

FY 2027 Budget Questions

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Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Chairman McKay

Question: Please explain the reasons for delays in spending bicycle and pedestrian access funding.

Topic: Transportation

Response:

As part of the December 14, 2021, Transportation Committee meeting, the Board of Supervisors set a target of identifying \$100 million for pedestrian and bicycle improvements over a six-year period. To meet this goal, it was recommended that 20 percent of the year-end General Fund balance, after outstanding encumbered and unencumbered commitments, as well as critical funding requirements be allocated to support additional bicycle and pedestrian safety and access projects throughout the County. As of FY 2026, \$82,118,597 has been allocated towards the \$100 million goal. Funding for active transportation projects is appropriated in Fund 30050, Transportation Improvements.

As a part of responses to the Q&As on the FY 2025 Budget ([Responses to Board of Supervisors Questions on the FY 2025 Budget, Question #C-195, 17.6](#)), it was identified that actual expenses through the end of FY 2024 were approximately \$5.1 million, and it was estimated that another \$7.7 million would be spent through FY 2025, bringing total expenses through FY 2025 to approximately \$12.8 million. As was discussed in the September 16, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting, current encumbrances and expenses to date are approximately \$13.0 million. Staff is, conservatively, estimating spending approximately \$9 million per year over the next three to five fiscal years.

Generally, these types of active transportation projects take anywhere between three to five years – the timeframe starting with the allocation of funds to the project and ending with the completion of construction of the project. Small projects with minimal right-of-way or utility issues will be closer to the three-year period, while more complex projects involving right-of-way acquisition and relocation of utilities will be closer to five (or more) years. Most construction, as well as utility relocation and right-of-way acquisition, takes place in the final year or two of the project. As such, that is when the largest portion of the funding is spent.

There are a variety of factors that can affect project schedules. In addition to changes in schedule that can be caused by utility relocation or negotiations with property owners regarding right-of-way, projects within the right-of-way must be reviewed and permitted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and may require multiple reviews before sign off. Additionally, staff conduct meetings to engage with affected community members and to get feedback on projects. In some instances, these meetings lead to changes in the scope of the project, which can add time to the schedule and cost to the project. Finally, it should be noted that position vacancies in the Fairfax County Department of Transportation have increased the time needed to prioritize and scope projects, thus requiring staff to stagger initiation of some of the projects to help manage workload. Consultants are now being utilized to help address this issue and to more quickly advance projects to the design stage.

Information about the status of projects approved under this program can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk/100-million-funding>. DOT is currently working on prioritization for a fourth round of projects utilizing the existing allocation of funds, with additional information forthcoming and discussion of this topic at a future Board Transportation Committee meeting.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Bierman

Question: What efforts were taken to mitigate the significant contract rate increase for the Body-Worn Camera program? Were other providers investigated?

Topic: Public Safety

Response:

The Police Department and the Office of the Sheriff both use Axon Enterprise, Inc. (Axon) for their body-worn camera (BWC) programs primarily because the company provides a complete, integrated system that meets the departments' operational, legal, and administrative needs. Rather than purchasing cameras alone, the departments rely on a bundled solution that includes both the hardware and a digital evidence management platform. Axon was originally selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process in which vendors were evaluated on their ability to provide a comprehensive BWC solution.

One of the main reasons for selecting Axon is its Evidence.com system, which provides secure cloud storage, automatic uploads, chain-of-custody tracking, and controlled sharing of footage with prosecutors and courts. Managing large volumes of video evidence requires strong security, audit trails, and compliance with legal standards. An all-in-one system simplifies these responsibilities and ensures recordings are properly preserved and documented.

The County has also taken steps to mitigate significant contract rate increases. During contract renewals, staff have negotiated pricing protections, reviewed optional features to determine which are essential, and adjusted service levels where feasible to control costs. The Department of Procurement and Material Management (DPMM) staff have evaluated Axon's pricing against cooperative contract benchmarks to ensure the rates offered to Fairfax County remain competitive. In addition, the County has researched and reviewed other BWC vendors to determine whether migrating to another platform could provide cost savings. While alternatives exist, most do not offer the same level of integration, evidentiary controls, cloud-based security, or compatibility with the County's existing deployed equipment. Transitioning providers would also require substantial operational changes, retraining, and data migration costs that would likely offset any potential savings.

Axon is one of the most widely used body-worn camera providers in the United States. Its system supports high-definition recording, GPS and metadata tagging, integration with in-car video systems and TASER devices, and tools for redaction and evidence management. Using a nationally recognized platform ensures reliability, consistent technical support, and interoperability with other agencies.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: How is overtime monitored countywide?

Topic: Compensation

Response:

Overtime is monitored through a combination of centralized financial controls, department oversight, and regular reporting to ensure expenditures remain within approved budgets. Each department is responsible for managing its own overtime usage, including pre-approving overtime when applicable, tracking hours worked, and reviewing charges for accuracy. Overtime must comply with County personnel policies and procedures, as well as all requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and related state laws. Departments monitor trends throughout the year to identify operational drivers of overtime and make adjustments when feasible.

