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The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by Mayor Justin M. Wilson

January 1, 2021 <u>View this newsletter in your web browser</u>

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Happy New Year Alexandria!

While the pandemic likely impacted "normal" traditions during the holidays, I hope the new traditions that we have all created have proved rewarding to you and your family.

As we begin 2021, the City remains in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, but with real hope for the first time for an end to this horrific experience:

 Last month the City began administering the COVID-19 vaccinations to healthcare workers. So far at least 642 Schedule Child Safety Seat Inspection Smoke Detector Installation Request Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator License Your Dog or Cat Report a Street Light Outage vaccines have been administered in the City with additional events scheduled in the next few days for those in the highest priority category.

- In October, our case volume began increasing considerably and we are now at nearly the highest number of known cases we have seen.
- COVID-19 testing <u>remains widely</u> <u>available</u>. We are currently at our highest testing volume of the pandemic and Alexandria has one of the highest testing rates in the Commonwealth and our region.
- Last week we had our 87,000th COVID test performed in the City and December marked the highest testing volume yet.
- Our targeted testing initiative in partnership with <u>Neighborhood</u> <u>Health</u> held free testing events multiple times per week in December.
- New opportunities for community testing in January will be announced next week
- Our hospitalizations have increased considerably and are nearing our highs.
- Our hospital capacity has remained stable.
- Our 7-day testing positivity rate has been climbing again, reaching our highest point in 6 months at the beginning of December after reaching our lowest point ever in October (3.3%). As of yesterday we are now at 8.7%.
- The <u>Governor announced new</u> restrictions to stem the spread of the virus in our community, including an expanded mask requirement, reductions in gatherings and modified stay-athome order overnight
- In August the Commonwealth released the free COVIDWISE exposure notification app for iOS and Android devices. Download it today!
- Our Health Department recently <u>provided some insight into the</u> <u>commonly reported potential</u> <u>exposure sources for COVID-19</u> <u>transmission.</u>

The ACT Now COVID-19 Response Fund has now re-branded as the Alexandria Resilience Fund., which is distributing money into our community to support the many needs this crisis has created. Please join me in supporting this fundraising effort.

The latest updates will continue to be posted regularly on the <u>City's</u> <u>Coronavirus website</u>.

<u>The Virginia Department of Health posts</u> <u>data daily online</u> regarding positive tests, hospitalizations and deaths.

The <u>Virginia Hospital & Healthcare</u> <u>Association is posting daily updates</u> <u>regarding hospital capacity and</u> <u>capabilities</u>.

I continue my monthly Virtual Town Hall meetings on the first Thursday of each month.

You can watch last month's Town Hall online and please join me at this link on Thursday the 7th at 8 PM to watch and participate live.

Volunteers are needed throughout our community. <u>Please refer to Volunteer</u> <u>Alexandria for opportunities to give back</u> to those in need.

We are now launching our "Adopt-A-Hand Sanitizer" partnership program. We are looking for private partners to host hand sanitizers throughout our community.

<u>Contact me anytime</u>. Let me know how I can help.

Initiatives and Updates

Landmark Mall to Redevelop

Days before Christmas, <u>the City joined with a few</u> <u>partners, some familiar and some new, to announce</u> <u>the future of the Landmark Mall site</u>. The new development plan will move <u>Inova Alexandria Hospital</u> from its home for <u>the past 58 years</u> on Seminary Road to a new modern facility on the site of Landmark Mall.

The site, one of the largest sites inside the Beltway awaiting redevelopment, will see a billion dollars of new investment, including a new Level II trauma center, medical office buildings, residential, retail, parks, a new fire station replacing <u>Fire Station 208</u>, new committed affordable housing and a new transit hub anchoring the City's new bus rapid transit network, DASH and Metrobus.

This will not only revitalize a site that many had given up on, but will also provide a catalyst for redevelopment and enhancement throughout the West End of our City.

Despite over two decades of decline, it is not a mystery why we had been unable to spur redevelopment on this site in the past, It is a complicated site, with a complicated ownership structure requiring significant infrastructure investment.

