



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

April 11, 2025

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

Re: MVCCA FY26 Budget Resolutions

Dear Chairman McKay, Mount Vernon District Supervisor Daniel Storck, and all Supervisors;

The members of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) carefully reviewed the County Executive's FY 2026 proposed budget; our recommendations and comments are below and detailed in the attached Resolutions.

We support the Food and Beverage tax (AKA Meals Tax) to bring in additional revenue.

We understand why the County Executive is proposing a higher real estate tax rate, however, we do not think it should be higher than the current rate. Home values have risen therefore, the current rate will bring in additional funds simply based upon the home values.

We will be testifying at the Public Hearings for the FY2026 Budget.

Katherine Ward

Katherine Ward
Cochair
MVCCA

Attachments:

- 1. Resolution with respect to School Transfer and Related Matters in the FY26 County Advertised Budget*
- 2. Resolution on the Proposed FY2026 County Budget (Environment & Recreation)*
- 3. MVCCA Recommendations on 2026 Budget line-item Stormwater Services (Fund 40100)*
- 4. MVCCA Resolution on Proposed FY2026 County Budget (Public Safety and Transportation)*

Attachment 1

EDU-2025-1 Resolution with respect to School Transfer and related matters in the FY2026 County Advertised Budget

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Executive's FY2026 Advertised Budget Plan (County Budget), released on February 18, 2025, proposed a funding increase (School Transfer) for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) of \$118M compared to the \$268.3M requested by the Fairfax County School Board (School Budget) resulting in a discrepancy of about \$150.3M (School Shortfall); and

WHEREAS most (\$214M) of the School Budget reflects the proposal, reached through collective bargaining, to provide a 7% compensation increase for all employees (about 93% of which are school-based professional staff) to improve morale and address actual and potential competitive disadvantage with neighboring jurisdictions which already have teacher pay advantages and are considering FY26 raises of similar magnitude; and

WHEREAS the Virginia legislature has proposed additional support for schools in its funding packages, including teacher salary raises and a possible one-time bonus, but the details are not yet known, may require a matching increase as in the past, but will not in any event adequately address the funding failures highlighted in the 2023 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) costing FCPS and Fairfax taxpayers about \$569M a year; and

WHEREAS the status of federal funding, which partially supports the cost of federal mandates regarding special education services, Title I schools staffing and other requirements (previously \$168M,) is unclear due to ongoing federal upheaval even as the underfunded mandates remain in place and the number of students eligible skyrockets; and

WHEREAS the School Budget includes no new programs but continues support for multiyear investments including fine arts, athletic trainers, and preschool (collectively \$4M) as well as school security improvements and teacher preparation and credentialing (\$14.2M) but is not able to provide for known needs such as middle school sports expansion, accelerating maintenance needs,

lower class sizes, middle school start time changes, or purchases of additional electric buses; and

WHEREAS the School Budget also includes unavoidable expenses (such as contractual increases, increasing enrollment of students with higher educational needs, debt service, transfers for major infrastructure maintenance for aging systems, workers compensation, and insurance); and

WHEREAS the School Budget's ability to make substantial system-wide reductions is limited because (1) the overwhelming preponderance of budget expenses is directly related to school-based staff salaries, (2) staffing levels and class sizes are subject to Commonwealth and US regulation, and (3) schools must accept all students regardless of need or special education eligibility; and

WHEREAS the County Budget reduces support for mental health services for families and youth, and for middle school after- school programs, although mental health problems are rising and middle school age youth need positive activities in the after- school hours to assure a positive transition to high school and avoid risky behaviors such as substance abuse, crime and vandalism which affect the entire community; and

WHEREAS FCPS maintains its national reputation for excellence while keeping cost per pupil in the mid-range of surrounding jurisdictions and the lowest ratio of central management staff in the area (1.1% compared to 2-4%); and

WHEREAS FCPS is long recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) as the single most important contributor to the economic health of the County, especially in uncertain times, and as its highest priority while a highly qualified, motivated and fairly compensated school staff is the most critical asset of FCPS; and

WHEREAS notwithstanding the demonstrated needs of FCPS, the BOS, the School Board (SB) and taxpayers face severe economic and social disruption as the federal government downsizes and reorganizes, making it difficult to fully meet the School Budget's requested 7% compensation increase from projected

revenue, however warranted by the need to hire, retain, and demonstrate support for FCPS' excellent teaching staff; and

WHEREAS the County Budget's proposed increase in real estate tax rate, though painful to many, is necessary to assure survival of our important institutions during this unprecedented period of dislocation even though it continues the burden placed on taxpayers by the failure of the Commonwealth's (and the US) to appropriately support Fairfax County, and any benefits from a possible meals tax would not be realized for FY2026,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA), in order to protect our institutions, home values and future growth potential, urges the BOS, as its first priority, to provide FCPS with funds sufficient to maintain its standards of excellence, to meet the needs of all children, and to provide a significant salary increase for staff; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the MVCCA urges the BOS to reconsider proposed reductions in mental health services and middle school activities as counterproductive to assuring a positive and healthy future; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the MVCCA urges the BOS adopt the proposed tax rate increase but to actively search out alternative revenue sources, especially a meals tax, and to work with elected representatives and other jurisdictions to assure them that Commonwealth meets its obligations on school funding and provides a fairer return on revenue received by the Commonwealth and attributable to Fairfax County taxpayers, businesses, and economic activity.

