



# Fluvanna Taxpayers Association

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**For immediate release**

## **Taxpayers Association Contributes Fiscal Chapter to Fluvanna County Comprehensive Plan**

October 10, 2008 – The Fluvanna Taxpayers Association has called for a cap on tax increases and better cost information for residents as part of a first-ever “Fiscal Framework” chapter in Fluvanna’s Comprehensive Plan. The new chapter is designed to build financial grounding, tax impact and residents’ ability to pay into the county’s basic planning document.

Presented to Planning Director Darren Coffey and the Planning Commission for inclusion in the County’s Comprehensive Plan, the chapter requires clear, understandable information that taxpayers can use to size up a planned expenditure or capital project. It also recommends limiting annual tax increases to five percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is greater

“The whole springboard for this chapter is the economic interest of the taxpaying populace,” said Elizabeth Franklin, who developed the chapter with FTA input after the Planning Commission expressed interest in the group’s idea at their August meeting. “That economic interest should rank foremost in all County decisions, policies and ordinances related to growth and development. In a taxpayer-focused fiscal framework, citizens are not just bystanders. They’re the financiers – the venture capitalists, if you will, of the County.”

The fiscal chapter is the first citizen initiative of its kind in Fluvanna. In 1999, some 150 residents participated in County-sponsored Comprehensive Plan work sessions, but until FTA drafted and presented its proposed Fiscal Framework chapter, no citizens group had independently proposed and developed an entire chapter for inclusion in the Plan.

Entitled “Fiscal Framework,” the 13-page chapter sets another precedent. It would be the first Comprehensive Plan chapter devoted to financial issues. The Comprehensive Plan, which has been undergoing revision and residents’ review in a series of community meetings, is a blueprint for the County’s future growth and development.

If it isn’t affordable, the Comprehensive Plan’s vision means nothing, insists Lee True, president of the 133-member Fluvanna Taxpayers Association. “What’s been lacking from the Comprehensive Plan process,” he said, “are tools that identify the projected costs for taxpayers and the fiscal impact of the Plan’s components on the County as a whole. Otherwise, how are taxpayers and officials supposed to know whether we can pay the tab for all the new infrastructure, added services and the growth models?”

The proposed chapter lays out a “taxpayer-focused fiscal framework” for County decisions, policies and ordinances. It lists nine major goals for fiscal responsibility along with action strategies needed to implement each goal. The goals are:

- Give the Comprehensive Plan fiscal meaning so that both citizens and County leaders can more fully understand and weigh the costs associated with every goal and objective.
- Promote the financial stability and well being of Fluvanna households through policies that align tax increases with taxpayers’ own economic capacity and progress.
- Bring individual taxpayer context and clarity to public hearings, presentations and documents related to capital improvements.
- Ensure that growth pays its way so that development does not have a negative financial impact on existing taxpayers.
- Synchronize the Capital Improvement Program with the Comprehensive Plan, new level-of-services standards and impact fee/proffer programs.
- Link County growth objectives and school construction plans to the Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.
- Ensure that taxpayers have a voice in all growth and development matters in which they have a pocketbook stake.
- Focus on fiscally sustainable economic development.
- Achieve maximum efficiency and cost savings in County operations.

“Tax policies should be linked to household economics and real-world metrics like inflation,” said Leroy McCampbell, treasurer of the Taxpayer Association. “Through this decade, double-digit tax increases in Fluvanna have been the norm, while inflation has hovered around 2 to 3 percent.”

The Planning Commission currently is reviewing citizen feedback on the Comprehensive Plan, including FTA’s proposed chapter. A public hearing on the revised draft is scheduled for October 30. To read the Fluvanna Taxpayers Association’s “Fiscal Framework” chapter for the Comprehensive Plan, go to [www.fluvannataxpayers.org](http://www.fluvannataxpayers.org).

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