



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Falls Church City Council Approves FY 2009 Budget That Fully Funds Schools and Reduces General Government Spending

Invests in Education, Public Safety, Youth Services, and the Environment

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – The Falls Church City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2009 Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program at their April 28 regular meeting, with a two-cent real estate property tax increase. FY09 runs from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009.

The \$76,427,560 FY 2009 budget maintains the City's financial security and high-quality services. The budget includes a 0.3 percent decline in government operating expenses and a 3.7 percent increase in the transfer to schools over FY 2008.

The Budget sets the real estate rate at \$1.03 per \$100 of assessed value, up two cents from FY 2008. However, due to declines in property assessments, the median tax bill for single family homeowners will decline by \$174. While the tax bill for the average homeowner will decline next year, new construction and growth in the value of commercial real estate will yield an increase of 3.5 percent in overall property tax revenue. All other tax rates remain unchanged.

The Water and Sewer Funds are balanced within estimated revenues with no rate change for the third consecutive year. The water rate will remain at \$3.03 per thousand gallons in FY 2009 and the sewer rate will remain at \$5.91 per thousand gallons.

The Budget maintains support for vital City services and meets several new community needs based on the Council Vision Statement and Strategic Work Plan. Highlights include:

Full Public School Funding. The Council continued its strong commitment to the Falls Church City Public Schools, which are ranked among the best in the nation. The Council fully funded the School Board's request at \$30,117,600, demonstrating their commitment to providing academic excellence and the recruitment and retention of preeminent teachers. (Vision Principle: World Class Public Schools.)

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Photo Red. Funding is provided to implement a red light camera program through the Police Department. First-year costs are \$482,373, of which \$427,500 is estimated to be offset by ticket revenues. A new Police Sergeant position will oversee the Photo Red program and manage compliance with state accreditation standards. This position is offset by de-funding an administrative position, and is funded by new revenues generated by red light violations. (Vision Principle: Neighborhood Preservation.)

City Center Project Manager. A developer proffer of \$125,000 will fund a new professional Project Manager position to oversee the City Center South development. (Vision Principle: Special Place.)

Mentoring At-Risk Youth. The Budget provides \$22,500 for a new volunteer-based youth mentoring program, in partnership with the Virginia Cooperative Extension of Virginia Tech. (Vision Principle: Word Class Government and Public Outreach.)

Environment. The Budget provides \$20,000 to comprehensively measure the City's overall energy use; enabling the City to track its efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions and reduce operating expenses. (Vision Principle: Environmental Harmony.)

Copies of the final budget and capital improvements program will be available at www.fallschurchva.gov in the coming weeks.

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