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Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson

Alexandria, Virginia

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While the Council has been in recess over the summer, it has been anything but quiet.

While the City's economic development initiatives focus on attracting new employers to our community, we also must maintain what we already have.

This past month we were able to celebrate the retention of a great Alexandria employer, [The Motley Fool](#).

Working with the Governor and the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, the City was [able to convince The Motley Fool to not only remain in the City, but add 60 new jobs](#).

We are excited to have The Motley Fool here, and we look forward to their continued growth.

[Contact me anytime](#). Let me know how I can help.

Council Initiatives

Policing in Alexandria

With the murder of police officers in Dallas, Baton Rouge, San Diego, and locally in Prince William County in addition the deaths of citizens at the hands of police in Louisiana and Minnesota, the practice and profession of policing has dominated the headlines this summer.

Local incidents have now taken on a national presence as each incident contributes to a national narrative. Local police departments and policymakers must react to events taking place throughout our



[Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)

[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

Events/Updates

Tomorrow is National Night Out!

[On Tuesday evening, August 2nd, neighborhoods all across our City will hold celebrations in support of our crime prevention efforts.](#)

With participation from the City's public safety agencies and the support of the many City government agencies that preserve our quality of life, this annual event is a great way to get to know your neighbors.

The full list of parties is on the City's website. I'll see you around the City!

Friendship Fire Festival Saturday!

[On Saturday from 9 AM until 2 PM, the annual Friendship Fire Festival returns to the 100 block of South Alfred Street in Old Town.](#)

Celebrating the founding of the historic Friendship Firehouse in 1774, this festival is a great event for residents and visitors of all ages!

Citizens Police Academy

The Alexandria Police Department does an excellent job of keeping our community safe.

By participating in the Citizens Police Academy, you spend 10 weeks learning about the

nation and not just in our community.

Last month in this space, I wrote about two emergent issues in our Police Department: [the recently received staffing study](#), and the [upcoming leadership change in the Department](#). I discussed our recent crime trends [which show a continuation of record low occurrences in our City](#).

Our Police Department has an authorized force of 304 sworn officers. Every day, these women and men do a dangerous and difficult job and do it well. They are paid to disobey natural instincts and actively seek out danger to protect our neighbors and our possessions. We give them extraordinary powers, but ask that they exercise care, caution, discretion, fairness, and restraint in enforcing the law. They protect our communities from chaos and mayhem.

Here in Alexandria, we know all too well the danger police officers face each day. In recent years, [we have seen officers brutally attacked simply for doing their job](#). Some have [survived solely due to the important safety protections in place](#). Now being honored at the new [Alexandria Police Memorial](#), we [have a list of officers who have been lost in the line of duty](#). In a career known for its stress and impacts on family, we have also lost officers who have died from suicide.

We have also not been immune to situations where the use of force by police is questioned. We have [had situations where that authority is upheld](#) and situations where [a law enforcement officer was instead convicted of an illegal use of force](#).

More than a few times, my "lead foot" has resulted in me on the side of the highway, awaiting a police officer walking to my window to inquire why I was in such a rush.

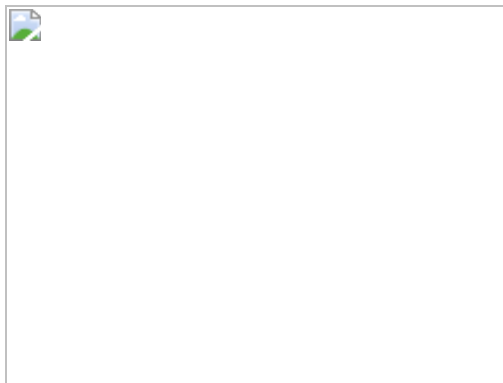
Whether justified or not, there are many Americans who approach their interactions with police with dread. Instead of the sheepishness I felt for being caught speeding, many approach that situation with fear of how the officer might react to them or the assumptions an officer might make about them. A perception exists that our system has different outcomes in police interactions depending on race. That perception [is supported by data in many cases](#).

We can argue these perceptions away. We can present data challenging the premise. Yet none of those tactics will address the underlying problem or reduce the fear and apprehension felt by some citizens in our nation and specifically in our community.

Where does that leave us in Alexandria? How do we react to the national narrative? How do we as a City look in the mirror and determine how we can learn by what is occurring around our nation?

We begin this discussion from a position of strength.

