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Mayor Justin M. Wilson

Alexandria, Virginia

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In This Edition

[Council Initiatives](#)

[Metro Shutdown Update](#)

[Potomac Yard Metro](#)

[Taxpayer Receipt](#)

[Next Running Town Hall](#)

[Host a Town Hall](#)

[Upcoming Issues: Green Building & Seminary Road](#)

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](#)

Yesterday our uniquely-American form of carnage came to Virginia's largest City, Virginia Beach.

I grieve for the victims, their families and the entire community. It is particularly heartbreaking for those of us in public service to see dedicated public servants murdered while serving the public.

I hope we will soon muster the political will and courage to address this solvable problem.

Later today I'm heading across the ocean to our Sister City of Caen, France for the first time as Alexandria's Mayor.

[Caen's Mayor, Joel Bruneau](#), has invited a small delegation from Alexandria to attend to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion of the Normandy beaches.

Before I leave town, I'll be participating in the City's 9th Annual D-Day Ceremony in Waterfront Park.

[This event, organized by the Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee, will recall the legendary battle that turned the tide and liberated Europe from tyranny.](#) The event will also celebrate the linkage between Alexandria and Caen, French culture and our shared values.

I hope you will join us today, and for the remaining events scheduled this week.



[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

Events/Updates

Vote This Month!

On Tuesday June 11th the City's polling places will be open from 6 AM until 7 PM.

The Democrats will be holding a primary to choose a candidate for Clerk of the Circuit Court and for those in the 35th State Senate district, a nominee for State Senate.

There are two sample ballots available.

[For those in the 35th State Senate District.](#)

[For those elsewhere in the City.](#)

You can [look up your polling place online.](#)

[In person and by mail absentee voting has already begun.](#)

First Thursday

Thursday is "First Thursday" in Del Ray!

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

Healthier Alexandria

The Alexandria Health Department will be hosting a community conversation about health issues facing our community, and they would like you to be there.

[RSVP in advance to select your meal and register for the raffle.](#)

Mulch, Delivered

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

Council Initiatives

Metro Shutdown Begins

The planning is over. A week ago, the shutdown began.

For a year we have known there will be no Metro Rail Blue or Yellow line service south of the airport from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2019. Our staff has been working closely with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Commonwealth of Virginia to prepare for this event.

While the past week has not been without challenge, so far the mitigation put in place by WMATA, the City and our regional and private partners have allowed for residents, visitors and our businesses to continue somewhat normal, albeit delayed, operations.

Personally, I have been testing out a variety of options to commute to my day job this past week. Check out the results on [my twitter feed](#) or [on Facebook](#).



The City [has posted daily summaries of the experiences of each day of the closure, as well as traffic cameras and traffic sensor data for review by the public.](#)

The mitigation plan for the closures relies on four pillars:

- [WMATA service \(shuttles and expansions of existing bus service\)](#)
- City/DASH alternatives
- Mobility alternatives (transportation network companies and transit modifications)
- Communication and outreach

The bedrock of this plan is the WMATA shuttles and service expansion. These shuttles are running 5 minute headways (intervals) during peak periods and WMATA has now sized them to accommodate 97% of the typical "peak of the peak" ridership through the corridor.

While the shuttle network is designed to carry the bulk of the ridership, I would encourage residents to examine existing bus service options that serve their neighborhood and can allow you to get around the closure.

The City's plan is not set in stone. We will continue to make adjustments throughout the closure period.

The work to restore Metro back to the level required to support this region continues. In the short-term, additional sacrifice will be required. As a daily Metro rider myself, I know the service challenges first-hand. I'm optimistic that these efforts will result in a more reliable system for Alexandria and the entire region.

King Street Pedestrian Zone

Almost exactly thirteen years ago, [the City spent a summer experimenting with a closure of King Street to vehicles on weekends.](#) By giving the road space over to pedestrians, the City attempted to

Online mulch delivery orders can be submitted.

Mulch is available in a full or half truckload, and each delivery ranges from \$50 - \$100.

[Deliveries can be scheduled online.](#)

George Mason Mental Health Services

[George Mason University's Center for Psychological Services is one of only a few nonprofit outpatient mental health centers that offer sliding scale fees and financial aid to the entire Northern Virginia community.](#)

Comprehensive testing, individual, family and group therapy and consultations are conducted by advanced graduate students in the Clinical and School Psychology Programs, under the direct supervision of licensed faculty.

Real Estate Assessment Appeals

Any appeal of 2019 Real Estate Assessments must be filed by today for hearing by the Board of Equalization.