At the countywide level, the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) reviews overtime spending as part of its ongoing fiscal oversight. Overtime data is monitored through the County's financial systems, allowing DMB to track expenditures by agency, identify patterns or areas of concern, and evaluate whether spending aligns with budgeted levels. Overtime may fluctuate due to public safety requirements, emergency events, or position vacancies. Significant variances are discussed with agency leadership, and corrective actions may be recommended.

Additionally, overtime spending is evaluated during quarterly reviews and as part of the annual budget development process. This provides a structured opportunity to assess the factors contributing to overtime use such as staffing levels, service demands, or operational needs and ensures departments maintain accountability for managing costs.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: Please describe the model currently used for leaf collection districts. What equipment is County-owned? What labor is County vs contracted? For leaf collection districts, are the capital/depreciation costs of equipment recovered as a part of the leaf collection fees? The same for overhead costs of managing and communicating the leaf collection program?

Topic: Public Works

Response:

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) divided residential vacuum leaf collection into 10 service areas, which are serviced in groups across three collection rounds. Customers who subscribe to email updates receive advance notification of collection dates. Collection schedules are also communicated through on-site signage with QR codes posted in Sanitary District neighborhoods and published online.

This year's service delivery model incorporated third-party quality assurance, including pre- and post-route photographic documentation to improve service consistency and accountability. These efforts were supplemented by a customer satisfaction survey to further evaluate and enhance overall service delivery.

The majority of equipment used for leaf collection is County-owned. All leaf vacuum equipment is owned and operated by the County, including 12 leaf vacuums, five automated leaf collection trucks, and six open-body leaf collection trucks. Contractors are used exclusively for hauling services and provide approximately 40 hauling trucks to transport collected leaves.

Leaf collection operations are supported by 20 full-time County staff. This workforce is supplemented by approximately 32 contracted laborers who support hauling operations.

Capital and depreciation costs associated with leaf season equipment are included in the leaf collection fees. From FY 2021 to FY 2023, annual spending on leaf equipment was less than \$110,000, representing under 5 percent of the total leaf season operating costs. From FY 2024 to FY 2026, additional capital investments in vehicles were made to enhance overall program delivery. Recent purchases include two automated leaf collection vehicles to supplement the service provided by the contractor, particularly in hard-to-access areas like dead-ends and cul-de-sacs.

Overhead costs for managing the leaf collection program and the associated communications with the customers are minimal. The County website serves as the primary communication platform, resulting in negligible direct communication expenses. Less than 5 percent of salary costs are attributed to overhead associated with the leaf season program.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Palchik

Question: What is the total surplus being returned to the General Fund this year from the Mosaic CDA district? When will those funds be available? Have they been included in the proposed FY 2027 budget?

Topic: Debt and Capital

Response:

For FY 2027, projected tax increment financing (TIF) revenues are \$8,343,783 based on January 1, 2026, assessed values and the FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan real estate tax rate of \$1.1225 per \$100 of assessed value. Per the bond documents, the County is to transfer to the Mosaic District Community Development Authority (CDA) only those tax increment revenues required for debt service payments, which equates to \$4,878,717 in FY 2027. The difference of \$3,465,066 was retained in the General Fund as part of the FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan.

On March 3, 2026, the CDA held its annual meeting. These same figures were confirmed by the administrator, MuniCap, as part of their summary presentation to the CDA Board.

In addition, MuniCap's presentation included an overview on the funding status of the Mosaic CDA Surplus fund. This fund was established as part of the trust indenture that was included in the bond documents in 2011 and serves as a backup if tax increment financing (TIF) revenues were less than debt service requirements. The surplus fund policy is to be funded at one half of the Maximum Annual Debt Service (MADS), and excess funding can be returned to the County's General Fund. The Surplus fund currently carries a balance of \$2,844,077, and one half of MADS is \$2,442,411. This translates to excess funding of \$401,666 primarily driven by interest earnings. The CDA Board subsequently voted to have these excess surplus funds returned to the General Fund. Staff anticipate this to occur as part of the *FY 2026 Carryover Review*.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Storck

Question: FCPS: Please provide the cost per student for FY 2025, FY 2026, and FY 2027.

Topic: Schools

Response: The following response was prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

The cost per pupil is derived using direct and indirect costs and student enrollment or services rendered. The FCPS cost-per-pupil below is the WABE average per-pupil cost for all instructional programs. Cost-per-pupil figures are computed by identifying all School Operating Fund costs and entitlement grants directly associated with an instructional program, such as Title I, PreK and Early Head Start, or elementary general education. Indirect costs such as instructional support, facilities management, general support, transportation, and central administration are distributed proportionally based on student enrollment. Total expenditures divided by program enrollment determine average per-pupil costs.