Conquering those obstacles requires a unique partnership and financial arrangement. A local firm, **Foulger-Pratt** is leading a joint venture in partnership with **Howard Hughes Corporation**, the current owner of the mall site, and **Seritage Growth Properties**, the owner of the Sears site. They were able to bring **Inova Health System** into the arrangement to anchor this redevelopment.

The City will finance some of the infrastructure improvements required on the site and we will purchase the future hospital site to lease back to Inova. Inova's proceeds from selling their existing site on Seminary Road is financing their expenses related to the move.

Two community meetings have now been scheduled to discuss next steps in this important effort:

On Monday, from 7 - 8:30 PM, a meeting to discuss the Landmark Mall redevelopment will be held.

On Wednesday, from 6 PM - 7:30 PM, a meeting to discuss the redevelopment of the existing hospital site will be held.

You can submit questions online in advance for both meetings.

Nearly 55 years ago, <u>then-Virginia Lieutenant</u> <u>Governor Mills Godwin Jr. (later Virginia's 60th and</u> <u>62nd Governor) came to Alexandria to open</u> <u>Landmark Mall</u>. Today, the work to restore the Landmark Mall site to a productive use of real estate for our City is a top focus for our community.

In June 2013, after taking over ownership of the mall site, the Howard Hughes Corporation <u>received</u> <u>approval by the Planning Commission and City</u> <u>Council for a redevelopment of their portion of the</u>

<u>site</u> . A slower than expected leasing market slowed their 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. <u>These changes were</u> <u>approved by City Council in April of 2015.</u>

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 this REIT.

Early in 2017, Macy's announced the closure of their store at Landmark.

<u>The Howard Hughes Corporation later announced</u> <u>that it had purchased the Macy's store site.</u>

<u>The Howard Hughes Corporation subsequently</u> <u>announced that the existing mall site is closing</u>.

Almost two years ago, Council approved revisions to the Master Plan to advance a comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

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

Two decades ago, when the ownership of the properties at Landmark Mall received their tax assessments from the City, the <u>actual mall site was assessed at \$76.4</u> <u>million</u>. The <u>Sears store was assessed at \$19.7</u> <u>million</u>. The <u>Macy's store site was assessed at \$17</u> <u>million</u>.

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

Today, the three properties are assessed at \$25.2 million, \$14 million, and \$12.6 million, respectively. They generate about \$500,000 in real estate tax today, less than half of what it used to be.

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.

While no one should be convinced until they see bulldozers knocking down the existing mall site, we have finally assembled a partnership, financing and a plan to revitalize this site. Landmark Mall redevelopment has been complicated from the beginning, but I believe we can be cautiously optimistic

that it is finally coming together with this exciting partnership.

New Broadband Services

Over <u>7 years ago, I proposed that the City develop a</u> broadband plan to help bring true competition to Alexandria's broadband market.

It has taken far too long, but the City is finally moving ahead on an effort to bring new broadband capacity to our community.

Last month, the City issued a revised solicitation to select a vendor to construct a municipal fiber network to serve City and School facilities around our community.

Nearly 6 years ago, the City issued a Request for Information (RFI). This RFI solicited concepts from the private sector for partnership with the City in expanding broadband options, availability, and capabilities. We received 10 responses from potential private partners and those responses shaped the approach the City is now taking.

For years, Alexandria has sought new private investment in broadband infrastructure. For most of our residents, we have one company providing Internet connectivity and television. With new <u>Verizon FIOS</u> <u>deployment plans shelved</u> around the country and <u>Google Fiber largely dead</u>, the investment in broadband infrastructure must fall to local governments. Regardless of the performance of incumbent providers, technological innovation and reliability thrives on competition.

This is an issue that impacts not only residents but also our businesses and the ability of our community to attract new investment.

Concurrent with the FY 2017 budget process, the City completed the <u>initial financial estimates for the first</u> <u>phase of the infrastructure build-out</u>. The plan is designed to replace the City's existing connectivity agreement for City facilities with a City-owned fiber network.

