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# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

*Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson*

Alexandria, Virginia

December 1, 2016

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We are now almost a month past our national election, and we can be proud that in Alexandria [over 83% of our active registered voters took the time to participate.](#)

However, it is obvious that the process divided Americans in a way that hasn't been seen in quite some time. It will take a while for our nation and our community to heal.

It would be useless to be anything but optimistic that both our President-Elect and the leaders in Congress will rise to the moment.

City Council's job remains to serve the interest of Alexandria.

[While only 18% of Alexandria's voters supported the President-Elect](#), he will still be the President. Where he works for the betterment of the lives of our residents, we will work with the administration. Where he works against those same residents, we as a community should stand in opposition.

To that end, and to help reconcile divisions, the [Council released a statement reassuring our community that our values will not change as a result of one election.](#)

One lesson of this election is that local governments must be the "laboratory" of good policy. That has always been my goal for Council. I hope that all Alexandrians can help us take up that mantle and lead.



[Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)

[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

## Events/Updates

### Scottish Christmas Walk on Saturday!

[The 46th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk returns this Saturday to the streets of Old Town!](#)

Scheduled on December 3rd, from 11 AM to 1 PM, the parade begins at St. Asaph and Wolfe Streets and concludes at Market Square.

I'll see you at this can't miss event!

### Ring in the New Year!

[Tickets are now on sale for First Night Alexandria!](#) Ring in the New Year in style in Alexandria.

[Enjoy family friendly performances throughout our community culminating in fireworks to ring in the New Year!](#)

### Be A Snow Buddy

[Volunteer Alexandria and the City work together to recruit "Snow Buddies."](#)

Snow Buddies work across our City to help residents who are unable to clear snow during inclement weather.

Sign up today!

### Leaf Collection Continues

The City's annual leaf collection effort continues.

[Residents may bag leaves using bags that can be picked up from a variety of City government sites.](#)

**My best wishes for a joyous holiday this month.**

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

## Council Initiatives

### A Discussion of Debt

Along with Councilman Paul Smedberg, I am a member of the City's Audit Committee. One of the duties of the committee is to supervise the City's annual financial audit.

When our audit concludes, the City issues a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, also known as the CAFR. Last month, [the Audit Committee and the Council accepted the CAFR for Fiscal Year 2016 which concluded on June 30th.](#)

The CAFR includes audited statements of the City's financial position and can be useful to fully understand the financial condition of City government.

The report shows that the City now carries \$522 million of outstanding General Obligation debt. This is actually a reduction of \$18 million of debt the City had outstanding at the conclusion of the previous year.

By law, the City must have a balanced budget each year. Unlike the Federal Government, we are simply not allowed by law to run a deficit. The debt we do incur is only used to fund our capital expenditures, primarily basic infrastructure, school facilities, transportation, sewers, etc. It is **not** used to fund the day to day operations of City government.

In July the City's [AAA/Aaa bond rating was reaffirmed](#) by both Moody's and Standard & Poor's. The City has held these ratings for 24 years and it might be easy to dismiss this as business as usual. However, this is no small achievement. [As of 2009, we were one of only 54 cities in the nation who held this rating.](#)

We should never take for granted the fiscal stewardship required to maintain these ratings. These classifications qualify the City to borrow at rates lower than most jurisdictions in the country. In July, the City did just that, [issuing \\$73.7 million of new General Obligation bonds](#) at one of the lowest rates in modern history. This saves millions for the taxpayers of tomorrow in the cost to service that debt used to finance improvements that further benefit the City's finances and standing.

[The City has even taken the opportunity to execute the municipal equivalent of "refinancing,"](#) by replacing higher interest bonds with new, lower interest bonds.

These actions have saved the taxpayers millions of dollars.

Last year, 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 \$1 billion of those funds go to new investments in transportation and school infrastructure.



Additionally, the vacuuming of leaves placed on curbs is continuing. [A full schedule is available online.](#)

### **Holiday Boat Parade of Lights**

[Wrapping up an amazing evening in Alexandria, the Holiday Boat Parade of Lights returns to the Alexandria waterfront this Saturday night.](#)

The event gets started at 5:30 PM and culminates with Santa on waterskis!

### **Torpedo Factory Holiday Festival**

[On Saturday, the Torpedo Factory will keep the studios open late to help you get a head start on holiday shopping and entertain the entire family!](#)

The Festival includes a scavenger hunt, live music, snacks, and a visit from Santa himself.

