

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 23, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO 87 : PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA OMB'S  
ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARD AND CONTACT US BETWEEN MARCH 6,  
2010 AND APRIL 19, 2010

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From March 6, 2010 to April 20, 2010 the City has received 121 public comments from an estimated 113 individuals (some individuals have provided more than one comment) concerning the FY 2011 budget. Of the 121 comments, 46 were posted on the online discussion board and 75 were submitted through the "Contact Us" system. Budget Memo #6, released on March 8, contains all public comments received prior to March 6.

The comments focused on a variety of topic areas ranging from the tax rate (and the related expenditure budget) and employee compensation to Alexandria libraries, affordable housing, and the King Street Trolley. The comments are organized in Attachment by the topic area they mostly address, as many comments discuss a variety of issues. Within the topic areas, comments are arranged by date received, with the earliest comments appearing first. All comments appear precisely as they were submitted to the City.

Please note that as opposed to the Contact Us system where a full name and address are required, users of the online discussion board are allowed to post using a self-designated user name. Due to their conversational nature, it may be beneficial to view the online discussion board comments in chronological order. To view the online comments in the order they were posted please visit <http://alexandriava.gov/budgetcomments>.

ATTACHMENT:  
Comments Organized by Topic

**Attachment 1:  
Comments Organized by Topic**

**Affordable Housing** ..... 1  
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**Affordable Housing**

We need more affordable housing!!! Affordable housing for people under poverty by 50% to 60% will help with crime, teenage pregnancy, drop out rate etc. When single mothers can work 9-5 and then stay home with the kids when the kids need them the most.

[Chyrell B. \(119\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 1:58 PM |

The city employee posting below makes an excellent point that many of our public servants cannot afford to live in the very city they serve, and this budget will exacerbate that problem even further. It should be noted that during the period from 2000-2008, when the city enjoyed years of double-digit annual tax revenue increases, Alexandria nevertheless lost 10,000 non-subsidized affordable housing units. Now that the economy has dampened, the city wants to respond by gutting its already-meager affordable housing budget to the with a 30% cut. Through good times and bad times, the City of Alexandria has steadfastly refused to recognize the housing needs of those citizens not making six-figure salaries. Certainly we can understand that increasing funding in this climate is unrealistic, but doing further damage to this already-overburdened part of our population is morally wrong.

[W. Mitchell \(123\)](#) | User | March 10, 2010 - 12:42 PM |

I am writing to express our concerns regarding the Fiscal Year 2011 proposed housing funding budget cuts.

The ALIVE! House is a homeless shelter for women and families. Our mission is to assist and prepare residents in achieving self-sufficiency and securing permanent housing to break cycles of homelessness.

The standard stay for homeless shelters by definition is six months. However, given the massive shortage of affordable housing, particularly affordable rental housing in the City of Alexandria, the “actual” stay is nine to twelve months, double the standard.

As a member of the Alexandria Homeless Services Coordinating Committee (HSCC) we partner with other non-profit and public agencies to help address the housing and supportive services needs of our community in an effort to eliminate homelessness in our City. What we are finding, however, is that instead of effectively moving people on to independence, we are either in effect “recycling” them through the system by way of movement from one shelter to another due to the lack of housing options or moving them completely out of the City to jurisdictions where subsidized affordable housing is available.

Recently we housed four single parent families headed by young women between the ages 17 and 25. Within the four families there were 8 children ages 3 weeks to 5 years. Of the four women only two had high school diplomas. Only one was able to secure full-time employment, howbeit without health benefits. All lacked the basic life skills necessary to readily secure employment that would provide an income needed to support the needs of their families – primarily housing. In fact, those we serve generally are unable to move on without some sort of housing subsidy.

We respectfully request that City Council not reduce housing funding in Fiscal Year 2011.

Thank you, very much, for your attention to our concerns. We look forward to continuing to do our part to assist and serve the residents of the City of Alexandria.

[Dimitri M. Warren, Director \(124\)](#) | User | March 10, 2010 - 5:01 PM |

Affordable housing is desperately needed by those professional who risk their lives on a daily basis to protect our lives and property. Imagine if we experience a terrorist attack, hurricane, tornado, or when the next great blizzard arrives, again making the roads impassible. How much time will elapse prior to the first responders gaining access to Alexandria from their affordable homes in Woodbridge or other distant points? How will the City Administration cope with a crisis lacking the trained and dedicated first responders?

How much time will elapse before the retail store workers, pharmacist, hardware store employees, and restaurant staff living far away from Alexandria are able to arrive? Without them the community is unable to obtain the necessary resources required in the aftermath of a disaster.

Also it is worth mentioning the citizens whom require affordable housing during the so called "good times". For example, the growing aging community who's numbers continues to grow, although their incomes remain fixed. Don't forget the entry and mid-level professionals, young families, the physically and mentally challenged, and those who have been downsized from their former careers. All these groups all need affordable housing now.

The twenty-nine percent (29.8%) or \$686,849.00 reduction in funding for the Housing (as stated in the 2011FY Budget Overview) is unfair and excessive. Rather than decimating the Housing budget (impacting many residents) why not reduce the planned increased funding to other areas (impacting fewer residents). For example, reduce the increased funding for the Registrar of Voters (\$58,464.00), and Real Estate (\$149,124.00), and City Manager (\$49,060.00), and City Attorney (\$192,753.00) totaling \$449,401.00. The total reduction of funding to the Housing budget will drop from \$686,849.00 to \$237,448.00 or from 29% to 10%. This is still not an acceptable amount; however it is not unfairly excessive compared to the rest of the budget reductions listed in the report.

I understand cuts are required in the newest budget, but you must be reasonable and prudent on where to make the cuts. Displacing many of the groups mentioned above will be the same as displacing a portion of your tax base. The migration of former residents to other locals will not ease the current financial difficulties, it will only exacerbate them.

[Lewis \(125\)](#) | User | March 11, 2010 - 11:12 AM |

"Affordable housing" is way overblown as an issue in Alexandria. Over 60% of the students in our public schools are poor enough to qualify for government food programs. These students do not all live in public housing. In fact, there is a very large part of our population living in private housing that they evidently "afford". Many are immigrants. As for government workers, I do not see them renting in the new Fire Station at Potomac Yards. This housing was billed as being "workforce" housing. The fact is that many middle class workers want suburban type housing with backyards for their children.

[Jon \(72\)](#) | User | March 15, 2010 - 1:56 PM |

## **Commercial Add-on Tax**

**First Name:** Laura

**Last Name:** Lee

**Date:** 4/1/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Punishment Tax!

I would like to encourage you to VOTE AGAINST the adoption of this punitive \$2.7 million new tax. We have had to lower our prices to manage through this economic disaster and I find it hard to believe Alexandria can't make it's budget considering we are already TAXED to Death and get VERY little in return as you have forgotten all about the suffering WESTEND so you could wrecklessly place all our taxes into Carlisle and Old Town! To add more taxes would be criminal to us as we already struggle enough to get business to stay here in the westend. This tax is NOT a good idea! May I suggest you tax all the businesses down in OLD TOWN that are thriving from our tax money while we sit here year after year on your promise to make things better!?

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Laura Lee  
General Manager  
Hawthorn Suites Alexandria

**First Name:** Dennis

**Last Name:** Goris

**Date:** 4/1/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Alexandria's Economic Health

I would love to increase my business revenue by 20% with the wave of an arm. But that's not reality. And its not realistic to think raising the tax rate on commercial property will be good for business -- or good for Alexandria. Where will the money going come from? Businesses are struggling. There is too much vacant commercial space in northern Virginia for businesses not to look elsewhere for something so essential to their bottom line. And they will.

I don't disagree that Alexandria faces some huge funding challenges. If property taxes must be increased, why place a disproportionate burden on Alexandria's business

community? A more equitable approach would be to apply any increase to everyone who will benefit from funding transportation projects -- residential as well as commercial property.

Property tax is a direct pass-through expense to commercial tenants, and thus directly affects Alexandria business' biggest expense after labor. The bottom line, especially in this market, really is the bottom line. And if you charge business more, some will leave. This is why, as a longtime resident and business owner in Alexandria, I strongly urge the Council to reconsider its proposal for a disproportionate tax rate on business.

### **Economic Development**

Let's focus a tiny portion of our 2011 budget on job creation through the enhancement and rehabilitation of those qualities that make Alexandria an exciting place to live, work and visit--namely our historic neighborhoods. Each year over the last decade our neighbors in Arlington have generated about 100 new jobs AND \$750,000 in state tax credits to local property owners! If Arlington can create jobs and tax credits through historic preservation, why can't Alexandria?

[John Sprinkle \(78\)](#) | User | March 23, 2010 - 5:34 PM |

## **Employee Compensation**

I wonder if any of the anecdotes about city employees include any of the over 240 that make more than \$100,000 per year.

The city has over 30 city employees per 1000 citizens whereas the rest of Virginia has less than 14 public employees per 1000 citizens. Double the average means double the possibility of unfortunate incidents happening to city employees.

Are we grossly overstaffed? Could we reduce our staffing by 50% by getting rid of the marginal producers and sharing the savings with the overburdened taxpayer and productive employees?

[Joseph Judson Smith, III \(90\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 8:05 AM |

"First of all, our pension cost the city less now that we moved to a defined benefit plan than it did previously."

You have a fundamental misunderstanding of pensions. Under a 'defined contribution' plan you get out of it what you earned (or lost) on your contributions based on your investment decisions, just like a 401k. Under the current 'defined benefit' pension scheme, the public covers your pension payout regardless of how the investments are performing. The risk is open-ended, i.e. the public has guaranteed your pension payout come heck or high water.

[mish \(102\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 1:53 PM |

@Joseph Judson Smith III.

I'm not sure how you're doing the math, but your numbers are off. We have a population of approx. 144,000 as of 2008 and 2,583 positions. That's about 18 positions per 1,000 residents, which makes sense considering that as an independent city, Alexandria has to provide services that are provided by the state elsewhere.

And no, we can't reduce staff by 50% unless you want the City to provide no services whatsoever beyond assessing and collecting taxes and policing the streets for the inevitable riots.

As for the 240 that make \$100K plus, they make up about 9% of the staff. The other 91% make less than \$100K and slightly more than half make less than \$60K. Those that make

over \$100K generally have advanced degrees, decades of experience, and at least a decade or more of City service. It's not like we pay the secretary that much.

[Cierek \(120\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 5:52 PM |

@mish: I took a pay cut to go into public service, but it's ridiculous to assume pay is irrelevant. My landlord won't exactly accept my public service as rent.

[Cierek \(120\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 5:58 PM |

Cierek,

Thanks for your comments.

My numbers include the education system which the state does as well. If I took education personnel out of both equations, I shall end up with a narrower gap. Education employees are 39% of total employees state wide and 46% in Alexandria.

My sources are the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, the City Financial Annual Report, and the US Census Bureau for government employees:  
<http://www2.census.gov/govs/apes/08stva.txt>

Riots? I don't think so.

[Joseph Judson Smith, III \(90\)](#) | User | March 9, 2010 - 9:40 AM |

@Joseph Judson Smith, III

Yes, the schools do change the numbers quite a bit but that large variation across the state relates to the quality of our schools, the percentage of the population under 18, the percentage of students needing special services like ESL, the types of programs/services our schools provide, etc. I don't think it would do the public or the City any good in the long run to compromise on the quality of our schools and the education they provide children from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Yes, riots was a bit hyperbolic, but I assure you that every cut in services, no matter how small, provokes a negative response from those affected and the people who represent

their interests. The kind of cuts needed to bring staff down to 50% of current levels would provoke a huge backlash from the public.

[Cierek \(120\)](#) | User | March 10, 2010 - 6:32 PM |

I would support the nine cent rate increase for residential property if needed. I am concerned that the City not be overly generous in the rules governing pension pay for public safety and other government employees. (See this week's Barron's feature article)

[Eugene Mulligan \(133\)](#) | User | March 14, 2010 - 12:38 PM |

City Employee compensation is far above the private sector. I believe City employees should pick up a percentage of contributions to their own retirement and health to bring them more in line with the private sector.

