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The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by:

Mayor Justin M. Wilson

Alexandria, Virginia

March 1, 2019

In This Edition

[Council Initiatives](#)

[City Manager Presents Budget](#)

[End of The Car Decal](#)

[Council Work Plan Approved](#)

[Running Town Halls!](#)

[Fixing the Roads](#)

[Combined Sewer Funding](#)

[Host a Town Hall](#)

[Upcoming Issues: City Assessments, Eco-City and Transit Vision Study.](#)

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](#)

Spring is just around the corner! The City Council has entered the busiest time of our annual calendar.

The budget process is in full swing, with important initial decisions coming this month.

We have student achievement to celebrate!

The team from T. C. Williams High School went to the [Virginia High School League Scholastic Bowl competition](#) and took home a state championship late last month.

[A week later, the T. C. Williams Girls Basketball team qualified for the state tournament.](#) They take on James Madison High School this evening with a trip to the semifinals on the line.

Go Titans!

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

Council Initiatives

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



[Schedule Child Safety Seat Inspection](#)

an asset (new schools, new roads, new playing fields, transit buses, etc).

[Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)

[A little less than two weeks ago, the City Manager presented his proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020 \(which begins July 1, 2019\) and his proposed 10 year Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2020 - Fiscal Year 2029.](#)

[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

You [can watch the City Manager's full presentation to the Council online.](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

With this presentation, our annual budget process has now commenced. The next two months will be dominated by [budget worksessions and public hearings](#) as we work towards our scheduled budget adoption on May 1st.

Events/Updates

St. Patrick's Day Parade

[The Ballyshanners host their Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade this Saturday!](#)

The Alexandria tradition steps off at 12:30 PM in Old Town.

I'll see you there!

Mulch, Delivered

Beginning on Monday, 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.](#)

Free Tax Assistance

Eligible Alexandria residents can receive assistance in completing their Federal taxes.

[Sessions are held on Saturdays and Wednesdays between now and April 13th.](#)

Become A Police Officer

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

On Saturday, March 9th, and Monday March 11th, the Department will host

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](#) .

In the budget guidance adopted by the Council for this year, I successfully included language requesting that the City Manager not include an increase in the real estate tax rate in his proposed budget.

The City Manager presented a \$761.1 Operating Budget, which represents a very small 1.7% growth over the previous year. Of the available new revenue, the City Manager has proposed allocating two-thirds to the Alexandria City Public Schools, and the remaining third to the needs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The remaining City operations are only growing 0.6% in this proposed budget.

While this is just the beginning of the process, the City Manager's proposed operating budget transfer for the Alexandria City Public Schools [matches the approved budget request of the Alexandria School Board.](#)

The Capital Improvement Program that the City Manager has presented contemplates \$1.6 billion of capital investment over the next decade. This proposal includes \$478 million for school facilities, \$380 million for transportation (including WMATA) and \$150 million for City municipal facilities.

The City Manager's proposed Capital Improvement Program largely matches the request of the School Board for capital investment as well.

Throughout the budget process, members of the City Council will submit questions to clarify various aspect of the City Manager's budget and to determine the fiscal impact of various policy proposals. Per our budget rules, any proposal to modify the budget must be informed by this type of analysis. [You can view the budget memos that have been provided to the City Council so far in the process.](#)

On Monday, March 11th at 4 PM, the City Council will be holding a public hearing to accept testimony from residents on the proposed budget. [You can sign up in advance online to speak to the Council](#) .

On the following evening, the Council will be adopting the highest real estate tax rate that we might consider this year. Under state law,

exams at 3600 Wheeler Avenue.

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

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!

Street Sweeping

At the beginning of spring, crews increase efforts to clean city streets, helping to keep our neighborhoods and commercial corridors clean and protect our waterways.

Litter, debris, and leftover grit from winter road maintenance can clog storm sewers and pollute our lakes and rivers.