The events gets started at 2 PM and continue until 9 PM.

### **Del Ray Tree Lighting**

On Saturday at 6PM, the holidays begin in Del Ray!

[The Annual Del Ray Tree Lighting will occur, followed by carols and Santa!](#)

All activities begin at Mount Vernon Avenue and Oxford Avenue at the site of the Del Ray Farmers's Market.

Participants are encouraged to bring nonperishable food and diapers to benefit Carpenter's Shelter.

### **North Ridge Tree Lighting**

[On Sunday December 11th, the holidays will begin in North Ridge.](#)

The annual North Ridge Holiday Tree lighting is

Our capital budget is funded primarily through a mix of debt and current year funding, also known as "cash capital." If you think of 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%.

There are a few ways the City regulates our debt level. The state has a legal debt limit of 10 percent of the assessed value of property in a community. For Alexandria, that would give us the ability to borrow up to \$3.8 billion, far beyond the \$522 million that we have outstanding today.

The City also applies a series of [self-imposed debt guidelines](#) which impose restrictions to our debt level using a few metrics. Two years ago, [I successfully proposed that the Council adopt a "Cash Capital" Policy](#). This policy now ensures that the City Manager proposes budgets that fund at least 2% of the cost of capital expenditures proposed for each year, thus limiting the growth of debt and ensuring generational equity. During the worst of the recession, we allowed nearly all of the costs of our capital budget to be borrowed. This new 2% floor will prevent the City from taking shortcuts during difficult times.

Buried in the [back of our Capital Improvement Program is a table that lists the capital projects that were requested but were not funded](#). These unfunded projects total \$260 million and include school initiatives, road paving projects, DASH Bus fleet expansions, City building maintenance funds, and much more.

This list does not include [the recent proposal by the ACPS Superintendent of a \\$515 million, 10 year plan to address our school capacity challenges at every level](#). It also does not include the [new Capital Improvement Program proposal scheduled to be presented today by the WMATA General Manager to the WMATA Finance Committee](#). That proposal requests an additional \$23 million from the City next year alone!

On Tuesday evening, [the Council received the latest assessment of the condition of our municipal facilities](#) and learned that an additional \$30 million would be required simply to bring our facilities up to a grade of "C."

Taken together, these unfunded projects are essentially additional debts for the City. They constitute deferred needs that grow in cost each year they are not addressed.

Last month, [the Council adopted our budget guidance for the City Manager](#). The resolutions provide the City Manager with the Council direction necessary to prepare his budget.

In adopting the guidance, the Council included language that I proposed requesting that the City Manager present a plan for addressing these deferred capital projects. That plan can include revisions to our debt policy guidelines to allow for greater borrowing.

With those alternatives coming before the Council in February, expect an extensive community conversation on the revenue, debt, and spending alternatives.

For the past few years, I have advocating addressing these long-deferred capital needs. I will continue that focus during this upcoming

scheduled to begin at 5:30 PM.

The event occurs at "The Pit" (aka Beverly Park, at the corner of North and South Overlook Drives).

The event includes caroling, food and the arrival of Santa!

### Menorah Lighting

[On Sunday December 25th, Chabad Lubavitch of Alexandria-Arlington will host their annual Menorah lighting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel \(901 N. Fairfax Street\).](#)

The event gets started at 5 PM and includes music, fellowship, and latkes!

### Women's Holiday Market

On Sunday, December 4th, the Friends of the Alexandria Commission for Women will sponsor its 19th annual Holiday Market.

The event, at the Charles Houston Recreation Center (901 Wythe Street), is from 1 PM to 5 PM.

Each year, the event raises money to support programs critical to women in Alexandria, including domestic violence and sexual assault programs.

The event showcases the work of creative women artists and artisans.

### Making Alexandria Better for Women and Girls

Do you know some incredible Alexandrians who work tirelessly to improve the lives of women and girls in our community?

If so, please nominate them to be recognized for their efforts at the 2017 Alexandria Commission for Women Salute to Women Banquet.

budget process. Addressing decades of under investment will not happen in one year or even 10 years. However, we must continue to make progress.

### Let There Be Light!

Street lights around our City help provide safety for our residents and property. In Alexandria, our street lights are operated and maintained by Dominion Virginia Power under the [Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association \(VEPGA\)](#). This is a statewide agreement that provides negotiated pricing for local governments to purchase power and related services. [The VEPGA agreement was recently renewed for another four years.](#)

In Alexandria, we have struggled with street light outages and the response of Dominion Virginia Power to reports of those outages.

