

# Proposed Budget **FY2027**

February 17, 2026

County Administrator: Bill Ashton

## Balancing Community Needs with Fiscal Reality

Through Efficiency, Value and  
Focused Priorities



**FY2025 Budget awarded GFOA's Distinguished Budget Award (36th consecutive year)**

**FY2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report awarded GFOA's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting (43rd consecutive year)**

**Maintained Stafford's three AAA bond ratings, secured first ever AAA bond rating for Utilities for Smith Lake and Little Falls treatment facility improvements**

New high school and two elementary schools under construction, with two more in the pipeline

**Have four major road safety improvement projects under construction, for a total of more than \$70,000,000, plus multiple other transportation projects in design**

Named a Stroke Smart Community

**Increase in New Meals and Transient Occupancy Tax going directly to the School's Operating Budget, and to support Parks capital projects**

Economic Development Launched Legacy Business Recognition Program

**Created Data Center and Solar Farm ordinances, as well as a dedicated webpage with info on data centers**

Stafford won third place for best technology practices in the 2025 Digital Counties Survey



**Added two new farms to the PDR program for a total of 1,317 protected acres plus partnered with NVCT to add more acreage to Crow's Nest**

Renovated the Board Chambers and lobby of the Government Center to provide better service to residents

**Created an interactive water outage map for Utilities customers**

Built a new \$8.5 million cell at the Regional Landfill

**Helped open the African American Heritage Trail**

Opened the first park in Rock Hill – Friends of Havoc Dog Park

**Created first ever Transportation Master Plan**

Little Falls and Aquia wastewater treatment plants won Platinum Performance Awards

**Stafford Won a National Government Experience Award, Stafford won VACo and NACo awards for the Start on Success high school student program for disabled students**

