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# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

*Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson*

Alexandria, Virginia

February 1, 2017

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[Last month, the City welcomed a new Police Chief to lead the men and women of the Alexandria Police Department.](#)

Chief Brown previously lead the California Highway Patrol as well as an office at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

I look forward to working with the Chief to keep our community safe.



[The School Board also had its own transition as the Board voted to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair](#) to lead for the upcoming year.

I look forward to working with Chair Ramee Gentry and Vice Chair Cindy Anderson as we work together to ensure the success of our children.

Congrats to former Chair Karen Graf and former Vice Chair Chris Lewis for their successful tenures in the leadership of the School Board.

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

## Council Initiatives

### Is It Time To Panic?

As a result of the Federal [Budget Control Act of 2011](#) and the failure of the resulting "Supercommittee," the nation was introduced to the so-called "[Sequestration](#)." The Sequestration imposed across-the-

[Schedule Child Safety Seat Inspection](#)

[Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)

[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

## Events/Updates

### Another Parade!

[The annual George Washington Birthday parade returns to the streets of Old Town!](#)

On Monday, February 20th from 1 PM - 3 PM, the parade is always an essential part of the season!

### Citizens Police Academy

It's time to start the next class of the Citizens Police Academy.

[This acclaimed program is one of the Police Department's key public outreach efforts.](#)

[The class meets for ten weeks each Wednesday, starting in March.](#)

[Sign up today!](#)

The deadline is February 20th.

### The City Academy

[The City is accepting applications for participating in our City Academy.](#)

The nine week program, beginning in March, will help you understand the way your government works!

[You may apply online between now and February 10th.](#)

### Nominate Great Women

board spending cuts to a variety of Federal spending. It was designed to never happen, but it did.

There is [no state in America where the Federal Government spend more per capita than the Commonwealth of Virginia](#). As such, the imposition of the Sequestration cuts had panicked the entire Commonwealth. [Then-Governor McDonnell formed a Commission to prepare the Commonwealth for the significant economic impact of the cuts](#). The impact of the reductions rippled through the economies of jurisdictions across the Commonwealth, [including Northern Virginia](#). Bond rating agencies [placed many Federally-dependent governments on notice that possible downgrades were imminent](#).

Overall, [the Sequestration cuts reduced Federal spending by a little over \\$1 trillion over nearly a decade](#). Regardless of whether you felt as though the cuts to spending were necessary, the reductions left a mark on the region's economy.

The new Administration is now preparing to make their own mark on Federal spending. [If published reports are to be believed, the reductions being proposed](#) would dwarf the Sequestration cuts of 2013. If these reports are accurate, and cuts of over \$1 trillion per year are enacted, the consequences for our region and our City would be catastrophic.

Again, the relative merits of these spending reductions are a discussion for another time. The impact of them will be dire for our City. We must prepare for the worst and respond accordingly.

[The President has now issued a hiring freeze and requested a plan for significant reductions to the Federal workforce.](#)

[We can expect reductions to Federal employee benefits.](#)

All of these reductions will disproportionately affect our region and our City. They will impact direct Federal revenues to the City, consumption taxes paid to the City, and eventually our real estate market.

Rather than panic, I suggested to my colleagues that the City should develop an "Emergency Plan" to respond to this threat.

I believe that any such plan should include tactics to prepare the City's fiscal condition, deploy new economic development tools, and provide for land-use initiatives.

I'm hopeful that the City can move quickly to address this threat.

### Protecting Your Right To Comment

Each month, with the exception of July and August, the City Council holds a Saturday public hearing at City Hall. All land-use matters and ordinances are included on the docket for the Council to receive testimony followed by final action on each matter. The public is invited to speak for up to three minutes on each docket item prior to the Council taking action. Council has the benefit of hearing from a variety of community perspectives in advance of taking action on these important matters.

