

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET OPTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR FY 2011  
PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENTS

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Looking ahead to the considerable challenges facing the City in Fiscal Year 2011, last July I asked City departments to provide me with budget reduction options for consideration as we prepared for the City Council budget retreat and the development of a budget for presentation to City Council next February. I also asked for increases that departments felt would be essential to meet critical public needs. We have done an initial review of those options and have \$8.7 million in reductions still under consideration and about \$1.4 million in new initiatives. This memorandum transmits a list of those reduction options for City Council's information.

**No decisions are necessary at this time on any particular reduction or new initiative.** This information is provided so that City Council may assess the type of reductions and increases being considered. This knowledge may help City Council provide general guidance to the City staff in preparation of a Proposed Budget to be presented next February.

Because over the past 3 years we have taken significant savings, particularly to balance the FY 2009 and FY 2010 budgets in light of the severe, national economic recession, the ability of City staff to trim budgets further without significantly affecting services provided to the public is greatly diminished. Authorized personnel strength peaked in FY 2007 at 2,649 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Although slightly more positions were authorized initially in FY 2009, the mid-year budget reductions and hiring slowdown of that year lead to lower staffing levels by year's end. We reduced 119 full and part-time positions in the FY 2010 budget. Continuing attrition has led to 222 unfilled full and part-time positions and a current (mid-October) on-board staffing level of 2,358 FTE. I continue to monitor and closely control all new hiring and have limited such hiring only to essential positions. (Detailed staffing level information will be provided in the Compensation and Benefit section of the Retreat materials.)

The list of reductions under consideration contains many programmatic reductions that truly will reduce services provided to the public. This list is not exhaustive. Depending on City Council's guidance and further analysis by City staff, we may have to propose additional or alternative programmatic reductions in February that will affect service levels in other ways.

I want to note that in my conversations and discussions with City employees they are concerned about further budget reductions and the impact on their ability to accommodate the workload placed on them without reducing both the quantity and quality of services they can provide. As you know, I too am concerned about not only the immediate effects on services to the public, but also the longer term effects on employee morale, productivity and retention.

Some reductions not on the list provided by departments, but also under consideration include:

- A savings of \$1.0 million in our contribution to the trust fund for "Other Post Employment Benefits" (health care and life insurance) as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). This slowdown in our contributions should still meet GASB requirements and the scrutiny of bond rating agencies. (More detail will be provided in the Compensation and Benefit section of the retreat materials.)
- A reduction of \$4.0 million in cash capital contributions to our Capital Improvement Program (CIP) from current revenues in FY 2011. This reduction may be offset by funding from prior year fund balances, but it reduces cash capital from FY 2010 revenues to zero.
- The use of state transit aid, which are greater than budgeted, to offset subsidies to WMATA in order to hold the total cost of transit subsidies provided by the City constant in FY 2011 with FY 2010 levels.

I realize that some reductions in City operations are both necessary and inevitable given the fiscal challenges facing the City. I provide the above words of caution only to make explicit what I think City Council fully recognizes already, that there will be no easy way to balance the FY 2011 budget without affecting City services both now and in the future.

Although departments expressed a wide variety of need requiring additional resources, at this time in this fiscal environment there are only two major critical increases suggested by departments that I am considering proposing in FY 2011. Both relate to public safety:

- I have received a request from the Fire Department to establish two new "peak time" medic units. The Department has made a sufficiently compelling case for these units to ensure public safety. Staffing and equipping these units would cost approximately \$930,000 in FY 2011.
- I also believe it wise to add funding for additional resources for emergency communication staff as we transition to a Department of Emergency Communications, a new Department created by combining the existing Police and

Consideration may also be given to enhancing the care and maintenance of existing City facilities and properties. Over the last few years, budgetary pressures have led to deterioration in these services. Further reductions may be necessary in FY 2011. At some point, however, perhaps sooner than later, City Council may want to consider restoring these service levels to those that existed before the financial crisis. There is a correlation between the condition of these facilities and properties and the community's sense of well-being, pride, and ability to present ourselves to and attract visitors.