In the Fall of 2013, Dominion Virginia Power performed a citywide assessment of street light outages and addressed those. Since that time, the City staff have performed similar assessments.

As part of the FY 2015 approved budget, I successfully proposed that the Council set aside money to perform two assessments during the year. When the City completed the first of those assessments 433 non-functioning streetlights were discovered around the City.

We also communicated with Dominion Virginia Power our desire that they enhance the ability of residents to report light outages.

In response to that request, [Dominion Virginia Power created a web form for the reporting of these outages.](#)

Additionally, we are working to improve visibility and safety in areas of the City where additional lighting would be beneficial. If you know of an area that might benefit from the installation of new lighting, please [review the process](#) and [submit an online request for new lighting using Call, Click, Connect.](#)

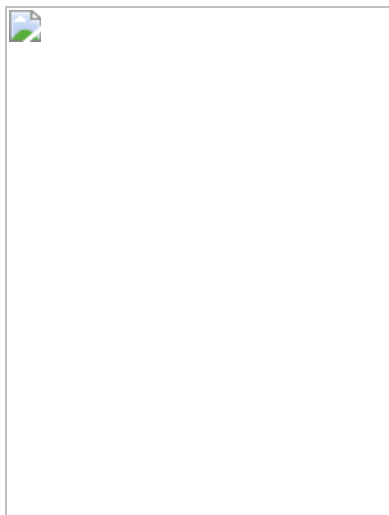
### Cleaner Water

Some of the efforts that a municipal government works on see quick results. Some efforts take a few years. Our efforts to achieve cleaner waterways will take decades, but the payoff will be for multiple future generations. The efforts are on-going and constant. The improvements continue nonetheless.

Early in the last Council term, the members grappled with the challenges that the City faced from federal environmental regulations that govern how we handle sewage from homes and businesses. Those efforts culminated in the adoption of the [City's Sanitary Sewer Master Plan](#). In conjunction with our partners at [Alexandria Renew Enterprises](#), we are working to implement that plan.

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 (run-off) is collected and returned to rivers and streams with very little treatment to remove pollutants



The banquet will be the evening of Monday, March 20th, at the U. S. Patent & Trademark Office.

[Nominations can be submitted online and are due by February 3rd.](#)

### Buy A Christmas Tree

[For over 60 years, the Alexandria Police Youth Camp has sent 20,000 children to Kilmarnock, Virginia for summer camp.](#)

This unique program gives many children the summer experiences that they otherwise would be denied.

The biggest fundraiser for this program is the annual sale of Christmas trees.

The trees are on sale now at 110 Callahan Drive (across from the Masonic Temple).

Trees are available for purchase from 4 PM until 8 PM from Monday through Friday. On the weekends, trees are for sale from 10 AM until 8 PM.

Please support this worthwhile cause by purchasing their Christmas trees.

### Buy Another Christmas Tree

[The North Ridge Citizens Association is selling Christmas Trees this weekend!](#)

Tree sales will benefit the Association and the good work they do in the North Ridge neighborhood.

Sales will occur in the parking lot at Trinity United Methodist Church at the corner of Cameron Mills Road and Allison Street.

On Friday, trees will be available from noon until 8 PM. On Saturday, they will be available 7 AM until 5 PM. The final day of sales

accumulated from roads, parking lots and other surfaces upon which it falls. 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 most rain events, due to capacity and design issues, this system experiences a Combined Sewer Overflow condition, where a mixture of stormwater and sewage flows untreated into waterways via stormwater outflows.](#)

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, primarily the Clean Water Act.

The City operates this Combined Sewer System [under a permit from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality \(VDEQ\)](#). In 2013, the City was issued a new five year permit for the operation of the system.

Essentially, this permit requires the City to work with the community to adopt a new Long Term Control Plan reducing the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water. The new plan was due to be submitted to the state this year.

The Plan, to be implemented over the next two to three decades, is a significant undertaking.

It will be disruptive to some areas of our City and it will require \$125 - \$188 million, primarily funded by ratepayers as an addition to bills from Alexandria Renew Enterprises.

[A year and a half ago, the Council created a new stakeholder committee](#) to monitor the creation of and offer feedback on the Long Term Control Plan.

The [committee made its recommendations](#) which came before the Council in May.