By leveraging E-Rate funding from the FCC,

achieving operating savings from the costs of the existing agreement, and the potential for private leases of our infrastructure, the effort may be able to pay for itself.

In the fall of 2016, <u>the Council unanimously took the</u> <u>next step</u> in this important process, as we requested

that the City Manager formally solicit for new providers to partner with the City.

One of the core components of the original proposal I made was that the City **adopt a "Dig Once" policy.** Essentially that's a policy that makes the City more efficient by leveraging existing underground infrastructure work to add conduit and other infrastructure at the same time. With hundreds of millions of dollars of sewer and transportation work scheduled over the next decade, we should sequence and combine that work to be the most efficient.

This is an exciting project and one that gives the City the best chance to leverage its assets to bring new broadband services to our residents and businesses.

Cheaper Water

Alexandria remains one in a relatively small list of Virginia jurisdictions who have a private water utility. <u>Virginia American Water Company</u> (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 <u>State Corporation Commission</u> (SCC) in Richmond. <u>In November of 2018, the utility filed</u> <u>before the SCC for a rate increase</u>. This increase is significant and also proposes to make an additional service charge permanent.

In 2019, the City Council voted to intervene in this application before the SCC and oppose this rate increase.

In November, the SCC concurred with the City's position and rejected most of VAWC's requested increase. As such, all Alexandria water rate-payers will receive a refund retroactive to May 1, 2019. VAWC had originally applied for up to a 15.84% increase. The SCC approved an increase of up to 2.9%.

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 <u>response of the hearing examiner</u> in June of 2015 supported the City's perspective.

Then, the City filed <u>a response urging the</u> <u>Commission's support of the findings of the hearing</u> <u>examiner.</u>

In September of 2015, the <u>Commission concurred</u> with their hearing examiner and that case was closed.

Yet at the end of October 2015, <u>VAWC applied to the</u> <u>State Corporation Commission for another rate</u> <u>increase</u>. 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.

Another hearing examiner was appointed. At the end of November 2016, 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. In December of 2016, the City provided its response to this recommendation.

In addition to significantly limiting the rate increase, the SCC also rejected the request to make the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Service Charge permanent.

To support the City's view on the inappropriateness of this type of unchecked rate increase mechanism, Senator Adam Ebbin <u>proposed legislation during the</u> <u>2017 General Assembly session to prevent such a</u> <u>fee structure in the future</u>. 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 and good processes at the same time.

Making Affordable Housing Happen

December was a big month for our efforts to create new affordable housing in our community.

At the beginning of December, <u>Carpenter's Shelter</u> and the <u>Alexandria Housing Development</u> <u>Corporation (AHDC)</u> celebrated the opening of <u>"The</u> <u>Bloom."</u> This unique partnership with the City provides a replacement homeless shelter for Carpenter's and 97 units of committed affordable housing (including 10 units for former Carpenter's clients) just south of the Monroe Avenue Bridge on Route 1. You can <u>watch the</u> **ribbon-cutting event online**.

Later that same day, <u>we broke ground</u> on "The Waypoint." <u>Wesley Housing, a non-profit housing</u> <u>developer</u> began construction of this new affordable housing project that will be constructed in partnership with the City and Fairlington Presbyterian Church. This project, will bring 81 new units of affordable housing which will serve residents earning 30%, 50% and 60% of the area median income in our community.

Later this month, "The Lineage at North Patrick Street," the reborn Ramsey Homes, <u>will begin to see new</u> residents moving in. Developed by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA), this new development will provide a total of 52 new units, again serving residents at 30%, 50% and 60% of our area median income.

All three of these development efforts were a continuation of the public/private partnerships that the City employs to create affordable housing. All three projects utilized City tax dollars and successfully competed for Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) administered by <u>Virginia Housing (formerly the Virginia Housing Development Corporation)</u>.

