

The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by:

Councilman Justin M. Wilson

Alexandria, Virginia

August 1, 2013

In This Edition

[Council Initiatives](#)

[Fixing an Old Part of Old Town](#)

[Child Seat Inspections Return](#)

[City Retains AAA/Aaa Rating](#)

[Host a Town Hall](#)

[Upcoming Issues: Public Housing, Old Town Bus Barn, Fund For Human Services & School Capacity](#)

Quick Links

[E-Mail Me](#)

[City of Alexandria Website](#)

[Pay City Taxes Online](#)

[Review Real Estate Assessments](#)

[Board & Commission Vacancies](#)

Events/Updates

National Night Out

Tuesday August 6th is National Night Out. Neighborhoods across our City will host gatherings to strengthen the ties between our public safety personnel and our neighborhoods.

Maintaining this partnership is key to keeping our City safe, and I look forward to seeing you at one of the many events scheduled all throughout the City.

Back to School Tax Holiday This Weekend

While the Council still has a month of recess remaining, and most Alexandria students still have a month of summer to enjoy, the students at Mount Vernon Community School and Samuel Tucker Elementary are back in class today.

A few minutes ago, I dropped my children off at Mount Vernon. Today was especially exciting for us as my daughter begins Kindergarten.

She'll be keeping her older brother company as he begins Third Grade.

Best wishes to all Alexandria students on a great school year--whether it starts today, or next month.

Please let me know how I can be of assistance. [Contact me](#) anytime.

 Council Portrait

Council Initiatives

Time to Fix an Old Part of Old Town

Protecting the historic nature of Old Town is one of the more important obligations of the City Council. However, there is one aspect of our historic infrastructure that must be modernized.

In 95% of our City, stormwater (rain) is collected and returned to rivers and streams with very little treatment. Separately, sanitary sewage is sent to the Alexandria Renew Enterprises wastewater treatment facility, where it is treated and later returned to waterways.

However, in a 540 acre section of Old Town, a Combined Sewer System still collects both sanitary sewage and stormwater together and sends it to the wastewater treatment facility for treatment. During severe rain events, due to capacity and design issues, this system

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday there will be a [Sales Tax Holiday](#) to assist parents with back to school purchases.

During this period, purchases of school supplies of \$20 or less and clothing of \$100 or less will be exempt from the Sales Tax.

Review the full list of [qualifying items](#) before heading out to Alexandria retailers to make your purchases.

DASH Survey

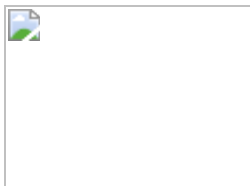
As part of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) that DASH Bus is currently conducting to refine its route structure, DASH has published a survey to collect information.

Please take a few minutes to complete the [survey](#).

Friendship Fire Festival

This Saturday, August 3rd, the [Friendship Fire Festival](#) returns from 9 AM until 2 PM in the 100 block of South Alfred Street between King & Prince Street.

Admission is free, and this is always a wonderful event for families. I'll see you there!

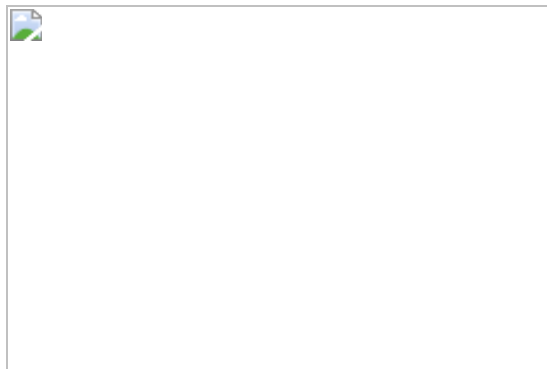


Metro Considers Changes to 10A/B/E

The Metrobus 10A, 10B, and 10E routes currently provide north/south connectivity on the east side of our City.

As part of Metro's overall efforts to improve bus service, Metro is conducting

experiences a Combined Sewer Overflow condition--where a mixture of stormwater and sewage flows untreated into waterways.



In addition to the impact that this has on the cleanliness of our rivers and streams, this type of overflow is strictly regulated by law.