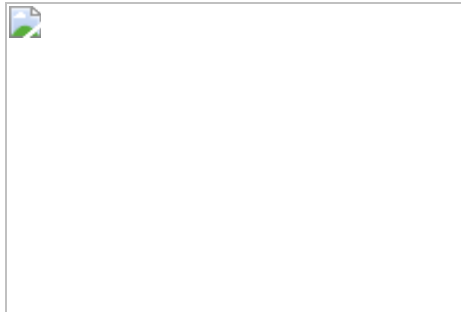
The Combined Sewer System has four outfalls:

- CSO-001, which discharges into Oronoco Bay
- CSO-002, which discharges into Hunting Creek
- CSO-003 and CSO-004, which both discharge into Hoofs Run

The permit requires that the City address CSO-002, CSO-003, and CSO-004. While CSO-001 is not covered under the permit requirements, the committee and the City have voluntarily chosen to begin addressing this outfall under this plan.

The plan proposes to use a variety of solutions between now and 2035 to reduce pollution from CSO-002 by 80%, from CSO-003 by 99%, and from CSO-004 by 99%. This would provide for a total pollution reduction of 86%.

This reduction is achieved by:





will be Sunday noon until 5 PM.

### Track a DASH Bus

DASHBus, Alexandria's local bus service has now implemented real-time bus arrival information.

[Try it out at your computer or mobile device today!](#)

### See The Stars

One of the little known treasures of Alexandria is the Planetarium at T. C. Williams High School.

Even lesser known is that each month, Bob Nicholson, who has long managed the Planetarium, opens it up for the community for free.

[Reservations](#) are required, but don't miss out on this great resource! The next show is the evening of Tuesday, December 20th.

- Construction of a 10-foot, 1.6 million gallon tunnel to address CSO-003 and CSO-004
- Construction of a 3 million gallon storage tank to address CSO-002
- New "green" infrastructure (improvements to the permeability of surfaces)
- Targeted sewer separation (typically funded by developers in the context of redevelopment)

In the proposed plan, CSO-001 is addressed by targeted sewer separation and green infrastructure.

In May, the Council approved the draft plan for submission to VDEQ. In addition, the Council requested that our Staff return with recommendations as to how we might speed the remediation of CSO-001.

[This past month, our staff accomplished this task.](#) The revisions proposed by the staff accelerated the feasibility study by 14 years. This study would explore where a storage tunnel or storage tank near CSO-001 could be located and the pros and cons of these alternatives.

The revisions also accelerated the assessment of CSO-001 by 6 years. This assessment would help us determine the sizing of any proposed infrastructure that must be built.

In addition, the revisions proposed greater prioritization of capital improvement program funds for green infrastructure and separation activity in the sewershed.

Ultimately, the cost of the remediation for CSO-001 could total up to an additional \$130 million.

The Council ultimately approved these revisions and submitted the revised plan to the VDEQ. While there has been interest by some members of the General Assembly in providing VDEQ with further direction in this area, at this point [Senator Adam Ebbin's proposed legislation is most aligned with the City's efforts to accelerate the remediation.](#)



As we move forward with these important water quality efforts, it will be vital to have continued partnership from state agencies and lawmakers to continue our progress.

The legacy of this effort will be cleaner waterways for future generations to enjoy.

### Getting Strategic

Local governments address a dizzying array of issues on a daily basis. It can be easy for the bureaucracy and the policymakers to lose focus when the needs and desires of the population we serve are expressed.

To help guide the City's direction, the City uses a Strategic Plan. The City's [existing Strategic Plan](#) has expired and for over a year there has been active community engagement to develop a new one.

We have now reached the point in the process where we make decisions as to our final strategic plan. The proposed plan will be coming to the City Council next month. The [draft plan is now](#)

[available on Alex Engage and we would like your feedback](#) between now and December 8th.

Additionally, on Monday, the 5th of December, there will be a community open house at Jefferson Houston Elementary School (1501 Cameron Street) from 6:30 PM until 8:00 PM.

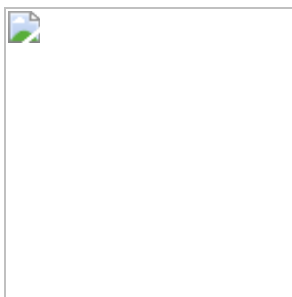
I look forward to your input in this important document.

