

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

*Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson*

Alexandria, Virginia

June 1, 2016

## In This Edition

[Council Initiatives](#)

[Investing in our Infrastructure](#)

[Protecting the Potomac River](#)

[Early Childhood](#)

[Host a Town Hall](#)

[Upcoming Issues: Fixing Metro, Envision Route 7, Torpedo Factory, Potomac Yard Metro, and 230KV Transmission Line](#)

## Quick Links

[E-Mail Me](#)

[Past Newsletters](#)

[City of Alexandria Website](#)

[Pay City Taxes Online](#)

[Review Real Estate Assessments](#)

[Crime Mapping & Statistics](#)

[Call.Click.Connect](#) (Submit Service Requests to City Agencies)

[Board & Commission Vacancies](#)

[Alexandria Health Department Restaurant Inspections](#)

[Report Potholes](#)

[Schedule Child Safety Seat Inspection](#)

[Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)

**Welcome to June! With the budget in the rear view mirror, the Council is sprinting towards our summer recess at the end of this month.**

**In a few weeks, the Class of 2016 will graduate from T. C. Williams High School and head off to take on a challenging world.**

**[Last month, the students and faculty celebrated "Decision Day," as the 331 T. C. graduates who are going on to college celebrated those decisions.](#)**



**The hard work of this accomplished class has led students to Princeton, Stanford, Dartmouth, Cornell, Berkeley, and more. Eighty-five graduates will be heading to my Alma Mater at Virginia Commonwealth University, 31 will go on to Charlottesville to attend the University of Virginia along with the 58 who will head to Harrisonburg to attend James Madison University, and the 50 who will head to Blacksburg to become Hokies at Virginia Tech.**

**Congrats to all of the students achieving their academic success during this time of year!**

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

## Council Initiatives

**Investing in Our Infrastructure**

[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

## Events/Updates

### Alexandria Women's History Tour

[The Alexandria Commission on Women and Historic Alexandria are joining forces on Saturday to revive the Alexandria Women's History Guided Tour.](#)

Beginning in front of Gadsby's Tavern at 134 North Royal Street, the tour runs from 1:00 PM until 2:30 PM and visits many different sites, highlighting the contributions of great women in Alexandria's history.

[Please RSVP by tomorrow to participate.](#)

### Taste of Del Ray!

[This Saturday, the 8th Annual Taste of Del Ray returns!](#)

From 1 PM until 3 PM, 15 restaurants will gather behind United Bank at 2401 Mount Vernon Avenue.

[Buy your tickets online today!](#)

### Become A Police Officer

The Alexandria Police Department will be hosting exams to evaluate those who wish to become Alexandria Police Officers.

On Saturday, June 4th and Saturday, July 9th, the Department will host exams at 7 AM at 3600 Wheeler Avenue.

This is the first step in the hiring process. [Find out more details online!](#)

### Pools Are Open!

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.) or renovate an existing asset.

In late February, the City Manager [presented his proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budgets](#) to the City Council and our budget process began.

[Last month, the City Council adopted our budget and we have now concluded the process.](#)

The adopted general fund operating budget is \$678.5 million, an increase of 4.5% from Fiscal Year 2016.

The Council held its first Public Hearing on the proposed budget on March 14th. We took four hours of testimony from residents around our City. A day later, we made the first critical decision of the budget process.

State law requires that early in the budget process, we "advertise" the highest real estate tax rate that we might adopt. When we adopt the budget, we are able to go lower than the "advertised" rate, but we cannot go above it.

On March 15th, [the Council unanimously voted to advertise a real](#)



[estate tax rate of \\$1.073](#), a three cent increase. With the adopted rate, the average residential homeowner will pay \$275 more than they did in 2015 (\$119 due to increase in assessments and \$156 due to the increase in the rate).

In March, I wrote about [the significant deficiencies in a variety of municipal facilities](#). Just getting these facilities up to a passable condition could cost over \$100 million over the next decade.

[I also wrote about our road paving plan](#). Due to years of underinvestment, our roads are in dismal condition and we have tripled our road maintenance budget to play catch-up around the City.