I submit also that Government employees would feel more supportive of limited government principles if they had to live FULLY with the consequences of this out of control spending by City Council..and that includes NO OFF SET in the event of increases in the residential or commercial property tax. Non-government workers are second class citizens in Alexandria and this is an injustice.

[Lisa Miller \(147\)](#) | User | April 2, 2010 - 5:07 PM |

## **Historic Alexandria**

**First Name:** Dave

**Last Name:** Cavanaugh

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** FY 2010 – FY 2011 Budget OHA

I am concerned with staff cutbacks in the Office of Historic Alexandria Budget for 2011. We are approaching a time where the City may no longer be able to adequately staff and fund each individual museums and historic buildings. In the face of even more severe cuts in upcoming fiscal year budgets, the City Manager and the Office of Historic Alexandria should begin developing alternatives that protect essential buildings, revitalize public support for local history, and contribute to Alexandria as a tourist

destination.

For 2011, the proposed budget reduces the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff of both the Black History Museum and the Fort Ward Museum. The reduction in FTE is at time of renewed interest in local African American history and community efforts to develop and incorporate a more diverse interpretation of the Civil War history and its aftermath.

The overall budget for OHA is being reduced 1.8 percent for the 2010-2011 period. Overall staffing is being reduced 5.7% The Fort Ward Museum and Historic site, which reported having 25,000 visitors in 2009 and expecting increases in visitation in 2010 and 2011, is being reduced from 3.6 to 3.1 FTE a reduction of .5 FTE.

The Alexandria Black History Museum will experience a similar reduction in FTE. The Office of Historic Alexandria recently created an ad hoc Fort Ward History Workgroup. This has been a collaborative community effort to uncover and tell a story of African American involvement in the Civil War and the short, but initial beginnings of racial democracy that followed the War. This effort is community based and has the potential to help renew interest in the interpretation of history at Fort Ward and attract wider range of tourist.

To sustain this interest, it is important that OHA continue to involve members of the Archaeology, Black History and Fort Ward Museum staff. The proposed cutbacks in FTE at the Black History and Fort Ward Museums could endanger continued progress in working with the community. With the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial, the projected 2011 opening of the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial and the continued interest in the African American experience, the City Manager should reevaluate the OHA Proposed Budget for FY 2011. Both the Black History Museum and the Fort Ward Museum are central to understanding and appreciating the importance of race in American history. Both museums are taking a disproportionate cut and the City may want to consider additional funding or reallocate proposed funding within the Office of Historic Alexandria.

OHA's ability to provide a quality educational experience for visitors and work with the community is jeopardized by the nature of the cuts being proposed. We have an opportunity to bring together and present the military contribution of African Americans during the Civil War, and the initial beginnings of racial democracy in America after the Civil War. We run the risk of "marching in place" and not seeing the social and economic (tourism) opportunities for the future.

Thank you

**First Name:** Eugene  
**Last Name:** Thompson  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Alex. Black History Museum Proposed Budget

March 9, 2010

The Honorable William Euille and Members of Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed FY2011 budget. In 1987 I had the honor of being hired by the City as the first Director of what is now the Alexandria Black History Museum. I was hired as a part-time employee who for more than a year worked many more weekly hours than the twenty hours for which I was paid. I was not hired full-time until the new addition was opened in 1989. Within two years my FTE's had reached 2.5.

It has been brought to my attention that the proposed budget will "unfund" the Curator's position. The position was held by Lillian Patterson until her retirement earlier this year. I hired Mrs. Patterson, 17 years ago, because of her involvement in the Alexandria community. When it came to creating local exhibitions and research, she knew where to go and with whom to speak. That position is very important in developing exhibitions and attracting visitors to the museum. If the position is unfunded, the museum reverts to the same level of staffing that was there when I left in 1995.

The proposed budget cuts the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) expenditures by 1.8%. Unfortunately, the proposed budget also cuts the Alexandria Black History Museum by 9%. The small museums within OHA seem to be taking the brunt of the proposed cuts. Having worked not only for Alexandria but also as Public Art Director for the city of Philadelphia, I understand the need to make the difficult cuts when the economy will not support all that everyone wants. It is my hope that you will fund the Curator's position. I believe that the museum staff should make more use of its collections in developing exhibitions, which might cut expenses. OHA also needs to explore ways to provide incentives for the thousands of city visitors to find their way just six blocks north of King Street to the museum.

I have always appreciated how supportive Council has been to the preservation of the city's African American history and culture. Whatever the final decision, I look forward to continuing my support for the programs of the Office of Historic Alexandria.

Respectfully,

Eugene Thompson, MEd  
Former Director:

Alexandria Black History Museum

### **King Street Trolley**

I would also like to point out as it has been mentioned previously, the trolley is the biggest waste of tax dollars. If it really is a boom for the businesses on King St., let them get together and form a King Street Business Association to pay for the trolley. If it is worth it they will pay for it. If it isn't worth it, the lazy tourists can walk.

[Nick S. \(141\)](#) | User | March 19, 2010 - 12:10 AM |

Now tell me why does a 21 year old employee have to loose their job to the trolley and voice boxes, really

[tt \(144\)](#) | User | March 24, 2010 - 3:05 PM |

Wow, why such trolley hate. I read a City budget memo last year and it stated that the trolley was paid by way of the room and meals tax increase. I don't think the City would decrease these taxes if they eliminated the trolley.

The City has also made the trolley operations more efficient, through using ARRA funds to purchase its own trolleys, this decreases the operating dollars required to run the trolleys because the city no longer needs to rent them.

I'm not sure why the trolley has become such a lightning rod of hate, if anything, it most definitely adds to the marketability of Alexandria which in-turn increases tourists traffic which results in higher sales-tax, room tax, and meals tax revenues. These additional revenues allow a greater diversification of revenue (that most residents seem to be demanding) and allow the city to not so heavily rely on the property tax rate. To diversify revenue and place less of a burden on residents the trolley needs to be kept.

[MRahoney \(154\)](#) | User | April 13, 2010 - 9:36 AM |

## **Alexandria Library**

**First Name:** Ian

**Last Name:** Clements

**Date:** 3/7/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Budget Cuts for Libraries

I have two requests regarding the city's proposal to cut operating hours at 3 library branches. First, please reduce the extent of the cuts. In other words, don't cut them as much as you have proposed. Second, if you must cut the hours, please allow the libraries to stay open as late as 9 p.m. at least one night a week (preferably 2 or 3 nights). Closing the libraries at 7pm, as proposed, would make it impossible for many working people like me to use those branches on any day but Saturday.

Thanks for considering my opinions.

Ian Clements

**First Name:** Anne

**Last Name:** Shine

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library Cutbacks

It has recently come to my attention that the Alexandria Library, specifically Duncan Branch will have its hours shortened, its budget cut once again. I realize that every agency in the City budget needs to be scrutinized for balancing purposes, but it would seem to me that cutting back on schools and libraries would be, in the long run, counter productive and therefore the very last areas in which the City makes budget reductions. It is a resource for our children as well as our adults in this community.

Please come see for yourselves how this library is utilized in so many ways, for job-hunting resources, taking out books, reading time for pre-schoolers (there were about 25 there the other day when I came to donate some books), community board meetings. The latter would be excluded if hours are cut in the evenings.

As a citizen and frequent user of this facility, please re-consider your budget reduction in our libraries.

Anne Shine

**First Name:** Elizabeth  
**Last Name:** Schilling  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Please do not cut library hours

To the Honorable Mayor Euille and all Council Members -

The announcement that the City plans to further cut the hours of the Duncan library is extremely distressing and strikes me as penny wise and pound foolish. The public library system is one of the most important services the City provides, and at less than 2% of the City's budget, it is already underfunded. Slashing the hours "around the edges", by delaying opening times until 10:00 and closing earlier on week days, will sharply reduce the Duncan library's utility to working families and to children. Storytimes are already regularly at capacity, and the delayed opening would be likely to reduce the number available. As a parent working flexible part time in order to raise my two small children, I regularly seek out the library to sneak in a few quiet hours of work early and late. (I would use the library even earlier if I could!) Cutting out evening hours would make the meeting room much less available and eliminate some important community activities such as book clubs.

The facility and the staff at Duncan library are the heart of my neighborhood. My entire family and my community benefits directly from the library's services and we will be directly affected by the proposed cuts. Understanding that the City does need to balance its budget, I urge you to consider the impact these minimal savings will have on such an important, valuable and highly valued institution.

Thank you for your attention and your service on our behalf,

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Schilling

**First Name:** Hallie  
**Last Name:** Wilfert  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan library reduced hours

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and

unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

The Duncan library is one of my favorite parts of the Del Ray neighborhood. I visit the Duncan library at least once a week to check out books, movies, and books on CD. Since I work in Maryland, the only time I am able to visit the library is after 7 pm. As a home owner and tax payer in Alexandria, I do not think it's fair to punish me and other working professionals by limiting our access to these resources. Additionally, closing the library by 7 on the weeknights would mean that the book clubs and author talks would most likely not occur, since these all generally start at 7 pm.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011Budget.

Best,  
Hallie Wilfert

**First Name:** Michelle & Joseph

**Last Name:** McCarthy

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Reduced Library Hours

We are extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, we encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Joseph & Michelle McCarthy

**First Name:** Andrea  
**Last Name:** Koslow  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

Please accept this notice as citizen feedback in response to the cut proposed by the Library Board and the City Manager, effectively cutting Duncan Library's operating hours.

Cutting the hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week for my family. During a time of economic trouble, city services like the library become more necessary and important to families than ever before. Duncan Library a central part of the Del Ray community and a resource to our neighborhood. The city has already closed the pool, located in the same block. What else are you going to take from our kids?

Please keep the library open as is. This is getting out of hand. Thank you for allowing me to share my point of view as a tax payer.

**First Name:** Nicoletta  
**Last Name:** Clifford  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan library budget cut back

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. People have less money, are unable to purchase books, so move from Barnes and Noble to our libraries. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening

programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Linda

**Last Name:** Perry

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library funding and the budget

Dear Council Members-

I have recently heard a rumor that the council is considering cutting library hours for budgetary reasons. As a registered voter in the City of Alexandria and a frequent user of the Duncan Library, I appeal to you to reconsider. Cutting library hours will save relatively little money but will have a highly negative impact on the lives of many Alexandria residents. My monthly book club meets at the Duncan branch at 7 in the evening. At that time of night, the library holds regular activities for working residents, and is usually also full of young people who would otherwise have no place to go. These late hours allow those of us who work days to meet in groups such as these at a convenient time. If the hours are cut to 6 PM, it will not be possible for many library patrons to use the library at all.

I encourage you to seek more creative ways to balance the budget than taking money from one of the most useful and successful services of the City.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Perry

**First Name:** Beth  
**Last Name:** Conord  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Changes to Library Hours

I understand that the city is under enormous pressure to save money and reduce expenses. But the Duncan Library is a wonderful resource for the city and our neighborhood. My daughter and I love going to the library but often the only time we can go is in the evenings. If the library was to close at 7pm during the week, we may not be able to use it. If you feel the need to reduce the hours, please consider keeping it open 2 nights per week until 9pm.

Thank you.

**First Name:** Sharon  
**Last Name:** Edwards  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library closing at 7 pm

It will affect parents when they get home from work and have dinner then want to take the kids to the Library or to research information for homework.

**First Name:** Alice  
**Last Name:** Falk  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Change in library hours

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any move to restrict the hours in local library branches. I realize that these are tough budgetary times, but the savings gained would be relatively small, especially when set against the harm that the cuts will do. Hard times are precisely when libraries become most important to their community, as centers of information (and of technology!) for those seeking jobs. Moreover, the elimination of evening hours will make the libraries wholly inaccessible in the week for most working families.

