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Dear Fairfax County residents and corporate neighbors:

I am pleased to present to you the Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget Plan.

Discussions of this budget began in late 2020, when our COVID-19 cases were at some of the highest points and no vaccine had yet been approved. I am happy to say over six months later, we are in a much better place, not just in Fairfax County, but across the Commonwealth and the United States.

As we have learned since this pandemic began, a lot can change in a matter of days if not hours. As a result, after careful evaluation and reevaluation by County staff throughout the year and as we prepared to adopt FY 2022 budget, flexibility and creativity were crucial.

At the same time, we had to find a balance between funding the much-needed resources and services that our community needed with easing the burden of our tax payers who are struggling to pay real estate taxes amidst skyrocketing real estate assessments.

Our perspective changed yet again in March 2021 with the passage of the American Rescue Plan. Because of the work of the President and Congress, this bill will bring more than \$200 million to Fairfax County over the next two years.

It is not every day that you can turn a \$300 million shortfall into a net positive, but in the end, I feel confident we supported our staff and our community across the board with this budget.

Due to the work of our County staff and federal partners, we were able to both reduce the real estate tax rate (we understand this does not amount to a tax decrease for many however) to \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value, while still increasing our General Fund, and thus our investment in services. This budget sets up the County and our Fairfax County Public Schools to recover from and advance beyond the pandemic. The Board remains committed to an equitable recovery.

The process for adopting the County Budget also focused on community engagement. It was that engagement, as always, from the community and our advocacy groups that shaped this budget. Your collaboration helped allocate an additional \$0.4 million to our environmental initiatives and \$30 million in wages for our County and Fairfax County Public School employees, as well as identify a plan to dedicate an additional \$13 million to affordable housing over the next two fiscal years using County funds or through the maximization of federal stimulus dollars.

As we did last year, we will continue to be very deliberate over the course of the coming months as we respond to a changing dynamic, and particularly the changes that come with recovery. Specifically, a detailed look at the FY 2022 budget will occur at mid-year to allow the Board to make further adjustments, if necessary, should the answers to some of the unknowns today be answered.

Adopting the budget is the most important thing our Board does throughout the year. When we adopt the budget, we are investing in our community's priorities and it is critical to have the community at the table with us. Thank you to everyone who called, emailed, and testified to share your views and guidance on the budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff McKay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey C. McKay
Chairman