We have a highly skilled police force that represents the diversity of the community that they police. The department is taking new steps to improve the diversity of the workforce in future recruiting efforts. We are fortunate to have a Sheriff's Department with a sworn workforce that similarly represents our community's diversity.



department's unique mission and meeting the men and women who perform it every day.

[Applications are due August 15th. As a graduate myself, I highly recommend the program.](#)

Register to Vote!

The Alexandria Office of Voter Registration and Elections is hitting the streets this month to help voters register to vote.

[The office will be available at the following locations and times to register new voters, verify existing registrations, complete absentee ballot applications, or receive a free photo ID:](#)

- Burke Library on August 2nd from 3 PM until 6 PM
- Durant Center on August 5th from 5 PM until 8 PM
- Duncan Library on August 8th from 5:30 PM until 8:30 PM
- Cora Kelly Rec Center on August 16th from 3 PM until 6 PM
- Lee Center on August 24th from 6 PM until 9 PM

First Thursday Returns!

This Thursday is the next "First Thursday" of the year!

[The Del Ray Business Association continues the tradition from 6 - 9 PM on Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray.](#)

This month's event highlights music and dance in our community!

Sales Tax Holiday

In the past, the Commonwealth of Virginia had three separate sales tax holidays: one for back to

Our officers participate in training aimed at de-escalation of volatile situations. We outfit our police officers with non-lethal force options to assist in the de-escalation of these incidents.

We have officers that participate in [training designed to address implicit bias in policing](#).

[The Alexandria Human Rights Commission conducts a review of each police use of force incident.](#) The Commission also reviews internal investigation data to question and provide accountability of the department.

In May, the Council approved the FY 2017 to FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For the first time, [a placeholder was included within the CIP to fund the deployment of body-worn cameras for our police officers](#). Although a few years away, the planning for this endeavor has begun.

While we must identify funding for staffing (in several areas) to administer a camera program as well as the cameras themselves, the priority must be to create policies and procedures so such a program can be a success. At the state level, [as directed by the Governor](#) and led by Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran (also a former Alexandria member of the General Assembly), the [Secure Commonwealth Panel](#) has developed [a draft policy for jurisdictions to consider regarding the implementation](#) of cameras.

While body-worn cameras do not solve all problems, they do provide an additional level of accountability and protect both officers and the public. I am hopeful that we can learn from the experience of our neighbors around the Commonwealth (and the nation) and implement such a program.

The [staffing study that I wrote about last month](#) included specific recommendations for increasing community policing. Such efforts have worked to improve the relationship between the police and the public they serve.

We can learn from the national narrative as well. A year ago, the [President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing provided a comprehensive report on policing in America](#). Led by Professor at George Mason University, Laurie Robinson and Charles Ramsey, the then-Police Commissioner of Philadelphia (and former Washington, DC Police Chief), this group provided a thoughtful series of recommendations for departments around the nation.

Near the same time, the Center for Popular Democracy released [their "Toolkit for Promoting Justice in Policing,"](#) which approached the issue from a different perspective.

While approaching the issue from different perspectives, these two reports found much in common.

Both reports focused on the need to address issues outside of policing that impact how policing occurs. Examples of this include poverty, incarceration, mental health, diversion, education and overall criminal justice policy. While many of these issues must be addressed at the state level, there are local implications.

For example, our Commonwealth's Attorney, Bryan Porter, recently [adopted new policies in his office governing how some minor offenses are prosecuted](#). The goal of these new policies is to resolve the underlying violations of the law and not exacerbate the financial challenges of those already in poverty.

The reports both emphasized the need for good data throughout the criminal justice system. Good data helps us measure the impact of policies and calibrate our responses.

school time, one for hurricane preparedness, and one for Energy Star efficient appliances.

[Starting last year, the three sales tax holidays were combined and this year will be held concurrently from August 5 - 7.](#)

Use the opportunity to shop at some wonderful Alexandria businesses and enjoy the tax discount!

Sunday Library Hours Return

Fiscal Year 2017 began today. In adopting our Fiscal Year 2017 budget, the City Council included funding to restore Sunday hours to Burke, Duncan and Barrett libraries.

[Beginning last month, those three libraries will be open from 1 PM until 5 PM each Sunday. That will match the Sunday hours of Beatley Library.](#)

Please take the opportunity to enjoy the expanded availability of our great system of libraries.

What Programs Interest You?

The City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities are working to determine the best program offerings to serve our City.

[In order to provide offerings most desired by our residents, we are currently conducting a survey that you can complete online to provide your perspective.](#)

Thanks for helping us serve you better!

Sidewalk Sale!