In January, [I wrote about the daunting infrastructure needs that face the Alexandria City Public Schools](#). Years of underinvestment and robust student growth over the past decade have left us with little choice but a rapid investment in new capacity.

[A year ago, I wrote about the scarcity of funding for new transportation infrastructure](#) and how increased needs to sustain the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) were crowding out local investments for transportation.

Collectively, [we have a basic infrastructure crisis](#). Deferring this work increases costs on future taxpayers and chokes off investment.

In advertising the rate increase in March, the City Council requested that the City Manager prepare a package of recommended capital initiatives to direct the additional two cents. [In April, the City Manager provided his suggested capital investments.](#)

After required contributions to our fund balance, the additional two cents will provide \$10.2 million of additional revenue in Fiscal Year 2017 for investment. The City Manager recommended:

[The City's outdoor pools are now open for business!](#)

See you at the pool!

### Real Estate Tax Payment Due

[For those who pay the Real Estate Tax Directly \(not through escrow\), the first payment is due on June 15th.](#)

[Payments can be made using six different methods.](#)

### First Thursday Returns!

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

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

This month's theme is the arts!

### Real Estate Assessment Appeals

Any appeal of 2016 Real Estate Assessments must be filed today for hearing by the Board of Equalization.

The [form is available online](#) and can be submitted by mail.

### ACPS Survey

[As the Alexandria City Public Schools work to implement their new strategic plan, they need your help!](#)

Whether you have kids in the schools or not, ACPS is looking for your feedback on issues related to the schools.

[Please take the time to take the survey 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

- \$730,000 for additional ["Complete Streets" efforts](#) to improve safety of all users of our streets
- \$2.3 million for renovations and HVAC replacement at the Alexandria Courthouse
- \$1.4 million for additional DASH Bus purchases
- \$450,000 for energy retrofits of City facilities
- \$996,000 for facility repairs at Gadsby's and Apothecary Museums
- \$570,000 for additional road resurfacing and repair
- \$400,000 for additional resources to support the [Municipal Broadband Initiative](#)
- \$3.4 million for Alexandria City Public Schools capacity initiatives

This addition of two cents will also annually provide \$7.6 million of cash capital funding to our Capital Improvement Program. This reduces planned borrowing, advances capital investment, and ultimately reduces taxpayer obligations in the future.

While this is a significant tax rate increase, I believe that the Council has adopted a package of infrastructure investments that will reduce taxation in the future and help improve the basic infrastructure that our government relies on.

### Protecting the Potomac River

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

In 95% of our City, stormwater (rain) is collected and returned to rivers and streams with very little treatment 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 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.

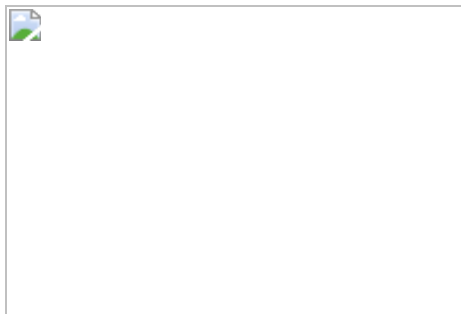
Essentially, this permit requires the City to work with the community to adopt a new Long Term Control Plan reducing

managed the Planetarium, opens it up for the community for free.

[Reservations](#) are required, but don't miss out on this great resource!

The last show of the school year is on Tuesday, June 14th.

the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water. The new plan must be submitted to the state this year.



The Plan, to be implemented over the next two to three decades, will obligate significant financial resources and likely prove disruptive to some portions of the affected area.

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

The [committee has now made its recommendations](#) which came to the Council last month.

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 Long Term Control Plan 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 3 million gallon storage tank to address CSO-002
- New "green" infrastructure
- 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.

Last month, 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 plan 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.

The legacy of this effort will be cleaner waterways for the next generation to enjoy.

### Investing In the Early Years

Of the new Kindergartners that started in the Alexandria City Public Schools in September, 21% of them had not had any formal pre-Kindergarten educational experience. For most of those 327 kids, they started out behind their peers on their first day in the classroom.