## Partnering For Our Community

[In March I wrote in this newsletter about my efforts to formalize the City's Public/Private partnernships.](#)

Earlier this year the City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities rolled out a framework for [Community Group PARKnerships](#) : formalized groups that provide a one-time or on-going donation of money, time, labor or other applicable resources to one of Alexandria's valuable parks or programs.

Now, this Fall, the department established the Community Matching Fund to promote collaborative partnerships among City's community organizations by providing matching 1:1 dollars for groups that propose fundraising for park and recreation improvement projects



The [first grants](#) were awarded in October and four community projects will soon be fundraising to meet their portion of the commitment. One of the projects is already pretty close to meeting its goal: ['Kick the Habit'](#) hopes to promote litter abatement in our neighborhoods, parks and streams by piloting the installation of bottle and jug filling stations at two of our most heavily used sports fields. We should be hearing from all of these groups

soon and I encourage you to join me in support of these innovative efforts.

In FY 2018, the funding will increase to a total of \$100,000 in annual matching funds, allowing a minimum of four projects. For the FY 2018 Fund, the application process will begin in March 2017.

Learn more [here](#).

## 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

### Snow After Action

On average, Alexandria [gets 15.4 inches of snow per year](#). In one weekend earlier this year, [we got 22 inches](#). It was an extraordinary challenge for our region and for our City. I'm immensely proud of our

City staff. They worked tirelessly without rest for days, in order to get our City back on its feet.

In the end, there weren't any fatalities. We had only one minor injury to one of our staff. All of Alexandria's streets were passable to emergency vehicles before most of our neighboring jurisdictions. [Our schools reopened before almost every other school system in the region.](#)

As with any emergency of this scale, we did a full after-action effort. Our goal is to learn from this storm as we have done in the past.



There were large financial impacts from last winter's storm. Our snow removal budget for last year was \$836,000. At the height of the January storm, the City was expending \$250,000 every 12 hours to respond. For all snow events in last fiscal year, the City spent \$3.6 million. As a frame of reference, the "Snowmageddon" storm of 2010 cost the City greater than \$5 million in response.

The City continues to work with Federal and State partners for some reimbursement of these expenses.

The after-action efforts has identified a variety of detailed observations on what went well, and what did not go as well.

Our staff has identified four major action items to address in our upcoming snow season:

- Improved communication
- Modifications to street prioritization
- Improvements to the management of external resources
- New resource allocation to meet 72-hour clearing obligations adjacent to City-owned properties

The City has responsibility to clear 560 lane miles of roads, 20 miles of sidewalks, walkways and pathways, 65 City-owned facilities, and 44 acres of parking lots and public squares. It is a significant undertaking.

We appreciate the patience of so many in Alexandria as we worked to respond to the storms earlier this year. Additionally, the after-action effort was enhanced by the 800 responses received by residents to our snow survey.

I, for one am hoping that we escape this winter with hardly a snowflake to speak of!

### **The New Patrick Henry**

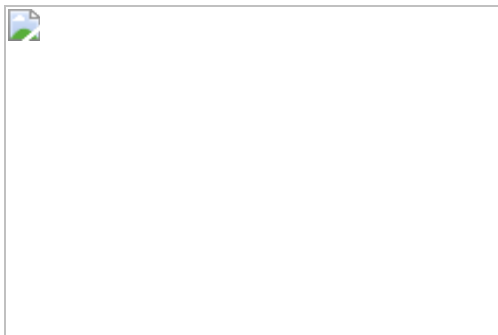
Over six years ago, the School Board adopted proposed capital funding for a new elementary school on the City's West End. Specifically, they proposed the site of the existing [Patrick Henry Elementary School and Recreation Center](#).

The school itself was originally built in 1953. Classroom additions were constructed in 1995 and 2011. The recreation center was added in 1973. Today 655 students attend the existing school.

With the enrollment challenges, particularly on the West End, coupled with the inadequate infrastructure, replacing Patrick Henry now is a priority.



Within the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Council funded \$42.1 million for replacement of Patrick Henry Elementary School. In addition, the City has allocated another \$6.7 million for replacement of Patrick Henry Recreation Center.



Current funding estimates for the recreation Center

will require an additional \$1 million in the FY 2018 CIP. Also, the City budgeted \$2.1 million to provide an artificial turf field and outdoor play equipment at the new school.

The process of jointly planning this facility has not been perfect. This is the first time in over a decade and a half that we have built a joint City/Schools facility, and it's important to define better processes to work from in the future.

The result of this planning effort is a new 137,000 square foot, Pre-K through 8th Grade school with a capacity of 900 students. The new recreation center will be 18,000 square feet.