Finally, there are several options that are described in a separate memorandum and Retreat presentation to City Council on Compensation Issues and Potential Cost Impact. Those options include:

- Adjusted Benchmark Rate
- Competency Based Classification Implementation Cost
- Market Rate Adjustment
- Merit Step
- Pay Supplemental Bonus
- Benefits Review

Attachments:

Budget Reduction Options for FY 2011 with Significant Impact on Public

BUDGET REDUCTION OPTIONS FOR FY 2011 WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON PUBLIC  
PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENTS  
CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR FY 2011 – BY STRATEGIC PLANNING OBJECTIVE

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**COMMUNITY: A COMMUNITY THAT IS AFFORDABLE AND DIVERSE WITH A RICH HISTORY AND  
CULTURE**

**Department of Human Services**

- Close and sell Mentor Home serving 5 to 6 teenage foster youth. Affected youth are 17-20 years of age. After 2 graduate from high school the City could either find an apartment in Alexandria where they can cohabit with regular contact by a social worker or shift them to a private, independent living facility outside of Alexandria.
- Reduce Rent Relief program eligibility to be more aligned with prevailing guidelines used in similar programs. Change could reduce the number of clients served to 62 families/individuals (instead of 73) and reduce benefits provided to 15 of those still served. Of the 11 clients who could be dropped from the program, all have someone living in the household who can assist with rental payments.

**Office on Women**

- Reduce Crisis Intervention program – particularly affecting court advocacy, safety planning, and crisis counseling.

**Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (Community Services Board)**

- Several reductions necessitated by FY 2010 reductions in Virginia Commonwealth support to CSB could continue into FY 2011 including:
  - Elimination of 2 administrative positions providing staff training and financial analysis. (During FY 2009, five administrative positions were eliminated and these additional reductions further impede the department's ability to continue existing functions in a timely and accurate manner.
  - Elimination of a laboratory aide providing drug testing for MH/MR/SA consumers as well as consumers at Adult Probation and Parole, Court Services/Juvenile Probation, the Sheriff's Office, and other programs.
  - Elimination of a detoxification and substance abuse therapist providing case management services to 10 to 20 consumers each month.
  - Transition intellectually disabled vocational consumers currently provided contracted services to in-house services. Similar services could be provided, but consumers and families could have less choice. Consumers already served in-house could experience some disruption to established routines and relationships as a result of additional consumers being served in-house.

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- Mental Health services could be further reduced by:
  - Reducing therapy services by 1,135 hours to 100 consumers per year that results in longer wait times for remaining consumers. Group therapy sessions for anger management could be eliminated for 50 to 60 individuals as well as specialized therapy services for court referred sex offenders. This program would have a 16% reduction in staffing levels if approved.
  - Eliminating most adult psychological testing services affecting 22 consumers, half of whom may be able to receive this service through a private provider paid by insurance. Some funding could be retained for critical need consumers without insurance.
  - Reorganizing residential management staffing, which results in the elimination of an Assistant Residential Coordinator position. This reduction is contingent upon the implementation of the early intervention and prevention reductions, which could allow for the transition of a position to the Extended Care Division.
- Early intervention and prevention services could be further reduced by:
  - Eliminating 21 programs offered at Schools and Recreation Centers. 657 students and 430 parents could not receive individual counseling; 1,670 students and 30 parents could not receive group services and 6,000 parents, school staff and residents would not receive information on prevention campaigns. 6,656 volunteer hours valued at \$42,265 would not be delivered.
- Substance abuse programs could be further reduced by
  - Eliminating 1,135 hours of therapy services to consumers that results in longer wait times for remaining consumers. Reducing the program by 1.0 FTE reduces the program's staffing by 15%.
  - Eliminating contracted residential services for 22 substance abuse consumers. Consumers could continue to receive other services, such as case management and detoxification services, but could not be able to obtain contracted residential treatment placements.