During the budget process that just concluded, [we learned that 88 children are on our waiting list for Head Start](#) . We learned that 422 children are on our Child Care Fee Subsidy waiting list. We were also reminded that we do not receive our full share of Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) money from the Commonwealth. We leave this money on the table as we do not have space or matching funding for the children.

Faced with severe enrollment challenges, [the School Board advanced a proposal during this budget process to create a new West End Pre-K center](#) , thus removing those classes from some existing K-5 schools and providing additional classroom capacity for K-5.



Three years ago, [the City Council set aside additional resources to help narrow the waiting list for early childhood services](#). I again proposed efforts to narrow the waiting list during this most recent budget. The Council again made new investments to do so.

[We know that early childhood educational investments are good investments](#) of resources. The current approach of addressing early childhood capacity is largely piecemeal. The unmet need is significant while not insurmountable.

It's time for universal early education.

We must work with both non-profit and for-profit entities to identify the gaps, build capacity, and ensure that every child starts ready to learn.

A joint worksession with our School Board is scheduled for later this month. We will again discuss our ongoing [joint planning to address the Children and Youth Master Plan](#).

### 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

## Fixing Metro

Once the crown jewel of the Washington, DC region, Metrorail is experiencing a very difficult time. While the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has numerous challenges, the most serious and pressing are related to safety.

Metro is a basic building block of our region's economy. If there is a perception that the system is unsafe, than that can be crippling to the region.

The brand new General Manager of WMATA, Paul Wiedefeld, is aggressively working to tackle these challenges. [Recently, WMATA finalized the Safe Track Plan, designed to concentrate three years of work into one year.](#)



Advancing this work requires expanded time when the system is not operating. To make this happen, extended weekend hours have been discontinued, new mid-day maintenance will occur, and most importantly, a series of "surges" will occur across the system.

While the "surges" and the resulting closures will have significant effects on our community, I have come to believe that they are necessary to correct the issues that face WMATA.

While there is work that begins this week, the first closure to directly affect Alexandria will be next month. From July 5th through July 11th, the Blue and Yellow lines will be shutdown between National Airport and Braddock Road.

The City will again be affected in January with additional closures on the Yellow and Blue lines.

While WMATA has indicated that they will be running shuttle service along closed segments, the City is working to put together alternatives to ease the impact of these closures on our residents.

While I recognize how difficult these closures will be for our residents, I am hopeful that the result will be a safer Metro.

## Envision Route 7

[For the past year, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission \(NVTC\), using funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, has been conducting a study of transit on Route 7 \(King Street in Alexandria\) from Alexandria to Tysons Corner.](#)

The study, entitled "Envision Route 7" is to explore whether such a transit connection would be feasible, and if so, how it could occur.

[NVTC has prepared a video detailing the effort that can be reviewed on their site.](#)

In the second phase, both Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit have been considered as transit modes for the corridor. The study is prepared to recommend Bus Rapid Transit and NVTC will be holding a series of community meetings to discuss the recommendation.

On Monday the 6th, a community meeting will be held in Alexandria from 7 PM to 9 PM at the Apartments at Mark Center (5708 Merton Court).

## Torpedo Factory



The Torpedo Factory Arts Center is an iconic presence on the City's waterfront. Bringing a half a million visitors into working artists galleries, the Factory is a economic development engine and unique arts resource for our community.

The City of Alexandria purchased the Factory from the United States Government in 1969. The Arts Center was opened in 1974 and has been a model for similar centers around country.

Yet for the past several years, the challenges of the Factory and the possible solutions to those challenges have been divisive.



In 2009, the [City commissioned a study to review the Factory and the opportunities of the site](#). The result of the study was a series of organizational changes to the Factory. [Those led to the creation of a new non-profit Board](#) to run the operations and leverage private resources to support the Factory.

With the existing lease nearing conclusion on June 30th of this year, the Torpedo Factory Arts Center Board [commissioned another study to look at the strategic options available to the City and the Factory](#).

This report recommended more changes to the governance, the management, and vision of the Factory.

With the impending lease expiration, this now comes before the City Council.

