

## Response to Questions on the FY 2019 Budget

**Request By:** Supervisor Smyth

**Question:** Please provide information about how much the new heliport is going to cost and provide justification on why we need two helicopters.

**Response:**

On November 3, 2015, voters approved a Public Safety Bond Referendum to fund various public safety initiatives to include \$13,000,000 for a new Heliport. The current facility was constructed in 1984 and no longer met the needs of the specialized staff and equipment assigned to the 24/7 facility. The helicopter is available for both medevac and law enforcement missions. The flight officers, pilots, paramedics and maintenance crews perform more than 150 helicopter missions per month and more than 80 medical evacuations per year. Each helicopter crew includes one pilot and two paramedic qualified flight officers who work 12-hour shifts and average two to four flights a shift. The pilots are civilians; the paramedics are police officers. As a result of the heavy maintenance cycles for helicopters, it is not unusual for a helicopter to be out of service for several days or even up to a week. Having two helicopters ensures consistent 24/7 coverage of the county. The helicopter on duty is always the official Fairfax 1, although in extreme emergencies or during times of large scale events, both helicopter units can be deployed at the same time.