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**Office of Housing**

- Eliminating the remaining dedication of 0.7 cents of the real estate tax for affordable housing purposes. This amount (previously estimated at \$772,060), if completely eliminated, precludes the issuance of additional bonds for affordable housing by eliminating funding for additional debt service. As a result, this reduction would put at risk the financing of the City Council plan to provide up to \$6.4 million to ARHA to replace 16 units in connection with the redevelopment of the James Bland public housing units. The Office of Housing has available \$3.3 million (\$2.27 million from the formula established for the ARHA units and \$1.03 million proposed to be reallocated from other programs) but is still \$3.1 million short. If Housing must have funds available to provide the full \$6.4 million, \$310,000 could still have to be provided by the dedicated tax source to pay debt service on \$3.1 million of bonds.

**Alexandria Library**

- Hours of operation could be reduced significantly during the week and on weekends at least 8 hours a week at Barrett, Burke and Duncan libraries from 65 hours to 53 hours. Temporary positions could also be eliminated with this reduction in service hours.
- The Library could cut the materials budget by 18% from its FY 2010 level. The number of books checked out may decrease if the titles sought by patrons are unavailable, the waiting time for popular titles could increase with fewer copies to lend, and the ability to expand into alternative media could be limited.
- The City Manager does not recommend furlough days as recommended by the Library Board – either for Library staff or for City staff.

**Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities**

- Mowing in City medians and the Ft. Ward Bastion could be reduced further to 1 time a month for a total of 8 times a year. This would have a noticeable visible impact as well as potentially endanger the Ft. Ward Bastion walls due to erosion threats from lack of sufficient maintenance.
- Horticultural services (i.e., seasonal plantings in medians, Market Square, parks, etc.) could be reduced further at nearly all RPCA maintained locations.
- Several administrative division positions could go unfunded. Service impacts may be mitigated to some degree by reorganization efforts, but RPCA could have significantly smaller ratio of administrative staff to total staff when compared to similarly sized departments.
- Pond maintenance activities at Ben Brenman Pond at Cameron Station could be reduced significantly and limited to periodic debris removal with no chemical applications.

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- City alleyway maintenance activities could be reduced to once a year sweeps for weed, trash and litter removal except where public health is at stake.
- Senior programs could be coordinated from the Lee Center with existing staff instead of at the Mt. Vernon Recreation Center, causing a reduction in staffing for this activity
- 6.22 vacant Recreation Services positions could be kept vacant through FY 2011. Portions of these positions serve adults as well as youth. These are primarily part time positions from neighborhood centers, the aquatics program and youth recreation programs.
- The afterschool programs at Durant/Jefferson Houston could be eliminated due to low enrollment. Children could apply to attend the Campagna program at Jefferson Houston or enroll at Charles Houston Recreation Center Out-of-School-Time program. Staff could be reassigned.

**Office of Historic Alexandria**

- Staffing at various OHA facilities could be reduced, including the Lyceum, Ft. Ward, Friendship Firehouse, the Archeology division, and the Black History Museum.
- A special Civil War Sesquicentennial effort at Ft. Ward may not be affordable for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War.
- The non-personnel budget could be cut at all OHA facilities as well. This reduction could affect the quality of the displays of museum artifacts and the services offered to the public.

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CITY THAT IS ECONOMICALLY DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE**

**Department of Planning and Zoning**

- Elimination of all outside contract support and some neighborhood planning staff resulting in the following: delay of the Small Area Plan for Eisenhower West by four months (to the middle of FY 2011); delay of a new unspecified small area plan for one year; elimination of most demographic and forecasting work; delay of implementation planning for the Landmark or Waterfront plan for at least one year; unless City Council provides specific funding for specific planning projects as part of add-delete or from Contingent Reserves set aside during add-delete.

**Department of Transportation and Environmental Services**

- An inspector position could be eliminated increasing the response times for inspections to be conducted for roads and other transportation infrastructure construction projects.

**Code Administration**

- Reduction in staffing for records scanning and retrieval. Could result in slower response to customer inquiries for records, FOIA requests and permit center activities.
- Reduction in fire inspection staff could result in the elimination of night and weekend coverage and increased response times for non-emergency complaints (e.g., trash, tall grass, noise, inoperable vehicles, illegal construction, overcrowding). Attendance at civic group meetings could be further limited.