Treasurer's Office achieved Accreditation

**Sheriff's Office applied and made Stafford a Certified Crime Prevention Community**

## **2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

# Stafford County 2025 Profile

MEDIAN HOME  
MARKET PRICE

**\$545,000**

UNEMPLOYMENT

**3.4%**

POPULATION

**168,900**

OWNER-OCCUPIED  
RATE

**80.5%**

MEDIAN INCOME

**\$137,807**

POVERTY RATE

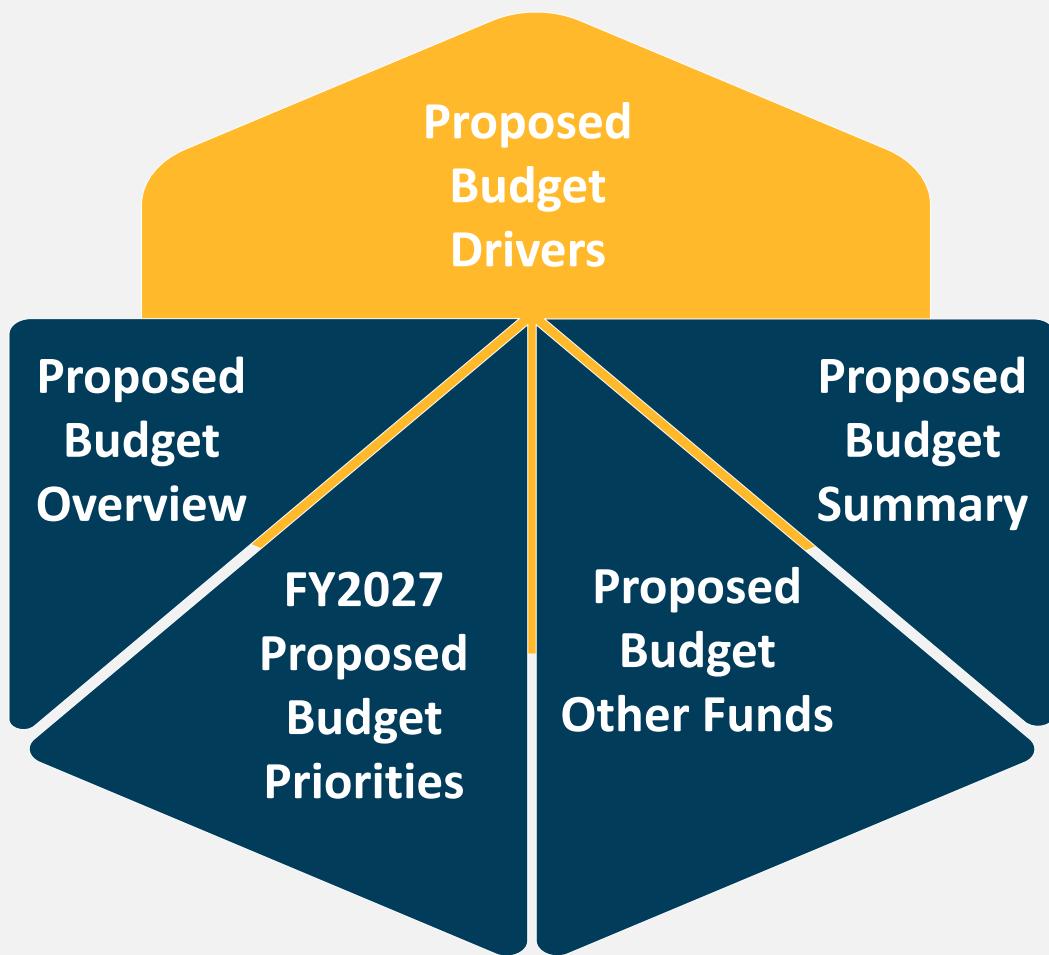
**5.40%**

# Stafford Rankings

**7** Comparable Jurisdictions

Albemarle County  
Chesterfield County  
Hanover County  
Henrico County  
James City County  
Prince William County  
Spotsylvania County  
Stafford County





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# Education Drivers

By the numbers:

**~+900**

New Students

Based on the division's ten-year projection model, student enrollment is projected to grow modestly over the next five years at 3%

**\$9M**

New Debt

Education-related debt now represents more than 78% of total County debt, largely driven by the construction of three new schools over a two-year period

**\$10.6M**

New Operations

New school facilities require ongoing operational support and significant investment to maintain and operate effectively

**\$17.6M**

CIP Major Projects

Beyond three new schools, additional needs include two rebuilds, an arts wing, and system upgrades

# Mandatory, Community Partners and Inflationary Drivers

## Public Safety

**\$4.5M**

ARPA Costs  
Motorola and Radio Costs  
Computer-Aided Dispatch

## Partners

**\$4.5M**

Rappahannock Regional Jail  
Juvenile Detention Center  
Library

## Ongoing Costs

**\$2.1M**

Contracts and Inflation Increase  
Technology and M365 Expenses  
Building and Maintenance Costs