I strongly believe that although reducing library hours might seem to be penny-wise, the move would soon prove to be pound-foolish.

Alice Falk

**First Name:** Brooke

**Last Name:** Anderson

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Reducing hours for Duncan Library

To whom it may concern-

I'm very sad to see that Duncan Library's hours might be reduced. This library is a fantastic resource, and one of the main reasons I decided to move to Del Ray. My one-year-old son and I walk to the library for storytime and often go first thing in the morning to enjoy the children's library before his naptime. I'm finishing my PhD and often use the library- which has lots of desks and wonderful wireless- to research and write. It would be such a shame to see the hours reduced for this library!

Regards,

Brooke Anderson

**First Name:** Cheryl

**Last Name:** Kim

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** FY 2011 Budget and Reduced hours at Duncan Library

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. The library serves an essential community function -- as an educational resource, as a place to meet, and as an enrichment to our lives -- that becomes even more critical during an economic downturn when people seek to borrow books rather than buy them.

For working families, the proposed reduction in hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For our kids, these reduced hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be altogether eliminated. For stay-at-home moms, these story times are an important way to meet other moms, as well as provide learning enrichment for their kids. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

The amount of money saved, which I understand is \$173,000 for the whole library system, is minimal given that the cost is significantly reduced access to community libraries. Again, for low-income and working families, the library is an essential support to educating children and expanding their horizons.

Additionally, the library serves as a focal gathering point that allows people to come together, creating a strong community bond. If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and feel that the library staff members are an essential part of the community. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Candide

**Last Name:** Mullin

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

I have just learned of the proposed cut in library hours at the Duncan branch and am disappointed that this is under consideration. When we consider the financial impact it may have (a savings of \$173,000) versus the total budget expenditures in the city, it appears that this "cut" is unwise. By scaling back the hours, we are prohibiting our community from accessing this wonderful and essential facility.

The library is one of the essential elements of a community, and in these times we need

to strengthen our community, not cut back on the resources it offers. Our community relies on the resources and gathering space that the library provides.

Thank you for your time,  
Candide D. Mullin

**First Name:** Alice

**Last Name:** Kale

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Proposed reduction in library hours

I am dismayed by our City Manager's proposal to reduce library hours. I fully understand that every department within the city must watch its pennies, but this does seem to be a disproportionate burden on one small sector. The proposed 10 am to 7 pm hours, Mon - Thurs, will drastically impact working parents and their children. Many parents are barely home by 7 pm and will have no time at all to bring their children to the library for school work or to obtain new books. Further, those children who don't have internet access in their homes will have many fewer opportunities to use those library resources.

For working adults without children, the opportunity to participate in many of our excellent evening library programs will be curtailed. Of all the city programs and resources, I use the library most. I am in Duncan Library several times a week. The staff is knowledgeable, kind to all its many users, and very family oriented. One day I dropped in to ask for book recommendations for my grandson. Story hour was beginning shortly, and the staff could have justifiably asked me to come back another time. However, a librarian made time to help me, and I left with excellent recommendations. I really appreciate that kind of service.

As I understand it, this year's proposal is for a larger City budget, not a smaller one, with increased property taxes to support it. Isn't there room to keep the libraries operating at the current level?

Please consider these comments. Thank you for the opportunity for input.

Alice Kale

**First Name:** Charlotte  
**Last Name:** Adams  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** proposal to cut Duncan library hours

I am upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is short-sighted and unreasonable during an economic downturn when library resources are in greater demand. Why don't you cut some of the obvious fat in the budget like the streetcars or computers for every single student at TC Williams?

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm. Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? There are many other places you could cut.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Adams

**First Name:** Sheila  
**Last Name:** Hoben  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** library budget cuts

PLEASE DO NOT CUT ANY MORE HOURS FROM OUR ALEXANDRIA LIBRARIES. RESTRICTING EVENING HOURS, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT, WILL FURTHER LIMIT OUR STUDENTS FROM ACCESS TO MATERIALS THAT THEY NEED FOR REQUIRED WORK IN SCHOOL. THINK CREATIVELY AND COME UP WITH ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE.

SHEILA HOBEN

**First Name:** Kimberly

**Last Name:** Fondren

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Proposed reduction in hours at the Duncan Library

I am very unhappy that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. The Library is just 2 % of the total budget of the City and provides services that go well beyond it budget numbers. This is a short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn like this one, library resources are in greater demand. The library has already taken draconian cuts to it buying budget.

For working families like mine, the reduced hours makes the library virtually inaccessible during the week. Our local branch is already closed on Sunday. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm. Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? Such a severely limited schedule will likely undermine future support for the library as patrons get out of the habit of going. If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Melissa

**Last Name:** Logan

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Please do not cut the hours at Duncan Library

As a working mother with two small children I really enjoy gonig to Duncan library in the evenings and early Sat. morning. I realize the City is under tremendous budget pressure but I encourage you to consider the implications of this decision for working families who cannot access the library during the daytime.

**First Name:** Jessica  
**Last Name:** Tefft-Soraghan  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members,

I have heard that there is a proposal to cut the library hours of the Duncan Library. Hard economic times mean that people need a great public resource like the Duncan library even more. My family is tight with money and it is a wonderful feeling to be able to take the kids to the library to check out a new book or dvd. There are so few things in this area that families can do without spending a lot of money.

The Duncan library is also a place of community in Del Ray. Parents and kids flock to the story hours. Often you have to get to the library 30 minutes before in order to get into the story time. We don't always get in and I have often thought how they need more staff! When I go to the library at night I often see teens working on the computers provided by the library. I'm not sure where these kids would be if they weren't doing their homework at the library. I hope that you can find other ways to cut the budget and not take away hours and staff from the library. It would not only hurt the library but the community of Del Ray.

Thanks so much for your time!

Sincerely,

Jessica Tefft-Soraghan

**First Name:** Polly  
**Last Name:** Morrison  
**Date:** 3/8/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library – proposed reduction in hours

Hi -

I wrote last fall to express my hope that a reduction of hours would not take place in Alexandria's libraries, particularly at the Duncan branch. I received several nice emails in response, mostly thanking me for my support, but that all city services are suffering cuts

and everyone needed to face their share of reductions.

I heard today that the potential reduction in hours is now being recommended by the Library Board and City Manager and that this reduction will result in an approximate \$173,000 savings. While understand the need for cuts during difficult times, this small savings will come at the expense of many people's access to a very valued community resource, at a time when it is more necessary than ever. For my family, it will simply mean that we we will not be able to access the library during the week because of my work hours. The library is part of our lives in a very basic way, we utilize its services several times a week, and it's painful to think that this will no longer be possible. I know that mine is only one of many, many families that will face this impact as a result of these cuts.

This library is such a valued community resource and the community already rallies around it to provide financial support. I volunteer for the local Friends of the Duncan Library and we raise money continuously to support the library to the best of our abilities, using all kinds of creative ideas to find funding to supplement the library's financial needs. Therefore, it's not as if many efforts are not already underway by the local community to take on needs of the library. However, the proposed cuts will only serve to weaken the library beyond a reasonable level -- fewer families will be able to utilize its resources during the week because of earlier closing hours and many classes and meetings will have to be cancelled because the community meeting space won't be available (for events that are usually held in the evening). This lack of access will erode the community support for the Duncan branch because community members simply won't have much of a branch to rally around.

I don't see how a savings of \$173,000 can justify the impacts that this will cause for all of us that value this asset so much and I ask the City Council to reconsider this decision, which I think is very short-sighted, and look for other places to find \$173K. At a time when the economy makes things difficult for so many in our communities, the library is a place that should be strengthened so that people can utilize its services, rather than weakened by inappropriate budget cuts, leaving residents without a way to replace what is being lost.

Thank you

-

Polly Morrison

**First Name:** Colleen  
**Last Name:** Flannery  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** proposed cut to library hours

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches?

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Esther  
**Last Name:** White  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library hours cutback

I recently heard that there is a proposal to cut back the hours of the city's libraries, including Duncan, our neighborhood one. The proposal to close the libraries at 7:00 PM Monday - Thursday would severely limit the times that my family can visit the library. My husband and I work and we typically visit the library after dinner on week nights when homework is finished, between 7 - 9. This is also the time that most working families can visit the library, and when much tutoring takes place. The library is a tiny part of the overall city budget, and the proposal to close, if accepted, will impact many people and only save the city a small amount of money. I realize that these are difficult times and we need to all seek ways to cut back. I urge you to resist closing our libraries during the

weeknight evenings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Esther White

**First Name:** Laura

**Last Name:** Jarsulic

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Please Do Not Reduce Library Hours

I have learned that the City is considering cuts to library hours to save about \$173,000 per year. I wanted to register my strong concern that the cuts will harm the neighborhoods and the many working people who use the libraries each week. In fact, cutting the morning and evening hours would disproportionately single out those citizens of the City who work during the day and have fewer resources available to replace the services offered through the libraries. My neighborhood library, Duncan Library, is a central hub for the neighborhood and is nearly always teeming with activity, especially during the hours that may be cut (9-10 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. weekdays). It is an irreplaceable resource for children and adults. I have used the library at least once a week over the 8 years I have lived in the neighborhood - almost entirely during the hours that the city may cut. I urge you to find another \$173,000 to cut somewhere within the budget that will have less of a profound negative effect on the City's neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laura Jarsulic

**First Name:** Eliza

**Last Name:** Engle

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library

resources are in greater demand. Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches?

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved. My son is 18 months old and loves to have books read to him. We figured out that he probably 'reads' over 25 books a day. We can't afford to go buy him new ones but we don't want to be reading the same books that he owns over and over (if you are a parent you know what this is about!)

We go to the Duncan or Queen library after I get home from work (which would be after it is closed if you change the hours) and get a dozen books every 2 weeks. He also goes to storytime with the nanny during the morning hours (which might not happen if you change the hours). Please don't cut this very valuable amenity for such a small amount of money!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Lindley

**Last Name:** Kratovil

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Shortening Library Hours

I am upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm. Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Joanna

**Last Name:** Karwacka Krantz

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library – proposed cuts to opening hours

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm. Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches?

If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Joanna K. Krantz

**First Name:** Thom

**Last Name:** Downing

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Proposed Library Budget Cuts

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. While the economy has slipped, circulation and use at the libraries has grown by leaps and bounds. More people are choosing to borrow rather than buy books and many others are using the computers and other resources to look for employment. The libraries provide vital services to the community and these services should not be reduced.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Already in the past two years hiring of additional or replacement staff has been suspended, janitorial services have been scaled back and the overall budget has been cut by more than 15%. The libraries are already reliant on donations to pay for such items as DVD cases, construction paper used in children's activities and even office chairs and some bathroom supplies. And now the Council is considering cutting hours as well just to save \$173,000. This is NOT the place to be looking for such savings as it will mean additional hardship for patrons and reduced hours for employees as well.

If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Karen  
**Last Name:** Swanson  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

I am a frequent user of Duncan and an early riser - even on weekends. I usually am finished with my weekend errands by 9:00 and stop by the library after. I love the fact that the library opens early on Saturdays because it allows me to get there to pick up new books to enjoy for the rest of the weekend. I bet that the DelRay market attendees also stop by after purchasing produce as I often see parents and children enjoying early morning walks to/from the library. I also drop by on the weekdays after my exercise class (around 7:15 p.m.). Closing at 7:00 would disrupt my routine since I would not be able to get there on the weekdays.

Please maintain the current hours.

**First Name:** Nancy  
**Last Name:** Lopez  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Budget Cuts to Duncan Library – Fiscal Responsibility

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

I write, perhaps surprisingly, to support the proposed cuts to the Duncan Library budget. My children and I use the library frequently. We visit nearly every week, and often have 40 or more books checked out at a time. I think the staff at the library are fantastic, and it is an important resource to the community.

