



Board of Supervisors Adopts Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

Last Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors voted 6-3 to approve a balanced \$2.45 billion budget funding both the county government and our school system at 97.6% of their requests.

The personal property tax rate remains unchanged at \$4.20 per \$100 in assessed value, while the real property tax rate increased by half a penny per \$100 in assessed value from the homeowner equalized rate of \$1.140, setting the new real property tax rate at \$1.145.

While the adopted budget will result in an average increase of about \$25 per year for the county as a whole, the average Blue Ridge District homeowner will realize a tax decrease of about \$196 due to slightly lower overall assessed values throughout the District. I voted in favor of the budget because it included many of the priorities that I heard from residents throughout my campaign, from road projects designed to reduce traffic congestion to the acceleration of multiple school projects in our area and an expansion of full day kindergarten.

While I've included the county's official press release, I thought it would be helpful to highlight a few items from the FY-2017 Operating Budget and our six year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Operating Budget Highlights

County Government:

- Funds County at 97.6% of its operating budget request
- Provides 2.5% increase for staff

- Returns to a more effective Merit-Based-Pay system
- Increases retirement multiplier for Police & Fire personnel
- Maintains county services for our residents while accounting for growth

Loudoun County Public Schools:

- Funds 97.6% of its operating budget request
- Provides a 5.5% increase over last year for an expected 3.8% increase in student population

While the Board of Supervisors does not control how the School Board decides to prioritize its funding, the amount provided could be used to:

- Accommodate enrollment growth and new school staffing
- Provide salary and benefit increases for staff
- Provide significant expansion of full day kindergarten
- Continue funding for the Academies of Loudoun
- Provide additional enhancements and restorations

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Highlights

Everything the county constructs is funded within our six year CIP, which is separate from the Operating Budget. At the beginning of this year, the Board took action to increase the annual debt issuance limit from \$200 to \$225 million per year in order to provide additional funding options to accelerate new school construction and better accommodate growth in the Dulles North and South area. Here are a few highlights that are important to our District:

Schools:

- ES-28, MS-7, HS-11 and Dulles North and South classroom additions funding is accelerated into FY 2017
- Continued funding for ES-23 and HS-9
- Continued funding for ES-31 although a site has yet to be identified
- Maintained funding for Briar Woods HS modular classroom removal

Roads:

- Accelerated funding for Northstar Boulevard between Route 50 and Shreveport
- New funding for the widening of Evergreen Mills Road between Northstar Boulevard and Loudoun County Parkway
- Maintained funding for the Route 606 widening project
- New funding for Shellhorn Road (future Greenway alternative)
- Maintained funding for Prentice Drive (future Greenway alternative)
- Maintained funding for Westwind Drive (future Greenway alternative)

- Funding for the Route 7/Route 690 Interchange in Purcellville accelerated
- New funding for future improvements to the Route 7/Route 287 Interchange in Purcellville
- New funding for Woodgrove High School/Fields Farm Park Road
- New funding for the Hillsboro Traffic Calming, Pedestrian Safety and Wastewater project
- Funding for Arcola Blvd between Route 50 and Loudoun County Parkway
- Maintained funding for Belmont Ridge Road between Truro Parish and Croson
- Intersection Improvements at Braddock and Summerall accelerated
- New funding for traffic light at Northstar and Belmont Ridge Road
- Dulles West Blvd between Arcola and Loudoun County Parkway (LCP) accelerated

Parks, Recreation and Culture:

- Maintained construction timeline for Hal & Bernie Hanson Park
- Maintained funding for Brambleton Library
- Increased funding for Fields Farm Park
- New funding for Franklin Park Trail in Purcellville
- New funding for Sleeter Lake Park in Round Hill

Public Safety:

- Maintained funding for Round Hill Fire and Rescue Station replacement
- Maintained funding for Aldie Fire and Rescue Station replacement
- New funding for Philomont Fire and Rescue Station replacement

Miscellaneous:

- Maintained funding for Town of Middleburg Crosswalk Project
- Maintained funding for western Loudoun Park and Ride

Official County Press Release

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has approved a budget totaling approximately \$2.46 billion in total appropriations for the general county government and school system for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY 17). The adopted budget includes a real property tax rate of \$1.145 per \$100 in assessed value. The personal property tax rate remains unchanged at \$4.20 per \$100. The budget includes a local transfer to Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) of \$694.8 million, which is a 5.5% increase in local tax funding over FY 2016 and represents 97.6 percent of the School Board's budget request.

Operations and Debt Budget Summary

The FY 17 operating appropriation is comprised of more than a dozen separate funds totaling \$1.60 billion. The operating appropriations include:

- \$1.06 billion for LCPS;
- \$475.14 million for general government operations; and
- \$8.99 million for the Children's Services Act Fund.

In addition, the adopted budget includes \$195.45 million for debt service appropriations, of which \$134.88 million is for LCPS, \$50.19 million is for general government projects and \$10.38 million is for special tax districts.

About 69 percent of the \$837.12 million in revenues from local taxes, including real property and local sales taxes, and use of prior year fund balance will be used for school operating expenses, capital projects and debt service. The remaining 31 percent will be used for the general county government for operating expenses, capital projects and debt service.

The FY 17 budget includes funding for a limited number of enhancements focusing on the opening of new facilities, public safety, and social safety net services. The adopted budget also includes a 2.5 percent merit pay increase for eligible county employees and enhanced retirement benefits for hazardous duty positions.

Capital Improvement Program

The Board also adopted a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that totals \$1.796 billion for the six-year planning period from FY 2017 to FY 2022. The category with the largest expenditure percentage is transportation projects at 40 percent followed by school projects at 30 percent.

To help address overcrowding and projected growth in the number of students in the Dulles North and Dulles South areas, the CIP accelerates funding for an elementary school (ES-28), a middle school (MS-7) and a high school (HS-11) into FY 2017 of the CIP. The proposed CIP also maintains funding for high priority general government projects.



Public Process

Adoption of the FY 17 budget came after a public process that included the presentation of the Proposed FY 17 Budget by the County Administrator in February, followed by public hearings in February and a series of public budget work sessions held by the Board of Supervisors in March.

The budget will go into effect on July 1, 2016, while the new tax rates are effective April 5, 2016, and will be used for the spring tax collection. More information about the budget process is online at www.loudoun.gov/budget.

All my best,



Tony

Blue Ridge District Supervisor

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