My focus is on deriving a structure for the operation of the Factory that:

- expands the vitality of the Factory
- improves its financial sustainability
- improves its diversity
- ensures the success of Alexandria's premier arts destination long into the future.

I am confident that working together we can achieve these goals.

[As the efforts to chart that course continue, the City has now taken steps to provide stability in the intervening time period. Effective October 1, the City will assume caretaker leadership for the Factory.](#)

During this period of time, the City will issue leases to the existing tenants, and provide day to day management.

It is my hope that this phase will be brief and we will be able to move forward with a new structure for the future of the Torpedo Factory.

#### **Potomac Yard Metro**

For decades, the City has discussed, planned, and just plain hoped for a Metro Rail station at Potomac Yard.

[In May of last year, the City Council unanimously adopted Alternative B as the site of the future Potomac Yard Metro station.](#) We have now moved from discussing Metro at Potomac Yard, to designing and building Metro at Potomac Yard.

[Last year, the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority \(WMATA\) approved the new station location and formally added the station to the system.](#)

[Last month, the Council approved revisions to the formal agreement between the City and the National Park Service.](#) This agreement was necessary to select Alternative B, which requires the use of some National Park Service land. Implementing this agreement will expand National Park Service land, improve existing public spaces, and protect the Memorial Parkway.

In 2008, along with then-Councilman Rob Krupicka, I proposed a new start to efforts to bring Metro to Potomac Yard. [We included language in the City's Transportation Master Plan](#) explicitly calling for a new station at Potomac Yard. We also tied the construction and funding of Metro to the development occurring in the Yard.

The result is [a funding plan for Potomac Yard Metro](#) that not only leverages the development activity in Potomac Yard, but also does so without requiring the contributions of General Fund taxpayers.

The largest environmental, [economic development](#), and transportation initiative in our City's history is being accomplished using [one of the most innovative funding mechanisms used anywhere in the country.](#)

The funding package today consists of [two special tax districts](#), tax increment funding, [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority regional funding](#), a [Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Board loan](#), and a developer contribution.

[The Potomac Yard Metro project will facilitate the creation of up to 26,000 new jobs and will bring up to \\$2 billion of new tax revenue to the City. It removes thousands of vehicles from one of the most crowded corridors in our City. It promotes the creation of the kind of walkable community our City has long desired in Potomac Yard.](#)

Once the Environmental Impact Statement process concludes with a Record of Decision, the construction efforts can commence. The Record of Decision is the formal federal document that outlines all of the agreed upon mitigation to any potential impacts that will result from the project.

Along with Councilman Smedberg, I serve as a member of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group (PYMIG). [In September of last year, the group received the latest schedule for the station construction, reflecting the beginning of the Design/Build procurement process next summer, with a station opening in early 2020.](#)

Tomorrow evening the City will be hosting another open house on this project, focusing on design, environmental impacts and construction impacts. It will be at Charles Houston Recreation Center (901 Wythe Street) from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM.

On Tuesday the 7th, the Planning Commission will be hearing the [land-use applications required to advance the construction of the station](#). This hearing will begin at 7:00 PM and public testimony is welcome. [You may sign up on-line in advance to testify.](#)

Assuming the Planning Commission makes a recommendation, the City Council will be hearing the same applications at our Public Hearing on Saturday June 18th beginning at 9:30 AM.

Successful completion of this project is a key component in our efforts to promote a stronger economic future for our City.

### **Future of Public Housing**

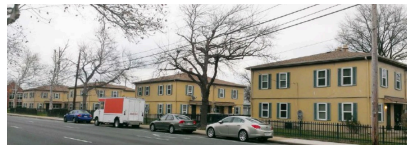


The [Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority](#) (ARHA) is an independent entity, separate from the City, that utilizes Federal funding from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing to low-income residents of Alexandria.

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

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

Now in 2016, the Federal Government is forcing changes in public housing with its inaction. Today, HUD only funds 73% of every dollar required to operate Alexandria Public Housing units. The balance of revenue that ARHA collects as rent is not sufficient for sustainable management of their properties, and with the effects of sequestration, this is likely to get worse.