However, difficult economic times call for a reduction in services. If the library hours are reduced, my family will simply arrange our schedules to visit the library during hours when it is open. I would much rather experience a slight inconvenience than have the City spend money it does not have.

We all must live within our means. At times this requires difficult choices about what services are most crucial. The library is a wonderful place, but it is not a necessity that the library remain open for 12 hours on most days.

I commend the Council for looking for ways to reduce costs, even if it is merely a small

cost savings. Small amounts all add up.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Lopez

**First Name:** Miriam

**Last Name:** Carroll

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Keep Duncan open until 9 p.m.

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. I particularly urge you to keep the branch open to 9 p.m. so working people may make use of it.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Sincerely,  
Miriam Carroll

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Jessie  
**Last Name:** Kamens  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Objection to Proposed Changes to Library Hours

Dear Council Members,

I would like to object to the proposed changes to the public library hours. The proposed changes would lead to the elimination of several community groups that use the library as a meeting place in the evenings. I live near Duncan library and regularly attend a group that meets there in the evenings. Many of these groups have a value to the community that greatly exceeds the meager \$175,000 in savings from the proposed cuts.

Further, the 7pm closing means that most working families will not have access to the library during the week. I understand that times are tight, and cuts need to be made somewhere, but the libraries serve to enrich our lives both through reading and meeting with our communities. Please preserve the extended hours.

Sincerely,  
Jessie Kamens

**First Name:** Marlene  
**Last Name:** Vasilic  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Proposed Cuts to hours of Duncan Library

As a 10 year resident of Warwick Village in Del Ray, the Duncan Library has become a valued resource in my family's non-work hours. That the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours seems short-sighted and unreasonable considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and

library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The savings of \$173K just does not seem to be worth the impact of the reduced hours to our family, community or city.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Marlene Cooper Vasilic

**First Name:** Andrew

**Last Name:** Sulavik

**Date:** 3/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library Operating Hours Curtailed

As a homeowner who lives less than half a mile from the Barrett Library Branch, I am dismayed that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett Library's evening operating hours. As someone who does not get home until 7:00 pm because of the traffic congestion in this area, the reduced hours would make it impossible for me to use the library during the week. I am enraged that as my property taxes rise, access to city resources are being cut. This of course does not only affect me, but I believe is extremely detrimental to our entire community - the unemployed who who rely on the library to search for jobs; our children who use the library in the evenings to complete homework assignments; and those stressed by economic conditions and need recreational materials to relax.

Even the smallest cutback is an all too obvious political attempt to cut back on a perceived soft asset. Since the inception of a public library by Benjamin Franklin, it has been the bedrock of an informed voting public, and a monument to Democracy. It is the great equalizer of the educational disparities that exist in our community between the haves and have nots. This move strikes me as one more slap in the face against the middle and lower middle classes who rely on and support this institution in many ways that the wealthy do not. No doubt there are other areas in the city budget that can be cut without hurting what is no doubt the only unambiguously good communal institution in our city.

Please reconsider keeping the library open in the evening at the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 10.

Sincerely,

Andrew T. Sulavik

**First Name:** Nellie  
**Last Name:** Hauchman  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library Services

State/County/City governments need to consider raising taxes rather than continue to take away vital services. This is getting ridiculous! Someone has to take a leadership position and make the citizens of the state aware that we receive many wonderful services from tax dollars. Yet all we hear is "Cut Taxes"!

One of those key services we get from tax dollars is the library. I am disgusted that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011

Budget.

Nellie Hauchman

**First Name:** Julie  
**Last Name:** Kito  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library Hours Being Cut

I live near the border of Alex./Arlington, and it is sad that I use the Arlington libraries more- they have better hours and nicer, more updated libraries. I assume they have more money to work with, but this quote below, written by Sharon Forsythe Luther off the Bev. Hills Listserv, makes a great point - "Why doesn't the City cut the amount of staff who are at the library at any one time, spreading the existing staff time so they can keep the doors open the same hours... ?!"

Libraries are such an invaluable resource, a great place to go to learn in a healthy, safe environment, a great place to take my 6 year old son. Please do not cut the hours any further.

**First Name:** Mark  
**Last Name:** Nagumo  
**Date:** 3/9/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** proposed shortened library hours

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council:

I am very concerned about the proposed shortening of the library hours by closing at 7:00 p.m. on weekdays. My schedule, and the schedules of many others, would rarely enable me to visit the library during the week. Public libraries are one of the great civic institutions in America. They offer enrichment and access to resources and information that are not available elsewhere at so low a cost to the library patrons and to the community. Curtailing services, especially during the evening, would restrict access to information when access is needed most. Although cutting hours at any time would cause harm to some segment of the community, perhaps, if absolutely necessary, morning hours could be curtailed, or perhaps some morning hours and some evening hours. The projected amount saved (\$173,000) seems paltry compared to the loss.

The Duncan library, with which I am most familiar, is one of the features that makes living in the Del Ray neighborhood such a wonderful experience. I am sure the other branches provide similar value to their neighborhoods. Cost-cutting and budget consciousness are necessities in these times, and where ever savings can be found, they should be made. But I urge you to not to cut evening hours in the public library system.

The loss would be far greater than any conceivable gain.

Sincerely,  
Mark Nagumo

**First Name:** Warrick

**Last Name:** Cromer

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library Budget Cuts

I am disappointed that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Harry  
**Last Name:** Sprinkle  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Don't Cut Library Hours

Mr. Mayor:

Please do not cut the library hours. My brother and I use the library in the evenings almost every week.

Thank you,

Harry Sprinkle

**First Name:** Jack  
**Last Name:** Sprinkle  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Don't Cut Library Hours

Mr. Mayor:

Please do not cut the library hours. My brother and I use the library in the evenings almost every week.

Thank you,

Jack Sprinkle

**First Name:** John  
**Last Name:** Sprinkle  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Don't Cut Library Hours

Mr. Mayor:

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Sincerely,

John Sprinkle

**First Name:** Susan  
**Last Name:** Neumann  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Don't Restrict Library Access by Cutting Hours

Dear Elected Officials:

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week, effectively disenfranchising them from this valuable service. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

Please keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved. I volunteer twice each week at Duncan Library. I care enough to commit my personal time -- I hope you will care enough to ensure all of Alexandria's residents have the opportunity to visit it as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Sincerely,  
Susan D. Neumann

**First Name:** Elisa  
**Last Name:** Nebolsine  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library Hours

Dear Mayor Euille & Councilmembers,

I am writing in reference to the proposed reduction in library hours at Duncan. I understand that this is a very challenging economic climate, and that you are being forced to make some difficult decisions. With that in mind I still urge you to reconsider your cuts to Duncan.

There are several reasons for this request. First, selfishly, I view Duncan as a tremendous resource and frequently use it at all hours. Both my husband and I work full time. We have three young children. If Duncan were to cut back as significantly as proposed we would have a very hard time getting there at all (and the city would lose a lot of revenue in our late fees!). Secondly, at a time when so many people are out of work or looking for work it seems counterintuitive to reduce one of the few free resources that can help people stay in communication (via computer and email) and actively look for the best job opportunities.

There are many more reasons why I hope Duncan does not get its hours cut, but I will not belabor the point. This is the first letter I have ever written to the City in this capacity, and it is my great hope that you will reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Elisa Nebolsine

**First Name:** Mike and Linda  
**Last Name:** Oliver  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library Funding

Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Donley and members of City Council,

Please consider keeping all of the Alexandria City Public Library hours the same as they are now because they are necessary to continue providing morning children's programs and evening hours for adult and student use as well as a space to hold community meetings. We feel that reducing hours of operation would seriously cut into these

programs and perhaps eliminate them all together. We appreciate the difficult choices facing you at this time.

Thank you, Linda & Mike Oliver

**First Name:** Brooke

**Last Name:** Adams

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett, Burke, and Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Anna

**Last Name:** Holster

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library Cuts

I was recently informed that a proposal for reducing library hours has been suggested. I am personally very upset by this proposal, as my daughter and I are avid supporters and users of the Barrett Branch of the Alexandria Library. My 6-year-old daughter is a first grader at Douglas MacArthur Elementary School and attends the Campagna Center after

school every day until 6pm. Following school, we have dinner, then visit the library several evenings a week. We typically visit the library during the 7-9pm time frame, and generally see a number of children and other patrons utilizing the library and its accommodations.

If the hour of closing is reduced from 9pm to 7pm, I am afraid my daughter and I will no longer have the opportunity to take advantage of what the library has to offer, as we typically patronize the library only in the evening due to school and work responsibilities. Like many working families in Alexandria, the only opportunity to visit the library is during the evening hours and having visited the library at various hours throughout the day, I can safely assert that the evening hours are some of the library's busiest periods on weekdays. The elimination of evening access to the library would surely deprive many Alexandria residents of the opportunity to take advantage of everything the library system has to offer. Further, the reduction in hours would lead to the elimination of all evening story times, book clubs, and activities for adults, which provide a necessary community resource.

While I understand the financial constraints you are under, I also believe the library is a valuable resource for our community and the proposed cuts would effectively eliminate library access for most working families, while resulting in only modest budget cuts relative to the immense losses. I hope that another proposal for elimination costs can be considered that does not lead to loss of access to the library for working families.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Anna R. Holster

**First Name:** Nicholas

**Last Name:** Nebolsine

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Proposed Duncan Library Changes

Dear Mayor Eulle & Councilmembers, I am writing in reference to the proposed reduction in library hours at Duncan. I understand that this is a very challenging economic climate, and that you are being forced to make some difficult decisions. With that in mind I still urge you to reconsider your cuts to Duncan Library. There are several reasons for this request.

Duncan is a tremendous resource and we frequently use it at all hours. Both my wife and I work full time. We have three young children. If Duncan were to cut back as

significantly as proposed we would have a very hard time getting there at all. Secondly, at a time when so many people are out of work or looking for work it seems counterintuitive to reduce one of the few free resources that can help people stay in communication (via computer and email) and actively look for the best job opportunities.

There are many more reasons why I believe Duncan does not get its hours cut and I hope the City of Alexandria will continue to provide a tremendous community resource.

Best Regards,  
Nicholas Nebolsine

**First Name:** Vanessa  
**Last Name:** Bustamante  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library hours cut - proposal

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members:

I am extremely concerned that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett, Burke, and Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Bustamante  
City of Alexandria Resident

**First Name:** Cathleen

**Last Name:** Phelps

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library Hours

I am writing about the proposed reduction in library operating hours for the Barrett, Burke and Duncan branches. As I understand it, these cuts will save about \$173,000 annually, a modest reduction when considering the size of the overall operating budget. Yet the impact of the change on the community will be significant:

- \* Library resources are in greater demand during an economic downturn.
- \* Working families will have almost no opportunity to use library resources.
- \* Children of all ages benefit socially and educationally from library programs, resources and study opportunities. We should be looking for ways to INCREASE, not decrease, the use of these resources and programs for our children so they are better prepared for school and beyond.
- \* Evening programs such as book clubs, author talks and access to meeting rooms will be a loss for our adult community. This is important because, again, library resources become even more of a valuable service to our neighborhoods when the economy is down.

Ideally, there is a way to achieve greater financial reductions without such negative impact for people in Alexandria. If not, shouldn't the cost savings be significant enough to justify the pain of the service reduction? I think so. But what I am seeing here is a noticeable and negative impact for Alexandria in exchange for not a lot of cost savings. I know there are creative people working on this budget and I bet they can find other and better solutions to balance the budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Victoria

**Last Name:** Serrano Ruiz

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Please do not cut the library hours

I am concerned that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett, Burke, and Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Sheryl

**Last Name:** OKeefe

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library

To Mayor Euille and City Council Members, I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm. As an adult trying to get my Master's degree I've come to depend on the library for studying and research - all of which is done after my kids have had dinner.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? If you've never visited Duncan Library, I encourage you to do so. It's a true neighborhood library; many patrons live within walking distance, and the staff knows practically every child by name. It is, without a doubt, a central part of the Del Ray community and an invaluable City service.