Approved by the MVCCA Members March 26, 2025

Attachment 2

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)
Resolution on the Proposed FY 2026 County Budget (MVCCA, E&R 2025-01)

Whereas, the Environment and Recreation Committee (E&R) of the MVCCA reviews and comments on County environmental and recreation programs.

Whereas, E&R is concerned that the County Executive's proposed FY 2026 budget for the Park Authority will not adequately support the following areas:

1. Eliminating an Ecologist I position (\$65K), which is important to manage invasive plants, which are overtaking our parks, and funding for park staff or volunteer coordinators is inadequate to even maintain the status quo.
2. Reducing trail maintenance by 50% will increase the risk of injury to park visitors resulting from damaged/degraded trails and may require trail closures.
3. Reducing Park and facility maintenance by 37% will worsen the already deferred maintenance.
4. Reducing open space mowing by 17% will increase the likelihood of increased invasive vegetation encroachment into parks.
5. Closing one nature center and one historic site (\$644,000).
6. Reducing the summer concert budget, which draws people to our parks.
7. Reducing forestry contract services, which is critical to addressing high risk trees that threaten life and property.
8. Reducing Port-a-Jon cleaning by 28%.
9. Funding to support implementation of the county's zero-waste trash and recycling program (currently trash overflows containers).
10. We need to maintain the parks, address trash and Port-a-Jon issues, and address invasives as a priority so that all residents, including One Fairfax residents, will have a rewarding experience.

Whereas, the MVCCA has long highlighted the need to manage flooding, the MVCCA supports the county's flooding workplan and strongly supports the need for the county's evaluation of stormwater issues in the Hollin Hall-Wellington area.

Whereas, eliminating funding for supplemental mowing from the Virginia Department of Transportation will not only result in less mowing but also impact removal of trash in the right of way, this reduction may seem minor but is likely to be widely unpopular.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Park Authority budget should be adjusted to ensure that our parks do not degrade because facilities are not maintained, dangerous trees are not removed, and parkland is overtaken by invasive plants. The Park Authority should fully participate in the county's zero-waste initiative (including regular removal of trash so that trash bins do not overflow). We need to maintain the parks, address trash and Port-a-Jon issues, and address invasives as a priority.

Be it further resolved that DPWES funding be preserved at least at the levels in the County Executive's proposal.

Be it finally resolved that the county retain the funding for mowing in the right of way because reduced mowing will result in the accumulation of trash.

APPROVED BY MVCCA MEMBERS MARCH 26, 2025

Attachment 3

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA) RESOLUTION

Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on
2026 County Budget Item *Fund 40100 -Stormwater Services*

Whereas: In March 2021, the MVCCA formed a Special Committee on Stormwater to address Mount Vernon District residents' complaints regarding stormwater problems affecting their homes and neighborhoods and the considerable expense they incurred to remedy stormwater run-off problems they did not cause.

Whereas: Since its inception, the Special Committee has identified residential properties in the Mount Vernon District suffering direct effects of stormwater run-off; challenged planned residential infill development projects that would increase and further aggravate stormwater run-off issues; and examined County ordinances and regulations governing stormwater.

Whereas: In its deliberations, the Special Committee has identified inadequate and aging stormwater infrastructure in many communities; issues related to infill development increasing impervious surfaces without regard to run-off issues; and inadequate ordinances, regulations, and best practices necessary to mitigate existing and future rain-driven flooding problems.

Whereas: In recognition of existing stormwater run-off problem, in memorandum, dated April 23, 2024, the County Executive examined County flooding problems; summarized the nature and extent of the problem county-wide, and offered a range of projects, programs, and regulatory actions to address these problems.

Whereas: Under the "Projects" section, and with reference to the County's *Resilient Fairfax* plan, the memo cited a need to address "coastal flooding" issues in the Belle View watershed, and under "non-coastal flooding", acknowledged an additional 570

known projects requiring action at an estimated cost of \$600 million above the cost of projects currently in the five-year capital improvement program.

Whereas: Under the “Programs” section, the memo cited existing steps to understand and mitigate flooding issues, including technical assistance, outreach, and work with the National Flood Insurance Program, as well as additional future programs to address flooding issues.

Whereas: Under the “Regulatory Actions” section, the memorandum acknowledged that changes to existing County regulations could help prevent flooding issues, and examined past changes and recommended additional changes to the regulatory framework, including updates to the Zoning and Stormwater Management Ordinances, Public Facilities Manual, the Comprehensive Plan’s Environmental Policy, and other policy materials, to better ensure flood-resilient and climate-ready communities in alignment with the *Resilient Fairfax* plan.