This year's street cleaning season begins Monday and will continue through the end of October.

Residents may see temporary "No Parking" signs in some neighborhoods, especially along commercial corridors.

Residents can help street cleaning efforts by clearing the curb in front of their home and ensuring that nearby storm drains are not blocked.

Street sweeping debris can be thrown away as regular trash.

once we choose this rate we can go lower, but no higher. This is the first action the Council must take on the proposed budget, and will set the tone for Council's consideration.

I look forward to working with the residents of this City to adopt a budget that is reflective of our values as a community.

The End of the Decal?

[Almost 12 years ago, during my first stint on the City Council, I proposed that the City consider eliminating the windshield decal used to enforce payment of the vehicle Personal Property Tax.](#)

I cited the diminished efficacy of the windshield decal as a tool for enforcement of payment, and the improved customer service by eliminating the decal. At the time, Fairfax County had just scrapped the decal for their vehicles, which was forcing consideration of the change throughout the region.



Now, over a decade later, 76% of Virginia localities have all transitioned away from the windshield decal. Loudoun County eliminated their decal last year and Arlington plans to do the same in 2020.

While concerns around potential lost revenue prevented the City from pursuing this change back in 2007, it is now believed the

the revenue impact would be negligible.

[Our staff recently returned with new analysis of the option and the financial impact.](#) In the proposed budget that is now before the City Council, the City Manager [has included a formal proposal to eliminate the decal next year.](#) Included in that proposal are changes in enforcement methodologies and technology to ensure no lost revenue.

As a result of this change, the City will need to make changes to [existing Overnight Parking Districts](#) in place in our City to ensure the enforcement of those restrictions remain feasible.

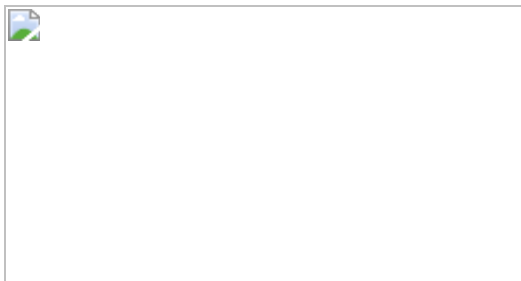
This change requires the approval of the City Council, but I believe this is an appropriate modernization in City tax collection and enforcement.

Work Plan Adopted

Earlier this week, the City Council [approved Alexandria's first Council Work Plan.](#)

In May of 2011, the City Council adopted a [Long-Range Multi-Department Planning Work Program" for Fiscal Year 2012.](#) This document was the first attempt to evolve the work program that Council has previously adopted for the Planning & Zoning Department into a document that now incorporated multiple departments engaged in long-range planning and policy efforts.

Today, the "Long Range Interdepartmental Planning Work Program" is adopted each year and serves as a schedule and framework for planning and policy initiatives. As a focal point for prioritizing



initiatives and ensuring adequate resources for those initiatives, this document has been quite successful.

This Multi-Departmental

Work Program is typically discussed by Council in January of each year and then adopted post-budget adoption in June. The current Council adopted Multi-Departmental Work Program was approved on June 13, 2018. Staff from the City's Department of Planning and Zoning presented [a draft of the FY 2020 plan to the City's Planning Commission early last month.](#)

As a contrast, the Council itself has no such document to guide its annual work. While Council has adopted a [Strategic Plan for FY2017 to FY 2022](#), it is a high-level plan and does not set out an annual work program. While a portion of the Council's workload is dictated by recurrent obligations (adoption of the budget, appropriation ordinances, periodic reports, etc), and by those seeking approval for various efforts (primarily land-use applications), the Council has no plan or document that allows it to schedule and sequence policy initiatives initiated by the Council itself.

The Council held a retreat at the end of January. This was the first time the new City Council had the opportunity to gather, more informally, to discuss how we will be approaching public business during the upcoming year. I proposed that Council use the retreat to define and refine a work program for the upcoming year.

