

Supervisor Herrity
Proposed Additions to Budget Guidance for FY 2027
As of April 30, 2025

Convene Outside Budget Experts for Deep Dive on the Budget

The County Executive’s initial FY 2027 Budget Forecast is projecting a \$271M shortfall and “a challenging picture since early revenue projections indicate continued constrained growth, while disbursement increases far exceed anticipated resources.” This forecast was prepared before the challenges of a shrinking federal forecast and uncertainty over tariffs. It is clearer than ever that we need to do a comprehensive review of the budget and cannot wait until the budget process early in 2026.

Prior to Fiscal Year 2000, there were several commissions and task forces formed to address County revenues and expenditures, emphasizing efficiency and fiscal restraint. From the Cole Commission under then-Chairman Tom Davis to the Task Force on Revenues and Expenditures under then-Chairman Kate Hanley. More recently we had the Line of Business Reviews under then-Chairman Sharon Bulova. These provided a forum for citizens of diverse backgrounds with fiscal expertise to review the County’s revenue and expenditures, sharing feedback to the Board year-round outside of the annual budget process.

Based on the testimony we heard from numerous citizens on the impact of the tax increase and the recommendations of organizations like the McLean Citizens Association, the Board should convene a group of citizens and/or consultants to conduct a deep dive review of the budget for areas where the County can provide services more efficiently and reduce the impact on residents. This group should be comprised of constituents with demonstrated budget expertise from diverse backgrounds for the purpose of providing recommendations on how the County can provide quality services in a more cost-effective manner, provide options for revenue diversification, benchmark with other jurisdictions, review areas the budget has grown, review programs started during the pandemic for their continued need and effectiveness, and provide options to address the reduced commercial tax base with the goal of reducing the cost of government and the tax burden on County residents and businesses. Our County Executive and Office of Management and Budget staff do an incredible job each year balancing the County budget, finding savings, and proposing greater efficiencies to the Board. As staff work under the direction of this Board, an outside budget review group would provide a greater diversity of perspectives on the budget, which may aid this Board and staff in those efforts.

Reaffirm Commitment to Longstanding Board Policy of Not Committing One-Time Funds to Recurring Expenses

The Board should reaffirm its commitment to not using one-time funds for recurring items—including using carryforward for known recurring IT and facility’s needs.

Intellectual and Physical Disability Services

Fairfax County is well known for its post education opportunities for our intellectual and physically disabled residents. There are a multitude of programs both nonprofit and at the County, CSB, FCPS and state level. We direct the County Executive to undertake a study of these programs to identify areas where these resources can be offered and provided in a more effective manner.

Lorton Workhouse Funding

The County continues to spend millions supporting the Lorton Workhouse Facilities and Property. In the FY 2026 budget this funding totals approximately \$6.9M. There have been some positive steps to improve the revenues from the Workhouse, most notably the addition of Bunnyman Brewery which has the added benefit of increasing traffic at the Workhouse. There have been several attempts to close the funding gap but they have not been successful.

The Board has approved a plan to invest an additional \$12.5M in the campus. There have been tens of millions invested in improvements at the Workhouse Arts campus but the project remains in a significant financial hole.

The Board directs the County Executive to hire a consultant to perform a review of the options available to address the funding gap within the terms of the restrictions placed on the property and report back to the Board.

Proposed Additions to Current Draft Guidance

School Crossing Guards (addition)

Evaluation of crossing guards should also include the impact on school busses and kiss and ride operations. The Police Department should solicit feedback from existing crossing guards on how to recruit and retain more guards as well as challenges they experience at their unique crossings.

Affordable Housing (addition)

Part of solving the affordability of housing problem is the timely creation of new market rate and market rate affordable housing. The Board directs the County Executive to work with industry and staff on a review the entitlement/land use process and the regulatory requirement placed on housing providers and the impact of delays and regulations on the affordability of housing.

Parks (addition)

The County Executive should work with the Park Authority to investigate the use of CDGB funds to reduce the impact of the Rec Center renovations on our ability to build new recreation facilities.