

PUBLIC INPUT ON THE FY 2014 ADVERTISED BUDGET PLAN (April 5, 2013)	
1	I do not agree with the property tax increase. There are other ways to deal with this budget shortfall. My 2013 real estate property assessment already increased by almost \$10K! The increase in property tax coupled with my employer cutting back on my salary and benefits due to the Federal government's inability to do anything with the budget is putting us in a really difficult situation. The proposed increase in property tax and assessment is completely unfair to middle class folks/families! My suggestion would be to increase and implement more "user fee" for different programs and services and eliminate/reduce other programs and services.
2	I am a long standing county employee (over 21 years) and I have concerns about the FY14 budget not including increased employee compensation. In addition to lack of compensation increases, we no longer have pay for performance and as I strong performer, I will no longer be rewarded for all the extras I do on a consistent basis. The impact of the latest tax relief reversal, in addition to increases in the cost of most life essentials (health insurance, gas, food), has made a significant negative impact on my families' budget. I will be eligible to retire in a few years but seriously doubt that I will be able to due the lack of increases in our salaries. Ultimately, the lack of increases for many years will impact my social security benefits and pension for the rest of my life. I can appreciate that we are in a very difficult climate, fiscally, but hope that you will reconsider your decision and include pay increases for county employees in FY14.
3	To Whom It May Concern, I don't understand how the county expects to retain high quality employees when there continues to be inadequate pay increases. We have already been through a number of years of no pay increases and then were given a few crumbs in the form of minor readjustments. In the meantime, my county property taxes have sky rocketed, as has the cost of health insurance premiums, gas and food, just to name a few. The county employees are, once again, disrespected by the 'powers that be' and, believe me, it does not sit well.
4	As a parent of children in FCPS, I am worried about the \$61 million dollar gap between the advertised budget and the amount FCPS is requesting. This additional funds is essential to continue the high-level of education students in this county receive, and I kindly request that you find a way to continue that education by funding FCPS at the level it has requested.
5	As a dedicated county employee, I cannot believe you are not providing raises yet again to your workforce. You say you want to remain competitive, yet Arlington is providing raises because they recognize the sacrifices made by their employees in difficult years. I actually live in Fairfax County, but am moving later this year because I can no longer support my family here. My insurance costs are increasing, my property assessment just went up, and my property taxes are going up, and my pay is being eroded further and further. The morale in my department is at an all-time low, and employees are not motivated....we now feel that the County should just appreciate us showing up and I can guarantee you no effort is being made to go beyond our normal duty. When I accepted this position, I did so with the understanding of regular pay increases...we have sacrificed enough, for three years. Now, not only are you saying there are no raises this year, you are implementing STRIVE, which means no step increase again next year. How can you continue to do this to your workforce?? We are hurting and no longer have desire to do our jobs, I can assure you of this. With STRIVE, I now have to accept HALF of what I understood I was getting when I signed onto this job. By adopting this program and not even offering us a COLA this year, it shows that you have absolutely no regard for your workforce. I only ask that you please consider the people that make this county great, and for once make an investment in us. We cannot continue having the budget balanced on our backs. This decisions not only impact us and our families now, but our retirements and our futures, for those of us that chose to dedicate our careers to the county.
6	I see special tax districts for some areas. Mclean and Reston. It is time to do the same in other areas of the county - South County and Lorton!!!
7	Fire and Rescue Deputy Chief Aids: Reduce the three shift Deputy Chief Aids into one day shift position. This one aide position would allow the aide to work with all three shift deputy's to assist with personnell actions. The Operations 6 staff can serve as the Deputy Chiefs Aide after 1600 hours through the remaining shift.
8	If you raised the retirement age of all county workers to age 62 you wouldn't have to raise taxes.
9	Fairfax Counts needs to realize that we as a county can no longer afford "luxury" affordable housing. We are losing tax base and gaining costs. Since 2009, the number of English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) students has grown 42.3 percent; the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals has increased by nearly 36 percent. Meanwhile we are providing for people who are making \$75,000 to \$107,000 per year according to http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/rentalhousingprograms/ph.htm Meanwhile we continue to hurt taxpayers, County employees, and FCPS students. The taxpayers have been hurt by seeing the Fairfax Board of Supervisors subsidize "low income" housing and then act stunned that 16 percent of students don't speak English as their first language, and 27 percent of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch. Coupling this with a weak "illegal alien" stance in schools, unlike PW county, has seen the FCPS enrollment increase and forced county employees like social workers, librarians, and taxpayers to hate "greedy" teachers. County employees are seeing no income increases and a tougher workload. Teachers have been hurt as they start at \$45,000 per year hoping for a \$1,400 step increase a year only to see a 1% \$450 raise while having to see class sizes increase. Teachers have seen the county prioritize "instructional coach" positions, foreign language immersion programs, newer technology, eliminating AP test fees and eliminating athletic fees over paying teachers steps they look forward to in order to live more comfortable lifestyles. FCPS has a turnover rate of 16%, which enables FCPS to hire new "cheap" starting teachers. The FCPS students are hurt with increased class sizes, less technology integration, and a testing inundation that emphasized memorization and teaching to the test over teaching the students how to think for themselves. We need to gain our tax base and lower our subsidies. Fairfax County can't afford to overlook the "hidden costs" on the school system of it's affordable housing program. The county needs to take care of the taxpayers and employees of the county and stop increasing our costs and getting less to show for it.