Whereas: The MVCCA reviewed the proposed *Fund 40100 - Stormwater Services* budget and, finding no one-to-one correspondence between the budget and the County Executive’s April 23, 2024 memorandum, requested clarification from County Staff.

Whereas: In a March 25, 2024 message, the County stated that \$9 million dollars was proposed in FY2026 for the *Emergency and Flood Response* line item from which the following Mount Vernon projects would be pursued in the Belle Haven Watershed and in the Wellington/Tauxemont/Hollin Hall Village communities:

1. Security camera improvements and enhanced signalization at the Belle Haven Pump Station and Tidegate Structures: \$124,000 in FY2026
2. Wellington/Tauxemont/ Hollin Hall Drainage Study: \$100,000 in FY2026.

Whereas: If left unaddressed due to a lack of funding or needed regulatory changes, flooding issues will continue to have a grave and growing impact on residents of the Mount Vernon community as well as other communities in Fairfax County.

Therefore, Be It Resolved: The Board of Supervisors should fund the upgrades at the Belle Haven Pumping Station/Tidegate for \$124,000, and the drainage study to alleviate the Wellington/Tauxemont/Hollin Hall Villager stormwater flooding issues for \$100,000.

Be it further resolved: The MVCCA recognizes the importance of the elements outlined in the County Executive’s memorandum and asks the Board of Supervisors to move quickly to fund and implement the memorandum’s project, program, and regulatory change elements, and more specifically:

1. Explore and encourage environmentally, economically viable solutions to the flooding issues in the Belle Haven Watershed, to include pursuing a partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) to address a structural solution to the watershed's continuing flooding problems on NPS property.
2. Work together with the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association to prioritize flood-related projects in the Mount Vernon District.
3. Begin work on the drainage study in the Tauxemont/Wellington/Hollin Hall Village communities, as well as other communities in the Mount Vernon District, to alleviate stormwater flooding issues.
4. Direct County staff to prioritize and publish the list of the 570 known projects referred to in the County Executive's April 23, 2024, memorandum.
5. Identify long term funding streams to address those 570 known projects requiring flooding solutions so that residents and businesses will not be adversely impacted by flooding.
6. Continue, through individual grants or other such conveyances, direct financial assistance to homeowners to defray costs of correcting problems, including consideration of higher grant amounts and lower homeowner share ratios.
7. Require Fairfax County offices charged with land-use planning, land-use development, and stormwater management to work together to explore changes to County ordinances, regulations, and policies to reduce damaging effects of stormwater run-off.
8. Recognize and address the impact infill development has on flooding issues in established communities, regardless of the size of the land disturbance, and ensure the County require stormwater runoff mitigation when risks to downstream residents are identified.
9. Ensure the County consider the impacts of increased impervious surfaces, soil disturbance, grading plans, deforestation, and inadequate stormwater infrastructure when approving infill development plans and address community inputs and concerns when raised.

Be it Finally Resolved: The MVCCA asks the Board of Supervisors to fund priority flood-related needs by examining and re-allocating line-item funding of Stormwater Fee revenue in the proposed 2026 budget; using carry-over funding from previous budget years; aggressively seeking and securing grants from federal, state, and other sources to support stormwater problem mitigation; and pursuing any other available funding mechanisms to correct problems attributable to stormwater.

Approved by the MVCCA Membership March 26, 2025

Attachment 4

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)
Resolution on the Proposed FY 2026 County Budget (MVCCA, PS&T 2025-01)

WHEREAS the Public Safety and Transportation Committee (PS&T) of the MVCCA reviews and comments on County public safety programs and transportation initiatives; and

WHEREAS PS&T is concerned that the County Executive's proposed FY 2026 budget for the Fire and Rescue Department fails to adequately support the emergency response activities; and

WHEREAS natural disasters are increasing in scope and frequency in the United States, along with the concomitant threat to human life, community safety and private property; and

WHEREAS Fairfax County has been adversely impacted in recent years by pandemic disease, extreme weather, including hurricanes, snowstorms and windstorms, and mass casualty events such as aircraft crashes; and

WHEREAS PS&T has highlighted the need for robust emergency response capabilities within the county to remediate the impact of such events, and notes that anticipated cuts to the budget and mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will force the devolution of emergency preparedness, response and response to the state and local level; and

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), an emergency preparedness program organized under FEMA's auspices, is a key asset in the County's disaster response plan, as it provides standardized emergency preparedness and response training to a corps of citizen volunteers, supports first responders, and stands ready to provide surge capacity in times of need; and

WHEREAS over the past four years, CERT's trained volunteers have contributed a total of 69,800 hours in community service and training, and stand ready to assist in future disasters; and

WHEREAS the CERT program's benefits to first responders and county residents are provided in a cost-effective manner; and

WHEREAS the proposed Fire and Rescue Department budget for FY26 eliminates \$34,000 of the CERT program's funding which will result in the elimination of the program and the loss of these capabilities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MVCCA urges the Board of Supervisors to restore the \$34,000 line item comprising the CERT program's funding and maintain this vital disaster response and recovery resource.

Approved by the MVCCA Members March 26, 2025