## Mid-Year Decisions

**\$1.3M**

Social Services and  
Commonwealth Attorney  
Positions  
Mid-Year Pay Increases

# Unfunded Mandate Drivers – Declining Revenue Base

## Tax Rates



## Tax Revenue

\$237M

\$228M

\$237M

## Tax Relief Overview

Senior and Disabled Veterans Exonerations

\$40M

Projected Tax relief totals

15

Estimated Total Cents for  
Tax Relief

Reflects mandatory community commitments and rising service costs

New schools add debt service and ongoing operating costs

Unfunded tax relief mandates continue to increase

**\$12.5M**

**\$19.2M**

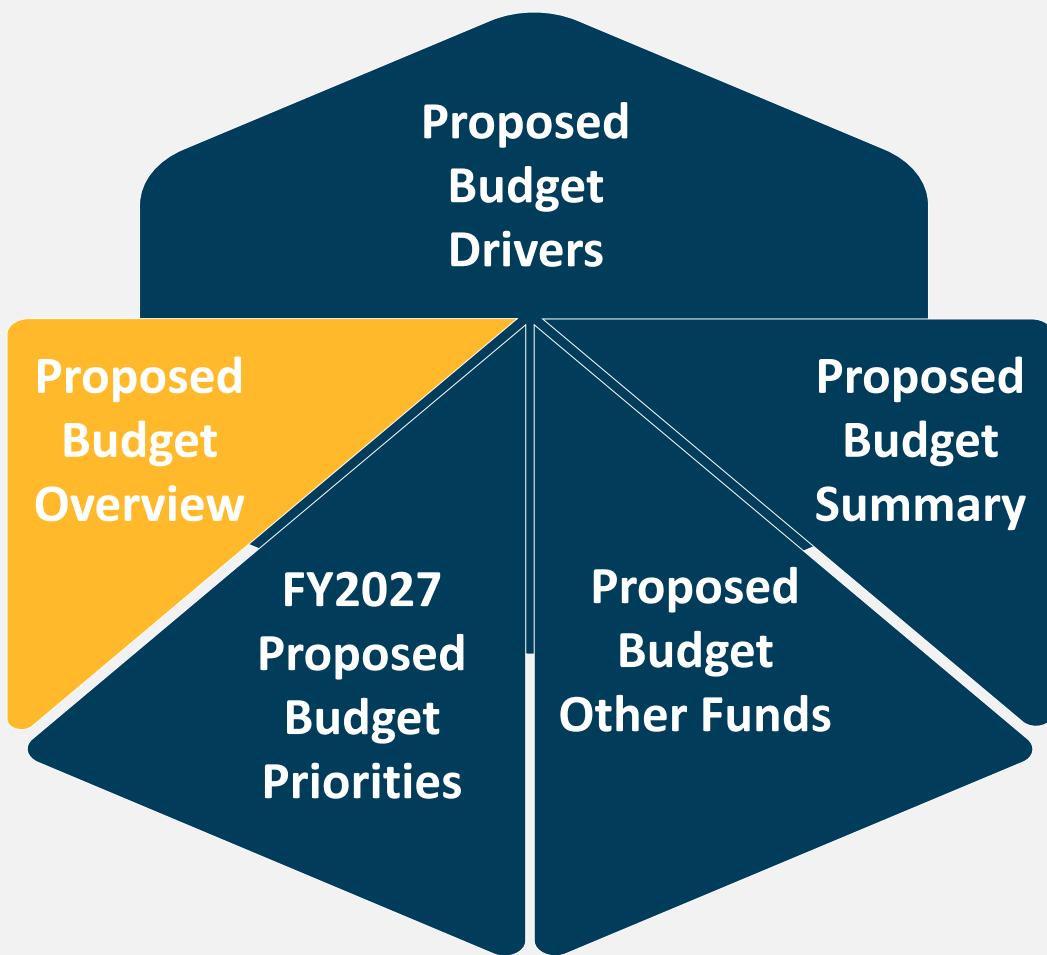
**16.6 cents**

**\$12M**

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The FY2027 budget was developed with a baseline requirement of a nearly \$44 million increase to fund public safety, education, and rising costs.

## FY27 Budget Drivers



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# Financial Planning Process



# Proposed Budget Overview – FY2026 All Funds

## All Funds Revenues



■ Property Tax | 31.3%

■ Local Non-Property Tax | 6.5%

■ State Revenue | 30.0%

■ Water and Sewer Fees | 5.6%

■ Bond Proceeds | 10.1%

■ Federal Funds | 3.9%

■ Other Local Sources | 9.4%

■ Prior Year Fund Balance | 3.1%

## All Funds Expenditures



■ Schools, Debt Service and Capital | 56%

■ Transportation | 5.1%

■ General Government | 19.8%

■ Other Services | 3.6%

■ Utilities - Water and Sewer | 13.9%

■ Fire and Rescue Levy | 1.6%

All Funds Total: \$1,127,212,614

# Proposed Budget Overview – FY2027 General Fund

## General Fund Revenues



## General Fund Expenditures



General Fund Total: \$498,568,038

# Budget Overview

## Revenues

Proposed FY27 Tax Rate | **\$0.985**  
(\$0.9236 FY26 Adopted)

Proposed FY27 Fire Levy | **\$0.014**  
(\$0.0131 FY26 Adopted)