Council worked to identify and prioritize what policy areas that it wants to review; what departments and agencies it wishes to review work plans and strategies with, sequence land use master plan amendments and revisions planned during the year; and select which of the City's boards and commissions that it would be important for the Council to meet with during the year.

Included in our adopted work program will be:

- Identification and schedule for policy work sessions,
- Identification and schedule for department strategic reviews,
- Schedule for receipt and consideration of master plan updates,
- Identification and schedule for Board or Commission joint meetings for those Boards and Commissions that Council thinks important to meet with
- Schedule for recurrent obligations (budget, appropriation ordinances, financial reports, etc)

I believe this plan will help organize the Council's work as we take on the important work of our community.

Running Town Hall!

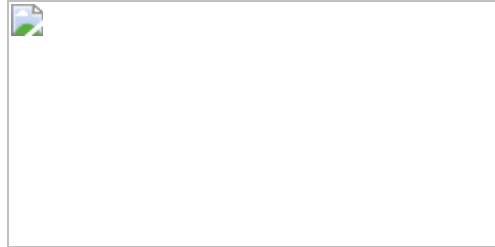
This month, I am introducing a new way to learn about City issues and raise questions about your community. Come run with me!

Throughout my 8 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 now going to bring those two efforts together with my first "Running Town Hall."

On Thursday March 28th, 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!



Fixing the Roads

The City Manager's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020) continues a multi-year effort to address the condition of the City's roads. [The proposed budget includes \\$5.5 million to pave 55 lane miles of roads around our City.](#) This is the most ever.

The City has 561 lane miles of roads for which it is responsible. Every 3 years, our Transportation and Environmental Services



Department assesses every street in the City [assigning each a Pavement Condition Inventory \(PCI\) score.](#) Based on that score and available resources, our paving plan for each year is formulated. The City will be conducting a new survey this year, which will prompt revisions to this schedule.

Including the money budgeted for Fiscal Year 2020, the proposed budget includes \$51 million for road paving over the next decade.

If the currently proposed funding level is approved, we are scheduled to resurface the following roads next fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2019):

- Taney Ave. from N. Early St. to N. Gordon St. (Edge Mill only)
- N Donelson St from Duke St to Taft Ave (Edge Mill only)
- Polk Ave from N Naylor St to N Pegram St
- E/W Abingdon St. from First St. to Dead End
- Commonwealth Ave from E Braddock Rd to King St
- Bishop Lane from N Quaker to Circle
- Mansion Dr. Entire Length
- Vermont Ave from S Gordon St to S Jenkins St
- S Jenkins St from Venable Ave to Holmes Run Pkwy
- N & S Fairfax St from Jefferson St to Third St
- Eisenhower Ave. from Mill Rd. to Holland Ln.
- W Rosemont from King St to Commonwealth Ave
- Mt Vernon Ave from Rosemont Ave to Dead-End
- High Street from W Braddock Rd to Russell Rd
- Virginia Ave. Entire Length
- N & S Union St from Pendleton St to Franklin St
- Dartmouth Rd. from Crown View to Dead End
- Valley Dr from Martha Custis Dr to Gunston Rd
- Powhatan St from Washington St to Slater Ln
- E/W Reed Ave from Richmond Hwy to Mt Vernon Ave
- Mark Drive (entire length)
- Stonewall Rd from W Braddock Rd to High St
- Jasper Pl from S Jenkins St to cul-de-sac
- King Street from Callahan to Daingerfield
- N Pitt St from Oronoco St to King St
- Norwood Pl from Cameron Mills Rd to cul-de-sac
- W. Taylor Run Pkwy. From Janney's Ln. to Dead End
- N Pegram St from Holmes Run Pkwy to N pickett St
- Roth St - Entire Length from Duke St to Business Center Dr

- Colvin St - Entire Length from Roth St to S Quaker Ln

For Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), we are scheduled to resurface the following roads:

- Duke St from S Patrick St to Strand St
- Hume Ave. from Commonwealth Ave. to Richmond Hwy.
- N Floyd St from Duke St to N French St
- Fendall Ave from Duke St to S Floyd St
- Wellington Rd from Beverley Dr to Chalfonte Dr
- Bryan St. from W. Taylor Run Pkwy. To Dead End
- Fillmore Ave. from Cul-de-sac to Seminary Rd
- Farm Rd. from Beverley Dr to Circle Terr
- N Gladden St & N Grayson St from Uline Ave to Uline Ave
- Tulsa Place from N Gordon to cul-de-sac
- Uline Ave from N Gordon St to N Furman St
- West Street from Duke St to Wythe St
- Skyhill Rd. from Janney's Ln. to Dead End
- Daingerfield - Entire Length
- Morgan St from N Chambliss St to Circular Parking space
- N/S Alfred St. from First St. to Church St.
- Reading Ave from Rayburn Ave To N Beaugard St
- Rayburn Ave from N Beaugard St to Reading Ave
- Lomack St from cul-de-sac to Dead-end
- S Iris from Venable Ave to Vermont Ave
- S French St from Duke St to cul-de-sac
- Cameron Mills Rd from Virginia Ave to Allison St
- N Howard St from Raleigh Ave to W Braddock Rd
- Moncure Dr from S View Terr to Hilton St (Base failure)
- Marlboro Dr. - Entire Length
- Diagonal - Entire Length
- Mt Vernon Ave from Hume Ave to East Braddock Rd

For Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022), we are scheduled to resurface the following roads:

- Executive Ave from W Glebe Rd to Mount Vernon Avenue
- Kentucky Ave from Old Dominion Bv to Russell Rd
- Alabama Ave from Kentucky Ave to Carolina Pl
- Beverley Drive from Russell Rd to Washington Circle
- Allison St. Entire Length
- Echols Ave from Seminary Rd to Dead-End
- Burgess Ave (All of it)
- Aspen Street from Landover St to Mosby St
- Guthrie Ave from Landover St to Mosby St
- Mosby Street from Aspen St to West Mt Ida Ave
- Holly St from Aspen St to West Mt Ida Ave
- Birch St from Holly St to Russell Rd
- Pine Street from Holly St to Russell Rd
- Evans Lane from Richmond Hwy to Reed Ave
- Lynhaven Drive from Richmond Hwy to Evans Ln
- Montrose Ave from Raymond Ave to Richmond Hwy
- Stewart Ave from Mt Vernon Ave to Randolph Ave
- Anderson Lane from Windsor Ave to Richards Ln
- Richards Lane from Anderson Ln to W Windsor Ave
- North Garland St from Ft Worth Ave to Cul De Sac
- Richenbacher Ave. from N. Van Dorn St. to N. Pickett St.
- Holmes Run Pkwy. From Van Dorn to Dead End
- Lowell Ave from N Chambliss St to cul-de-sac
- S Gordon from Duke St to Wheeler Ave
- Venable Ave - Entire Length
- Underwood Place from Ingram St to cul-de-sac
- Cathedral Dr - Entire Length
- Benning Ct from N Chambliss St to Dead-end
- S Ingram St from Duke St to Vermont Ave
- Holmes Run Pkwy from S Jordan St to S Jenkins St
- South View Ter from E Taylor Run Pkwy to Hilltop Ter
- N & S Washington Street from First St to Church St
- Jupiter Place from N Jordan St to Cul de sac
- Greenwood Place from Seminary Rd to Circle
- Knox Place (all of it)

- Rutland Place from N Pickett St to Cul de sac
- Reed Ave from Richmond Hwy to Mt Vernon Ave
- E&W Nelson Ave from Russell Rd to Leslie Ave
- George Mason Place from Monticello Bv to Cul de sac
- Terrett Ave from E Mt Ida to E Randolph Ave
- Usher Avenue
- W. Taylor Run Pkwy from Duke St. to Janney's Lane
- Colfax Ave from Seminary Rd to N Rosser St
- North Early Street from W Braddock Rd to Cul-de-sac
- Fort Ward Pl. - Entire Length
- Ellicott St. - Entire Length
- Jewell Court & Anderson Court from N Chambliss St to cul-de-sac
- N & S Saint Asaph St from First St to Dead-end
- Crown View Dr. from Clover Way to Dartmouth Rd.