At the beginning of each agenda and prior to hearing the docketed matters, the Council takes public testimony on matters not on the agenda. This is called the "Public Comment" period. Typically,

Do you know amazing Alexandrians who make an impact on the lives of women and girls in our City?

[The Alexandria Commission for Women is taking nominations for its annual "Salute to Women Awards."](#)

[Nominations can be made between now and the 3rd of this month.](#)

The Awards ceremony and reception will be held on Monday, March 20th at 6 PM at the Patent and Trademark Office.

### **Be A Snow Buddy**

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

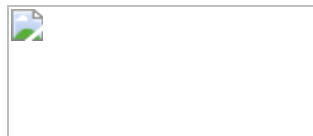
Snow Buddies work across our City to help residents who are unable to clear snow during inclement weather.

Sign up today!

residents provide testimony on issues they believe the Council should address, issues that will be coming to a Council docket in the future, and specific issues affecting their daily life.

For over 40 years, the City's resolutions have provided for the Public Comment period to be limited to 30 minutes. [The current version states that those speakers beyond the 30 minutes of testimony should be allowed to speak at the end of the agenda, after the docketed items are heard \(along with the public testimony associated with those items\).](#)

For a variety of reasons, this public comment period has extended much longer than the allocated half hour. In 2016, the public comment period alone averaged over an hour. Twice last year, it was over 3 hours. It is valuable for Council to hear the testimony of residents concerned about different matters not on the docket. Unfortunately, that time can come at the expense of those members of the public prepared to offer testimony on the items that are on our docket.



[To address this challenge and prioritize the testimony of those who attend our public hearings to testify on matters on our docket, I suggested that the City live by the language that has long been in our resolution. This provides for 30 minutes of public testimony at the beginning of the meeting, followed by our docketed items and concluding with the remaining public comment testimony.](#)

After some discussion, Council ultimately voted 6-1 to allow up to 15 public comment speakers to speak at the beginning of the meeting and any additional public comment speakers to speak at the end after testimony is heard on the docketed items.

While allowing up to 15 speakers at the beginning of the meeting could still go over the 30 minutes we have allocated, this limit will give all speakers some predictability as to when they can be heard.

I believe this change will ensure that those attending our public hearing to provide feedback on docketed items will have their voices heard. I'm hopeful we struck the right balance in how we prioritize the different public testimony that we receive.

### **Landmark Mall**

Seventeen years ago, the ownership of the properties at Landmark Mall received their tax assessments from the City. The [actual mall site was assessed at \\$76.4 million](#). The [Sears store was assessed at \\$19.7 million](#). The [Macy's store site was assessed at \\$17 million](#).

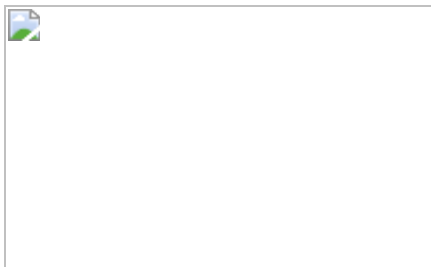
At the City's tax rate in 2000, these three sites alone generated \$1.25 million in real estate tax.

Today, those three properties are assessed at \$24 million, \$13.4 million, and \$10.6 million, respectively. They generate about \$500,000 in real estate tax today.

To make the situation even more severe, real estate tax is only a portion of the picture. The reduction in revenues from sales tax, dining tax, and other business taxes has also been dramatic at this site.

There is no clearer demonstration of the City's financial challenges than the predicament that currently faces Landmark Mall.

In 2009, the City Council approved the [Landmark/Van Dorn Small Area Plan](#). This plan laid out a comprehensive vision for the redevelopment of the entire corridor including the properties on the existing Mall site.



The bankruptcy of one of the owners, unfavorable market conditions, and the complexity of the relationship between the three owners on the site resulted in little action for several years.

In June 2013, after taking over ownership of the mall site, the Howard Hughes Corporation [received approval by the Planning Commission and City Council for a redevelopment of their portion of the site](#). A slower than expected leasing market has slowed that company's intentions to redevelop.