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

Real Estate Tax Payment Due

The first half payment of the 2019 real estate tax is due Saturday June 15th.

[Payment can be made in six different ways, including online.](#)

replicate numerous cities around the world who have taken asphalt designed for cars and created new vitality.

While there were concerns voiced by businesses in the vicinity, the closure was popular with the pedestrians themselves. The experiment was unfortunately limited and short-lived.

Now, over a decade later, a newly expanded Waterfront Park, with public art, active programming and adjacent businesses has created expanded visitation. My view is that this is the perfect time to resurrect a good idea that may have been slightly before its time in our City.



[Councilman John Chapman and I have proposed](#) that the appropriate City agencies engage the business and residential communities to prepare a new recommendation for a pedestrian zone in the unit, 100-block and potentially 200-block of King Street in Old Town.

We view this moment as the perfect time to see these blocks, connecting Market Square with our Waterfront, as not just roads to carry cars, but vital space to support commerce, visitation and the history of our community.

I am optimistic that such a proposal would expand outdoor dining in the corridor, provide active programming in the area, and become a signature area for our City.

[Let me know what you think](#) as we continue the discussion of this concept.

Scoters

Disruptive technologies have been especially "disruptive" to local government. Whether it's Uber and Lyft or food trucks, when these new businesses come to municipalities, they typically proceed laws that govern their use,

This was undoubtedly true when dockless scooters began showing up in Alexandria last year. After some discussion with our regional neighbors and community engagement, the Council approved a 9-month pilot program back in November.

The pilot program required each company to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City. [This agreement imposed rules and requirements on the companies and their customers.](#) This pilot program was designed to help the City determine if these devices have a place in our City.

The pilot was slow to get started, but today there are seven companies who have executed the MOU with the City, each allowed to operate 200 scooters in our City. As of late April, over 22,000 "trips" have been taken using the scooters in our City. [Over 17,000 \(77%\) of those trips occurred in the latest month of data.](#)

The City Council has heard a substantial amount of input on these dockless scooters from many residents in our community. While there is certainly support for these devices being in our community, I have heard significant concerns about scooters blocking sidewalks, being operated on sidewalks, the aesthetics of the devices, riders without helmets, scooters creating accessibility issues, and general concerns about enforcement.

In late April, the City Council received a presentation and offered feedback on the ongoing pilot. [You can watch that presentation and discussion online.](#)

The pilot will expire in the fall. While it is clear these devices have significant popularity, the City has work to do to address the very real concerns about their operation.

Potomac Yard Metro

Since November, [when the Commonwealth of Virginia announced the investment of \\$50 million into the Potomac Yard Metro Station](#), the City has been working to apply that investment to improve access to the station. Adding a \$50 million+ investment to a \$320 million capital project, after the contract has been awarded, is not an insignificant undertaking.

With the active engagement from the Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Group (PYMIG), [three alternatives for improving access were developed](#) and ultimately submitted to the contractor to be priced.

Option 3 was clearly the most favored option of PYMIG and the community members who provided input into this process. [Unfortunately, the City has now received the pricing on each of the three alternatives, and all three are over the \\$50 million allocated by the Commonwealth](#). In the case of the third alternative, the estimate was \$100 million of cost.

There is some belief that the first alternative can be further value-engineered to bring the cost down. It will be some time until we can determine whether that is possible or even advisable.

PYMIG will next meet on June 10th at 7:00 PM at Charles Houston Recreation Center (901 Wythe Street) and will provide feedback to the Council. The Council will accept public testimony on these developments on Saturday June 22nd beginning at 9:30 AM. We will then take action on Tuesday June 25th.

On the front page of the [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) for the Potomac Yard Metro Station are the seals of four entities: Federal Transit Administration, Department of the Interior, WMATA and the City of Alexandria. Later in the report there is additional input from the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the National Capital Planning Commission.



The breadth of the entities involved clearly demonstrates the complexity of the project. This project is deeply complex and has been challenging to bring to reality for decades.

In September, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) announced the latest and most significant milestone in the the City's 4-decade long effort to bring a new metro station to Potomac Yard. WMATA [announced the selection of Potomac Yard Constructors as the prime construction contractor](#) .

Potomac Yard Constructors is a joint venture of [Halmar International](#) and [Schivone Construction Company](#). The bid was ranked the highest technically during the procurement process and had the lowest price. WMATA provided Potomac Yard Constructors with the formal "Notice to Proceed," and the formal design and construction of the new station has begun.