We continue to play "catch up" throughout the City from deferred road maintenance during the worst of the Recession.

I'm hopeful we can continue (and hopefully increase) these investments in this very basic infrastructure.

State Funding for Combined Sewer Remediation

Last week the Virginia House of Delegates and the State Senate approved amendments to the Commonwealth's biennial budget. [Included in those amendments was \\$25 million to support work on the Alexandria combined sewer system.](#)

With remediation expected to require hundreds of millions of dollars, the City requested funding from state coffers to assist in this challenge. Other jurisdictions in Virginia with similar systems have benefited from such funding, and this investment in a significant accomplishment, largely due to our General Assembly delegation, led by Senator Dick Saslaw, the Senate Minority Leader.

[Two years ago, the General Assembly enacted legislation that required the City to address remediation of our Combined Sewer System by July 1, 2025. This is a timeline far more aggressive than what the Commonwealth's own environmental regulator had agreed was reasonable.](#)

In June of last year, [City Council approved transferring the ownership of the four Combined Sewer outfalls to Alexandria Renew Enterprises](#) to allow the City to leverage their capacity and capabilities to address these issues.

At the end of that same month, [the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality approved a plan jointly prepared by the City and Alexandria Renew to meet the more stringent timeline](#) imposed by the General Assembly.

The City is now well on our way to meeting this new timeline.

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 as clean water.

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.

The City has always been in compliance with all permits for the operation of the system, releasing amounts of sewage within the limits permitted and has conducted targeted sewer separation activities along with redevelopment and other planned activities.

The 2013 permit required the City to work with the community to adopt a new Long Term Control Plan. The plan that was prepared reduces the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water. The new plan was submitted to the state on schedule.



[Politico recently ran a very comprehensive look at St. Louis' efforts to address their combined sewer issues.](#)

[Marketplace had a review of the Baltimore Combined Sewer System.](#)

[National Geographic covered the Combined Sewer challenges in Washington, DC.](#)

These cities, and many others face similar challenges to the task we face in Alexandria. While there are some differences, we all share the immense complexity and costs.

[Washington's "Clean Rivers" Project is expected to take 20 years and cost \\$2.6 billion](#) to cover 53 outfalls. Washington's latest effort for the Anacostia began in 2013 and will conclude in 2023.

The challenge is significant. We certainly did not plan to rectify this outfall on the timetable that the Commonwealth has provided. Even with the unreasonable timetable, Alexandria remains ahead of many jurisdictions around the nation on this issue. Stormwater planning and work coordinated with redevelopment activity has left us better situated than most. This is not a new issue for Alexandria.

The City recently convened a new [Stakeholder Advisory Group](#) to work with Alexandria Renew and the community to move this project forward. On Wednesday, this committee held their first meeting.

We have significant work ahead of our community to make these important investments in cleaner waterways.

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

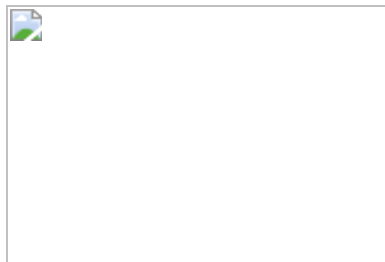
Measuring the Value

Nearly 60% of the costs of Alexandria's government come from residential and commercial real estate taxes. As such, the announcement of our annual real estate tax assessments is the most important indicator for the upcoming budget process.