In 2015, Howard Hughes Corporation was back at City Hall to apply for very minor amendments to the approval that was issued in 2013. [These changes were approved by City Council in April of 2015](#).

While no one should be convinced until they see bulldozers knocking down the existing mall site, there is a lot going on, including some significant events last month. Landmark Mall redevelopment has been complicated from the beginning, but I believe we can be cautiously optimistic that it is finally coming together.

- [Early last month, Macy's announced the closure of their store at Landmark.](#)
- [The Howard Hughes Corporation later announced that it had purchased the Macy's store site.](#)
- [The Howard Hughes Corporation subsequently announced that the existing mall site is closing.](#)
- [Mill Creek is now engaged to handle the residential portion of the redevelopment.](#)
- There have been discussions between the City and Howard Hughes about potential public/private partnerships that will help spur the redevelopment.
- Sears spun-off a new Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) in 2015 called Seritage Growth Properties to maximize value out of their remaining real estate. [The Landmark Mall Sears store property is now owned by the new REIT.](#)

One of the largest impediments to redevelopment has been the presence of three landowners on the site. We now have two landowners on the site and we are getting closer to having one landowner with full site control.

The redevelopment of the Landmark Mall site has been a long time in coming to fruition. I am optimistic that we are finally making real progress in this effort.

### **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. These 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 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 its final disposition.

[During most rain events, due to capacity and design issues, this system experiences a Combined Sewer Overflow condition. This is 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. The plan reduces the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water. The new plan was submitted to the state last 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 of last year.

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:

- Construction of a 10-foot, 1.6 million gallon tunnel to address CSO-003 and CSO-004
- Construction of a three 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 of last year, 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.

[Last year, 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 six 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.

Enter the General Assembly. In the past, [the General Assembly has provided money to localities elsewhere in the Commonwealth, including Lynchburg and Richmond, to assist with the remediation of their Combined Sewer Systems.](#) In 2013, [then-Governor McDonnell proposed new funding for the City to address this issue.](#) Unfortunately, the General Assembly removed the funding before the budget was adopted.

This year, there has been a flurry of legislation proposed to force Alexandria to further accelerate the remediation of the Combined Sewer System.

A State Senator, Richard Stuart, [has proposed one of the more draconian pieces of legislation.](#) As proposed, the legislation would have required the City to bring all four outflows into compliance by 2020, a little over three years from now. From an engineering perspective, that timeline is impossible. To make matters worse, that legislation proposed that if the City fails to comply with the 2020 timeline, we would have ALL state funding of the City removed, including funding for schools, public safety, human services, etc. It is basically the state equivalent of the "death penalty," and has never been proposed before.

Due to the efforts of Senator Adam Ebbin, the legislation was amended to remove the "death penalty" and make the deadline 2025. While it is positive that the draconian removal of all state funding is off of the table, 2025 is still a timeline that the City's engineers believe is not feasible. This legislation also presents process challenges that could potentially SLOW efforts to address



this issue. That version of the legislation passed the State Senate and is now pending in the House of Delegates.

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.

## 72 Hour Rule

As an old City we have old laws. I have worked with our City Attorney over the past few years to modernize or repeal several old laws.

We [repealed antiquated laws that banned many massage services](#).

We [repealed laws that required bicycle registration](#).

We [got rid of laws prohibiting "for sale" signs on vehicles](#).

We [struck out code sections that required new streets to be named after Confederate Generals, banned cohabitation, and prohibited shoeshiners](#).

While it's relatively easy to repeal anachronistic laws, it becomes more challenging when the laws need to be modernized.

In the summer of 2015, [I proposed that the City take a look at the so-called "72-hour Rule."](#) The 72-hour Rule [is officially 10-4-8 of the City Code](#). This code section has been on the City's books for many years and was last revised 30 years ago. This is in addition to any existing on-street restrictions.