With aging properties sitting on valuable land, ARHA is now looking at the highest and best use of its land to preserve housing for low-income residents in our City.

Over 30 years ago, the City Council adopted [Resolution 830](#), which required the replacement of any public housing unit that was displaced by redevelopment. In past redevelopment efforts, replacement units have been obtained and created throughout our City.

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

Today, under this Plan, James Bland Homes have become [Old Town Commons](#). This redevelopment activity has proven successful in providing a sustainable model for mixed-income housing in our City.

In the fall of 2014, with these experiences and lessons behind us, [ARHA issued an RFP \(Request for Proposals\)](#) to solicit proposals from private developers for the potential redevelopment of seven additional properties: Cameron Valley (built in 1985), Andrew Adkins (built in 1969), Samuel Madden (built in 1945), Ramsey Homes (built in 1942), Hopkins Tancil (built in 1945), Ladrey (built in 1968), and the ARHA Headquarters building on North Fairfax Street.

As they have continued through the process, ARHA narrowed the number of properties down to five: Andrew Adkins, Samuel Madden, Hopkins Tancil, the ARHA Headquarters building and Cameron Valley. [Ramsey Homes continues to be addressed under a separate process.](#)

ARHA has now chosen development partners for each of the five remaining properties:

Andrew Adkins: Alexandria Opportunity Housing, LLC, an affiliate of Clark Realty

Samuel Madden: Alexandria Opportunity Housing, LLC, an affiliate of Clark Realty

Hopkins Tancil: EYA/Penrose/JBG

ARHA Headquarters: EYA/Penrose/JBG

Cameron Valley: Bozzuto/Wesley Housing

Each of these redevelopment efforts will rely on [Low Income Housing Tax Credits](#) (LIHTC) and will need to compete successfully for those funding sources.

ARHA is now working to determine the sequencing of these projects. [These efforts will need to be synchronized with the City's long-term planning efforts as well.](#) I serve along with my colleague Councilman Chapman, the Chair of our Planning Commission and the Chair and Vice Chair of the ARHA Board on the ARHA/City Redevelopment Committee. We are now tasked with coordinating these redevelopment efforts going forward.

This is an exciting opportunity for ARHA, the City, and our commitment to preserving low-income housing. I am hopeful we will end up with a good result.

### **230 KV Transmission**

Two years ago, I wrote about Dominion Virginia Power's proposal to construct a new 230 KV transmission line through the northeast corner of our City.

In June of 2014, the [City formed a community group to begin reviewing Dominion Virginia Power's proposal](#) and offering feedback to the Council and directly to Dominion Virginia Power on their proposed routes.

The most important occurrence at the first meeting was the release of Dominion Virginia Power's [proposed routes](#). Each of these routes have negative impacts for our community.

The group concluded its work at the end of 2014 [with a series of recommendations to the City Council, State Corporation Commission and Dominion Virginia Power.](#)

As this process concluded, Dominion believed that the urgency behind the proposed transmission line had subsided. The process was then delayed for some time to allow them to analyze their studies.

In February, Dominion again approached the City with a timetable indicating that they will apply to the State Corporation Commission this summer.

Ultimately, the decision about the necessity of this transmission line and its routing will be made by the State Corporation Commission. However, the City and its residents will have some opportunity to help shape that decision.

The City continues to have significant concerns about this proposal and the potential impacts on Alexandria.

The City reconvened the community group and a series of meetings were again held.

[The group returned to the City Council last month with a recommendation of the "least objectionable" routes](#) as well as a request for opposition to any above ground route.

The Council adopted a resolution opposing and above ground routing, and identifying the "least objectionable" routes as ones that either:

- Used the existing CSX railroad right of way
- Used waterways, both Four Mile Run and the Potomac River
- Used the George Washington Parkway

We look forward to [Dominion Virginia Power's filing with the State Corporation Commission](#) so that we can work with both parties to minimize negative impacts on our community.

Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson  
703.746.4500  
[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)  
[www.justin.net](http://www.justin.net)  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Paid for by Wilson For Council