Last month, the City mailed assessment notices to each property owner and you may [view valuations online](#).

[Overall, the City's real property tax base increased by 2.71% to \\$41.0 billion. This is the highest growth in the tax base in the past three years, but below our average of the past decade.](#)

The average assessed value for a single family home increased 1.36% to \$764,596. Of those properties, 49% of single family homes increased in value, 13% decreased, and 38% stayed the same.



The average assessed value for a condominium increased 3.30% to \$329,216. Of those properties, 57% of condominiums increased in value, 6% decreased, and 37% stayed the same. This is a big change from the previous several years where condos have lagged behind

our single family housing stock.

Commercial real estate is continuing to make recovery in the City. Commercial property assessments increased 3.58% to \$17.0 billion.

In Virginia, multi-family residential housing is considered commercial and can dominate our assessment results and mask underlying weakness.

Last year, multi-family rental properties grew by 3.52% led by \$114.7 million of new growth. Our existing office assessments grew by 2.97%.

Overall, new construction added \$344.3 million to our tax base. Over the past five years, \$1.93 billion of new growth has been added to the tax base. This generates \$21.8 million in annual new revenue. Said another way, your real estate tax rate is about 5 and a half cents lower as a result.

If you have concerns about your assessments, you have multiple options to have the assessment reviewed. First, contact the Real Estate Assessment office at 703-746-4646. Our staff is happy to discuss your specific assessment.

Until March 15th, a resident can submit a request to have assessments reviewed for modification by the City Staff. [Those](#)

[requests can be submitted online.](#)

If the review process does not yield a satisfactory result, an appeal can be filed to be heard before the City's Board of Equalization and Assessment Review. Those requests must be filed prior to June 1st.

Eco-City Town Hall

How can Alexandria take meaningful climate action? How should we best handle solid waste and manage recycling? Can we expand the use of renewable energy in our community? Can more sustainable building practices become universal in Alexandria?

Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission is pushing our City to make new commitments in our quest towards environmental sustainability.

[On Saturday the 9th of this Month, the City is hosting an Eco-City Summit to get your feedback on the draft recommendations for the update to the Environmental Action Plan.](#) The summit will be held from 9:30 AM until 12:30 PM at Hammond Middle School (4646 Seminary Road).

Led by an incredibly motivated and knowledgeable group of residents, the City vaulted to the lead among local governments by adopting the [Eco-City Charter](#) a decade ago. The charter defined a comprehensive vision for our City to improve environmental sustainability.

The Eco-City Charter then led the City to adopt the [Environmental Action Plan](#). The plan laid out specific actions the City should undertake. It detailed how we should measure success and it began to define the next phase of our Eco-City evolution.

With a decade under our belt, it is now time to take our plan to the next level. We recently commenced an effort to revise our Environmental Action Plan. [In October, the City Council adopted the Phase 1 update](#), including significant new commitments in air quality, transportation, waste, green buildings and water.

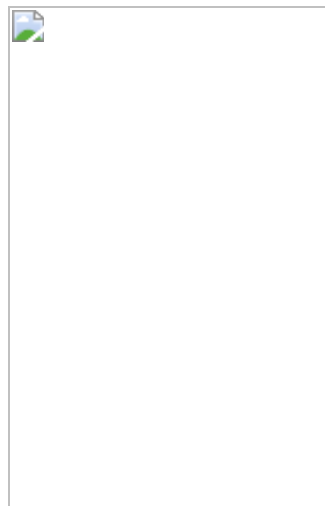
With any plan the City adopts, the test is not simply whether we will accomplish what we laid out in the plan (although that is an important test). The City plans that have transformative impact are the plans that end up cutting across multiple City policy priorities. The Eco-City Environmental Action Plan has had that impact. It has fundamentally transformed City operations in numerous policy areas.

