



## **Bexar County Commissioners Court**

San Antonio, Texas 78205-3036

210.335.2555

210.335.2926/fax

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Aug. 20, 2019**

**Contact:** Eric Maldonado

210.335.0073/o

210.449.1569/m

### **Bexar County Proposed Budget Includes No Tax Rate Increase for FY 2019-20**

Bexar County Manager David Smith presented the proposed budget for FY 2019-20, with consideration for the new property tax relief passed during the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, which resulted in a property tax revenue cap of 3.5 percent. Although the new law does not take place until the FY 2020-21 budget, the proposed tax rate is already well below the rollback tax rate.

The proposed tax rate of \$0.301097, which remains the same as last year, continues the trend of either lowering or maintaining rates for property owners since 1994.

The proposed budget totals \$1.782 billion for all funds, including \$600 million in operating appropriations, \$730 million in capital projects, \$160 million for debt service, and \$29 million for contingencies and reserves, most of which is carry forward funding for multi-year capital projects. The FY 2019-20 proposed budget for the general fund totals \$489.7 million compared to last year's operating budget of \$475.3 million, or an increase of \$14.4 million.

"We must work diligently to preserve our Triple-A credit rating in order to secure the County's future," stated Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff. "The proposed budget looks at the long-term economic forecast to ensure Bexar County is in the best financial position and continues to provide world-class services to constituents."

Based on certified appraised property values reported by the Bexar Appraisal District, property values are expected to increase by 6.95 percent, or \$11.2 billion. Property values on existing properties are projected to increase by \$7.33 billion, and new construction will generate \$3.87 billion in additional value.

"The south and west areas of the County continue to see huge growth in both population and business," stated Precinct 1 Commissioner Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez. "The presented budget continues to address the growing needs of our community, maintain public safety and encourages economic development in areas that had been long neglected – while keeping taxpayers in mind."

Last fiscal year, Commissioners Court adopted a new phasing approach to funding road projects. Road projects are designed in one year and then constructed in the next year. This phased approach enables Commissioners Court to make funding decisions at pivotal points in the projects. This year, funding in the amount of \$20.5 million is proposed to begin construction on six projects.

--more--

Additionally, the County has entered into Advanced Funding Agreements with the Texas Department of Transportation for three road projects in the amount of \$11.5 million.

“As the County continues to expand, we need to prepare to meet the needs of the growing population and bring transportation solutions,” stated Precinct 3 Commissioner Kevin Wolff. “Bexar County continues to lead in new construction, which enables us to maintain a historically low tax rate, but as we plan for the upcoming years, we need to place serious consideration into how we plan to improve commutes – especially as transportation funding and approaches continue to evolve.”

The budget also provides \$16.45 million in funding for new and existing flood control projects. The funding for these projects will come from savings from existing projects that are either at or near completion. Of the \$16.45 million, \$9.65 million is proposed for new projects and \$6.8 million is proposed to be reallocated to existing flood control projects, which includes \$500,000 for HALT site expansions.

In addition to the increasing public safety measures, such as proposing to fund six new patrol positions, the proposed budget includes increased funding for to the Family Violence and Family Justice Divisions of the District Attorney’s Office to help clear a backlog of cases and process protective orders applications.

“Working together with the courts, District Attorney, Office of Criminal Justice Policy, Planning and Programs, and other departments, this proposed budget reflects the need to face the underlying issues which affect our community,” stated Precinct 4 Commissioner Tommy Calvert. “Not only must we address the issues of family violence and child abuse and neglect, but provide resources to families to stay out of the justice system and reduce recidivism.”

The County continues to maintain triple-A bond ratings from all three major rating agencies, making it one of the few local governments in our area to be Triple-A rated by all three major rating agencies. This has resulted in estimated savings of \$41.3 million in debt service payments for the County.

Communication with bond rating agencies is key to ensure the County continues to meet the high standards necessary to maintain our triple-A bond ratings.

One of the most significant factors is the healthy cash reserve balance Commissioners Court has approved over the last several budgets. The proposed budget includes a general fund balance of \$73.85 million, or just over 15 percent of expenditures, which is consistent with rating agency guidance.

“Whether it be at the school district, city, state, and now County, I have always believed that our budget should be driven by our community. To that end, I have been focused on visiting with residents and stakeholders to learn more about the issues and needs in our area, and have created the Precinct 2 Budget Survey to provide a way for folks to share their thoughts,” stated Precinct 2 Commissioner Justin Rodriguez. “I will continue to encourage public input and remain committed to ensuring that the approved budget allocates our community tax dollars according to our community priorities.”

Two public hearings will be held on Thursday, Aug. 29 and Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019 in the Double Height Courtroom. The final budget will be adopted on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019.

The proposed budget is available online at [www.bexar.org](http://www.bexar.org).