The City operates this Combined Sewer System under a permit from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ). In 2011 the City applied for a renewal of the permit and the VDEQ has now released a [draft permit](#) for comment by the community.

Essentially, this new revised permit requires the City to spend the next three years working with the community to adopt a new Long Term Control Plan to ultimately reduce the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water.

The Plan, to be implemented over the next 2-3 decades, will obligate significant financial resources and likely prove disruptive to some portions of the affected area. It will be important to receive broad community input as we work to comply with the new permit.

On Monday evening, August 5th, the Environmental Policy Commission will be holding an information meeting and [Public Hearing](#) on the draft permit to collect input from the community. It will be from 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM in City Hall.

Sheriff's Office to Resume Child Safety Seat Inspections

As a father who has spent far too many hours attempting to install child safety seats in my vehicle, I am very sensitive to the difficulty in safely installing these seats.

Starting today, our Sheriff Dana Lawhorne has stepped forward and will now begin offering [these inspections by appointment](#) for Alexandria residents.

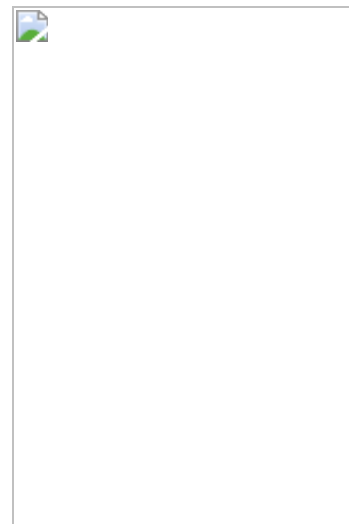
The Council worked with the Sheriff during this most recent budget process to identify a nominal amount of funds to cover the training and overtime associated with providing this service.

In addition to the scheduled appointments, the Sheriff will be organizing public events to perform these inspections in the community.

Thanks to the Sheriff for offering to fill a need in our community and ensure the safety of our City's children.

City's AAA/Aaa Rating Reaffirmed

While the latest news is filled with stories of communities whose mismanagement and misfortune has lead to financial ruin, it's



a study on changes to these routes.

They have collected a considerable amount of [data](#) on the existing service, and they are soliciting [input](#) from the community.

important to continually recognize that Alexandria has retained its [AAA rating from Standard & Poor's](#) and its [Aaa rating from Moody's](#).

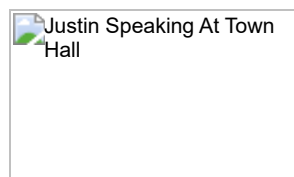
These ratings save our community millions of dollars every year, as we are able to finance new infrastructure investments (schools, transportation, recreation, and public safety) at the lowest cost available.

In retaining our rating, Moody's cited the City's "healthy financial position supported by conservative budgeting and favorable debt profile."

These ratings don't just happen. They are the consequence of thoughtful work and difficult decisions over decades by residents, City staff and City policymakers.

The Council will continue our work this year to protect the fiscal health of our City long into the future.

Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!



My regular series of Town Hall Meetings are back!

You supply the living room and a bunch of your friends and neighbors. I will supply a member of the Alexandria City Council (me) with the answers to any of your questions about our City.

Just [drop us a line](#) and we'll get a Town Hall on the calendar! Thanks for the interest!

Upcoming Issues

Public Housing Redevelopment

The [Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority](#) (ARHA) is an independent entity, separate from the City that utilizes Federal funding from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing to low-income residents of Alexandria.

ARHA directly manages and oversees 1,079 units of affordable housing. In addition, ARHA manages the City's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program--which utilizes Federal funding to provide assistance for another 1,906 low-income families to reside in privately owned housing units.

At the Federal level and around the country we have seen dramatic changes in how public housing is managed and developed. The Federal Government has been a proactive participant in bringing about the redevelopment of public housing. This was demonstrated in Alexandria when the City utilized [HOPE VI](#) funding to redevelop 100-units of Public Housing into [Chatham Square](#), a mixed-income development incorporating both market-rate and Public Housing.

In 2013, the Federal government is forcing changes in public housing with its inaction. Today, HUD only funds 73% of every dollar required to operate Alexandria Public Housing units. The balance of revenue that ARHA collects as rent is not sufficient for sustainable management of their properties, and with the effects of sequestration, this is likely to get worse.

