

MVCCA Board Resolution 2019-1 Recommendations for the FY2020 County Budget

WHEREAS the Fairfax County Executive's FY2020 Budget Plan ("FY2020 Advertised Budget") was released on February 19, 2019, and contains revenue and spending recommendations including the following:

- (1) Full funding of the School Transfer request in the Fairfax County School Board's FY2020 Advertised Budget ("School Transfer");
- (2) A 1% MSA raise for County employees and some additional enhancements to compensation such as Performance, Merit and Longevity increases;
- (3) A FY2020 property tax rate of \$1.15 per \$100 assessed valuation, the same rate as FY2019 (the average taxpayer will pay an additional \$148 per year or \$12.30 per month due to assessment increases); and

WHEREAS full funding of the School Transfer is necessary to continue restoring the pre-eminence of Fairfax County Public Schools through attracting and retaining teachers through a competitive salary structure and eventually restoring class size to pre-2008 levels; and

WHEREAS proper functioning of the County requires high quality employees with appropriate salaries and benefits compared to competitors in the region but in the absence of statistical evidence showing competitive disadvantage (such as was shown with teachers) MVCCA is not able to determine if employee compensation in the FY2020 Advertised Budget meets this standard; and

WHEREAS Mount Vernon District is very diverse and has experiences with the social ills associated with concentrations of poor and immigrant populations such as lack of well-paying jobs, uneven access to services, poor student performance, substance abuse, domestic violence, property crimes, and gang violence all of which requires substantial investment by the County if the intent of ONE FAIRFAX is to realized; and

WHEREAS the FY2020 Advertised Budget includes some additional funding for services of particular interest to Mount Vernon District residents, and which will further progress on the County's ONE FAIRFAX initiative including:

- (1) Staffing for the new South County Police Station and an increase in funds for Diversion First, Opioid Task Force and Gang Prevention Initiative;
- (2) Increased funding for programs which particularly target youth and/or provide assistance to students and families including Diversion First, Special Education graduates Programs, Early Childhood and School Readiness, School Health Support, Healthy Minds Fairfax, and Opportunity Neighborhoods;

WHEREAS such additional funding in FY2020, while helpful, is only an incremental step in addressing community problems and furthering "ONE FAIRFAX" so that increased funding will still be needed in

FY2020 and successive year to address all issues, particularly reducing the waiting list for Head Start and other early childhood programs; and

WHEREAS no funds are provided for undergrounding of utilities and communications although MVCCA has noted that undergrounding of utilities and communications is highly desirable to furthering revitalization of Richmond Highway corridor, will provide more reliable service than current above ground technology, and that if done concurrently with VDOT projects provide a cost efficient opportunity which will of be lost if the County does not act (see Attachments); and

WHEREAS other Virginia counties including Prince William and Stafford have already begun undergrounding utilities using various funding methods, and where VDOT and Commonwealth funds may be available, but additional substantial investment by the County will be needed to achieve undergrounding for the Richmond Highway corridor and other areas particularly in the older sections of the County; and

WHEREAS the County's share of funding for undergrounding on Richmond Highway could be accomplished by devoting a portion of the usual carryforward (\$5-6M) for the next few years and/or by creating a County-wide fund for undergrounding through a dedicated additional one-half or one-quarter penny on the property tax rate, or utility rate, or other creative funding methods with Richmond Highway being the initial project to be followed by other projects as opportunities arise;

WHEREAS MVCCA has for years urged the Board of Supervisors ("BOS") to include some flexibility in setting the maximum tax rate, the BOS on March 5, 2019, set a maximum property tax rate of \$1.15 per \$100 assessed valuation which likely precludes establishing a dedicated revenue stream for County-wide undergrounding in FY2020 but should be considered for FY2121 and thereafter; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations respectfully requests the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to adopt the County Executive's FY2020 Advertised Budget including full funding of the School Transfer, to adopt the suggested \$1.15 tax rate for application in FY2020, and to consider the following requests:

(1) If possible, additional funds be directed to programs promoting the goals of ONE FAIRFAX and those that assist the disadvantaged, particularly Head Start which continues to have long waiting lists with children "ageing out" before they are able to participate; and

(2) The County should take advantage of the opportunity to underground utilities along Richmond Highway in concert with VDOT widening—and eventually in other areas of the County—by dedicating funds from any FY2020 carryforward and in the future through carryover use and/or dedicated funding through the property tax rate, and/or utility tax, and/or other creative funding methods.

Adopted by the MVCCA General Council on March 26, 2019