



Bexar County Commissioners Court

San Antonio, Texas 78205-3036

210.335.2555

210.335.2926/fax

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Contact: Eric Maldonado

210.335.0073/o

210.449.1569/m

Bexar County Adopted Budget Includes No Tax Rate Increase for FY 2019-20

The Bexar County Commissioners Court adopted the budget for FY 2019-20, with consideration for the new property tax relief passed during the 86th Legislative Session, which resulted in a property tax revenue cap of 3.5 percent. Although the new law does not go into effect until the FY 2020-21 budget, the adopted tax rate is already well below the rollback tax rate.

The adopted 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 adopted 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 \$292 million for contingencies and reserves, most of which is carry forward funding for multi-year capital projects. The FY 2019-20 adopted budget for the general fund totals \$490.7 million compared to last year's operating budget of \$475.3 million, or an increase of \$15.1 million.

In addition to increasing public safety measures, such as funding for gun safety initiatives and six new patrol positions, the adopted 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 with local community groups, I am proud to have brought forth several changes into the adopted budget," stated Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff. "From providing additional funds to supply the community with gun locks, to providing training sessions on spotting potential active shooters, I am committed to providing the needed resources to reducing crime and keeping Bexar County safe."

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.

"This historic budget demonstrates our commitment to Bexar County taxpayers to reduce or maintain the current tax rate for the 25th consecutive year," stated Precinct 1 Commissioner Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez. "Our continued growth and success in attracting new businesses has allowed us to provide world-class services to residents, while keeping the taxpayer's own budget in mind. Throughout the next

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fiscal year, I will work to ensure we can continue this trend and bring in more economic opportunities to the county.”

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 budgeted to begin construction on six projects.

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.

“The newly adopted budget maintains our historically low tax rate and continues to address our growing transportation needs,” stated Precinct 3 Commissioner Kevin Wolff. “As we approach the next decade, we must anticipate the upcoming growth in population and the additional vehicles which will be on the road. I am committed to bringing innovative transportation solutions and will continue to bring in funds for future projects.”

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 budgeted for new projects and \$6.8 million is budgeted to be reallocated to existing flood control projects, which includes \$500,000 for HALT site expansions.

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 adopted budget includes a general fund balance of \$73.6 million, or just over 15 percent of expenditures, which is consistent with rating agency guidance.

In preparation for the 2020 election, the approved budget includes \$200,000 for community outreach and educational materials regarding the new voting machines. The new machines will be available for the smaller 2019 elections, but with heavy voter turnout expected in 2020, there will be a yearlong marketing campaign ensuring that voters will be informed and familiar with the new procedures on Election Day.

The 2020 election will also feature Voting Centers, which will allow voters to vote in any polling place open during early voting and on Election Day. Voters will no longer be restricted to their precinct, if they missed the early voting period.

“Throughout the budget development process I have been proud to advocate for priorities and service areas most important to Precinct 2 and Bexar County, including quality infrastructure, enhanced public safety, and an improved elections system,” stated Precinct 2 Commissioner Justin Rodriguez. “I am especially proud our adopted budget supports individuals and families impacted by family violence,

mental illness, addiction, poverty, and trauma through allocations to our justice system, behavioral health system, education and workforce development initiatives, and to our many community partners.”

The adopted budget will be available online at www.bexar.org.

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