This is an absurd way to cut costs. I urge you to keep the library open in the evening. The impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

~Sheryl O'Keefe

**First Name:** Charlotte

**Last Name:** Dugan

**Date:** 3/10/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Library

I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett, Burke, and Duncan Library's operating hours. This is an incredibly short-sighted and unreasonable cut, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand.

For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Charlotte Dugan

**First Name:** Dawn  
**Last Name:** Hurto  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** City Libraries / Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

We live in Del Ray and love the Duncan Library. It is an incredible resource for residents in advocating literacy, education overall and provides a space for neighbors and community groups to gather. Please do not cut its hours! As adults are working longer hours to make ends meet, the library's evening hours are critical for accessibility. Please don't reduce access to the City's libraries -- important education and community places.

Thank you for your time and attention.

- Nate & Dawn Hurto  
Alexandria Residents

**First Name:** Margaret  
**Last Name:** Grathwohl  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Library Budget Cuts – FY 2011

As a frequent user of the Duncan Library, I am extremely upset that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting its operating hours as part of the FY 2011 Budget. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during times most-often used. For taxpayers with children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adult taxpayers and voters, evening programs would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7 PM.

The impact of the reduced hours seems to far outweigh the savings-- \$173,000.00 to a line item that is already less than 2% of the City's total budget. The Library system has consistently been the victim of budget cuts (often quite disproportionate) and is already operating on a shoe-string budget, with many basic library supplies, projects and programs being supplemented by Friends of the Library groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

**First Name:** Kira  
**Last Name:** Lopez  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Alexandria Libraries

Just a note to say I use the libraries all the time. I find them to be invaluable. I take my 2 year old triplet girls to story time as often as possible. Lisa at the Children's section in the Barret branch is the most amazing librarian I have ever encountered (fancy, expensive, private schools included!).

Please, please don't let the libraries fall by the wayside. I use them for myself as well as my kids, and plan to for at least the next 16 years!

Thanks,  
Kira E. Lopez

**First Name:** Christine  
**Last Name:** Elder  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

As we are a few years into the economic downturn, I can understand there is no easy fat left to target in the city's budget, but I urge you to consider carefully any proposal to reduce the hours or operating budget of the Duncan library in Del Ray. Libraries are an invaluable resource and serve an important leveling role in our community. It is the symbol of diversity and provides a place where anyone can access information to enrich, retrain, or inspire young and old. I use the library about every 10 days, and am proud to see each time people of all ages and backgrounds enjoying this gift.

The concept of small town american libraries where people can spend hours in the stacks diving into any book they want is a revered icon of freedom of access to information well-known in every corner of the world. We are indeed fortunate to have these services and should work hard to maintain them, even if it means other difficult decisions. I have now joined the friends of the library, as have several of my neighbors, but we need the city to maintain its support. Few city institutions serve such a broad range of constituents.

thank you for your consideration of this difficult issue.

respectfully,  
Christine Elder

**First Name:** Joni  
**Last Name:** Finegold  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** proposed reduction in library hours

While I understand the need to reduce non-essential services in response to tight budgets, I urge the Mayor and City Council to rethink reducing the operating hours of city libraries (and rec centers, if those are on the table, too). The library cuts are due to start in July, but during the summer when students are out of school and it's hot outside, there is an even greater need for libraries than before. While cutting the morning hours may affect families with younger children, I'm more concerned with older children who have a lack of activities. Since Super Summer has not been funded and in general, economic woes have reduced what any family can afford, we have less overall available for our children. For teens, we should strive to have as many activities available for them in the evening, and closing at 7 will affect them primarily. I wish the libraries were open even later; but in Alexandria, the only thing that seems to stay open at 8 is expensive coffee bars and restaurants. During the summer it is extremely important to have libraries, rec centers, and other free, accessible evening activities.

**First Name:** Maureen  
**Last Name:** McNulty  
**Date:** 3/10/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

I was upset to learn that Duncan Library's hours are proposed to be cut as a means of balancing the budget. Reducing evening hours will dramatically decrease the time that working parents and students can utilize the library. Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thanks very much,  
Maureen McNulty

**First Name:** Kim

**Last Name:** Burstein

**Date:** 3/11/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Proposed Reduction of Alexandria Library Hours

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am concerned that the Library Board and the City Manager have proposed cutting the Barrett, Burke, and Duncan Library's operating hours. This is alarming, particularly considering that, during an economic downturn, library resources are in greater demand. For working families, the reduced hours would make the libraries virtually inaccessible during the week. For children, these shortened hours would mean morning programs and storytimes would be delayed or cut, and evening storytimes would be eliminated. For adults, evening programs -- such as book clubs and author talks -- would likely be eliminated, and the meeting rooms would be inaccessible for community groups and library events, as all these typically begin at or after 7pm.

Is this worth a savings of just \$173,000 annually, when the cost is reducing access to all of Alexandria's neighborhood branches? Our libraries are a central part of our community and an invaluable City service. Please keep the library open in the evening -- the impact of the reduced hours is extremely disproportionate to the amount of the budget cut achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2011 Budget.

Sincerely,  
Kim Burstein

Today the FCC submitted the National Broadband Plan to Congress. The following is one excerpt from the plan. Please support our libraries and keep them open.

#### Increasing the Capacity of Community Partners

For millions of Americans, libraries and other public computing centers are important venues for free Internet access. Libraries are established institutions where non-adopters know they can access the Internet, but community centers, employment offices, churches and other social service offices play increasingly important roles. Low-income Americans and racial and ethnic minorities, in particular, rely on public institutions and community access centers for Internet access. Over half (51%) of African Americans and 43% of Hispanics who use the Internet do so at a public library.<sup>88</sup>

But public computing centers provide more than just free access to the Internet. They provide supportive environments for reluctant and new users to begin to explore the Internet, become comfortable using it and develop the skills needed to find, utilize and create content.<sup>89</sup> Patrons of these centers overwhelmingly express the value of the personnel who staff them and can offer one-on-one help, training or guidance.<sup>90</sup>

Researchers from the SSRC have found that community-based organizations, such as libraries and non-profits, are key institutions in underserved and non-adopting communities—often providing Internet access, training and support services even when those activities fall outside their traditional missions.<sup>91</sup> While the challenges and opportunities they face vary, these libraries and other community partners are critical to improving digital proficiency in communities.<sup>92</sup>

The United States has more than 16,000 public libraries, 99% of which provide free Internet access. Ninety-one percent of libraries overall and 97% of libraries serving high-poverty areas report offering formal training classes in general computer skills, and 93% offer classes in general Internet use.<sup>93</sup>

However, many libraries lack the computer equipment to meet the needs of today's patrons. Eight in 10 libraries report hardware shortages that produce waiting lists during part or all of the day. More than 80% of libraries enforce time limits on use; 45% of libraries enforce time limits ranging from 31 minutes to 60 minutes,<sup>94</sup> which is not enough time to complete many popular and highly useful tasks such as the mathematics review course for the General Educational Development (GED) tests, which can take up to 150 minutes.<sup>95</sup> In addition, other CBOs such as community centers, churches and local non-profits lack resources to maintain their own computers, technical support and Internet access (see Box 9-3).<sup>96</sup>

[Susan Doherty \(110\)](#) | User | March 16, 2010 - 4:33 PM |

The budget proposal to cut evening hours at Duncan and other branch libraries is shortsighted. The majority of people in Del Ray, where I live, work during the day and, and for many, their only option for the library in the future would be Saturday. Perhaps more important, there are many evening events held at Duncan, some sponsored by the library but others by people or groups in the community. Eliminating these really strikes at the heart of the community, the need for people to gather and take part in activities together. A better solution would be to open the library at noon two or three days a week and close it at nine, so that these important evening activities can continue to take place. Thank you.

[Bill Hendrickson \(140\)](#) | User | March 17, 2010 - 9:57 AM |

I applaud efforts to cut spending and do not endorse any increase in taxes to make up the budget gap. The city should do what most of us have to do when money is tight-- look for ways to trim our spending. It is unreasonable to ask citizens to pay higher taxes when many of us are either not getting raises, taking pay cuts, or even getting laid off. We have to tighten our belts and the city needs to do the same, as many others commenters have stated.

Specifically in regards to the reduction in library hours: if that is necessary as part of an overall budget spending reduction, then I will reluctantly support it. But I would ask the city to reconsider the specifics of which operating hours will be eliminated. In my neighborhood, the Duncan branch serves many families with dual working parents who utilize the evening hours primarily or exclusively. There are many special programs offered at the library during evening hours as well. Instead of changing the operating hours to 10-7 during the week, why not 11-8 or even 12-9? That way you could preserve the evening availability but still achieve the same level of savings. Alternately, offer for example a M & W 9-5, Tu & Th 12-9 schedule--again, same amount of reduction without completely sacrificing evening hours.

[Patty Brady \(152\)](#) | User | April 8, 2010 - 10:42 AM |

**First Name:** Mary

**Last Name:** Peet

**Date:** 4/9/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Duncan Library Hours

I recently purchased a house close to the Duncan Library for the convenience of library access, among other neighborhood amenities. Changing the hours to 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Monday through Thursday instead of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. would reduce my ability to use the library services as I commute with public transportation to the District for work. Shorter hours would also reduce library activities I would like to participate in, such as book clubs. Thank you for considering this request.

## **Parking Meters and Enforcement**

**First Name:** David

**Last Name:** Childs

**Date:** 3/15/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** City Budget

In reference to the city's budget, I am providing a few suggestions as to raise some monies to help out the budget.

#1. Raise the prices on the following Parking Violations

10-4-22 , 10-4-23, 10-4-24, 10-4-25, 10-4-26, 10-4-27 - currently the violations carry a \$35.00 fine, raise the fine to \$40.00 like most other fines

10-4-8 - currently the fine is \$25.00 - raise it to \$40.00

10-4-41 & 10-4-42 - currently is \$48 - raise to \$100.00 -especially in the case of 10-4-42 since it is involving blocking a fire hydrant or fire lane which is a safety issue also.

#2 Currently, there is a Virginia state statute that carries a \$500 fine for a vehicle being abandoned on the street or on private property The state code sections are 46.2-1200, 46.2-1200.1 & 46.2-1201. I suggest that someone check with the police parking enforcement people to see how many "abandon auto" notices(52c - 52d forms) to see if it would be worth it to create a city parking code that would mirror the state codes listed above that would allow for the parking enforcement officers to issue a parking citation or be given the authority to get a summons from the magistrate to be given to the owner of the vehicle when they tow the vehicle off the "abandon auto" notice.

I hope this might help

Identify police that write the most parking tickets and replace them with less expensive meter maids. I don't want to see an expensive law enforcement officer's signature on a parking ticket. That's waste.

[resident \(102\)](#) | User | March 23, 2010 - 2:59 PM |

I favor a tax increase that will allow the Human Resources Dept in police and parking services to affect a broader sample. Clearly you do not have resources to monitor a family of 5 riding bicycles down the middle of King street creating a very dangerous situation for a Dash bus driver. With one simple tipping point, a child would have been in front of bus, having fallen, and then, of course, the bus driver is charged. He was over cautious in his work. I admire him. I might also suggest that police officer would focus on outliers such a the middle of King Street in front of bus. The parents are empowering the children to be citizens that care only for their joy without safety concerns. Change the parking meters to \$5.00 per hour on Aflred St. Can you set it for 3 hours. This revenue should be adequate for the space.

If I cannot complete my service requested at the Sugar House Salon, and (after years of being a customer there) and if I forget to ask the very sweet employees to feed the meters, why should I be charged with a parking ticket. Your public policy is punishing good faith citizens Why,do we have human resources dispensing speeding tickets to senior citizens and Mom's with precious infants in the correct seating on a whim. I called the police department to state my concern regarding the offenses I see every day - with no police presence. I suggest something is very wrong. For example, as I speak to friends and family about challenging a speeding ticket, it is highly suggested to me that I be smart and just pay the fee. Here is, yet, one more tipping point in public policy. Something is not right when a citizen of Alexandria since 1973 has trouble navigating Alexandria's system. What is wrong? Why are you punishsing good citizens? Philosophically, it should work the other way - Right?

