



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 26, 2025

TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Larry J. Zaragoza, DEnv, Chair
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Park Authority Budget for 2027

EQAC has followed the budget for the Fairfax County Parks Authority for years and has raised concerns for the adequacy of the budget to maintain the parkland that we have. We recently heard from the Park Authority about the proposed budget cuts that they expect to offer to the County Executive, which resulted in highlighting several observations. This memorandum highlights those observations.

In our discussion with the FCPA Board, they shared the following observations:

1. The donation from private parties and or gifting of new properties to the FCPA from the county without the addition of sufficient funding to support the maintenance or potentially required improvements further aggravates an already stressed budget.
2. The implementation of new and adjusted programs and policies, including upgrades to assets to meet ADA compliance, bamboo mitigation, and One Fairfax have all added responsibilities to the FCPA that add to the cost of maintaining the parks or take funding away from other valued services or programs, such as the Fairfax County Park Foundation, an independent source of revenue for the agency. These budgetary stresses are further compounded by a backlog in deferred maintenance.
3. In addition to the county's contribution to the FCPA not keeping up with the needs described above, the budget is further burdened by the rate of inflation.
4. As FCPA has taken on these additional responsibilities without full funding to cover the services, budgets have become increasingly stretched so that services, maintenance, and park improvements has been impacted. Moreover, with FCPA adapting to these added costs, FCPA has been directed to decrease its budget over the last two years. EQAC is not in a position to analyze the FCPA budget but EQAC recommends that an analysis of the services provided and the funding for the services should be undertaken.
5. The county's contribution to the FCPA budget per acre is lower than the park budgets of other counties (against comparable services), such as Montgomery County and Arlington County. This information suggests that the FCPA is underfunded.

The budget cuts that are being considered for FY 2027 will reduce services that are appreciated by county residents. EQAC recognizes that this is an especially challenging budget year and that the Board of Supervisors makes many difficult decisions in balancing the budget, but we

need to consider the impact of these decisions, particularly through the lens of impact to the most vulnerable communities in the county.

EQAC understands that the Board of Supervisors has long recognized the importance of our parks are important to residents and businesses as they contribute to a higher quality of life and value of property.

We hope that this information will be helpful to the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive as the draft budget for 2027 is prepared. As EQAC has said before, we believe it is important to at least keep what we have.

cc: Jennifer Miller, Deputy County Executive
John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
Jai Cole, Executive Director, FCPA
Phil Hagen, Director, Department of Management and Budget
Kiel Stone, FCPA Chair
EQAC