County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2026

TO: Jeffrey C. McKay, Chairman and Members
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Sean Rastatter, Chairman
Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC)

SUBJECT: FY 2027 ITPAC Budget Letter to the Board of Supervisors

Fairfax County has a technology-savvy citizenry and is consistently recognized as an innovative top-performing county with first-class IT management. Thus, expectations are elevated for DIT to deliver exceptional IT-based citizen services and staff support using innovative technology solutions with cost-effective IT investments.

To support this goal, the County set up the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC) comprised of citizens with significant government and IT industry expertise. Through regular consultations with senior leadership of the Department of Information Technology (DIT), members provide advice for addressing IT challenges and identifying opportunities using modern technologies and methods.

ITPAC supports the County Executive's IT proposal in the FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan. This provides almost $12 million in funding to support Information Technology, with enhancements to IT infrastructure and operating support for completed IT projects. It also contains recurring, baseline funding to handle inflationary increases in contracts as well as IT products and services. In short, the County Executive's proposal will result in a significant and timely infusion of funds to modernize IT systems and address emerging requirements throughout the IT portfolio.

County Successes: Previous IT investments by the Board have yielded substantial positive results.

DIT Earns National IT Best Practice Awards: The County's IT Program has often been recognized as a national benchmark for excellence. It is praised for its governance, investments, and low-risk delivery model. It creates cost-effective technology solutions aligned with the Board's goals. In 2025, Fairfax County received second place in the Center for Digial Government's Digital Counties Survey for jurisdictions with populations exceeding 1 million. In the last three years, the County has placed first or second each year. The survey honors the innovative use of emerging technologies, enhanced cybersecurity measures, and strengthened digital equity initiatives. This reflects a citizen and business community with high expectations for the County's commitment to effective technology use. Sustaining this success requires consistent and enhanced technology investments, such as that proposed by the County Executive.

Tax System Upgrades: As the Board is aware, technology upgrades have been created to facilitate the food and beverage tax implemented effective January 1, 2026. From a technology perspective, a new online and backend solution had to be developed to support the collection, reporting and management of the tax. This technical achievement is substantially contributing to a streamlined customer experience.

Department Reorganization: As reflected in the County Executive's FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan, DIT is undergoing significant reorganization as part of a thoughtful, long-term vision to enhance services to residents and prepare the department to be a leader in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. ITPAC fully endorses and embraces this important change.

Efficiency and Effectiveness Investment Recommendations: ITPAC endorses the following broad categories of investments, which are essential to ensuring the reliability, scalability, and efficiency of County IT.

- *Cyber Security Strengthening:* Cyber threats are on the rise. Nationwide, local and state government entities have become prime targets. In today's highly connected digital world, it is essential for maintaining business operation and public safety to protect critical infrastructure, manage third-party risks, oversee artificial intelligence (AI) and handle data governance needs. Continuous service delivery of water supply systems, transportation networks, and communication systems require defending this infrastructure from the devastating effects of cyber attacks. Investing in cybersecurity technologies, skilled personnel, and expertise is crucial to protect data and mitigate operational risks.

- *Bringing IT toward its Optimal State:* ITPAC was very pleased that an initial tranche of $5 million in baseline funding was included in the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan to address significant IT-related needs in areas including Infrastructure Requirements, Cloud Expansion, Application Modernization, Phone System Replacement, as well as new technology and training. Multiple investments are being made with these funds, such as filling previously vacant positions to stand up a required data and innovation team in DIT.

  The FY 2026 funding was always intended to be the first stage of a multi-year effort to address increasing IT requirements and demands. ITPAC supports the County Executive's recommendation for an additional $5 million, bringing the overall total to $10 million, to support critical investments in multiple areas of the IT enterprise:

  - Elevating customer experience as a central pillar by ensuring seamless support, training and service desk functions
  - Enhanced customer portals – the vision of *One Account, One Experience* includes developing a single point of access for residents and business, with the goal of transforming the customer experience through digital modernization and data-informed services, while ensuring equitable IT access. This is complex work that will require significant time and investment
  - Modernizations and expanding in growth areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, expanded mobile/web options, and other emerging technologies
  - Strengthening governance, vendor management, finance, and program delivery
  - Augmenting and streamlining network, cloud, architecture, and data center operations for enhanced operations for efficiency and scalability
  - Developing and promoting agile transformation through building Centers of Excellence to drive enterprise-wide delivery improvement
  - Pursuing additional application modernization and implementing new technologies

  ITPAC supports these investments and initiatives as well as also strengthening partnerships and collaborating with local entities, such as FCPS or companies with a large local presence, to co-develop services like predictive analytics or "smart/connected communities."

Challenges to Achieving the Mission: ITPAC recommends continuing work to address these longstanding items.

Hiring Impediments with IT Staff Approaching Retirement: DIT struggles to hire and retain the high-level IT talent it requires from the DMV marketplace. Issues include non-competitive compensation, hiring non-responsiveness, limitation on home location and telework restrictions. The business impact of this situation will be felt in the near-term future as almost 25 percent of DIT staff are in DROP, retirement eligible, or eligible to retire within the next two years.

Protection of County Data: The cybersecurity threat landscape is continuously expanding due to advancements in artificial intelligence and cloud technology. Strengthening data governance practices, including robust data protection measures, is essential for maintaining uninterrupted operations, and minimizing risk of data loss. Prioritizing these efforts in budget planning is critical.

Growing Value of Data Analytics with Data Proliferating: The increased use of data with the need for advanced technology to collect, manage, preserve and analyze this data.

Agencies' Business Process Transformations: As agencies strive for greater efficiency through process transformation, their proposals often have significant IT implications. For these initiatives to be effective, DIT must be engaged early as a partner to ensure the proposal is both cost effective and sustainable.

Agility and Time Required to Execute Contracts: The County would greatly benefit from increased contracting agility and faster contract awarding. Current processes often prolong the time required to implement technology, which can lead to higher costs and even prevent implementation entirely.

Additional FY 2027 Recommendation Highlights: ITPAC also supports the following initiatives.

- Continue the innovative multi-year budget process investment strategy for IT projects, allowing timely funding for multi-year projects such as the Public Safety Radio Platform Refresh and the project to upgrade the FOCUS SAP software supporting both Fairfax County government and FCPS to the next generation cloud-based platform as well as similar major projects.

- Provision of requested funds to support inflationary cost increases and maintain required licenses for technology software and other core systems, as nearly all products and services in the Technology Infrastructure portfolio require annual increases to maintain current service levels. These services are not only necessary to keep the County secure from outside cyber threats, but also to allow the County to be nimbler and keep the network infrastructure, telephony and other related services current with the ever-changing technology landscape.

Conclusion: Similar to other large high-performing organizations, the County's reliance on technology continues to expand. Given the need to protect against constantly evolving cyber threats and the rapid advance in the use of information and technology to deliver services, the County must modernize with the latest technologies, applications, and staffing to meet its goals. ITPAC appreciates and values the opportunity to assist the County in achieving best practices in technology governance and implementation strategies.

Cc:
Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee
Matthew Harrison, Chief Information Officer
Maura Power, Chief Technology Officer
Christina Jackson, Chief Financial Officer
Ellicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive for Administration