[On Saturday and Sunday, August 13th and 14th, the 7th Annual Alexandria Sidewalk Sale returns to Old Town and Del Ray.](#)

Both reports spoke to training and resources as well as internal and external oversight.

While Alexandria has avoided some of the most significant issues that have occurred around the country, we have not been immune. The national dialogue presents us with the opportunity to be proactive. Making progress on these engagement opportunities must be a priority of our next Chief.

I am hopeful that we can engage in community dialogue and craft a package of policy solutions that maintains the safety of our community, maintains the safety of the police that serve our community and helps us expand the trust and accountability in our police that must exist among our entire population.

[Let me know your thoughts.](#)

Waterfront Update

Our Potomac River waterfront is the reason Alexandria exists as a community. [The history of this waterfront](#) is the history of Alexandria. It is what has brought people and commerce to our community for generations.

Unfortunately, for the past few decades, the future of our waterfront has also been the source of discord and community division. Far too often it has led to litigation. This litigation has, in some cases, [persisted for decades.](#)

When the last City Council was sworn in over three years ago, it was an early goal to resolve all on-going litigation, craft settlements with disputed landowners, and move forward as a community together. I believe that has been a success.

The implicit compromise of the [approved Waterfront Small Area Plan](#) was as simple as it was controversial. Can we allow some increased development on three derelict sites in exchange for the following: new waterfront parks, public accessibility throughout the shoreline, new flood mitigation, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality?

While achieving this vision has not always been easy, we now stand closer than ever.



Over a year ago, [the Virginia Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City](#) in the final litigation related to the Waterfront Plan. [Last June, the Court denied a request for the case to be reheard](#), thus ending the litigation.

Last May, the property exchanges occurred between the City and the Old Dominion Boat Club. The [City now owns the existing Club property](#) and the Club [now owns properties farther south along the waterfront](#). In order to create a seamless, uninterrupted park along the waterfront, this exchange was required.

With City funds from our settlement, the Boat Club has now begun to [construct a new club for their members on their new site](#). Last month, [demolition of the long-shuttered Beachcomber Restaurant was completed](#). Construction of the new club is under way and should [conclude approximately a year from now](#).

With over 50 boutiques participating and offering deeply discounted summer merchandise, this is a great opportunity to shop local!

Parking in Old Town at the meters will be free all day Saturday and Sunday. Parking in Del Ray is always free.

I'll see you there!

Irish Festival

[The Ballyshanners will bring back the Irish Festival to our waterfront!](#)

On Saturday, August 13th, from 11 AM until 7 PM, the festival returns to Waterfront Park at 1A Prince Street.

With food, dance, and music, this festival cannot be beat.

Request a Bike Rack

Know a good place in the City where we should place a bike rack?

[Let us know!](#)



Racks are installed on a seasonal basis and cannot be installed on private property.

Upon conclusion of the swap, the City will create a landmark park, Fitzgerald Square, with integrated flood mitigation at the base of King Street, thus addressing flood challenges that have long plagued the corridor. In May, the Council [received the plan for the first phase of this park implementation.](#)

Over a year and a half ago, the Council approved [Phase One of the Waterfront Landscape and Flood Mitigation Design.](#) This exciting design marries the vision of the Olin Group and the input of hundreds of residents who participated in the planning efforts. It also received input from the [Art and History Report](#) to ensure our history is a key component of the future of our waterfront.



Elsewhere on the waterfront, [the Carr Hospitality Indigo Hotel](#) is well under construction with completion slated for later this year.

Just next to that, on the site of the Robinson Terminal South, [Robinson Landing](#) will be under construction shortly. [This effort will conclude in 2019.](#)

Last fall, the [Council unanimously approved the redevelopment of Robinson Terminal North,](#) at the other end of the waterfront. Just last week, the [City was notified that the developer wished to place the project on hold](#) due to the market conditions. While an unfortunate turn of events, I look forward to working with the community and landowners to move redevelopment of that property forward.

The Waterfront Commission has been working to determine the governance and funding for programming and improvements in the new public spaces on our waterfront.

The Commission [had looked at a variety of different options to partner with private landowners and business owners to fund public improvements and programming for these important public spaces.](#)

This conversation has now merged with advocacy for the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Old Town. If the City Council were to authorize a BID, business owners in the district would pay a higher real estate tax rate. The additional revenue would support a new entity that would annually provide a budget to the City Council for approval.

This idea was pursued several years ago, but efforts ended when there was not sufficient support from the businesses who would ultimately pay the tax.

The idea is back again, with business community support.