**Economic Development Activities**

- Options for 3 percent reductions have been requested of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and the Small Business Development Center. Reductions, if taken, could negatively impact economic development activities.
- City funding for the Eisenhower Partnership is scheduled to end in FY 2011.

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**HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT: A HEALTHY COMMUNITY THAT PRESERVES ITS ENVIRONMENT**

**Alexandria Health Department**

- State reductions to the Pharmacy program could result in elimination of the activity unless the City provides funding (through the already-budgeted local match) for continuation of some portion of the activity at a reduced level. Approximately 26,000 prescriptions are filled annually for about 7,650 patients serving both State mandated programs and City sponsored programs.
- State reduction to the environmental health program could seriously impact the City's respiratory health program unless City provides for funding for replacement of 1 full-time state funded positions (eliminated in May 2008) with two part-time staff. (The new positions to be funded by fee increases – see below.) Reductions could affect the following performance measures
  1. Number of smoke free work places
  2. Number of community respiratory health outreach activities
  3. Number of healthy home assessments
  4. Number of respiratory health complaints investigated
- Adult Clinic reduction in service from 4,700 to 4,100 patient visits. There is hope that the City can enter into an agreement with ANHSI to enable ANHSI to increase current capacity to serve adults

**Department of Transportation and Environmental Services**

- Could eliminate King St. and Mt. Vernon "white wing" sidewalk and gutter cleaning services.

**TRANSPORTATION: A CITY WITH A SAFE AND CONVENIENT MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION  
SYSTEM**

**Department of Transportation**

- Bus Shelter cleaning services could be eliminated for 120 bus shelters (both DASH and METRO) that are now power washed once a month.
- Sidewalk, curb and gutter repairs could be reduced by 1,550 square yards or about 14%. This could eliminate the ability of TES to do preventative maintenance. Work could be limited to verified complaint driven requests and staff identified immediate needs.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY & QUALITY OF LIFE: A SAFE CITY WITH A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Police Department**

- Reduction in Community Policing (COPs) activity so that only 1 officer is assigned to each neighborhood now covered. Second officer would be reassigned to Patrol from the Lynhaven/Mt. Jefferson, Arlandria and James Bland neighborhoods.
- 2 of 11 motorcycle officer positions could be reduced and reassigned. The core functions of radar enforcement, traffic management and dignitary escorts could be preserved but other ceremonial functions and funeral escorts could be substantially reduced, if not eliminated, unless funded by fees for such services.
- A captain position could be eliminated. When the Chief promotes a captain to deputy chief, the captain position will not be replaced.
- A vice detective position could be eliminated, reducing the unit strength from 10 to 9 positions , with 2 others on related task force assignments.
- Parking enforcement vacant positions could be eliminated.
- The planning and accreditation function could be completely civilianized.
- A vacant civilian training specialist position could be eliminated, and its duties combined with the Field Training Officer sergeant position.
- One support position in the Domestic Violence Activity could be eliminated. (This unit has 2 civilians right now, the administrative officer and the social worker.)
- Overtime could be reduced in the Patrol divisions, through careful management of special events, and through limiting non-essential activities (K-9 and Special Operations Team demonstrations, Honor Guard appearances).
- Equipment purchases could be curtailed (saving depreciation costs in the General Fund budget and significant costs charged to the Equipment Replacement fund). The reductions include reducing the Police fleet by 7 cruisers and 2 unmarked sedans. In addition, if the motor officers are reduced, 2 motorcycles could be eliminated. Also, 10 mobile data browsers could not be purchased in FY 2011.

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**Court Service Unit**

- Staffing for at-risk youth intervention programs could be reduced. The State has already reduced funding for these activities by 5%. An additional \$107,086 reduction of City funding could require CSU to reduce the number of truant cases handled from 30 to 12, dissolve the school suspension initiative for court-involved youth, and eliminate intensive case management services.

**Commonwealth's Attorney**

- This office could reduce its victim restitution collection services for crime victims, and concentrate on collection in those cases most significantly in arrears.
- A vacant commonwealth's attorney position could be held vacant which would result in a reduction in the types and numbers of misdemeanor cases which the office prosecutes.