Essentially the 72-hour rule provides that a vehicle cannot be parked on a City street for longer than 72 hours. The rule was enacted to prevent abandonment and long-term storage of vehicles on our streets. Unfortunately, today it is primarily used as a tool in "neighbor versus neighbor" disputes.

From 2000 to 2015, our Police Department has been asked to check a vehicle for compliance 7,500 times and they have issued roughly 1,300 citations for violations. This is a law where enforcement is primarily initiated by complaint. That was true in 87% of the time.

In neighborhoods without off-street parking, the rule can become particularly problematic when residents are on vacation or on a business trip, without any place or anyone to move their vehicle.

In making my proposal, I have asked that our Staff examine possible changes, including consideration of a full repeal, an extension of the time period, or creation of a permit scheme. This would allow residents to purchase permits to exceed the 72 hours in an extenuating circumstance.

[Our City staff is presently working with the Traffic and Parking Board to conduct a review. They distributed an online survey to collect input. Over 700 participants provided input on the survey. On Thursday February 16th, the City will conduct a community meeting to learn more perspectives from the community. The community meeting will be in the Sister Cities conference room at City Hall from 7 PM until 9 PM.](#)

Following the additional community input, our staff will return to the Council with a recommendation in May.

We expect to continue our efforts to modernize our laws. If you have suggestions for laws that need revision or replacement, [let me know your ideas](#).

## Water Rates

Alexandria remains one in a relatively small list of Virginia jurisdictions who have a private water utility. [Virginia American Water Company](#) (VAWC), a subsidiary of a large national company, provides the water supply to Alexandria's residents and businesses.

As a private utility, VAWC is subject to the authority of the [State Corporation Commission](#) in Richmond. In 2014, VAWC applied to the commission in order to create a new "Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Service Charge."

As proposed, the new charge was to assist VAWC in collecting the resources to perform system-wide maintenance.

While the City certainly supports the maintenance efforts that are badly needed to protect our City's water supply, we do have concern about the mechanism.

At my request, the City filed with the Commission in opposition of



VAWC's request. The City's concern was that the change proposed by VAWC removes a significant "check" (the review by the State Corporation Commission), that exists to ensure the proper process is followed before rates are raised.

The Commission appointed a hearing examiner to look at the facts in the case and make a recommendation. The [response of the hearing examiner](#) in June supported the City's perspective.

Then, the City filed [a response urging the Commission's support of the findings of the hearing examiner](#).

In September, the [Commission concurred with their hearing examiner and that case is now closed](#).

Yet at the end of October, [VAWC applied to the State Corporation Commission for another rate increase](#). The increase took effect on April 1, 2016 and increased the typical residential customer's bill by approximately \$4 per month. Additionally, they again applied for permission to create the new infrastructure services charge. Under state law, the increase goes into effect, but if the Commission lowers or eliminates the increase, every customer will be entitled to a refund.

In April of last year, [the City Council voted unanimously to oppose the proposed increase](#).

Another hearing examiner was appointed. [At the end of November, this hearing examiner provided his report](#). While the examiner did not accept all of the rate increases proposed by VAWC, he did approve a 3 year pilot of the new Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Service Charge. [Late in December, the City provided its response to this recommendation](#).

We are now awaiting final action by the State Corporation Commission.



To support the City's view on the inappropriateness of this type of unchecked rate increase mechanism, Senator Adam Ebbin [proposed legislation this session to prevent such a fee structure in the future](#). Unfortunately, the legislation did not survive the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee.

I'm hopeful we can continue our efforts working with VAWC to improve our aging water infrastructure but respect our ratepayers at the same time.

### 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

### Budget Process Begins

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 ongoing 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).

[This year, the City Manager will present his proposed budgets on Tuesday, February 21st, and the City Council will adopt the budget on Thursday, May 4th.](#)

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. In the fall, the City Council adopts a resolution which provides direction to the City Manager as 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.

In early November, 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 2028 Capital Improvement Program.