A year ago, the City hosted our 2020 Housing <u>Summit</u>. The event was designed to draw residents and policy experts from around the region and the nation. The attendees discussed the status of the City's implementation of our 2013 Housing Master <u>Plan</u> along with discussion of our continued housing challenges and the options to address those challenges in the future. It was a thought-provoking session and you can review the presentations and videos for all of the sessions online.

During <u>my presentation</u> at the beginning of the session, I discussed the City's achievement toward our goal of creating or preserving an additional 2,000 committed affordable units before 2025. Through a variety of efforts, the City had accounted for 1,404 of the 2,000 housing units we are working towards.

Of the 1,404 units 735 of them have been created through partnerships with non-profits and the City's

housing authority, the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority. These partnerships have typically utilized <u>Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits</u> (<u>LIHTC</u>) and braided several different funding approaches. Creating housing that remains affordable regardless of often unforgiving market conditions requires creativity and a little luck.

A year ago <u>our City's Housing staff assembled the</u> <u>financing for the acquisition of a West End property</u> <u>that had been on the market.</u> With the purchase, which closed last year, the building and its units will be preserved as committed affordable housing.

The <u>Avana Alexandria Apartments</u> is a building located at 3001 Park Center Drive. It consists of 326 apartments, with most currently affordable at market rates to residents making 70% - 80% of the Area Median Income.

The building has now been re-branded as "Parkstone Alexandria," and last month the preservation effort was awarded a "Trend Award" by the Urban Land Institute of Washington for the innovation.

The purchase was made by the <u>Alexandria Housing</u> <u>Development Corporation</u> (AHDC), a housing development non-profit created by the City, and it represents two firsts:

- As part of the Commonwealth's Amazon incentive package, the Virginia Housing was provided new resources to invest in areas potentially impacted by the new Amazon housing demand. This is the first proposed use of those funds.
- JBG Smith, one of the largest private developers in the region, recently <u>created the Washington</u> <u>Housing Initiative</u>. With the related Impact Pool, JBG Smith has created an investment vehicle to provide financing to support affordable housing. This is the first ever use of this fund.

In addition to these more creative sources of funding, the City is also providing \$8 million of lending to support this acquisition.

<u>With this purchase</u>, AHDC will be able to operate the building as committed workforce housing for decades to come. This is an exciting arrangement that highlights the partnerships required to make affordable housing happen in our city.

In September, the City Council unanimously approved the extension of pre-development financing to AHDC and <u>Wesley Housing</u> to explore three other affordable housing development opportunities:

- A partnership with AHDC to develop 375 committed affordable and workforce units in Arlandria at the corner of Glebe and Mount Vernon
- A partnership with Wesley Housing to develop 354 committed affordable units at Parcview on Holmes Run Parkway
- A partnership with AHDC to develop 55 units, including 15 ownership units on Seminary Road next to Fire Station 206

All three of these projects will still proceed through the City's land-use process to ensure suitability.

Alexandria will continue to be an expensive place to live. Yet, these efforts will go a long way to improving the City's stock of committed affordable housing and ensuring that those of a variety of income levels will be able to continue to call Alexandria home.

CARES Act

Less than eight months ago, the City received our <u>first</u> tranche of <u>Federal CARES Act</u> money. <u>We have put</u> that money to good use in benefiting the residents and businesses in need in our City</u>.

In June, as we were on track to fully expend the \$13.9 million that the City received, <u>I wrote to urge the quick</u> release of the second tranche of funding. At the end of July, <u>the Governor announced the allocation of</u> that money to address the significant need that remained.

From the beginning of this crisis, it has been clear that the two levels of government, local and state, who are required to balance our budgets annually, could not address the immense financial need that has been created. Only the Federal Government could provide a sufficient amount of money to address some of these challenges.

While jurisdictions around the country have faced real criticism for frivolous expenditure of these scarce funds, the City committed early in this crisis to ensure that we effectively used these funds to assist our residents and businesses who have suffered during this crisis and that we leave no dollar on the table. I believe we have done just that.

