

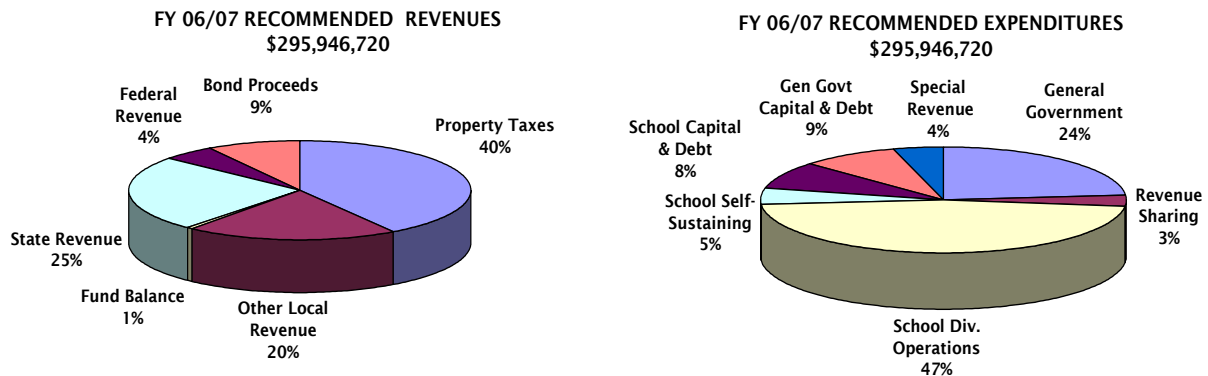
BUDGET MESSAGE



The Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
 County of Albemarle
 401 McIntire Road
 Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Albemarle County:

On behalf of the administration of the County of Albemarle, I am pleased to present to you and the citizens of Albemarle County the County’s Fiscal Year 06/07 proposed operating budget of \$259.3 million, an increase of \$26.2 million (11.2%) over the FY05/06 budget, with approximately 63% or \$16.5 million of the increase attributed to the School Division budget and approximately 14% or \$3.7 million going to fund public safety initiatives. When the FY06/07 capital budget is added to the County’s operations, the combined budget totals \$295.9 million. This budget is built on the current real property tax rate of \$0.74/\$100 of assessed valuation and a Personal Property tax rate of \$4.28/\$100 of assessed valuation.



To present a more comprehensive picture of the County’s budget to the Board and citizens, this financial document is more than just the County’s FY 07 proposed operating budget. This financial plan includes information on expected revenues, our recommended FY 06/07 operating budget, our FY 06/07 - FY 10/11 Capital Improvements Program budget and our annual Business Plan which links our strategic plan to both the operating and capital budgets. The Business Plan features both the recommended expenditures for the County’s upcoming capital initiatives and clarifies their impacts and relationships with the County’s operating budget.

Meeting Emerging Needs

This budget is based on our county’s continuing transition from a predominantly rural and suburban county to an urbanizing locality that is beginning to face challenges and service pressures more similar to a small city. As jurisdictions evolve and grow, the costs to support this growth do not increase in a linear incremental fashion. Programs we are funding today to meet our community’s emerging needs, from paid firefighters to storm water management to acquisition of conservation easements, simply did not exist even as recently as ten years ago. This financial plan responds to the impacts of this steady population growth, while it provides

additional funds to our capital budget to address the more intensive development in our urban areas such as sidewalk and road construction as well as improved public safety and increased human services.

In the midst of this transition, our citizens continue to value the rural character and agricultural heritage that has always defined Albemarle County. Our 2004 Citizen Survey told us that above all other issues residents are most concerned about how well the County is doing in managing the impacts of growth and in preserving open space in the roughly 690 square miles that comprise our rural areas. While we have very specific land use policies to protect the open spaces, natural resources and rural character of our county, the success of our protection efforts depends on our ability to concentrate growth, including new homes and businesses, in our established urban areas. For the 35 square miles that comprise our urban areas to function successfully as compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use communities with effective transportation systems and adequate public safety response, local government must provide broad and diverse services.

Challenges to Service Levels and Infrastructure

The following are examples of the ways in which our budget has changed during the last ten years in response to the urbanization challenges that have grown at a pace significantly beyond the increasing population. These figures reflect comparisons from the FY 1997 Adopted Budget to this year’s Recommended Budget.