While I am frustrated with the challenges that rising construction costs have created in finalizing the scope of this project, I remain committed to seeing this project to reality.

[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 \(over 30 years\). 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.](#)

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

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 current schedule calls for the station to open in late 2021/early 2022, but that will be refined as we move forward.

Taxpayer Receipt

I have now been a part of adopting eight City budgets as a member of the Council. Each year, I try to find new ways to engage residents in the process, and increase understanding of budget priorities and trade-offs.

A few years ago, I worked with the staff in our City's Office of Management and Budget to create a new [Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#).

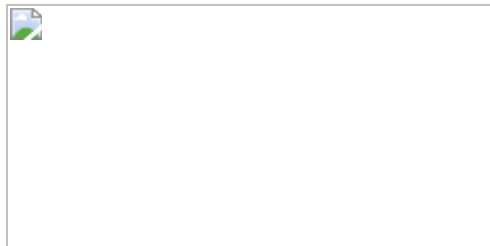
Modeled after the [Federal Taxpayer Receipt](#), this website will take the assessed value of your home and detail how much of your real estate tax is going to the various programs and services of City government.

In exactly a month, we will begin Fiscal Year 2020. Accordingly, we have updated the receipt to reflect the newly enacted budget. Give it a try and [let me know](#) how you like it!

Running Town Hall

In March, I introduced a new way to learn about City issues and raise questions about your community. Come run with me!

Throughout my 8.5 years on the City Council, I have tried to find new ways to bring your government to you. During that same time, I have also tried to keep up my running schedule. I'm working to bring those two efforts together with my second "Running Town Hall."



On Thursday June 20th, I will team up with [Pacers Alexandria](#) at 1301 King Street in Old Town.

Arrive at 6:45 PM. Come ready to run and with questions and ideas about our City's future.

Please [e-mail my aide](#) to let us know you're coming! We hope to see you there!

Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!

As Mayor, I am continuing my regular series of Town Hall Meetings.

You supply the living room and a bunch of your friends and neighbors. I will supply the Mayor who will hopefully have 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

Green Building

On Tuesday evening, the City's Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing and considering [the first update to our Green Building policy in a decade](#). This new policy reflects the collaboration of a [Task Force](#) that met for several months to arrive at this new direction.

[Buildings account for 39% of total energy use, 68% of electricity consumption and 38% of all carbon dioxide emissions](#). When buildings are built efficiently, redevelopment can be a powerful force to reduce our energy demands and improve our environment.

In 2009, the [City Council adopted Alexandria's first Green Building Policy](#). The policy laid out a series of expectations of the development community, including [LEED Silver for non-residential development and LEED Certified for residential development](#). The policy included flexibility so that developers could utilize other standards to ensure environmental sustainability of their development.



Meeting the standard requires a myriad of different techniques. Simply put, green building reduces the energy and water usage of buildings, while creating more livable homes and better spaces for work.

While these efficiency improvements are certainly positive for the environment and livability of these spaces, they are also extremely important to the affordability of residency. For those reasons, they were included as components of our [recently adopted Housing Master Plan](#).

Since the adoption of the policy, 95% of the development constructed or under construction has met this policy. This equates to about 10 million square feet of green building.

Yet a lot has changed in the ten years since the approval of this policy. Green building strategies have gone from being a novelty and luxury to being a market standard.

The new policy raises proposes to raise the bar, with all private development being requested to meet a LEED Silver standard, and and all public development being required to meet a LEED Gold standard. In addition to LEED, the proposed policy also allows for alternate certification options, including [Green Globes](#) and [Earthcraft](#).

While the task force supported the notion that public construction activity to lead the way in sustainability, there was some disagreement as to whether LEED Gold was sufficient or whether the City should set [Net-Zero construction](#) as the goal.

Ultimately, this proposed policy will come to the City Council at our Public Hearing on Saturday June 22nd at 9:30 AM. Public testimony is welcome.

I am excited that we are advancing this policy initiative. It is an important component of the City's Eco-City Action Plan.

Seminary Road & Vision Zero

With the scheduled upcoming repaving of Seminary Road, we are now working to make decisions about how that road will be configured in the future.

On Thursday evening, [our Transportation & Environmental Services staff released their staff recommendation for the future configuration of the section of Seminary between Janney's Lane and N. Howard](#).