[During the budget process, my colleague Councilman Chapman, successfully proposed allocating funding to study the idea more thoroughly.](#) This would provide a series of recommendations if the Council chooses to pursue implementation.

I believe that Business Improvement Districts have been very successful tools across the country. They help leverage private investment and encourage small business growth. I look forward to further consideration of this concept.

Please [let me know your thoughts](#) as we work to achieve the vision of a more vibrant and accessible waterfront for our City.

Summer School Work

In approving [the City's budget for Fiscal Year 2017](#), which began on July 1, the Council made significant new investments in capital infrastructure. One of the largest areas of that new investment was for capital investment in our schools. The [Council's adopted Capital Improvement Program](#) included \$274 million of investment over the next 10 years including \$44.2 million in this fiscal year alone.



While much of the planned capital investment will go to make large scale capacity investments, we cannot lose sight of the important maintenance that is required in existing facilities.

With students occupying these facilities during

the school year, the summer is the time to address these importance maintenance efforts.

The Education Facilities Department of the Alexandria City Public Schools is [now under way to implement an aggressive schedule of work throughout the system.](#)

I look forward to continuing our investment in this basic infrastructure work to maintain the learning environment for our children.

AAA/Aaa Affirmed

Each time the City goes to borrow money for its capital budget, it must go before the rating agencies to have its credit worthiness assessed.

Much like individuals must have a credit check performed before acquiring a mortgage, a car loan, or a new credit card, the City must go before Standard & Poor's and Moody's to have the two organizations assess whether we are doing a good job managing the City's finances.

[Last month, the City borrowed \\$73.7 million of general obligation bonds.](#) These bonds were issued at a true interest cost of 2.12%, which is the lowest rate the City has achieved in recent years and was reflected in the nine bids received during the process.

While Council had authorized \$80.5 million of general obligation borrowing, the current municipal finance environment allowed the City to avail itself of a \$10.5 million bond premium in addition to the \$73.7 million of borrowing.

[Both Moody's and Standard & Poor's re-affirmed the City's AAA/Aaa bond ratings, citing our strong fiscal management and conservative debt posture.](#)

Those high ratings qualify the City for the cheapest borrowing rates available, which will save our taxpayers millions over the 20 year life of these bonds.

In May, [the Council adopted our 10 year Capital Improvement Program, covering fiscal years 2017 - 2026.](#) Over the 10 year period, the program calls for \$1.672 billion in capital investment throughout the City. Over 60% of those funds go to new investments in transportation and education infrastructure.

Our capital budget is funded primarily through a mix of debt and current year funding also known as "cash capital." Relating this to your home mortgage, the cash capital is the down payment. We also

pay interest each year on the debt that was issued in previous years.

Alexandria is very conservative with our use of debt.

For example, Arlington County limits its debt to 4% of its Fair Market Real Property Value. Both Fairfax and Prince William Counties limit their debt to 3%. Alexandria's self-imposed limit is 1.6%, and this budget year we achieved 1.37%.

The median for other similarly rated and sized jurisdictions is 2.42%.

Debt is a tool that allows us to balance the costs of large capital investments across the generations of Alexandria taxpayers that will benefit from them and to pay for our investments from the returns we reap from them.

In issuing the City's rating, Moody's wrote: "The stable outlook reflects the likelihood that the city will maintain its satisfactory financial position due to proactive management, sound financial policies, and continued tax base growth and diversification."

It is important for us to maintain the careful stewardship that will protect our taxpayers and our City's infrastructure.

Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!

My regular series of Town Hall Meetings continue!

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

Increasing our Tree Canopy

Our tree coverage is one of the most basic quality of life indicators for our community.

Alarmed by the steady reduction of the City's tree canopy, the Council created a committee in 2004 to develop an Urban Forestry Master Plan for our City.

In 2009, the outgoing Council [approved the Urban Forestry Master Plan](#) and instructed our staff to work to implement the approved plan. At the time, the City had cataloged 17,000 street trees and an additional 50,000 trees on parks, schools, and other public property.

The Plan included an extensive series of specific recommendations, but the guiding principles were:

- Adopt the American Forests' recommended tree canopy goal of 40%
- Plant 400 additional trees annually

- Improve maintenance of those trees planted on public property
- Work to encourage additional tree plantings on private property

Armed with the approved plan, the City has gone to work in improving both maintenance and the planting of new trees.

In 2013, at my suggestion, [the Council allocated additional resources to improve tree maintenance Citywide and reduce a significant backlog of maintenance requests](#) .