[Dr. Margaret Cofer \(151\)](#) | User | April 8, 2010 - 7:31 AM |

## **Public Safety**

**First Name:** Meredith

**Last Name:** Lair

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Cutting Community Oriented Policing Program for Lynhaven

I bought my house on Wesmond Dr in April 2009 and moved in the following month. The only clue, which I missed, that there was anything wrong with the neighborhood was the fact that there was no grass in the median strip in front of my house. The first night I was in the house, I figured out why. As I was hanging shelf paper, I was hit with the overwhelming smell of pot smoke. I soon realized that the house next door is essentially a drug market. Young men would hang out in the front of my house (hence, no grass), in the neighbor's yard, and on the neighbor's porch smoking pot and doing other drugs. My neighbor's grandson sells drugs out of the house, and in the summer, that activity spills into the yard. Sometimes my house is overwhelmed by chemical smells, which lead me to think they are cooking and/or smoking harder drugs in there. The young man who is dealing is just lucky and clever enough, and Alexandria is just short enough on resources, that the police were never able to catch him in the act. What made a difference in my life was the action of Officer Ruggiero, our COP officer. He arranged for foot patrols past the house, he parked his squad car in front of the house to do paperwork, and he opened a line of communication that was vital for me. If I would call the APD dispatcher, they had no sensitivity to the fact that I didn't want my neighbor to know who I was (I had two acts of vandalism committed against my property last summer, likely in retaliation for calling the cops). Officer Ruggiero gave me his cell phone so I could call or text him and he could arrange for police to come by in such a way that it I was not implicated. He even did this once when he was on vacation in New York!

I have seen middle-school kids scoring drugs in my neighbor's backyard in broad daylight, hard-core addicts creeping around at 3 in the morning, and the daily traffic of young men entering the house to buy drugs. The idea that Lynhaven has been cleaned up is absurd! This neighborhood is sliding back into what it once was, and the process is clearly accelerated in the summertime. It would be pennywise but pound foolish to eliminate this program and just \*hope\* things don't get worse. I was so desperate last summer that I seriously considered selling my house at a loss. Please do not eliminate this program!

@John - EMS transport fees offset the full cost of patient transportation. The city bills private health insurance for the transport service. I fully support charging for transportation since the city responds to many non-resident emergencies. This principle shouldn't differ from Alexandria Inova Hospital charging for heart surgery, angioplasty or MRI scans.

Rob Rapanut, Vice Chair, Alexandria EMS Council  
([http://www3.alexandriava.gov/ems\\_council](http://www3.alexandriava.gov/ems_council))

[Rob Rapanut \(127\)](#) | User | March 11, 2010 - 8:17 PM |

**First Name:** Kristel

**Last Name:** Blount

**Date:** 3/30/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Fire Department Budget as related to the BRAC Building

I was reading the budget memo's in relation to the upcoming buget. In regards to the fire department staffing and fire/ems response to the new DOD/BRAC Bldg at Mark Center, since the bldg will have it's own security staffing, and to possible releive the Alexandria fire department from at least some of the ems/ambulance responses, has anyone brought up to the DOD to either have DOD fire personnel stationed(i.e. their own fire station with at least 1 fire engine andd ambulance) on site like they do at places like Ft Meyer's, Belvoir, Quantico, etc. or request that if they will be having their own medical clinic there that they contract out to anyone of the various pprivate bls/als ambulance services that currently transport to Alexandria Hospital that can be able to transport any patients to Alexandria Hospital from the DOD Bldg..

## **Recreation**

**First Name:** Brian

**Last Name:** Hewlett

**Date:** 4/20/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Adult Fitness Fee for City Rec Centers

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed adult fitness fee that is included in the proposed budget. I think it is a better idea to put a higher fee on programs that are staff intensive (such as after school programs for kids) than to put a fee on using the fitness center which requires little staff attention. Put the fee where the costs are.

## **Tax Rate and Expenditure Budget (General)**

**First Name:** James

**Last Name:** Aldige

**Date:** 3/7/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Tax Increases / City Budget

I am writing to implore the City Manager, the Mayor, the City Council to restore some fiscal sanity to the City Budget, reduce city spending, and not raise taxes in the economy, one of the worse in modern times. I understand that you want to increase the city budget by about 7%. We should be reducing the city budget about about 7-10%. The city population has grown only about 11% in the past 10 years, yet the City budget has grown by almost 100%. This is outrageous and must be stopped. We are also spending about \$17,000 per student in the public school system, the highest in the state where the average is about \$9,000 per student. Your outrageous spending MUST stop. I have lived in this city since 1967 and watched as the City has spent, spent, spent. Not is the time to reduce spending and not implement a tax increase. I think that sometimes you think the Federal Government will bail the city out. The Federal government is broke and under the current leadership, our government has taken on an astronomical debt, one which I know can never be paid down in my lifetime. When will you people ever learn that spending is not the solution to all of our problems.

**First Name:** Matthew

**Last Name:** Gentile

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Taxes

I understand the taxes on my office are going up AGAIN. 7.9% Jeezzzz just make it 8% ok. I dont have any long speeches as i know it would fall on deaf ears. Just one comment which i am sure you are familiar with. I'm madder then hell and there is nothing that i can do about it except vote against you guys and we all know how that will turn out. Keep sticking to the man. I'm sure your all proud of the way our hard earned money is being spent. Overtaxed citizen. Please dont respond as i have no interest in hear any of your rationalizations.

**First Name:** Jeanmarie

**Last Name:** Tulipane

**Date:** 3/8/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Taxes

Dear Group,

First let me say that I love this city and second, I am not a person who wants all of the services but doesn't want to pay for them. I work for an association and times are tough and our members cannot afford additional increases in their membership fees .. so what do you do?

You take a hard look at your budget and start making the hard decisions about what needs to be eliminated. Sure everyone thinks that their program should not be cut but come on!!!

Don't raise taxes ... Cut programs and services, don't fill empty jobs, don't give pay increases. Start fining people for disobeying our laws.. enforce evening HOV!! I've been to Bethesda and it's vibrant and there is no free parking!! Fine parking past hours, ticket everyone one who does not stop at stop signs. Enforce the no -neon signs on Washington Street law!

Too many empty Dash buses on the road - create a better schedule. Charge for the trolley going down King Street - people should walk King street and spend money! Hurry the sale of the bus barn on the north end of town and sell it to developers.

Stop throwing so much money at our schools that produce so little in graduation rates and good grades.

Finally, thank you for this opportunity to vent.. Please don't raise my taxes..

Jeanie Tulipane

I for one, believe that there are many services that could be privatized - if it results in reduced taxes.

For example - trash and yard waste collection: why is the City in this business? Why not treat it as a utility such as my electricity, cable, telephone, water and sewer?

BTW - the City never plowed my street after the February storms. We taxpayers just want to get to work - how about even a minimum effort to clear the streets for us?

Your online budget is a hoot - someone spent a great amount of time trying to make us believe that we're getting a great "deal" (in fact, after looking at all of that PowerPoint - I'm not sure what any of it means).

[dean6294 \(118\)](#) | User | March 8, 2010 - 8:30 AM |

I feel that the City should focus on those services that are truly essential and fully fund those services. For example, Trolleys for lazy visitors ... a waste. Pursuing expensive litigation (e.g., CSX transloading and Mirant Plan) for naught ... fire the lawyers or get more pragmatic ones.

Additionally, the City should plan for smart growth. While nobody wants Old Town to become an extension of Crystal City a good mix of residential AND commercial is necessary. It seems that Alexandria has focused almost exclusively on residential growth. Residents cost a lot more money than businesses: they need schools, more police, resident services, etc.

Finally, user fees for essential government services is a morally bankrupt position. I specifically make reference to the \$400-\$600 user fee for ambulance services PLUS \$10/mile transported. What's next? User fee for fire services ... police services.

[John. \(122\)](#) | User | March 10, 2010 - 12:29 PM |

It is unconscionable that the city would even consider giving city employees raises when our taxes are being raised to pay for them. I can only assume that the city manager is feathering his own nest. Many Alexandrians have lost their jobs or at best, not getting raises themselves. If we have to pay more in taxes to provide basic services, so be it. But city employees getting raises in the face of taxpayer sacrifices is WRONG!

[Patti North \(128\)](#) | User | March 12, 2010 - 1:28 PM |

9 cents raise, when we bugeted for 7 cents? The city council needs to grow some round things and tell Jim Hartmann to rethink his stuff. This is enough to really make me rethink my politics

[paul vogel \(129\)](#) | User | March 13, 2010 - 1:34 PM |

A 7-cent increase is bad enough, but 9 cents is outrageous in a climate where almost everyone's income is decreasing, and despite the "average household" propaganda, my assessment and I presume many others is going up again. "Old folks" on "fixed" [hah] income are tightening their belts; the city should too. Money won't solve the problems at T.C. Williams, anyway. Alexandria has become a spendthrift city and a less desirable place to live.

[P. Toulmin \(130\)](#) | User | March 13, 2010 - 2:15 PM |

The city council should adopt a budget that reflects current available revenue and NOT raise real estate taxes. When my income decreases, I reduce spending. This city council does not get it. If you do not have the money, then reduce spending to a level that reflects available revenue. When money was free and easy the council spent like maniacs, did not put money aside for hard times and now we taxpayers are asked to pay the price for their stupidity.

[D Bernstein \(131\)](#) | User | March 13, 2010 - 2:32 PM |

LOWER the spending! What is wrong with you government workers/politicians. Do you think there is an endless supply of our money to support you?

[J. Haybyrne \(132\)](#) | User | March 13, 2010 - 5:40 PM |

I see that a lot of people posting on this board are upset about a tax rate increase for next year. I'm a homeowner and would love to see my property taxes go down next year, too. However, in reading the City Manager's budget and listening to Council's debate on Saturday about why they decided to advertise a 9-cent increase, the things that are not being cut with a hatchet are either core government services (i.e., public safety, transportation, education) or things that really give Alexandria a competitive edge (ACVA). Even things that enhance our quality of life and make our City special are facing significant cuts (i.e., libraries, historic Alexandria). To avoid a tax increase, Council would need to cut \$21 million beyond what the City Manager proposed. It would help the discussion if people who believe we must avoid a tax rate increase would outline specific cuts. It's easy in the abstract to say that people should be laid off. What City departments do you believe are bloated or over-staffed? Many City staff positions have been eliminated over the past three years. In my recent dealings with the City, I see a workforce that's stretched pretty thin. Because we compete with the Federal government as an employer, which gave workers in the DC area a 2% COLA this year, I

don't think it's realistic for us to keep freezing worker pay. I'm interested in hearing others' perspectives, but please be specific about where you would find \$21 million in cuts so we can have a discussion about our City's future.

[K. Kaplan \(44\)](#) | User | March 14, 2010 - 11:51 AM |

I have spent 14-15 hours curled up at the computer with the 711 page proposed budget and the budget forecast model.

I believe that the city's staff should propose specific cuts to present four scenarios: the original proposed budget with a 7 cent increase, one with a 9 cent increase, and one each achieving a 10% and 15% spending reduction (and the lower tax rate needed.)

Only they are familiar with severance expenses and contractual obligations which might be off limits for cuts. It's the city's obligation to provide options in addition to recommendations. It is not each citizen's duty to prepare a budget.

Others have already pointed out specific areas they'd cut, how spending increased compared to population, revenues skyrocketing due to the real estate bubble, how many new programs were begun, staffing relative to other jurisdictions levels, pensions, MRA adjustments, etc.

Others have called for increased funding for a variety of programs.