10	I am very upset by the increase in property taxes. My wife and I are both federal employees, who have not received a significant raise since 2010. We are also both expected to be furloughed this year for up to 22 days. While furloughs for now are only for 2013 and this is a 2014/15 budget plan, the fact remains that you are proposing significant tax increase while are rising while our income is flat, if not falling. (My property tax for FY13 is also rising due to an increase in assessed value of our home.) I hereby request that you reconsider your plan to keep the tax rate the same and instead look to further reduce spending to balance your budget. Reducing spending is what we are having to do on a personal level.
11	If the federal government can tighten its belt and cut the fat out of its bureaucracy by engaging in a retrospective analysis of rules and expenditures that may be outmoded, ineffective, insufficient, or excessively burdensome, and modifying, streamlining, expanding, or repealing them, then local governments can do likewise. Citizens understand that they cannot have it all; now governments at all levels must reach that understanding. How about furloughing county employees, including executives (you all!) and your staffs one day a week for several months? Citizens are getting along with less and have been doing so for a number of years; governments at all levels must learn how to get along with less. It's easier, I know, to simply increase taxes; it's much more difficult to search diligently for ways in which to avoid increasing taxes, but that should be at the top of your "to do" list. If you elect to take the easy way out, Fairfax citizens should sweep you out of office; I, for one, would be quite willing to lead that effort.
12	I am a HS Art Ed teacher in FCPS, and would like to make my plea for computers. I have full classes of 30 students, and only 2 of the 6 computers in my room are working. I am told by both my school and by the County that replacement of these computers that are four years beyond their warranty has yet to be determined. They have indicated that replacing computers throughout the entire county is moving very slowly, and that priority is being given to core departments here in the school, and to elementary schools throughout the county. It is not possible for teachers to deliver 21st century skills and technology-rich lessons without technology in the classrooms. The Visual Arts are an important part of our students' education, as we are teaching critical thinking skills, the ability to think creatively, process through production, service projects based on human issues, collaboration, and the ability to construct and decode the many visual messages in the world around us. Thank you very much for acknowledging and acting upon this very important need within our educational system.
13	I may be completely off the mark on this, but my understanding of employee comp time is that it's on the books, so to speak, as an unfunded liability. Maybe it would make sense to: 1) put an immediate freeze on employees accruing comp time; 2) require employees who are carrying a balance to use comp time before using vacation time; and 3) require employees to reduce their comp time balance to 0 or a reasonable minimum like 40 hours by the end of FY14. It seems to me that those steps could potentially save the county a lot of money. Thanks for the opportunity to
14	Ideas for Police Dept -- eliminate the police boat team!!!!!!! Instead of paying overtime when one station is short on staffing re-assign an officer for the day from another station that is above staffing level. This was done in the past and worked well. Eliminate the overtime for PD to patrol county parks on Sundays!!!!!!! Re-design the patrol shift from 11.5 hr per day to 12 hour shifts. This not only increases the patrol units on the street but will also decrease the overtime budget dramatically. If this is implemented then the previously two mentioned items would be resolved automatically. Wow!! To the citizens of Fairfax County these are win/win solutions.
15	Taxes should not be raised nor should new taxes be added. Fairfax county needs to make do without any tax increases or new taxes.
16	I am writing to request that the Board of Supervisors lowers the tax rate to such a level that, for the average Fairfax County real estate taxpayer, this year's tax bill be no higher than last year's tax bill. Because real estate assessments countywide have gone up this year, the tax rate would need to be lowered to ensure that there is not a net tax increase for county homeowners. I realize that, like most American municipalities, Fairfax County is under significant financial pressure. However, in view of the dire situation of both the federal government - sequesters and possible furloughs/layoffs and of the private sector - belt tightening, possible layoffs - it is only reasonable for the county to ensure that its residents are not dealt an even higher burden with a real estate tax increase. Also, keep in mind that Virginians are already facing higher taxes as a result of the transportation bill passed recently by the Virginia General Assembly. Thank you for your consideration
17	I am against a 2c increase in the property tax rate. I am against additional staff at the Animal Shelter. Enough has been spent on the extensive upgrade of the Shelter. I vote for a reduction in the rate allocated to the McLean Community Center; the Center has a surplus and is making up ways to spend it, just because they have it not because the proposed expenditure is necessary.
