



NEWS RELEASE

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Ellis Recommends \$1.47 Billion Budget for Fiscal Year 2020 to Board

Includes nearly \$854 million in education investments

Wake County Manager David Ellis tonight presented his Fiscal Year 2020 Recommended Budget to the Wake County Board of Commissioners. The \$1.47 billion proposal includes major investments in education, public health and safety, and quality of life, which would help the county meet its growing service demands and achieve outcomes identified by the board.

"I've spent the past year in my new role analyzing the demand for the core county services we provide to the public," Ellis said. "My budget recommendation reflects the priority needs we must address to deliver those services at the level our growing population expects and as state regulations require."

Ellis includes in his recommendation nearly \$854 million in investments for education. Of that, \$507 million would fund the Wake County Public School System's operating needs – a \$36.5 million increase from FY19. This marks the first time the county's annual contribution to the WCPSS operating budget would exceed half a billion dollars.

The FY20 Recommended Budget also includes:

- Adding five ambulance shifts and hiring 20 EMTs and paramedics to operate them. This investment will help Wake County EMS respond more rapidly to increasing calls for service;
- Adding 14 new positions to the county's Child Welfare division to lower the average caseloads for our social workers, enhance their ability to protect our youngest residents and strengthen efforts to help the children in our care find permanent, loving homes;
- Providing funding to the Wake County Board of Elections, so it can hold the March presidential primary election and operate 11 early voting sites across the county;
- Investing in IT security upgrades and network improvements to expand protections against ransomware and phishing scams, which can put our data at risk; and
- Increasing accessibility to our public libraries. This budget would open new and improved libraries in Cary, Fuquay-Varina and Morrisville. It would also expand Sunday hours to six more libraries, and it would completely eliminate late fees for all library patrons.

Explaining the Property Tax Increase

To meet the needs outlined in his budget message, Ellis recommends a 6.36-cent property tax increase. It would bring the county's property tax rate to 71.8 cents for every \$100 of property value.

It is important to note that of the 6.36-cent increase, 3.8 cents will fund projects identified by the three bonds voters approved in November 2018.

They include the:

- \$548 million WCPSS construction bond;
- \$349 million Wake Tech infrastructure improvements bond; and
- \$120 million parks, recreation, greenways and open space bond.

Of the remaining 2.56 cents, 1.39 cents would fund increases for WCPSS operating needs, and 1.17 cents would fund county operating expenses.

In all, 76% of the proposed 6.36-cent tax increase would fund education. The remaining 24% would fund county needs.

Under this recommendation, a property owner would pay an extra \$64 per year in property taxes for every \$100,000 of assessed value. For example, the owner of a \$300,000 home, which is roughly the average home value in Wake County, would pay an additional \$16 per month or \$192 more a year in property taxes.

Next steps

Residents are invited to share their thoughts on the proposed budget at two public hearings on May 20. The first will take place during the 2 p.m. Board of Commissioners meeting at the [Wake County Justice Center](#). The second will be held at 7 p.m. at the [Wake County Commons Building](#).

The board is expected to vote on adoption of the county's FY20 budget at its 5 p.m. meeting on June 3.

FY20 runs from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. For more information about this budget proposal, visit our website, wakegov.com.

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