Property tax revenue increase | **10.4%**

Increase in tax relief | **38%**

Consumption tax revenue increase | **10.2%**

Median assessed home value | **\$477,100**

Average tax bill | **\$4,699**

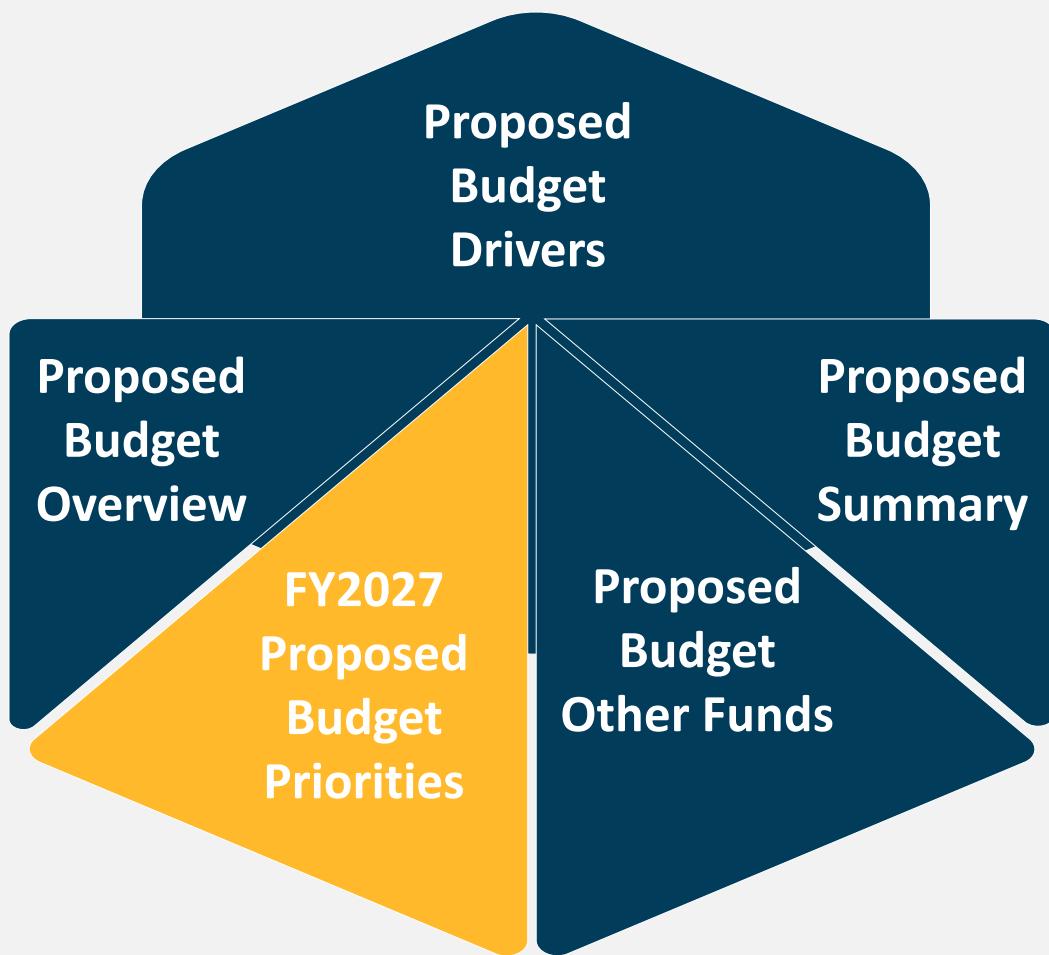
## Expenditures

Overall General Fund increase | **9.9%**

Overall School Operating Fund increase | **10.5%**

## General Fund Operating Budget Drivers

- Education Funding \$24.0M
- Transportation \$9.4M
- Public Safety Support \$6.3M
- General Gov. Support \$3.6M



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# PROPOSED BUDGET PRIORITIES

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## Balancing Community Needs with Fiscal Reality

**Through Efficiency:** Stewardship in a Constrained Revenue Environment

**Value:** Safeguarding Educational and Workforce Outcomes

**Focused Priorities:** Strategic Advancement Despite Revenue Constraints

# Budget Efficiencies



Savings from  
Base Budget



Department  
Cuts



Transportation  
Transfer Reduction



Technology  
Savings

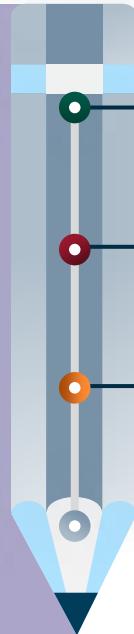
# \$6.9M

Total reductions and savings  
from the FY2026 base

# Prioritizing Educational Value

The FY27 Proposed Budget includes a:

**\$24M  
Increase**



**\$10.5M**

New Schools Operations and Public Day School Increases

**\$4.5M**

Pay increases for School teachers and staff

**\$9.0M**

Three new schools' impact to debt service

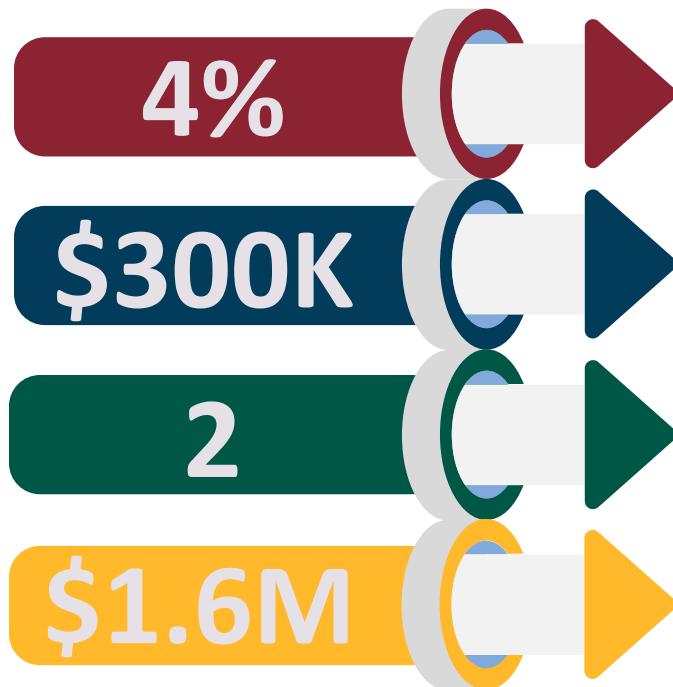


ENGAGE IN PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES



# Valuing a High-Performing Workforce

## The Proposed Budget Includes:



Adjusted compensation across public safety and general government to remain competitive in the labor market and competitiveness

Targeted compensation adjustments for Fire and Rescue and the Sheriff's Office to account for overtime demands and address pay compression

Two new positions in the Proposed Budget—one in Procurement and one in Fire and Rescue—both are revenue-neutral

Ongoing increases in the health insurance market necessitate higher employer contributions to sustain competitive, comprehensive coverage for our workforce

# Focused Priorities

The Board approved a new Strategic Plan set of Five-Year priorities in 2023 for the Stafford County 2040 Vision – 2024-2029.



Goals

Objectives

Objectives  
Completed

## 1.1 Transportation

Establish consistent Board discussions throughout the year, focusing on multimodal transportation efforts that incorporate education, funding, and planning.

## 2.1 Education

Remain committed to ongoing communication with the School System to address and elevate educational challenges facing the community.

## 2.3 Wellness

Engage the community through current and new events and programs, in collaboration with identified community partners and organizations.

## 4.5 Growth

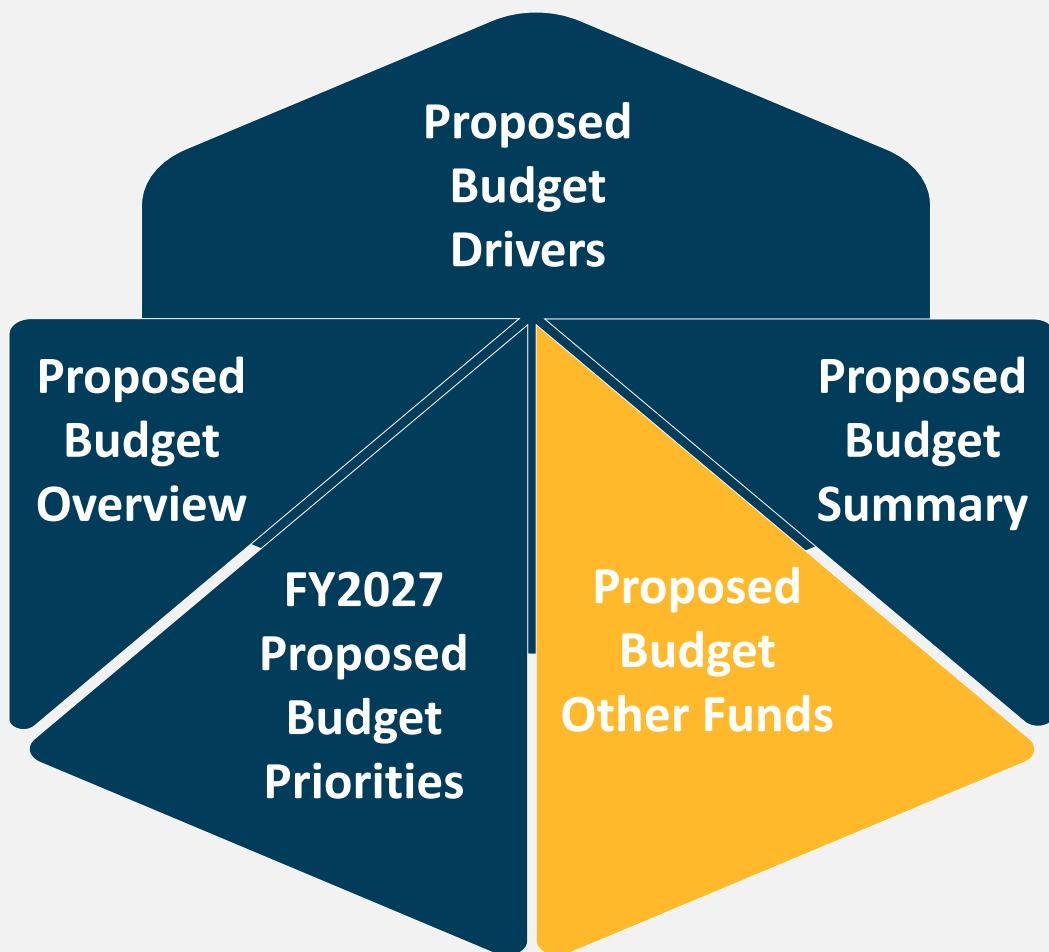
Research and present actionable solutions for workforce housing.