OPERATING	FY 1997	FY 2007
▲ Fire Rescue ° # of Paid Fire Rescue Staff	3	54
▲ Fire Rescue ° Volunteer Fire Rescue Operations	\$759,679	\$1,519,073
▲ Police - Full Time Employees	111.5	147
▲ Public Transportation	\$321,507	\$978,603
▲ Affordable Housing Trust Fund	0	\$250,000
CAPITAL		
▲ Transportation - Roads	\$500,000	\$2,490,000
▲ Infrastructure	\$61,000	\$1,388,000
▲ Stormwater (federal and state mandates)	\$110,000	\$650,000
▲ Fire Stations	\$250,000	\$4,372,000
▲ ACE (Acquisition of Conservation Easements)	0	\$1,000,000

Much of the increase in this year’s recommended budget is found in the Capital Improvements Budget, where specific projects that address many of the urbanization pressures are funded. For example, the 06/07 Capital Budget includes \$470,000 in funding to begin the planning and construction of two urban fire stations, the Northern and Pantops Stations; \$3.6 million in funding for the new Crozet library; \$2 million for a partnership with the YMCA and PVCC for a recreational center; \$2.5 million in road construction projects; and \$827,000 in neighborhood planning, roadway landscaping and sidewalks for our urban communities. While these projects have been recognized as critical to the needs of the communities they will serve, the cumulative effects of constructing and operating the facilities have a significant effect on the budget that does not necessarily correspond with our community’s rate of population growth.

We Are Making Progress Towards Our Goals

In the past year, the County made many strides towards the realization of our strategic plan:

We Are Protecting Our Rural Spaces and Natural Resources . . . Our new groundwater ordinance protects rural water quality and supply and we now have 17% of the County protected from

development in permanent conservation easements and park land - our ACE Program since 2000 shows 206 development rights eliminated and 3,112 acres protected. We sponsored two green forums last year which focused on new approaches to stormwater management to improve our area's water quality and on greenways and trail system, local food production, and transportation alternatives as green infrastructure and we installed and planted a 10,500 square foot greenroof on the County Office Building which is the largest greenroof in the state. Rural area protection is the focus of a new chapter in our Comprehensive Plan, with specific implementation strategies to be determined in 2006.

We are Creating Quality Urban Places . . . We hired a Business Development Facilitator and a Director of General Services to ensure the economic success and vitality of our master planned communities and to meet infrastructure needs of the urban areas. We invested significant Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding towards a variety of infrastructure projects and neighborhood improvements and increased funding for transportation projects and began working with the Virginia Department of Transportation to identify ways to accelerate critical local projects - we approved a Transportation Engineer position to provide leadership for these efforts. Development ordinances to implement Neighborhood Model initiatives were adopted, including requiring the types of amenities that will create attractive and livable urban environments.

We are Supporting Educational Excellence . . . 100% of our schools is fully accredited by the Commonwealth of Virginia and 84% of our students pursue post-secondary education. Sixty-five percent of our 2005 graduates earned an Advanced Studies diploma, about 18 percent higher than the state average and sixty percent of our 2005 graduates completed at least one rigorous, college-level course while in high school such as Advanced Placement (AP), dual enrollment, dual credit, or industry certification courses. Students at risk of not achieving academically get help from various intervention programs: Bright Stars, Academic Learning Project Schools (ALPS), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and Title I, as well as the County's Family Support Program.

We are Committed to Quality Living . . . We are developing a partnership with the YMCA and Piedmont Virginia Community College for an indoor recreational facility to serve community needs and we upgraded a half-mile section of the Old Mills Greenway trail at Free Bridge to a Class A multi-use ADA accessible trail. Sixteen first-time homebuyers received funds from the County's homebuyers assistance program and the Office of Housing received a \$44,000 grant to restart its Family Self-Sufficiency Program, which supports participants in the housing choice voucher program in achieving their housing goals. The Department of Social Service's Family Support Program was awarded a 2005 Achievement Award by the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), which recognizes exemplary local government programs.

We are Focused on Customer Expectations . . . Several important features were added to the County's website including on-line tax payments and an online proffers database - Albemarle's website recorded over 1,000,000 downloads in 2005. We changed our vehicle decal program from annual to permanent effective January 1, 2006 to improve customer service so residents will no longer have to remove and reapply decals every year. Secure wireless access is now available in the County Office Buildings at both McIntire Road and Fifth Street, allowing employees and building visitors the ability to use laptops and PDA's wirelessly.