[Beginning with the budget that the Council approved in May, we have now increased the annual tree and shrub maintenance capital budget by an additional \\$100,000 annually](#) .

This increase will allow the City to meet the Urban Forestry Master Plan goal of an additional 400 trees planted annually and will provide an overall funding level to replace or plant a total of 850 trees this year.

We rely on residents to help us meet our goals. If there is an area where you believe [a street tree would be appropriate or a tree that requires maintenance, use our Call, Click, Connect system to submit the request](#). Our staff will review the location and provide you with feedback.



In Fiscal Year 2018, the City will commence with an update to the Urban Forestry Master Plan including new landscape guidelines and implementation strategies. The goal of this effort will be to create new mechanisms to continue our progress in increasing tree coverage in our City.

Providing Better Care for Mental Health In Alexandria

Deficiencies in how we provide mental health services in the Commonwealth of Virginia has been a focus of policymakers in Richmond for several years. The mass shooting at Virginia Tech coupled with the family tragedy for State Senator Creigh Deeds have kept these issues in the spotlight.

Alexandria has maintained the highest per capita rate of individuals hospitalized under [Temporary Detention Orders](#) for severe mental health emergencies. A recent review found that 80 individuals with serious mental illness have refused treatment or have other barriers to receiving services.

With new funding from the General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services published a grant availability to assist local governments in creating new Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) teams to better serve these individuals. These PACT teams are already in place in other jurisdictions including [Arlington](#) and [Fairfax County](#),

and have shown success in serving those with these mental health challenges.

[Alexandria recently received \\$850,000 from the Commonwealth to pursue the creation of a PACT team of our own.](#) The team will be made up of up to ten City employees, including eight new positions, that will provide intensive, 24/7 mobile services to these individuals. The ratio of staff to clients will be no more than 1:10 with many clients receiving services 2 to 3 times per day.

This initiative will allow the City to continue to pursue the highest quality, evidence-based services to our residents suffering from severe mental illness.

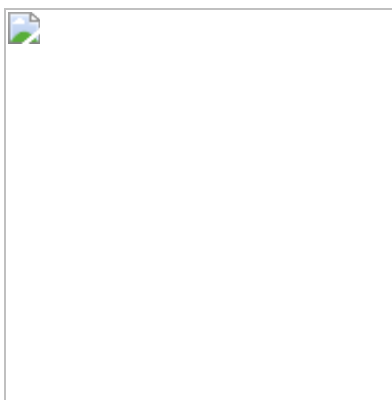
I am hopeful that we will see improvements in the outcomes for these clients.

Capital Bikeshare Grows

As we speak, the City's Capital Bikeshare network is again growing. This summer we are adding 13 additional stations to showcase the bike sharing public/private partnership that now counts the District of Columbia, Arlington, Montgomery County and Alexandria as members.

The expansion [came after a review of the existing system by the Transportation Commission](#) and our City Staff including review of the [usage data](#).

The City's Capital Bikeshare system was originally funded using



Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. The CMAQ funds and developer contributions now purchase new stations, while the City's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) now fund operations for existing stations.

Public transportation systems of all kinds depend on heavy public subsidies. In Alexandria, the DASH Bus system recovers approximately 30% of its costs from fare box revenue. Original estimates of Capital Bikeshare's performance were expected to be similar. Surprisingly, Alexandria's cost recovery in the first year reached 72% from rentals and now hovers at 63% with the expanded network.

[Motivate International](#) is the private contractor who administers the network for Capital Bikeshare. As they recently assumed the operations agreement, they also accepted a 25% reduction from previous pricing, thus driving down the City's cost for on-going operations.

The system has provided a critical, low-cost connectivity option for short trips, used frequently by our residents and visitors alike. Current plans will allow continued expansion over the next few years. [Please use this link to suggest station locations.](#)

The new stations in this year's plan are:

- St. Asaph Street at Madison Street (Harris Teeter)
- Commonwealth Avenue at Cameron Street (King Street Metro North)
- Madison Street at Henry Street
- Royal Street at Wilkes Street (Old Town Safeway)

- Radford Street at Osage Street
- Commonwealth Avenue at Monroe Avenue
- Commonwealth Avenue at Oak Street
- Potomac Avenue at Route 1 (Station 650)
- Bruce Street at Mount Vernon Avenue (My Organic Market)
- Four Mile Run Park parking lot (Four Mile Farmers and Artisans Market)
- Lee Recreation Center
- Franklin Street (District Taco)

The full expansion map is [available for review online](#).

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