As we have concluded the year and the original deadline for the expenditure of funds, the City used the entirety of the \$27.8 million we received:

 \$8.9 million was utilized for the City's COVID-19 response (City staffing, PPE, public health investments, etc)

- \$4.1 million was utilized to address food insecurity in our City
- \$6.5 million was utilized for emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention efforts
- \$5.5 million was utilized for grants to small businesses
- \$2 million was utilized to provide resources to non-profits addressing need in our City
- \$800,000 was utilized to provide childcare to families in need

In late March, <u>the President signed the CARES</u> <u>Act</u> which provided \$2 trillion to assist residents, businesses and government.

Our City government has worked to assist residents and businesses to access the various funds that have been made available for their benefit. The legislation also created a \$150 billion fund to assist state and local governments. Virginia received \$3.3 billion of these funds. Jurisdictions with a population of 500,000 or more go directly to the Federal government and the remainder is distributed by the applicable state government. The remaining portion of these funds is where the City's allocation is drawn from.

The United States Department of Treasury **provided guidance detailing how the funds can be used.** While the City and other jurisdictions urged maximum flexibility from the Federal Government, the money the City received is limited to:

1) Expenditures incurred as a result of the pandemic response.

2) Expenditures could not already be in the City's budget (must be new spending)

3) The money had to be utilized by the end of 2020

While we have expended significant amounts of money to address this crisis, the largest financial impact on the City has been the loss of revenue. The CARES Act funds were not allowed to replace the revenue that the City lost, but it did help us support the residents and businesses who are suffering during this time.

In May, the House of Representatives enacted "The Heroes Act." This legislation included a substantial local government assistance component. For Alexandria, this legislation would provide \$81.9 million to replace revenue that has been lost due to COVID-19 public health restrictions. While not fully replacing the our losses, this allocation would have gone a long way to easing the burden on our local taxpayers and services.

The legislation signed earlier this week by the President does many good things, but it did omit new assistance to local governments.

With this expectation, the Council voted last month to allocate \$1 million of local resources to fill the gap as the Federal resources disappear. This additional funding will address rent relief efforts and food insecurity efforts during the beginning of this year.

While there is new hope that COVID-19 may soon be behind us, the hardship faced by our residents and businesses will continue for a while to come. The City will continue to find ways to provide the support required.

Accessory Dwelling Units

At the beginning of last year, <u>I wrote an op/ed in the</u> <u>Alexandria Gazette opposing proposed state</u> <u>legislation</u> that would impose zoning policy changes on communities around the Commonwealth as a method to address affordability challenges. While the legislation was well-meaning I was fearful it would exacerbate other challenges faced by our community and remove local authority over land-use policy.

One of the pieces of proposed legislation would have required the City to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by right.

While the legislation failed, earlier last year the City kicked-off its <u>study of Accessory Dwelling Units</u>. That study has now concluded and <u>the Planning</u> <u>Commission will consider the staff recommendation</u> on Tuesday evening.

If you wish to provide input to the Planning Commission, you can <u>e-mail your input</u> or <u>sign-up to speak at the</u> <u>virtual public hearing</u>.

Assuming the Planning Commission takes an action on this recommendation, the City Council will consider this ordinance at our Public Hearing on Saturday January 23rd.

An accessory dwelling unit, affectionately known as a "granny flat" or "in-law suite" for its inter-generational living attributes, is an independent living unit attached or contained within an existing primary residence.

The staff proposal largely replicates existing restrictions for the construction of sheds and garages to govern the construction of these stand-alone living units.

Accessory dwelling units were originally identified in the <u>City's Housing Master Plan in 2013</u> as a strategy to allow inter-generational living, provide supportive housing for disabled adults and support market-based housing creation. At our most recent Housing Summit, an Alexandria architect gave an interesting presentation on his effort to bring an ADU to his property nearby. <u>You</u> <u>can watch the video online.</u>

Accessory dwelling units are a modest approach to addressing some of our housing challenges. I look forward to your input on this proposal.