The combined facility will feature the artificial turf field, a hard surface flex court, three new playgrounds, and open space.

The new facility will have 80% more floor area than the existing facility, yet there will only be a 16% reduction in open space. After construction, 64% of the 13.82 acre site will remain open space.

[On Tuesday, at 7 PM, the Planning Commission will consider the land-use approvals](#) necessary for the construction of the new school. Assuming the Planning Commission makes a recommendation, the City Council will hear the application on Saturday, December 17th, at our Public Hearing beginning at 9:30 AM.

Public testimony is welcomed at both the Planning Commission on Tuesday and the City Council on Saturday, the 17th.

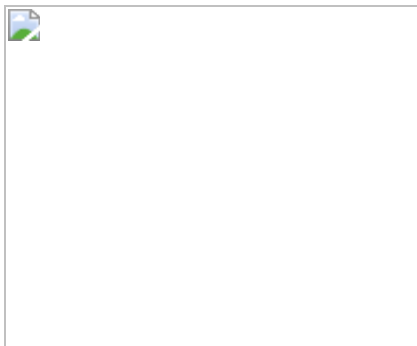
[The new school is scheduled to open to students for the Fall session of 2018.](#)

### **Our Next Budget**

The most important decision the City Council makes each year is the adoption of the annual operating budget and capital improvement program. The operating budget generally funds the on-going costs of government (primarily personnel), while the capital budget funds one-time expenditures that provide the community with an asset (new schools, new roads, new playing fields, transit buses, etc).

It has always been my view that the most important part of the budget process is the adoption of our annual budget guidance for the City Manager. As mentioned earlier, while the budget is not presented until February, in the Fall, the City Council adopts a resolution which provides the City Manager with direction as to how to prepare that budget.

The guidance typically provides direction on tax policy, expenditure priorities, debt policy, and other emergent issues. To prepare the Council to provide this direction, a retreat is scheduled.



Just before Thanksgiving, the Council had our annual retreat and [received the first glimpse into next year's financial picture](#).

This is the beginning of the Council's process to adopt the Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018) Operating Budget and the Fiscal Year 2018 - Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Improvement Program.

The initial projections are that next year's revenues will grow at a rate of a 1.5% overall. If that estimate holds, that would provide the City government with about \$9.9 million of new revenue.

With real estate taxes generating most of our resources, that growth is driven by an estimated increase of 2% in our real estate tax base. As in the past, larger growth in residential real estate is being offset by continued weakness in commercial real estate.

On the expenditure side, we quickly begin to see our challenge. [Given student enrollment growth](#), there is an expectation that there will be a request for additional operating funds for the Alexandria City Public Schools. Our estimates include \$7.2 million of additional funds for transit services, most of which will be required for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA or Metro). The estimates also include \$7.9 million for personnel costs (salary increases and benefit expenses), \$2.9 million for non-personnel costs, and \$7 million of new debt service costs.

All together, that creates an estimated shortfall of \$15.9 million (not including the impact of ACPS enrollment increases) before we start the process. By the time the Council adopts its budget in May, that gap must be addressed by tax increases, expenditure reductions, or some combination of the two. The Council begins to set that direction with the adoption of its budget guidance.

It is always easier to cut the budget in the fall, than it is for the Council to cut the budget in the spring during its budget process. As such, my preference is that the City Manager be directed to present a budget without an increase in the real estate tax rate.

For the last few years, [I have been unsuccessful in my attempt to adopt guidance for the City Manager to not include a tax rate increase](#).

It is far too early to determine whether an increase in the City's real estate tax rate is necessary. Yet, in order to explain the necessity of a potential increase to the taxpayers, I believe we must have the City Manager prepare a budget without such an increase.

Like last year, I am hopeful we can not only restrict growth in the operating budget to the the new revenue that is available (currently estimated to be \$9.9 million), but also allow flexibility for new tax revenue to be utilized to fund the City's Capital Improvement Program.

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, while we have made progress over the past four years with new investment in capital infrastructure, I believe we have hardly made a dent in the backlog of under-investment over the decades.

There are really only four ways to fix that under-investment: raise taxes, shift money from the operating budget, increase debt, or cut other capital programs.

I am again hopeful that the Council will use this budget as an opportunity to make an investment level in our infrastructure that supports our community and economic growth.

[You can watch Council's discussion on the adoption of the budget guidance online.](#)

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