Also of note: the proposed budget is NOT zero based, or that's not evident in the planning model. Any business or household would use a blank slate to evaluate spending top to bottom in rough times. Business and households first look for where to cut or defer spending. They only then raise prices if they can't cut spending (or ask for a raise or find a new job.)

The city raises the tax rate if assessments drop; they get a windfall if assessments increase unless they cut the rate. Perhaps the FY11 approved for publication 9 cent rate is a 22% cut if reduced to 7 cents rather than a 7.8% increase from 9 cents?

Also, please note that fees are also being raised (water is already more than 50% taxes and fees.) The writer suggesting making the "fees" a real estate tax so it's deductible, has a good point.

The city's "2011 budget forecast model" is useful (down loadable from this website.) It takes current spending, increased by a category inflation factor, as it's base. Tax revenues are calculated via adjusting assessment increase/decrease percentage and the tax rate. Expenditures can be increased or decreased by percentages and growth/cuts

by strategic plan category. It projects assumptions for 10 years.

What it does not show is the number of staff by line item, so you don't see how many positions might be eliminated if you cut. Nor does it show capital expenses/sales. It does have an "absorption" variable: what percentage of new activity can be taken on by current staff 100%= no new staff, 50% adds staff expense.

I'd suggest everyone play around with it.

On the revenue side, I think the city's assumption about assessments in 2011 and 2012 (I assume these are Cal year, not FY) are too pessimistic, and that they are too optimistic in the out years. Aside from that, the only thing that has an appreciable impact is cutting staff spending (which also cuts pension & health expenses.) This can be done in the model by making MRA salary increases a negative percentage. This mimics staff cuts (i.e. if you want to cut 15% of staff, and give 3% raises to remaining staff, -12% is close but not exact.

For anyone with the courage to crunch numbers, I found it best to start with assessments, then spending, then adjust the tax rate.

[Mike Hepple \(134\)](#) | User | March 14, 2010 - 4:08 PM |

Correction: the current rate is 90 cents, not 9 cents, so a 7 cent recommended increase to 97 cents is a 7.8% increase. Sorry for the typo.

[Mike Hepple \(134\)](#) | User | March 14, 2010 - 4:16 PM |

**First Name:** Teresa

**Last Name:** Armentrout

**Date:** 3/14/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** City Budget and Taxes

Once again, it is terribly disheartening to see that the City Council is raising taxes on homeowners. I've read the information about "hard" the cuts are. I'm not persuaded. At some point the city has to come to grips with less money. How many years must we go through this? During the fat years of high assessments, even though there were "rate cuts", the actual taxes to be paid soared. Since 2002, my taxes have doubled. It has been helpful that my taxes have lowered somewhat since 2006, the peak assessment year. However, the rates have steadily increased the last 4 years even as assessments continued to drop.

Tax monies couldn't be collected and spent fast enough during the high rolling years of the 2000-2006 housing market. Since then, it seems like the council has picked the "highest" tax collection year (2006) as the standard to which the city compares/sets the tax rate, regardless of home assessments. Where was the prudence in preparing for a rainy day when the housing market had to even out? While no one could have envisioned the recent rapid economic fall, it came as no surprise that the hot housing market was unsustainable. As I get nearer to retirement, I more and more think about moving from Alexandria. I do love it here. But the taxes and traffic are beginning to point me elsewhere. Bottom line - it matters to folks is how much in taxes you are paying. Please do not raise our taxes. Hard choices will need to be made, and that is why you are a Council Member. Make them. If the tax increase proposed stands, this on top of last year's increase has cost several of you my vote.

Please rethink the rate increase. If and when I can retire I won't be able to continue to live in Old Town simply because of the constant tax increases on property owners. Even working full time I find it more difficult each increase.

[S. Taft \(135\)](#) | User | March 15, 2010 - 8:57 AM |

As both an employee & homeowner in the City I feel a great deal of conflict on this issue. I don't want my real estate taxes to increase. My condo fee continues to go up to compensate for the increase water and energy costs. Additional taxes would mean less money in my pocket. The flip side is that the taxes are tax-deductible. As an employee, my salary has not increased in over 2 years (the extent of my tenure). I have an advanced degree & a certification in my field. I do not make close to 100k but would love a merit increase or a COLA just to keep up with the ever-increasing cost of living expenses. I can make ends met but I have a hard time putting anything away for a rainy day or retirement. I encourage my fellow residents to slowing consider any suggestions of continued salary freezes and increased layoffs. We work very hard for our neighbors. Salaries must be competitive or the City will loose it best & brightest public servants when other opportunities present. Also, the City cannot function without and adequate and talented workforce.

[Anonymous \(136\)](#) | User | March 15, 2010 - 9:46 AM |

As a 32-year Alexandria resident, I favor the property tax increase. I value the quality of our city services and employees way too much to complain about the need to pay \$200-

\$300 more per year due to this increase. Unlike federal programs, I can see and benefit from these services every day, and I know who is accountable for both successes and failures. And as these local taxes are deductible from my federal taxes, it is a lot better than having to pay such money directly to the IRS!

[Bill Ward \(137\)](#) | User | March 15, 2010 - 9:01 PM |

I hope with a few conservatives now on the council, we can come to our senses. Every household is feeling the pinch right now, and how do we react at home? Cutting back on movies, dinners out and other pricey family activities. So why would the City raise our taxes? It will only make things harder for the residents. How about looking at the City's budget and cutting back on entitlements and union pensions, etc. Everyone must do their part. Raising taxes is NOT the solution.

Follow Gov McDonnell's example. CUT BUDGETS and do NOT raise taxes.

[Moxy \(138\)](#) | User | March 16, 2010 - 10:25 AM |

Absolutely horrible - property values continue decreasing, economy is in a recession and our council's proposed solutions is to raise our property tax rates. If this goes through it time to throw more of them out. Awful.

[C. Davis \(139\)](#) | User | March 16, 2010 - 12:09 PM |

The problem is that assuming because property assessments decreased, that an increase in the property tax rate will be a wash for most people and the city can take a few dollars off the top. The problem is that when property values/assessments decrease, it is an indication that people cannot afford the increased rate. This doesn't even take into account the people that inexplicably had their assessed value increase. Not only does their tax rate increase, it is increased two fold to make up for all the other assessments in the city that went down. It doesn't take an large increase in the assessment to do damage to a budget under the proposed tax rates. My assessed value went up by 10% this year because my home is in Old Town. This increase, coupled with the proposed tax rate increase, pushes my property tax up between 17-20%. That is an extra \$850 to \$1,000.

The mention in the Manager Memorandum of March 16th is also a little misleading to compare Alexandria's property tax rate to Prince William County, or Loudon County--

Fairfax is a debatable comparison due to its pure size and most Alexandria residents would only consider living in a small portion of Fairfax county. While those counties have much higher tax rates than Alexandria, all those numbers do is skew the analysis. In reality, Arlington is the only fair comparison and Alexandria should be competing to draw more people to want to buy and locate a business in Alexandria instead of Arlington. Keeping property taxes low will only increase the desirability of living and running a business in Alexandria, which will only help push property taxes back from their current trend.

The proposed budget is only "1.5% less than the peak budget" two years ago. Why only 1.5% less than what was the biggest bubble-spending spree in the country's history. Most families and businesses were forced to cut much more than 1.5% of their budgets from 2 years ago, yet the city has only cut 1.5% and actually increased its budget from last year. If four or more years of tough budgetary times are in store for Alexandria, offering a band-aid of 1% increases, when inflation is at or near 0%, will only compound the fiscal problems. The budget should be more in line with what the people of Alexandria had to do the last two years and that is cut their budgets by more than the meager 1.5%.

[Nick S. \(141\)](#) | User | March 18, 2010 - 11:39 PM |

Before imposing more taxes on the residents and businesses alike, the Council needs to think outside the box. Gov. McDonnell said this when talking about his proposal to privatize the Virginia ABC stores:

"we can't just do things the same old way.... "

However, many Council members have been spending your money at an unbelievable rate over the last ten years. A figure that was alluded to — which frankly has whizzed over most people's heads — shows that although inflation in the Washington metropolitan area rose 37% from 1997 to 2008, MRA, COLA and merit raises for City staff combined to grow at a staggering 69% rate.

What other portions of the budget could be cut to avoid a property tax increase of such magnitude? The corrupt ARHA department is up over 33% in the last 4 years, nearly ten times the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and nearly three times the rate of inflation during the same period. The Planning Department, which has grown at a rate of over 15% in the last four years, is another. The Planning Department is about to seriously mess up the Potomac Yard area after they did a number on Carlyle. Economic development activities are up 12% in the last four years, another area that could be cut.

Since our leaders can't seem to properly cut the budget, the only way out appears to be

increasing taxes. One reason they want to increase taxes is to increase the City's funding of Metro which is an abject failure. Metro is so heavily subsidized already that the local Governments are subsidizing your trips on Metro at \$.80 a mile. Metro is a failure and the City should be decreasing their share to Metro in response.

It is time for the City Council to realize that bills MUST be paid with existing resources instead of on the backs of others. Local governments MUST do more with less money. The City Council should do and promote what every family in America is already doing; surviving with existing financial resources.

Our City Council should show some grit and determination to stop the epidemic of uncontrolled and out of control spending when the piggy bank is already gone. This has plagued our City for YEARS as liberals like Mayor Euille have been spending the City's money like drunken sailors. This has to stop.

[Lee H. \(142\)](#) | User | March 21, 2010 - 2:05 PM |

**First Name:** Robert T.

**Last Name:** Keelin

**Date:** 3/21/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Budget

I am writing to express my strong concern about proposed real estate tax increases for the coming budget year, as well as a couple of other issues. The value of my home has declined each year since 2006, yet my real estate taxes have continued to rise. When property values decline, taxes need to follow suit. Government seems to think that its citizens have bottomless pockets -- that government can spend as it pleases by raising taxes year after year. No one in the company I work for received a merit increase or bonus award last year thanks to the bad economy, and the same will be true this year for those of us lucky enough to still be on the payroll. (Some of my former coworkers are no longer employed because of headcount reductions in the company.) I earned less money in 2009 than I did in 2008, and the same will be true this year. My insurance premiums for 2010 rose by 88% (that's right, 88% -- it's not a typing error). I have less money to spend and that means I will spend less. This is simple economics -- when you have less to spend, you spend less. Government does not seem to understand this simple principle.

Of related concern are recent reports I've read about the student body at TC Williams high school. The city spent \$100 million of taxpayer money to build that school and every time I drive by it (which is frequently because I live close by) I look at it and think about the \$100 million it cost. Now I find out that that hundred million dollar facility

houses some of the poorest performing students in the whole state and it looks like nothing more than an outrageous waste of taxpayer money! And that's not the worst of it. It seems that the head of the city school system is trying to implement a fix that will not require the city to fire any of its teachers as part of a plan to improve grades.

Although I don't like suggesting that anyone should lose his job, if students are not doing well academically, surely the teachers teaching them must have something to do with that. Somehow, I suspect that a lot more of my tax dollars will be part of the solution, while the current crop of teachers at TC Williams continues to hold on to their jobs.

Finally, recently I read in the local newspaper that the city is contemplating spending \$6 million for an elevated waterfront walkway along the Potomac River in old town. Where does the city intend to get the money for this walkway -- by digging deeper into the pockets of its taxpayers -- many of whom cannot afford to live in old town or eat in its pricey restaurants?

Again, I say that when my income drops I spend less. Government needs to do the same. My real estate taxes for the coming year should be less, not more, than they were last year.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Keelin

I strongly oppose any increase in property taxes to compensate for the apparent inability to make difficult decisions on deep budget cuts. There are many reasonable budget reduction measures outlined in others' comments. Please learn from them.