The table below shows FCPS’ average cost-per-pupil data from FY 2025 and FY 2026. This can also be found in the [FY 2026 Approved Budget book](#), Cost Per Pupil section, page 378.

| Approved Cost Per Pupil Summary | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | FY 2025 Approved | FY 2026 Approved |
| FCPS Cost Per Pupil | \$20,940 | \$21,986 |

The projected FY 2027 cost-per-pupil will be available on January 22, 2026, when the superintendent releases the FY 2027 Proposed Budget.

Note: The FY 2027 proposed cost per pupil is \$23,722. This information can be found on p. 117 of the FCPS [FY 2027 Proposed Budget book](#), which was released after FCPS initially responded to this question.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: FCPS: Over the last five years what have been the funding amounts for staffing reserves? Over the same timeframe, what have been the staffing reserves for special education, economically disadvantaged, and multilingual student enrollments? For each of the last five years what have these reserves been used for?

Topic: Schools

Response: The following response was prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

The staffing contingency includes teacher and instructional assistant positions to adjust for staffing requirements identified after enrollment projections are finalized and is a total pool. The staffing contingency is primarily used to increase classroom positions at schools when enrollment exceeds projections, to address unique circumstances, and to address large elementary class sizes. When enrollment is lower than projected, positions may be returned to the staffing contingency. Positions are allocated and returned during normally scheduled staffing meetings. Positions not utilized are either recognized as savings during a quarterly budget review or contribute toward year-end funds available. See chart below for more details.

| | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25 |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Staffing contingency budgeted salary amount (in M) | \$14.2 | \$12.3 | \$18.9 | \$19.6 | \$20.7 |
| Staffing contingency budgeted positions | 260.0 | 227.0 | 310.0 | 310.0 | 310.0 |
| Positions added with one-time funding | 0.0 | 33.0 | 265.0 | 200.0 | 140.0 |
| Total available positions | 260.0 | 260.0 | 575.0 | 510.0 | 450.0 |
| Alleviate large class size | 33.0 | 30.0 | 104.5 | 81.0 | 83.0 |
| Generated by staffing formula | (32.5) | (211.3) | 334.2 | 158.8 | 221.3 |
| Special education unique need or extenuating circumstance | 108.6 | 134.1 | 134.0 | 139.0 | 145.7 |
| Positions utilized | 109.1 | (47.3) | 572.7 | 378.8 | 450.0 |
| Positions not utilized | 150.9 | 307.3 | 2.4 | 131.2 | 0.0 |

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: FCPS: What is the impact of purchasing the Western High School on the FCPS Capital Improvement Plan?

Topic: Schools

Response: The following response was prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

The Western High School purchase primarily impacted the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by transitioning the project's site acquisition costs into the current period, and new construction estimates into the five-year planning horizon. Previously, these costs had been projected beyond the five-year planning horizon presented by FCPS in the adopted FY 2026-30 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). As school bond referendum funding is a fixed amount, the timing of other capital projects projected during this timeframe may be impacted. The proposed FY 2027-31 CIP will be new business with a presentation to the School Board on January 8, 2026, and will build upon the previously approved program of capital expenditures.

Note: The School Board approved the [FY 2027-31 Capital Improvement Program](#) (CIP) on February 25, 2026. The CIP was proposed in January after FCPS initially responded to this question. The new high school, formerly known as Western High School, has been named Skyview High School.

Response to Questions on the FY 2027 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: What are the total incremental Park Authority expenditures by year to comply with the County's Zero Waste mandate?

Topic: Parks and Libraries

Response:

The County's approved Operational Energy Strategy includes a goal to significantly minimize waste in County government operations and achieve zero waste by 2030. In response to this goal, the Park Authority established a pilot program to enhance trash and recycling collection at two of the six Park maintenance areas in FY 2025. Trash removal at park properties had been limited due to existing trash and recycling receptacles, and staff resources to manage the collection.

The following adjustments have been approved or are anticipated to be approved to support the Park Authority's Zero Waste Initiatives Program:

| Fiscal Year | Recurring | One-Time | Total | Description |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| FY 2024 | \$0 | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | One-time funds supported vehicles, receptacles, and compactors for the pilot phase of Zero Waste implementation for two of the six FCPA maintenance areas. |
| FY 2025 | 564,990 | 0 | 564,990 | Recurring funding supports staffing and operating equipment for the pilot phase of Zero Waste implementation for two of the six FCPA maintenance areas. |
| FY 2026 | 0 | 1,416,762 | 1,416,762 | One-time funding supported vehicles and equipment needed to implement the Zero Waste Plan in the remaining four maintenance areas, consistent with the Budget Guidance for FY 2027. |
| Total Approved | \$564,990 | \$1,916,762 | \$2,481,752 | |
| FY 2027 Anticipated | \$1,218,433 | \$0 | \$1,218,433 | Recurring funding is anticipated in FY 2027 to support staffing and operating expenses for the remaining four FCPA maintenance areas. |