**Clerk of Courts**

- Staffing could be reduced by one or two full-time positions (from the currently approved level of 23 FTE). This could impact the Department's customer service at the counter and on the phone and the availability of providing clerks for courtroom proceedings.

**FINANCE AND OPERATIONS: A CITY THAT IS FISCALLY STRONG AND WELL MANAGED**

**Office of Communications**

- The media content coordinator position could be held vacant through FY 2011. This could result in a reduction in the Communications Office capacity to produce video content both online and on Channel 70. Also special project and content development work could be spread out and shared by the current staff.
- FYI Alexandria and the internal news digest AlexNews could be distributed only electronically except when departments print copies at their own expense and mailed to those residents who specifically request hard copies of FYI Alexandria. Some copies could be available in the libraries.

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**General Services**

- A large reduction in costs is possible by the award of a new contract for management of the City-owned parking facilities.
- The costs of postage and vehicle car washes could be passed back to the departments and mostly absorbed within their budgets. It is expected that departments will thus have an incentive to reduce those costs.

**Human Resources**

- Administrative support services could be reduced by 25%, shifting those functions from a temporary worker to HR professional staff – thus resulting in a decline in service delivery to internal clients.
- Two HR technician positions could continue to be held vacant, which could impact the classification and compensation and benefits and records functions of the department. This may delay the processing, recording and tracking of compensation and benefits information.
- Employee training and tuition assistance programs could be reduced significantly – serving 45 less employees (55%).
- HR funded support for out-sourced training and professional development could be reduced and internally developed courses and programs could be emphasized. Funding could be reduced by 38%.
- Employee wellness program funding could be reduced by 22%. The program could be redesigned to effectively provide wellness activities with the remaining funds.
- HR funded recruitment and advertising could be reduced by 40%. A more strategic recruitment campaign with the remaining funds could be designed.

**Department of Information Technology Services**

- The ITS department could reduce staffing by holding vacant two computer programmer/analyst positions and a network engineer position. This could affect support for enterprise document imaging, which supports 14 other major applications. Other application development upgrade and maintenance efforts on behalf of other departments and ITS responsiveness to network service could also be affected. The reduction could require ITS division chiefs to perform some of the programming tasks and network related services associated with these positions rather than manage and administer the divisions as well as plan future improvements in programming and network operations.

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- Administrative support could be reduced to one person for the entire department. Constituent service to other departments could decline and other IT staff could have to handle routine clerical and administrative tasks, thus diverting them from using their professional and technical skills on tasks.
- Eliminate training for City Standard business software applications, such as word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail and other applications. Departmental efficiency may be affected and increased help desk inquiries to run these routine applications may also affect help desk service.
- Eliminate ITS internal staff training and the purchase of books and publications. This could erode ITS staff ability to keep current with current technology developments.

**Purchasing Department**

- The funding provided for outside contractor support could be reduced by 60%. This reduction could hinder the department's ability to handle complex procurements though the use of an experienced procurement expert.

**Finance Department**

- Some administrative services could be consolidated and the affected departmental professional staff could perform administrative tasks themselves, thus reducing their efficiency.

**SCHOOLS AND YOUTH: A CITY WHERE ALL YOUTH HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED**

**Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs**

- 6.22 vacant Recreation Services positions could be kept vacant through FY 2011. Some portion of these positions serve youth.
- Operating hours at Charles Barrett and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers could be reduced to only those necessary for core Out-of-School-Time afternoon activities. These facilities could remain available for use by RPCA programs that allow cost recovery outside of Out-of-School-Time program hours. Night staff could be reassigned to Mt. Vernon and Charles Houston.
- The after school programs at Durant and Jefferson Houston could be eliminated because currently there are no children registered and children could apply to attend the Campagna program at Jefferson Houston. This offering could be dropped and Staff could be reassigned.

**Alexandria City Public Schools**

- Each 1% reduction (or increase) in City transfer to Schools is equal to \$1.65 million.