The current projections are that next year's revenues will grow at a rate of less than 2% overall. If that estimate holds, that would provide the City government with about \$12.2 million of new revenue.

With real estate taxes generating most of our resources, that growth is driven by an estimated increase of 1.5% - 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 began to see our challenge. Driven largely by [student enrollment growth](#), the Superintendent [has proposed a budget that requires \\$9.6 million of additional operating funds](#) for the Alexandria City Public Schools. The estimates

also include \$7.9 million for City personnel costs (salary increases and benefit expenses), \$2.9 million for City non-personnel costs, and \$7 million of new debt service costs.

All together, that creates an estimated shortfall near \$30 million, before we start the process. The additional money requested by the School Superintendent's proposed budget would require 78.8% of the new revenue available to the City Council. That estimate doesn't begin to address the significant gap in funding in capital spending for the schools. I've tried to address that below.

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.

In the budget guidance adopted by the Council for this year, I included language requesting that the City Manager prepare a supplemental package to address some of the unfunded capital initiatives. This package will include additional revenue, changes to debt policy, and other alternatives to advance these unfunded, but recommended, initiatives.

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 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.

Once the budget is presented, [the Council will have a series of worksessions and public meetings](#) to solicit public input and finalize the adopted budget. On Thursday, February 23rd at 7 PM, the City Manager will make a presentation of the budget to the public at the Beatley Library (5005 Duke Street).

The Council will then host a budget public hearing on Monday March 13th at 4:00 PM at City Hall.

I hope to see you there.

### **School Capacity In Focus**

Four years ago, the City convened the Joint [Long Range Educational Facilities Work Group](#). The group was given the essential charge to understand our recent increase in student enrollment, better project enrollment growth in the future, and to decide what to do about it.

The previous School Board Chair and Vice Chair, the previous Mayor, and I joined a group of community members and staff to steer the effort.

The day after Labor Day, 15,058 students started in the Alexandria City Public Schools. That constitutes a 2.6% increase from the previous year or about 388 additional students.

This year is the tenth straight year of enrollment growth. During that period, ACPS has added over 5,000 students.

The last time [that many children attended our schools was nearly 50 years ago in the early 1970s](#).

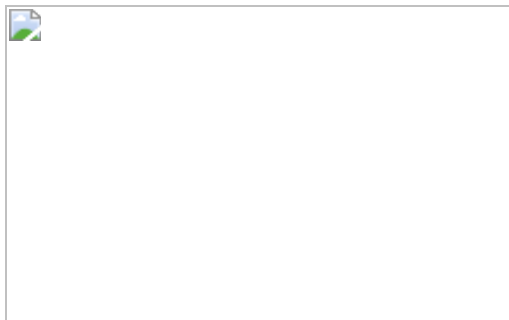
We have also worked to understand where the enrollment is coming from. For example, we learned that on average low-rise apartments

generate nearly three times the students as high-rise or mid-rise apartments do. We learned that single family homes generate nearly double the students as townhouses. We know that public housing and other income-restricted units far outpace any other property type for student generation as that housing is geared for families.

[We now know that housing units built over 30 years ago account for four times the student generation as those built in the past 30 years.](#)

These data points remind us of the need to address this enrollment growth head-on.

In June of 2015, the City Council and the School Board adopted the [Long Range Educational Facilities Plan](#). The Plan is the culmination of the group's work in conjunction with the efforts of both ACPS and City staff. The plan looks at each elementary school building in the City, assesses the facility's educational adequacy, and provides a roadmap for increasing capacity and addressing deficiencies.



We recently launched the [next phase of this effort, planning for additional capacity at the high school level and in the pre-school area](#). With important decisions ahead over how to address capacity challenges for 9th Grade at Minnie Howard School, this process has urgency for the Council and School Board.

The City Council's approved Capital Improvement Program included funding for a [new Patrick Henry Elementary School and Recreation Center with increased capacity](#). In December, the Planning Commission and the Council approved the land-use approvals for the design of the new school and recreation facility. In July of last year, [the School Board approved the selection of a construction management firm to manage the effort](#).

