

## County Manager's December 8, 2009 Budget Forum Consolidated Group Notes

### Cuts/Savings opportunities/Revenue sources to consider:

#### Revenue Enhancements:

1. Increase fees and/or add new fees for the users of services, such as leaf collection, but be sure a sliding scale is in place. Look at the possibility of charging a fee for a (currently) free service before cutting the service – explain the trade-offs when the fee is proposed.
2. Increase taxes rather than cutting programs, but with assistance in place for those who need it, and provide clear reasons as to why the tax increase is needed. Consider more use of special taxing districts and/or challenge programs
3. Implement a fee for residents using lawn services who leave the bags of clippings at the curb for trash pick-up
4. Implement “Adopt a Pothole” (fee/donation for pothole repairs)
5. Consider a temporary increase in parking meter rates
6. Add more speed traps to raise revenue, increase ticketing for moving violations
7. Look more to grants and federal funding to support programs
8. Impose a tax or penalty when a builder stops construction on a lot prior to completion
9. Increase the decal fee
10. Establish a fee for repeat/nuisance fire alarms (Fairfax has this)
11. Consider charging for library cards
12. Look at the management of Arts Centers – savings/efficiencies possible? Look at them more as revenue generators, especially the new Cultural Center

#### Expenditure Savings/Efficiencies:

13. Energy savings and efficiencies in County facilities
14. Increased coordination and integration of services to reduce duplication and produce efficiencies – between County agencies, between County and Schools, between local jurisdictions (examples within the County – combine recreation centers and libraries, combine Police and Sheriff, combine finance and personnel functions)
15. Marginal reductions in staff hours rather than wholesale position cuts – reduce hours to something less than 40 hours per week, use furloughs; look at reductions in employee benefits

16. Rolling closure for library branches and/or other community facilities(i.e., close different branches on different days of the week); only have Central Library open on Sundays – no branches open that day
17. Look for ways to provide more services online, enabling staff cuts.
18. Avoid duplication of online library resources and print resources
19. Increased use of volunteers and community fund raising to maintain services
20. Expand “Adopt a Street” program
21. Increased collaboration with churches, nonprofits and the private sector for the provision of services, including human services (including outsourcing more services)
22. Temporarily slow down or halt spending on non-essential capital projects, like the trolley, Long Bridge Park, traffic calming measures (speed bumps), sidewalk and street replacements, brick sidewalks; consider cutbacks in transportation enhancements, new street lights
23. Look at possible adjustments in service level standards, such as whether to continue snow removal on bike paths
24. Reduce “making me feel good about what Arlington is doing” marketing, such as giving a party to promote the Car-Free Diet initiative
25. Reduce the use of print materials (flyers, brochures) for emergency management, and cut 1700 AM radio
26. Cut back on use of County cars
27. Look for ways to modify the way services are provided to achieve savings, for example, having residents bag up leaves instead of just raking to curbside, if that would save money on collection
28. Reduce management staff. Reduce the number of Deputy County Managers, Assistants to the County Board members.
29. Revisit the Schools revenue sharing agreement
30. Make a greater push for people to shop in Arlington. Consider creating “Arlington Bucks”
31. Consolidate County office space, and generate revenue by leasing out County facilities to groups in need of space (especially nonprofits)
32. Consider clustering services and facilities around areas of higher population

**Services/Programs which should NOT be cut:**

1. Services for vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, low income residents
2. Programs which may provide short term savings through cuts but which have a long term impact, such as on the environment, or prevention services
3. County website – it’s the only source of County information for many people

4. Needed County services which have seen an increased demand (such as DHS safety net programs)

**Other issues/concerns:**

1. Don't add any new programs
2. Make cuts in a way that programs can be readily restored when funds are available – don't completely eliminate program infrastructure; take a strategic/long term view when making cuts
3. Mixed comments (on both sides of the argument) on whether any programs should be considered sacred when considering cuts
4. Make cuts in a way that considers a geographical balance of facilities between north and south Arlington
5. Keep in mind the needs of kids who don't have computers at home – need access to community centers, libraries
6. Keep the average citizen in mind when making cuts – not just the wealthiest or and poorest
7. Advertise a tax rate higher than needed to provide wiggle room
8. Need to consider the impact on the quality of life for residents when making cuts – Parks & Recreation and Libraries bear many of the cuts but are critical to quality of life
9. Provide more information about the cost of programs to provide a better basis for the public to make informed recommendations – the line of business narratives in the proposed budget book don't always get down to the specific program level
10. Look at utilization when deciding what programs to cut – limit services that are used less
11. Core services – roads, other infrastructure, sanitation, police, fire, emergency services, services for the elderly, services for the homeless and unemployed, education (especially special education), library services
12. If raising building/development related fees, need to provide a higher level of service. Need to eliminate government road blocks that halt productivity of the private sector (look at fees and processes)
13. Ask activist groups and civic groups to prioritize for their areas – for example, ask those involved with the Gulf Branch effort to prioritize what are the most critical nature centers
14. Ensure that the vulnerable have a voice in the budget discussions
15. In the last "Consideration to Guide Recommended Budget Reductions" add the word "diverse" before world-class in the last one (so it would now read "Maintain a balance of services that make Arlington a unique, diverse, world-class community."