18	I respectfully submit that the County leadership should allow the police dept the flexibility to find the required savings, rather than mandating specific positions to be cut. The loss or sharing of logistics personnel will require shifting sworn officers from patrol to take care of logistics duties. Speaking as President of our Home Owner's Association, our residents are concerned that the response time for emergency calls is already more than 15 minutes. (We have a safe neighborhood, and the number of emergencies is only four--but while it's probably not a valid sample, it is the reality with which we must live.) Thank you for your consideration.
19	Good Afternoon, I am deeply concerned about a tax increase of .20 cents. While it seems its only 20 cents.that equates to \$940 in real terms for me, which in a time when the Federal Government has started to do sequestration, which also means a reduction in pay for most. This increase is not needed. There are several things we can do to cut costs. Law mowing, buy goats. They don't require the 401k or other benefits and can clear an area quickly. Close certain pools and parks on certain days. I am sure if I audited the books I could cut this budget. What are we spending on senior services? cut the programs and entitlements. Are we using fuel efficient vehicles? if not why not...Put school security under the police department, that has to be a savings. The school next to me has a principal and assistant principal..why do we need a assistant principal... Lets start cutting admin staff and get supervisors out from behind the desks...Shorten lunch by 1/2 an hour for all employees and shorten the business day by 1 hour...there has to be a savings there. These are just thoughts, but there has to be a may to cut this budget but not increase the property tax.
20	Please make schools funding the highest priority possible and listen to the school board! The teachers have not had raises in a long time and class sizes are unacceptably large. The property values and appeal of Fairfax County are very closely tied to school quality and we are in danger of slipping. This is not just for people with children in school, it is a vital issue to everyone in the county's economic health. Thank you.
21	The proposed \$7Billion spending is outrageous. Most residents struggle to pay all the taxes currently imposed. The Mill levy on the hyper inflated property values needs to be cut back to 89 mills and the county operate with the revenue that the 89 mill levy produces. You have raised the mill levy each year during the Great Recession versus trying to operate in a modest manner.
22	In a time when public pensions are getting clobbered by the media, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors created the DROP retirement program; this goes against common sense. Why is it okay for a person to retire, keep his/her job, and get both a paycheck and a retirement annuity at the same time from the same employer? To add insult to injury, the county pays 5% interest on the DROP account and the employee "earns" the retirement cost of living raises. Is there not something wrong with this DROP process? The county maintains that the DROP program is cost neutral, but there are multiple studies by other states/jurisdictions that show that there is a cost. Since the county has not given pay raises of any significant amount to its employees, to continue to maintain the DROP program for retiring employees is nonsense. This "double dipping" swindle is both unnecessary and borderline unethical.
23	Cut the fat out of the large bureaucracy that is Fairfax County government; don't raise taxes on citizens who are already over taxed.
24	Not smart to raise taxes. Cut spending. I just refinanced my home, but will start planning to move out of Fairfax and probably Northern Virginia. This is not the time to add additional burdens on Families in the Northern Virginia Area. I will be watching closely. No phone calls please. I will watch what you do in the news.
25	As a resident and tax payer I want to understand why funds are being spent on unneeded uniforms for fire fighters. This is a slap in the face to me and other tax payers as I'm continuing to hear that Fairfax county is unable to cut their spending. The approach to confiscate even more of my money to fuel an unchecked county government is reprehensible. The county government again is proving that they are irresponsible stewards of public funds.
26	I wanted to voice my total lack of understanding on how you can propose a budget that is based upon a 3.5% increase in residential real estate assessments while proposing a 2-cent increase in the Real Estate Tax Rate in an environment where the economy growth is minimal. I appreciate this county has a high number of top 1% income wise for which this increased cost means nothing, but for the larger percentage of people it is a struggle to get by. You just made that struggle that much harder. And if you are hearing from residents that higher spending is acceptable, let me go on record to say I don't find higher spending to be acceptable in the current economic environment. Government at all levels continues to reach into taxpayers' pockets to extract additional taxes and fees while those individuals have no recourse to do the same. For those on a pension or work for hourly wages, we can't just increase our income stream because the government needs additional funds which they just take from us. It seems to escape those in government the cumulative impact of all the "it is just a few / a couple of hundred dollars more". My real estate assessment goes up 3.5%, a 2-cent increase in the Real Estate Tax Rate, a 1% increase in the sales tax rate coming later this year, increased in various fees and the list goes on. Will government only be happy when they have every penny I have? Is now the right time to expend funding for major human services and public safety requirements? And rather than constantly expanding the revenue of government, what if government worked under a continuous cost optimization process like many business and individuals do. When I managed an organization, I was required to reduce operational cost by 4-5% every year. From those savings, salary increases or additional spending could occur. Those reductions had to be documented and proven each year. While I admit my exposure to Fairfax County government is limited, my experience at state and federal levels has shown this is a totally foreign concept and not ingrained in the daily function of the staff. While harder to implement and
27	Referencing the article in the Examiner, we need to get past the "use it or lose it attitude" with regards to government spending. We need a bottom up budget approach and every dollar spent needs to be justified since we are facing a \$169m deficit. Increasing the property tax rate along with assessed values is making this county less livable.