize opportunities to expand the Silver and  
201 Orange lines to locations that maximize regional connection, by focusing on increasing  
202 transit capacity of the Rosslyn tunnel; and

203 (13) the Board of Supervisors should reduce the auto-centric environment in suburban  
204 and rural communities by prioritizing transportation improvement projects such as bus  
205 service, sidewalks, bike lanes, transportation demand management, signals, and trails;  
206 and

207 (14) the Board of Supervisors should consider potential negative impacts to the natural  
208 environment and air and water quality when approving transportation improvement  
209 projects, and



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210 (15) the Board of Supervisors should pursue opportunities to bury utilities underground  
211 throughout the county, including along the Richmond Highway Embark project area.

212 **VII. FY 2020 Advertised Budget**

213 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors should continue to seek  
214 cost savings and efficiencies, particularly in areas where benchmarks show our  
215 spending is higher than the market requires, and should adopt a tax rate that avoids  
216 any deterioration in services.

217 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive  
218 should, for FY 2020, continue to improve communication about fiscal priorities and  
219 adopt a maximum advertised tax rate which encourages citizen input on the proper  
220 balance of taxes and services and limit the Board of Supervisors' flexibility.

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