This Budget Continues Our Strategic Response

While we are proud of the accomplishments we have achieved in partnership with the community, we recognize the many challenges that face us in the upcoming Fiscal Year and beyond. This recommended budget is designed to support the County's priorities within available resources. Here are some specific ways this budget addresses those challenges (for a complete listing and description of proposed operational and capital initiatives, please see the Table of Contents of the Business Plan on pages C-i in the Business Plan):

- **Provides for High Quality Education and Lifelong Learning** – The County will transfer \$91.2 million to the School Fund for operations, which is an increase of \$10.2 million, or 12.2%, over last year. The Capital Budget allocates \$13.375 million to school projects, with major projects including ongoing work on the Monticello High School auditorium and a new addition for Cale Elementary School. The budget also continues the County’s support for technology in schools and for Workforce training through new support for the One-Stop Workforce Development Center. This budget works closely with the schools to help close the achievement gap by funding the Urban Vision Educational Equity program to help children succeed in school.
- **Protects and Enhances the County’s Natural Resources** – This budget demonstrates our continued commitment to protecting the County’s natural resources by providing on-going support for the Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program, which for the first time is funded with \$650,000 in recurring general funds and \$350,000 in recurring tourism funds to sustain our annual \$1 million contribution. The budget also continues with support for the Ivy Landfill and for our expanded storm water program. The budget provides for ongoing recreational enhancement efforts like our greenways and our river and lake access programs and allocates new funds to providing handicapped accessibility to the fishing facilities at Mint Springs Lake.
- **Promotes Public Safety** – Recognizing the vital role of public safety in our community, this budget recommends approximately \$5.5 million for public safety efforts in FY07. Major items include continued support for building the Northern fire station due to the increased development in the northern area. Funding for all these Northern fire/rescue initiatives totals over \$700,000 next year alone. Other fire/rescue system efforts, which total \$4.27 million, include the first phase of new stations at Pantops and Ivy, capital equipment purchases for the volunteer fire departments, and a fire/rescue training facility/police firing range. Additional police support, totaling \$483,000, is provided by new positions including three sworn officers, a civilian property clerk, an investigator, an animal control officer and a records clerk.
- **Improves Quality of Life/Addresses Affordable Housing** – This budget recognizes the importance of maintaining our outstanding quality of life including new public facilities that provide needed amenities in the urban areas. These initiatives include the new Crozet library at \$3.6 million and an indoor recreational facility to be constructed in collaboration with YMCA and PVCC. We are continuing our focus on affordable housing with \$250,000 in funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and additional support to Piedmont Housing Alliance for housing counseling and loan development help for Albemarle residents.
- **Provides for Urban Infrastructure** – We are allocating funds to help create quality urban environments that will accommodate the majority of the County’s new growth. Examples include Neighborhood Plan implementation, roadway landscaping and our sidewalk program, which total \$824,000 next year. An increased commitment to transportation allocates a total of \$2.5 million on road projects - all infrastructure projects combined total a \$3.3 million annual contribution. We are also investing funds in small business development to assist our business development facilitator in supporting the creation of vibrant “downtown” centers in our master planned communities.
- **Stresses Effectiveness and Efficiency** – We continue to focus on increasing our effectiveness and efficiency – for example, last year we documented \$750,000 in one-time savings and \$500,000 in ongoing savings and 5,800 staff hours that were saved and redirected towards high priority projects. This budget has a strong emphasis on technology with the recognition that productivity and customer service will increase with

technology innovation. Specific initiatives include new GIS technology and a GIS support person, additional Information Technology staff to support and maintain our new system and to work on many of the interactive business processes that will allow us to serve citizens better like on-line payments, applications (permits, reservations, dog licenses, employment, etc), tracking payment information, and others. The budget provides for additional training in technology to keep productivity at high levels, and for a new records management system for Community Development records.

Special Thanks

Each year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), under the direction of Melvin Breeden, coordinates the general government operating and capital budget process. I want to thank Melvin and recognize, with sincere appreciation, the assistance and cooperation of our Department Heads, constitutional officers, regional agency Directors, School Board and School staff for their many hours of hard work and contributions to this budget. I also want to specifically recognize Brenda Neitz, Laura Vinzant, Steve Allshouse, Richard Wiggans, Robert Walters, Tom Foley, Roxanne White, Lee Catlin, Lori Allshouse, Diane Mullins, and Beverly Taylor for their efforts.

In closing, this recommended budget supports the Board of Supervisors' vision for Albemarle County as a community that offers a high quality of life and preserves our natural resources and visual beauty for future generations. I look forward to the upcoming discussions with you and the citizens of Albemarle as we move forward with this FY 06/07 financial plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert W. Tucker, Jr.
County Executive