## 6.1 Public Safety

Continue efforts to reassess Stafford County's public safety salary scale to maximize retention and recruitment.

## 7.1 Governance

Evaluate and propose Board support options that focus on community outreach and communication.



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# FY2027 Capital Program

**\$9.7M**

The Rodney Thompson Middle School project replaces end-of-life mechanical systems and provides a refreshed learning environment.



**\$18.3M**

Efforts continue on the new Courthouse facility, which will replace the current one located at the Government Center.



**\$700K**

The Carl Lewis Community Center replacement will add an ADA-accessible hall, a commercial kitchen, and improved parking.



**\$5.1M**

The North Stafford High School Fine Arts Wing project will add and renovate dedicated orchestra, drama, and music spaces to support the fine and performing arts programs.



# Transportation Fund



**\$4.3M**  
US-17 Business  
STARS Improvements

 **IMPROVING ROADS  
FOR OUR COMMUNITY.**

**\$4.9M**

Stefaniga Road and  
Mountain View Road  
Intersection  
Improvement

**\$20.0M**

Enon Road and Route 1 Improvements  
Proposed FY2027 Budget Presentation – February 17, 2026

**\$15.6M**

**Projects in Design:**

- Route 628 Left Turn Lanes at Route 1
- Shelton Shop Road Improvements
- Leeland Road Widening
- Route 1 and Layhill Road Intersection Improvements

Transportation remains a key budget priority, with continued investment supporting critical roadway projects, enhancing connectivity, and accommodating continued growth.