[David Paolicelli \(143\)](#) | User | March 23, 2010 - 8:04 AM |

As a City Fire Dept. employee for the last 27 yrs. it has been my privledge to protect the citizens and visitors of our city; however an increase in the residential proprty tax, as proposed, would be the final nail in the coffin for myself and my family. We would have to sell our home and move out of the city. With no pay increases, both merit and COLA, for the past three years I have been brought to this point. I love our City and my wife is a fourth generation native of Alexandria, but the passing of this tax increase will put an

end to that lineage. I am sure I am not alone in the negative effects this will have on all citizens, and especially City employees living here.

[Mike Z \(145\)](#) | User | March 27, 2010 - 5:55 PM |

As Mike Z's comment makes clear the raise in taxes will change behavior. The city's cost estimates do not take into account what behavior changes will occur when the real estate tax is raised. I use Mike Z's comments as an illustration of how the raise in taxes will change behavior. In no way am I trying to degrade Mike Z's service to the city. His comments show the all-too-true reality of governments that fail to account for behavioral changes when declaring that a tax increase will simply raise money in a static analysis of the revenue raised.

First, people like Mike Z, as he stated, will no longer be able to afford their homes and be forced to sell their house. When people sell their house under distressed conditions, as we learned the last 3 years, it forces the seller to settle for less money than they would in a normal sale. Additionally, the increased number of properties on the market will also drive prices down. The decreased sales prices will ultimately push the assessed values down leading to less revenue than projected. Not only will lower assessments drive down tax revenue, but it will raise the foreclosure rates and have other consequences that we have seen too much of the last three years.

Second, as a recent first-time homebuyer in Alexandria, I can tell you that the assessed property tax impacts the sales price. Homebuyers determine what monthly payment they can afford. For example, an increase in the property tax rate that causes a higher annual payment of \$1,000 results in an increased monthly payment of \$83. While that \$83 may seem like a miniscule amount to the city, to make up that difference to keep an equivalent monthly payment, the sales price of the home will have to be lowered by approximately \$12,000. Call me crazy, but one of the last things our housing market can handle right now is an additional decrease in home values by another \$12,000--simply because some members of the city council cannot make the difficult decisions of cutting the budget.

[Nick S. \(141\)](#) | User | March 28, 2010 - 10:30 AM |

I do not support the residential or commercial tax increases. I believe we should be eliminating the "Affordable Housing" tax as the City's spending is making the City unaffordable to its own citizens. We should be eliminating most subsidies and grant programs and fund safety net benefits only thru the individual. There are so many programs that I view as NOT the province of City Government I can't see how our

educated population can justify supporting it at such a high cost compared to the private sector.

Govt spending has grown over the last ten years by approximately 80% even though our population has only grown by 17%. It is time for new blood on City Council.

[Lisa Miller \(147\)](#) | User | April 2, 2010 - 5:00 PM |

First, please do not approve a 7% increase on homeowners. For many, our homes are worth significantly less than what we are paying. Also, if employees, as well as residents, are not getting pay increases, where do you expect this money to come from. We all live on some sort of budget. Our current mortgage payment is already hundreds more than anticipated purely because of city taxes.

Second, use non-tax revenue options that you already have! I can't tell you how many cars on my street sit for days and days. There is a limit, it says a vehicle can be parked in the same spot for no more than 72 hours before it is considered abandoned. Utilize this. Maybe the guy on my block with 13 cars would get rid of some. Also, how many citations were issued during the snow storm for residents and businesses not clearing their sidewalks? The language is there, use it.

This leads me to another issue, parking enforcement. I have noticed that a few particular very large officers are driving around in nice new cars! Really!?! Is this because they killed the Neon? How much extra gas are they using? They should be forced to get out and walk. No more cars in Old Town. Maybe then they would notice that a car hasn't moved in weeks, or that someone was illegally parked in a handicapped spot or that they couldn't walk in front of a house or business because of snow or bushes.

I agree with the comment regarding library and community center hours. Don't close at 5pm when everyone gets home from work. Open at 2 in the afternoon and stay open until 8 or 9.

And the free trolley. Stop it. No more. Old Town is "walkable" let's encourage this. These trolleys just add to the congestion on King St.

Also, the box on King that tells me when I can and can't walk...another waste of money. I can't imagine the other wastes that occur behind closed doors.

Look at the money you currently have coming in a adjust accordingly. That is what all of us have had to do. You can't get blood from a stone.

[Elizabeth \(149\)](#) | User | April 6, 2010 - 3:24 PM |

There should be no increase in any taxes in 2011. The tax rate should remain unchanged.

The people of Alexandria are not seeing their incomes increase and are forced to economize and not buy what they cannot pay for.  
The City Council has for too long given every interest group too much of what they have asked for.  
This includes city employees who have good salaries and good pensions with health care coverage continued. If we can afford hundreds of thousands of dollars for non essential activities we should not increase the tax burden.

[citizen \(150\)](#) | User | April 7, 2010 - 12:29 PM |

**First Name:** Sean  
**Last Name:** Rough  
**Date:** 4/13/10  
**City:** Alexandria  
**Subject:** Cut the Spending

To the city Council and other concerned Public Servants-

As a proud citizen of Alexandria who cares about the city's long-term prosperity and economic viability, I wanted to voice my strong support for a REDUCTION of the city's annual budget.

The large majority of your citizenry has faced the current economic climate by cutting discretionary spending in order to make sure outlays don't exceed inflows. Looking at current budget projections, it appears that Alexandria is not yet prepared to do that. Granted, current guidance provides for aggressive cuts in the GROWTH of spending, but the fact that spending is set to grow at all in an environment of declining revenues is disturbing. The reality is that Alexandrians cannot know when a recovery will take place, nor whether it will look like recoveries that have gone before. This is the time to get our house in order, so to speak: by "pruning" the budget now, we will be better positioned to either sustain future unpleasant economic surprises, or to thrive all the more if the economy turns around.

Again, I urge the Council to exercise wise stewardship of the Public's money: REDUCE the annual budget. Demonstrate to an increasingly pinched Public that its government has the discipline to govern well.

Sincerely,  
Sean Rough  
207 Longview Dr.  
Alexandria

PS: The city's openness about its budget and its decision-making materials really is remarkable—and very much appreciated. Thank you.

**First Name:** Bud

**Last Name:** Miller

**Date:** 4/15/10

**City:** Alexandria

**Subject:** Cut the bloated budget without a significant impact on City Services

#### Recommendations for Immediate Budget Cuts

1. Immediate Savings: \$290,000 to \$1,451,000 per year.
  - a. Modest pay reductions for all City Employees earning more than \$100,000 per year.
    - i. 1 percent = \$290,000
    - ii. 3 percent = \$870,000
    - iii. 5 percent = \$1,451,000

Note: This would impact a total of 246 of the City's highest paid employees, but the average City Employee, including the cops & firefighters on the street would not be touched.

2. \$1 million in Revenue; \$10,500 annually in new tax revenue.

Immediate Savings: \$XXX,XXX per year

- a. Eliminate the Safe Haven Project.
  - i. Eliminate the 10 positions planned to oversee the activities of the maximum of 12 Safe Haven Residents.
  - ii. Eliminate additional construction/re-hab/supplies
  - iii. Sell building on open market for \$1 million (below market value)
  - iv. Once building is privatized, it should bring in a minimum of \$10,500 in property taxes per year. (Additional tax revenue will be likely depending on the new owners.)

Note: As of this date, this multi-million dollar waste of money has yet to provide a single night's respite or meal to anyone.

3. \$2 Million

- a. Reduce the Planning & Zoning Department staffing to 2000 levels.
  - i. This would result in the elimination of xx City Jobs.

Note: the Department of Planning and Zoning has been one of the fastest growing departments in the City Bureaucracy. Given that the economy has virtually stopped new

projects in the City, it is only reasonable to reduce unneeded staff. This will also reduce the likelihood that this department will be misused to pursue political agendas, which has resulted in negative unintended consequences. Eliminate the “Professional Ethicist.” Budget cutting decisions are a role for our elected and appointed leadership. If our leaders cannot face the difficult choices associated with budget cuts, they should be replaced. Hiring a “Professional Ethicist” is simply a waste of taxpayers’ dollars in a vain effort to avoid accountability. Terminate any contracts/future payments to “Professional Ethicists.”

Eliminate the “Office on Women.” For those who haven’t noticed, the year is 2009, not 1959. People of all genders can take care of themselves, especially in a community as progressive as Alexandria. Indeed, the very existence of the office is both sexist and patronizing. In practice, the office provides little in the way of services or education that is not redundant with other City Services.

Eliminate the Poet Laureate. \$1,000 is not a large sum of money, but it illustrates the casual disregard the city has for scarce taxpayer dollars. What is more important, promotion of “culture” or letting Alexandrians keep more of their hard-earned money in order to pay their bills? Surely, if the Council feels this relatively new position is important, they can voluntarily donate enough in private contributions to keep the City well supplied in “Poet Laureates.”

\*Eliminate Tuition Assistance for City Employees. There are numerous scholarships available for those qualified to earn them or, like just about everyone else, they can provide for their own education.

\*Eliminate City Training of Employees for Standard Software Programs. Make proficiency in basic, well known programs like Microsoft Word a hiring requirement. In this day and age, most high school, if not elementary, students are proficient in the basic Microsoft office programs. If City Workers are unable to use these essential programs, it is rather unlikely that they will be of much service to the public.

\*Eliminate City Funding for “Adult Youths.” Alexandria taxpayers should not foot the bill for youth services provided to legal adults. Stop using taxpayer dollars to provide for foster or mentoring services for people older than age 18.

Charge to ride the King Street Trolley. The Alexandria City Council has apparently said there is such a thing as a free ride. Free is nice, but it doesn’t even begin to reflect reality. If a rider isn’t going to pay a small amount, perhaps a quarter, for a ride down King Street, he/she sure isn’t likely to drop a bundle at a local business.

Eliminate Vacant Positions. The world hasn’t ended and the City hasn’t ground to a halt because some “vacant” positions haven’t been filled. Permanently eliminate positions

that have been empty for more than six months.

**Affordable/Public Housing.** Follow the example set by “The Berg” (Chatham Square) by redeveloping all public housing projects near the Braddock Road Metro station and redistributing at least half of the units throughout the City on an equitable basis. Maximizing the return on the extremely valuable real estate closest to Metro and Old Town will boost City real estate tax revenue while reducing costs associated with concentrated public housing. Such actions would also conform to the City’s long-standing Fair Share policy mandating scattered site public housing.

**Audit the Community Services Board.** The policies, decision making processes and implementation procedures of the Community Services Board should be audited with the intention of helping the greatest number of people with limited resources. For example, according to City documents 50% of the individuals receiving psychological testing services from the City could likely receive the same services from their private insurers.

**Pursue More Efficient Lighting.** When maintenance is required, replace traditional lights with more efficient, longer lasting, LED technologies. While the initial replacement costs are greater, the City will more than recoup these costs with lowered electric bills, less maintenance, safer and greater reliability at its stoplights and other lighting requirements. A gradual replacement program will save dollars long-term and place the City well on its goal to be more environmentally friendly.

**\*Pursue Less Expensive Greenery.** When maintenance is required, replace plants in City-maintained medians and parks with low height shrubs and other perennials that will require a minimum of maintenance. Not only will this reduce costs, but it will be better for the environment.

**Reduce Heating/Cooling Costs.** Like many Alexandria families are doing, the City should cut back on the thermostat. Turn the temperature in City office buildings down several

degrees during the winter and up during the summer to reduce costs.

**\*Eliminate Subsidies for Non-Needy Residents.** According to a City Document, at least 11 “clients” of rent subsidies have family members living in the units who could assist with rent payments. Why should taxpayers help pay rent support when individuals receiving the rent subsidies earn enough to do without them?

Finally, in the event our locally elected leaders aren’t up to the task, it may be time for hard working, over taxed Alexandrians to work with the State Legislature to amend The City Charter to protect Alexandria and its future generations from a lack of fiscal responsibility.

\*Congratulations to the City for identifying these budget cutting ideas and posting them on the City's web site.