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Dear Fairfax County residents and corporate neighbors:

I am pleased to present to you the Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted Budget Plan.

When our Board began discussions about Fiscal Year 2021, no one could have foreseen the widespread challenges our community would face because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, for the first time in recent memory, the County Executive presented the Board of Supervisors with two budget proposals. The first was presented on February 25, 2020, which funded many of our Board's priorities and recommended a 3-cent increase to the Real Estate Tax rate. The second was presented April 7, 2020, which responded to the performance of the economy and the hardships facing our community by cutting most new spending, with the exception of a slight increase to the Health Department's budget to assist with its COVID-19 response. It also held the line on the Real Estate Tax rate. This flexibility and these changes to the proposed budget were needed, and hopefully they provided our community additional relief during these tough times.

The process for adopting the County Budget remained focused on community engagement, but the way we went about that engagement was certainly altered. Our Budget Forums and Town Hall Meetings hosted throughout the County in its nine Districts were hosted digitally, recorded for television, and shown through various other socially distanced methods. Our three days of Public Hearings involved video, written, and, for the first time, over-the-phone testimony. Despite the unusual circumstances, our offices received hundreds of emails and communications from our constituents and heard from more than 100 speakers during our three days of hearings. Much work was done well in advance and adjusted in real-time through our joint Budget Development Committee meetings with our partners on the School Board, as well.

The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget was officially adopted on May 12, 2020 and is based on a Real Estate Tax rate of \$1.15 per \$100 of assessed value.

We will be very deliberate over the course of the coming months as more information is available to address COVID-19 and respond to a changing dynamic. Specifically, a detailed look at the FY 2021 budget will occur at mid-year to allow the Board to make further adjustments, if necessary, should the answers to some of the unknowns today be answered. This will also allow us to address our priorities such as affordable housing, the environment, and our County employees.

Adopting the budget is the most important thing our Board does throughout the year. When we adopt the budget, we are investing in our community's priorities and it is critical to have the community at the table with us. Thank you to everyone who called, emailed, and testified to share your views and guidance on the budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McKay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jeffrey C. McKay
Chairman