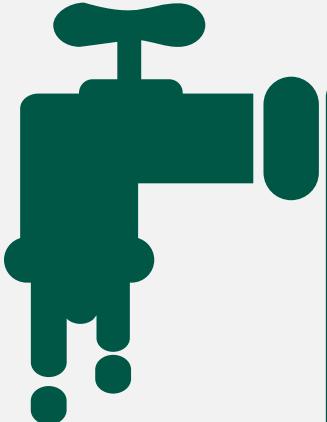
# Utilities Fund

**6.5%**

Planned  
rate  
increase for  
FY27 - FY29  
to maintain  
fiscal  
stability

New  
Personnel  
Requests

Civil Engineer  
SCADA Project  
Manager  
3R Construction  
Project  
Manager



**\$166M**

**Total Fund**

## Major Capital Improvements

Little Falls Run Wastewater Plant  
Upgrades

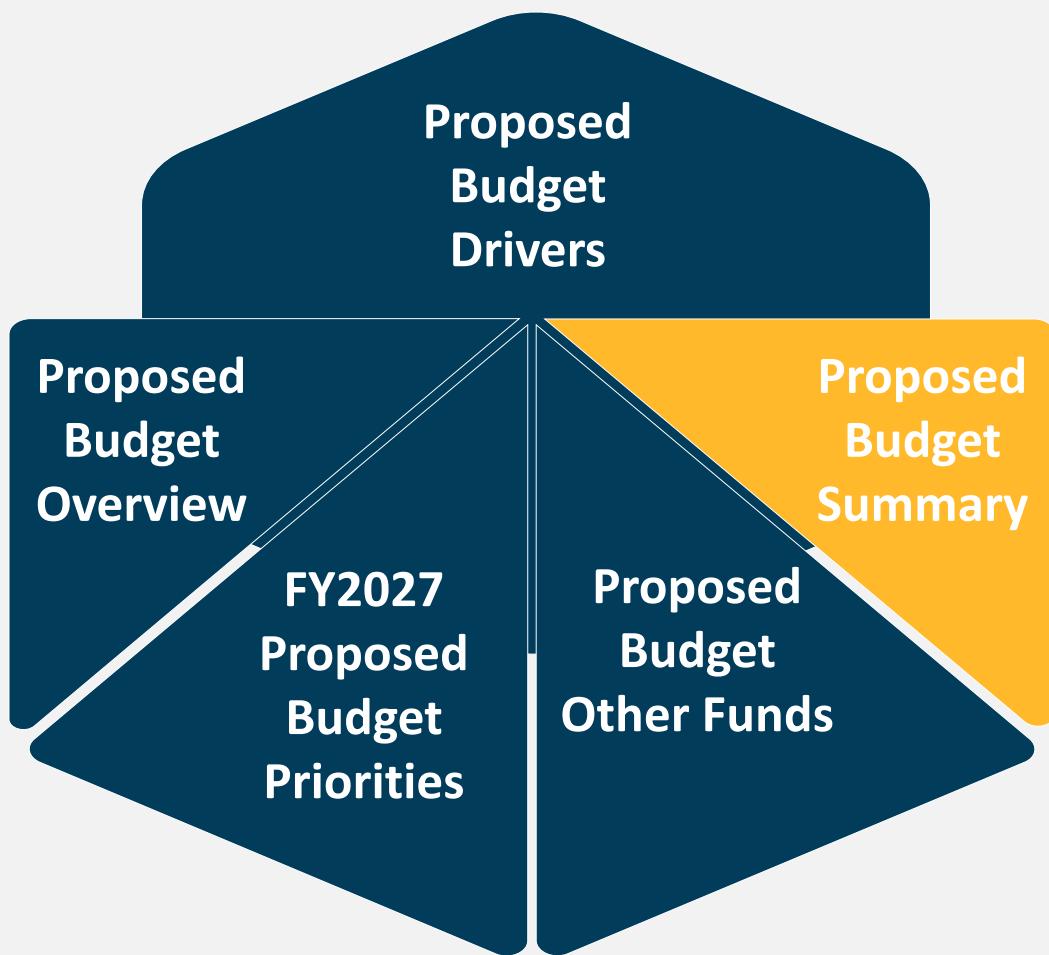
Smith Lake Water Treatment Plant  
Upgrades

PFAS – Water Regulatory Planning

New Utilities Facility

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The proposed 6.5% utility rate increase for FY27–FY29 continues the prior rate strategy and is based on an updated, independent rate study. Supports long-term stability and predictable, customer-friendly rate adjustments.



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Feb 2026	17	County Administrator Proposes FY2027 Budget
	18	Individual Meetings with BoS Members
	24	Budget Work Session (BWS): General Fund
	26	Joint SB/BoS BWS: Schools Presents Budget Needs
Mar 2026	03	Authorize the Advertisement of Public Hearings: FY2027 Budget, FY2027-2036 CIP, VPSA Bond Issuance, and CY2026 Tax Rates
	24	BWS: General Fund, CIP, and other topics to provide additional information prior to the public hearings
	31	BWS: Other Funds
Apr 2026	07	Special Called Public Meeting: FY2027 Budget, FY2027-2036 CIP, VPSA Bond Issuance, CY2026 Tax Rates
	08	Individual Meetings with BoS Members
	16	Joint SB/BoS BWS

Apr 2026	20	BWS: Finalize Proposed Budget
	21	Public Hearings and Adopt: Utilities Rates and Other Ordinances, if needed
	21	Adopt CY2026 Tax Rates, FY2027 Budget, FY2027-2036 CIP, and VPSA Bond Issuance

March 30 – April 6, 2026 Schools' Spring Break  
CIP - Capital Improvements Plan

## FY2027 BUDGET CALENDAR

[WWW.STAFFORDCOUNTYVA.GOV/BUDGET](http://WWW.STAFFORDCOUNTYVA.GOV/BUDGET)

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Responsible Stewardship. **Focused Priorities.**  
Protecting Educational and Workforce Outcomes While  
Advancing the Community in a Constrained Revenue  
Environment.