In Council's budget approved in the spring, we also [included both operating and capital funds to support the School Board plan to use leased space for both a new West End Elementary School and a West End early childhood center](#). Utilizing leased space, while not the most efficient, would allow us to bring new capacity online even sooner than new construction would allow.

During the search for leased space, ACPS came upon a property that they wished to purchase instead. [At 1701 Beaugard, the property is an office building that ACPS believes can be retrofitted for a school use](#).

At this point in the process, purchasing (versus leasing) would now require that ACPS re-purpose a significant portion of their approved Capital Improvement Program. That would mean deferring and redefining projects that have been expected to occur this year. In doing so, there will be implications on future years, as alternate funding for those efforts would need to be identified.

In December, the Council and representatives from the School Board and staff discussed the proposal at our Legislative meeting. [You can watch the discussion here](#).

While the discussion on 1701 Beaugard continues, the School Board [did adopt their FY 2018 - FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program request](#) (CIP). The adopted CIP represents a radical

departure from last year's approved request. It doubles the amount of spending over the next decade with over \$611 million of capital spending planned.

The proposed CIP includes:

- New Swing Space to accommodate 35 classrooms (2018)
- Demolition and rebuild of Douglas MacArthur Elementary (2020)
- Demolition and rebuild of T. C. Williams Minnie Howard Campus (2021)
- Renovation and capacity increase of Cora Kelly Elementary (2022)
- Construction of a new middle school (2023)
- Demolition and rebuild of George Mason Elementary (2022)
- Construction of a new Pre-K center (2025)
- Construction of a new elementary school (2027)

This plan is quite ambitious while realistic about what is necessary to address our enrollment challenges.

To fund a plan similar to this, the City Council will require commitment from the taxpayers to aggressively tackle these challenges. It will also require ACPS and the City to develop the capacity and capability to execute this plan to maintain that commitment.

We have a lot of work to do! Let me know your thoughts.

### **How Much Parking Is Too Much?**

The [Station at Potomac Yard](#) is widely regarded as a model project in the City. The combination of 65 units of affordable housing with a new City fire station has proven successful.

Yet, it's an area of the project that has been less successful and has generated more focus concern in City Hall.

When the project was constructed, the developer complied with the current City zoning ordinance specifying the required number of parking spaces. During construction 143 underground parking spaces were built. Of those 110 were designated for the residential uses in the building.

Now that the building has been occupied for several years, we have the ability to look at actual usage. What we found is that there are only 53 vehicles registered at the complex, and most evenings hardly more than 30 vehicles parked.

Why does this matter?

[Construction of parking is expensive](#). Some estimates would suggest a cost of \$20,000 to \$50,000 per space. That cost is paid by the developer, but can come at the expense of other civic priorities. If the developer is spending money on parking (that ultimately isn't needed), they're not spending that money for more open space, park land, affordable housing, transportation, schools, etc.

With that challenge in mind, the City chose to initiate the [Parking Standards for New Development Study](#). This group developed alternatives to ensure that we "right-size" our parking.

[In 2015, the City Council adopted new parking standards for multi-family housing](#). By rightsizing parking, we significantly reduced the cost of construction for multi-family residential development, provided new incentives for the use of transit, and freed up resources for alternate community investments.

However, these new standards went even farther, by providing steeper parking incentives for restricted affordable housing units. [In](#)

[doing so, the City essentially adopted our largest financial incentive for the creation of new affordable housing](#), while also reducing the overall cost of private housing development.

We are now beginning the same process for our commercial parking standards. These standards have not been updated since the 1960s.

On Monday, we kick-off this process with a discussion at City Hall led by Todd Littman, the Executive Director of the [Victoria Transport Policy Institute](#). [The event begins at 7 PM and will be in the Council Chambers at City Hall.](#)

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