With aging properties sitting on valuable land, ARHA must now utilize its land as the tool to preserve housing for low-income residents in our City.

Over 30 years
ago, the City
Council

adopted [Resolution 830](#), which required the replacement of any public housing unit that was destroyed by redevelopment. In past redevelopment efforts, replacement units have been obtained and created throughout our City.

In 2008, the City Council adopted the [Braddock East Master Plan](#), which called for redevelopment of several aging public housing properties. By allowing additional density near existing transit it was designed to encourage private partnership in the redevelopment of this housing.

Today, under this Plan, James Bland Homes are becoming [Old Town Commons](#). With two phases already completed and occupied, and one phase nearing completion and nearly sold-out, this redevelopment activity has proven successful in providing a sustainable model for mixed-income housing in our City.

With these experiences and lessons behind us, ARHA is now preparing to issue an RFP (Request for Proposals) this fall to solicit proposals from private developers for the redevelopment of 7 additional properties: Cameron Valley (built in 1985), Andrew Adkins (built in 1969), Samuel Madden (built in 1945), Ramsey Homes (built in 1942), Hopkins Tancil (built in 1945), Ladrey (built in 1968), and the ARHA Headquarters building on North Fairfax Street.

As ARHA begins this effort in partnership with the City, we will have a historic opportunity to partner with the private sector and provide new housing for a variety of income levels near existing transit in our City. This effort will also provide financial stability for ARHA in the face of continued change at the Federal level.

Old Town Bus Barn Says Goodbye

Sitting on two acres in Old Town, the Royal Street Bus Garage has long represented an opportunity for the City.

Last month the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) approved the [sale of the property](#) beginning with a solicitation this fall.

The sale of this property will return the property to the City's tax rolls and allow for redevelopment of the property as part of our upcoming Old Town North Small Area planning process.

This is a landmark property in Old Town, and removing the existing use will dramatically improve the aesthetics of this area.

Alexandria Fund For Human Services

Alexandria depends on its partnerships with numerous non-profit organizations to provide critical services to our community. In many cases, these organizations leverage significant charitable giving to provide these services far more efficiently than City government could ever do.

At the core of Alexandria's partnership with the non-profit community is the [Alexandria Fund for Human Services](#). The Fund is actually an umbrella for the Children's Fund, the Youth Fund, and the Community Partnership Fund, which together spend over [\\$2 million annually](#) to utilize the capacity of non-profit organizations to provide services to vulnerable populations in our City.

With limited resources and large unmet needs in our community, the Fund has been challenged to fund long-standing programs with established records of success, while also preserving resources for new emerging efforts to respond to changes within our City.

Together with my colleague Councilman Smedberg, we have proposed a new look at the administration of this Fund. Starting this month, a study group will be looking at how the Fund is administered, how the Fund aligns with our Strategic Plan Goals, and what changes might make the Fund more effective in the future.

In November this group will return with recommendations for consideration by the City Council.

More Kids For Our Schools

This morning I contributed to the growing student population at ACPS by dropping off an additional child (to go along with one that I already had there). I am apparently not alone.

As I've written in previous months' newsletters, we have seen dramatic growth in student enrollment in our schools over the past 5 years.

Planning for this growth requires collaboration between the City and the Schools to ensure the appropriate capacity exists as students enter our schools. Along with the Mayor, two members of our School Board, and 15 other Alexandria citizens, I am continuing my service on the [Long Range Educational Facilities Planning](#) Committee.



The Committee has mapped out a [Work Program](#) for its efforts, and we have a few subcommittees working to address specific areas.

I serve on the subcommittee that is working to dig into the enrollment numbers and changing demographics of our schools. We have looked at fascinating information on [birth rates](#), [housing affordability as a factor in enrollment](#), and [student retention](#) (otherwise known as "cohort survival rate").

In our continuing efforts to keep the community engaged in this process, we will be hosting a community presentation on these issues on Saturday August 17th at 2 PM at Burke Library (4701 Seminary Road). All are welcome!

Councilman Justin M. Wilson
703.746.4500
justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov
www.justin.net
Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314