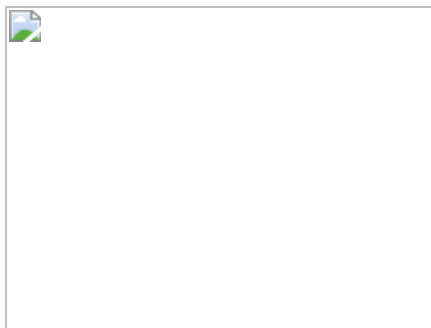
This proposal will be considered by the [City's citizen Traffic and Parking Board on Monday June 24th at 7:30 PM](#). While ordinarily these matters would not come before the City Council, given the significant community interest, Council will later hold a public hearing in September to act on this proposal. Both meetings will welcome public testimony.

Each year, an average of 37 people are killed or seriously injured on Alexandria's streets. Each of these tragic incidents change the lives of the victims and their families in dramatic ways. But for each tragedy, there are also countless close calls and near misses that don't get reported.

In Alexandria, we are fortunate to have pedestrian scale, walkable neighborhoods with urban amenities throughout our City. Yet if residents do not feel they can safely traverse the streets of our City, then all the urban amenities are for naught.

The City [has invested millions of taxpayer dollars to improve pedestrian safety throughout our community](#). Those resources have included improving pedestrian access to schools, building and improving sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming efforts, bike lanes, new signalization, and more.

With the recent large increases in road resurfacing budgets, [the Council has also steered new dollars into our "Complete Streets" efforts, the City's program for improving non-vehicular transportation infrastructure](#).



Yet there are still areas of our City where sidewalks are non-existent or unusable, intersections are unsafe and unsafe driving is rampant. We must improve the safety of our streets for all users. Doing so requires changing the behavior of all users of our roads.

[In the current budget the adopted a year ago, the Council added 6 new sworn traffic safety officers.](#)

Our Police Chief has worked to increase the focus of existing resources on traffic enforcement efforts. This has resulted in education and significant increases in traffic citations being issued throughout our City.

Nearly 3 years ago, [the Council adopted an overhaul of the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.](#)

We kicked-off a [Vision Zero initiative](#) for Alexandria. While this initiative will involve significant resources and planning, it simply means that we would design road spaces, traffic regulations and operations to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries. [At the end of 2017, the Council approved our Vision Zero Action Plan.](#)

One of the components of the City's Action Plan was to install "Leading Pedestrian Intervals" (LPI) at at least 10 intersections around the City. An LPI is an extra phase at a signalized intersection that gives pedestrians a "head start" prior to vehicles entering the intersection.

Earlier this year, [City staff selected intersections based on crash and safety characteristics and implemented 17 new LPI's around our City.](#)

Another one of the components of the City's Action Plan was to remove the ability to make right turns on red lights at a selection of intersections. Removing this turn movement reduces the complexity of intersections and improves safety for pedestrians and other users. In November the City [announced the initial intersections that will have this turn movement banned](#) following a review of crashes, usage and efficiency. These restrictions were later implemented.

[Allowing right turns on red was pushed by the Federal Government during the 1970s as a response to the energy crisis.](#) Some [communities in the country are banning right turns on red to improve pedestrian safety.](#) The [District of Columbia is now considering similar changes](#) at selected locations.

My view is that in order to significantly improve pedestrian safety in our City, we will have to be willing to make trade-offs in the pursuit of safety. The data show that the changes that will most significantly improve safety are also the most controversial in our community. We have to follow the research. And sometimes, we may be able to reap huge benefits with very little cost.

For instance, [the first phase of the King Street Complete Streets](#) effort involved the removal of parking, narrowing of travel lanes, improved crosswalks, signage, new bike lanes, etc., to reduce speed and improve safety. [The initial analysis showed that the project has reduced speed, reduced crashes and improved safety.](#)

[The second phase of the work on King Street](#) was an even more dramatic overhaul of the corridor, including reductions of travel lanes, pedestrian islands, crosswalks, etc. [In September of last year the City Council and Traffic & Parking Board received the initial analysis of those changes.](#) As with the first phase, crashes have been reduced, average speed has been reduced.

On Seminary and Quaker, the City reduced speed limits to improve safety. [The initial review of this action has indicated a reduction in speed and accidents,](#) with negligible delays.

We have also explored the creation of additional ["pedestrian scrambles"](#) to create an "all pedestrian" phase at problematic intersections. One example can be found at the intersection of W. Mt. Ida and Commonwealth Avenues.

[We have HAWK \(High Intensity Activated crossWalk\) signals in place](#) to ensure high visibility of pedestrians in high traffic corridors.

We need your input!

Alexandrians should be able to use our streets safely. We will have to take ourselves out of our comfort zone to make that happen. Let me know your thoughts.

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