Inova HealthPlex

While the big headline of this newsletter is the move of Inova Alexandria Hospital to Landmark Mall, just before the pandemic hit <u>Inova announced another planned</u> <u>expansion of healthcare services in our City with</u> <u>the development of a new Inova HealthPlex in</u> <u>Oakville Triangle</u>.

Oakville Triangle is a 13-acre parcel of land nestled between Del Ray and Route 1, immediately across from Potomac Yard. It holds some of the last light industrial space that remains in the City.

Almost six years ago, the City Council approved the <u>Oakville Triangle and Route 1 Corridor Vision</u> <u>Plan</u>. The site was approved for increased mixed-use density along with expansion and improvement of existing green spaces, new affordable housing, "maker space" to replicate some of the existing light industrial spaces and improvements to the road network in the plan area.

However, the plan was likely ahead of the market and the plan approval sat dormant for several years. In late 2018, implementation of the plan was immediately accelerated with the announcement that the new Virginia Tech Innovation Campus would be located within Oakville Triangle. <u>Yet that announcement did</u> <u>not last long, as Virginia Tech ultimately decided</u> <u>they needed more room to grow and they moved</u> across Route 1 to North Potomac Yard.

With the announcement of the new Inova HealthPlex arriving in this location, the Oakville Triangle plan is back to life, with planning efforts moving forward.

Last month, the City Council unanimously approved the master plan amendment to accommodate this new configuration for Oakville Triangle.

Bringing this new healthcare resource to Alexandria will provide an important resource for our community and spur redevelopment in a strategic area of our City.



Ensuring Equality For All

Last month, <u>Alexandria was notified by the Human</u> <u>Rights Campaign that for the first time, we were</u> <u>awarded a perfect 100 score on the "Municipal</u> <u>Equality Index."</u> We join only 3 other Virginia localities in this distinction and only 93 other localities nationally.

While we are not perfect, this is an external recognition that Alexandria is a community that works to ensure equality for all.

A little over 32 years ago, <u>Alexandria became one of</u> <u>the first jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of</u> <u>Virginia to amend our Human Rights ordinance to</u> <u>include protections against discrimination on the</u> <u>basis of sexual orientation</u>. Passed on a divided vote of the Council, this action empowered the City government to seek out and eliminate discrimination in our community.

Since that action, the City has continued its work to extend protections against discrimination, oftentimes going beyond what state law would allow.

A year ago, the City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance amending our human rights ordinance again, this time to include protections against discrimination based on gender identity and expression. This proposal, originally suggested by my colleague Councilman Seifeldein, expanded upon protections that the City had provided for its employees.

During the 2020 General Assembly session, Virginia adopted a comprehensive non-discrimination legislation, providing protections across Virginia for our LGBTQ residents. This provides localities around the Commonwealth with the tools to protect our residents.

I am pleased that the City has received this new recognition, but far more importantly I am pleased that Alexandria is a place where we embrace our LGBTQ community.

Small Cell Deployment

Elsewhere in this newsletter, I provided an update on the City's deployment of a municipal fiber network. Our work continues with procurement activities for the fiber build.

Yet the broadband-dependent applications of tomorrow will be delivered through a variety of different technologies. The <u>next iteration of cellular</u> <u>technology is known as 5G</u>, which will be capable of

delivering broadband capabilities far beyond current deployments.

How to facilitate the deployment of 5G has been the topic of both Federal and state rule-making and lawmaking. Over two years ago, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued an order attempting to accelerate deployment of 5G by preempting some local authority over this infrastructure work. Similarly, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted new legislation facilitating the construction of so-called "small cell" installations, which support existing 4G networks and are often required for 5G deployment.

Our City staff has worked to develop new guidelines and ordinances to allow this new wireless deployment, while being respectful of the potential aesthetic impacts to our streetscape.

Last month, the Council approved 10 year agreements with three different carriers permitting them more extensive deployment around our community.

Ultimately, we want to ensure Alexandria is not left behind as technology advances. To do so we have quickly adopted a regulatory framework that supports prompt deployment of this infrastructure.

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