

Accomplishments and Events Budget, Finance and Administration



The City of Alexandria is committed to creating recreational, cultural and educational opportunities for its young people.

FY 2000 Budget

In May, Council approved an overall budget, including General and Special Revenue Funds, of \$361.4 million for FY 2000. The total budget consists of a General Fund Budget, which is supported by local taxes of \$288.2 million, and a \$73.2 million Special Revenue Fund, that includes federal and state grants and non-local monies. The General Fund appropriation for FY 2000 to the Alexandria City Public Schools of \$92.4 million is an increase of \$3.5 million, or 4% more than last year's appropriation, representing 32% of the General Fund Budget. This appropriation fully funded the School Board's operating budget request.

Real Estate Taxes and Assessments

The overall assessed value of real property in the City increased by 5.02%, from \$11.6 billion in CY 1998 to nearly \$12.2 billion in CY 1999. More than 50% of this increase stemmed from new construction. New residential construction added \$187.8 million to the tax base and new commercial construction added \$130.9 million. The average assessed value of an existing residential home (which includes townhouses and condominiums) increased by less than 1%, an increase of \$1,256, from \$179,496 in 1998 to \$180,752 in 1999. In addition, with a stable real estate tax rate of \$1.11 maintained, the increase in the average residential tax bill for 1999 was less than 1%.

Revenue Initiatives

The FY 2000 budget also includes revenue initiatives to diversify the tax base: a new \$1 per night lodging fee, instituted as part of the City's transient lodging tax, to expand the City's overall investment in tourism promotion. The new fee is projected to generate \$700,000 in additional revenue. City Council lowered the transient lodging tax rate from 5.65% to 5.5%. The approved budget also includes increases in some user fees, consistent with City Council's adopted guidelines that require the City to review user fees annually. Specific user-fee increases adopted for FY 2000 include: the residential trash fee; the ambulance transport fee; and recreation fee changes, as endorsed by the Park and Recreation Commission. Due in part to federally mandated clean air capital investment costs at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, where the City burns its trash and produces electricity, the City's cost for residential trash service is projected to increase to \$210 by FY 2001. The increase will be phased in over two years, with an increase of \$25 this year, from \$160 to \$185.

Capital Improvement Program

City Council approved a six-year (FY 2000-FY 2005) Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of \$118 million in public improvements, which represents a reduction of approximately \$19.4 million, or 14.1%, compared to the approved FY 1999-FY 2004 CIP.

Total funding for City capital projects in the FY 2000-FY 2005 CIP is \$66.1 million, which represents a reduction of \$22.9 million, or 25.7%, as compared to the current FY 1999-FY 2004 City CIP. The City's CIP is largely consistent with the approved FY 1999-FY 2004 CIP, but also includes funding for: an increase of approximately \$4 million in the City's capital contribution to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, largely for Metrorail rehabilitation; construction of a new animal shelter at a cost of \$2.5 million (including \$500,000 in private contributions); \$620,000 for a one-time grant for capital renovations to the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, scheduled to be undertaken between FY 2000 and FY 2001; \$500,000 for bulkhead repair at Waterfront Park; \$374,000 for a Visitor Center; and \$13.2 million for the City's Information Technology Plan, which provides for the City's investment in essential technology systems.

Total funding for the Schools' capital projects, including State aid for Schools' capital needs for FY 2000-FY 2005 is \$53,645,000, an increase of \$5.3 million, or 10.9%.



during one of Alexandria's summer re-enactments focusing on the City's colorful history.

Bond Issuance

In January 1999, the nation's two most recognized municipal bond rating agencies — Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's — reaffirmed their highest credit rating, Aaa and AAA, of the City. Alexandria is one of fewer than 25 independent cities in the United States with both of these top bond ratings. The City sold \$40 million of general obligation bonds at an interest rate of 4.3%, which will be used to finance public improvements, including the new community library, a new elementary school, and renovations to recreation facilities. The triple-A rating from both rating agencies will save the City approximately \$500,000 in interest costs over the 20-year life of the bonds.

Parking Adjudication Office

Council approved funding in December for a new Parking Adjudication Office, which opened March 1. This office has improved customer service by providing a more efficient and responsive system for contesting a parking citation. Instead of making a court appearance, individuals now may present their cases to a trained adjudicator for a hearing fee of \$10, which is waived if the citation is dismissed. Citations can be contested by mail, scheduling an appointment or on a walk-in basis. The telephone number of this new service is 703-519-3360.

Extended Hours of City Service

The Treasury and Revenue divisions of the Finance Department now are open in City Hall from 9 a. m. to noon every Saturday, except holiday weekends. Citizens can register vehicles, purchase City decals, obtain Residential and Visitor/Guest Parking Permits, and pay real estate and personal property taxes and parking tickets at City Hall. Citizens also can make tax payments by mail, or at Alexandria Crestar bank branches. Property taxes and parking tickets also can be paid by telephone with a credit card by calling, 1-888-2PAYTAX.