With the Federal government now choosing to decline its traditional global leadership role in climate policy, the responsibility falls to local and state governments to lead the way.

[Just about two years ago, the City staff released the latest report detailing our progress in achieving the items defined in the plan.](#)

We have seen great progress in the City in furtherance of our goals:

- The City government has reduced energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The percentage of new construction utilizing green building components has increased.
- The City's tree canopy has increased.



- We have protected over 100 acres of new open space.
- We have doubled our solid waste recycling rate.
- We have increased transit ridership.
- We have adopted smart-growth oriented residential parking standards.
- We have improved the walkability of our neighborhoods.
- We have implemented stormwater infrastructure around our City.

Despite a constrained revenue environment, we have used non-General Fund revenues to continue to make progress.

In recent years we created and sustained a very successful farmers market compost program.

In adopting last year's budget the Council funded a new program to provide proactive maintenance of the City's urban forest.

We are bringing a new Metro station to Potomac Yard and a new dedicated Transitway to the West End.

We recently created a new stormwater utility to address our obligations to the Chesapeake Bay.

We identified hundreds of millions of dollars to address combined sewer modernization to address our obligations to the Potomac River.

We created a new Sustainability Coordinator position.

Our approved Housing Master Plan recognizes the importance of energy conservation as a component of housing affordability.

Our Complete Streets investments have continued to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility throughout the City.

Our recently approved [Eisenhower West](#) and [Old Town North](#) Small Area Plans included substantial sustainability chapters. As these plans are implemented, the City will have opportunities to achieve more significant sustainability initiatives, including district energy and other large-scale efforts.

[On the recommendation of our parking standards task force we recently adopted an ordinance to "right-size" our commercial parking standards](#) .

Yet, we can do more.

We have now begun a process of [updating our Green Building standards](#). These standards set the obligations of developers for incorporating sustainability into their new construction. Proposed revisions will come to the City Council in June of this year.

Our planned municipal facilities work gives us an opportunity to raise the bar for sustainability practices in our own facilities construction.

Last Saturday, the Council unanimously [adopted long-awaited updated to our Landscape Guidelines](#) to reflect the Environmental Action Plan and the City's Urban Forestry Master Plan.

The Commission's recommendations push the City to make new commitments in renewable energy, climate change, green buildings, land use and open space, and solid waste.

Constrained budgets make it more challenging for our City to continue its leadership in sustainability practices, but we can and should work to lead the region in this policy area. These efforts are critical given recent Federal policy changes, but are also good for our economy and our quality of life. I look forward to working to see them to reality.

Buses, Reimagined

On an average weekday, about 14,500 people board Metrorail at one of our four stations (Braddock Road, King Street, Eisenhower Avenue and Van Dorn Street). It is certainly an important part of transportation in our City.

Yet our four Metrorail stations (soon to be five) serve only a small portion of our 15.5 square miles. On an average weekday, almost 24,000 people board a bus, either [DASH](#) or Metrobus.

The tool our City has used for decades to serve the transit needs of most of our neighborhoods has been the bus.

This month, DASH will celebrate 35 years of serving Alexandria.



What started with 17 buses and served less than a million passengers, today serves over 4 million passengers with 85 buses. While new routes have been added, and existing routes tweaked at times, the basic construct of DASH's route network has largely been unchanged.

Communities around our nation have done the difficult work of rethinking

their bus route networks to improve frequency of service, reduce route duplication, and ultimately serve more riders. [Houston's overnight route network transformation helped spur growth in ridership at a time when transit ridership was dropping elsewhere.](#)

Alexandria is now undertaking a similar effort, designed to re-imagine our bus routes and ultimately increase ridership and route efficiency. [The Alexandria Transit Vision Plan](#) is the City's effort to rethink our buses.

To provide a factual basis for this effort, [a "Transit Choices Report" was developed](#). This report is a compendium of data on our existing transit network, designed to support this significant undertaking.

[This is an opportunity for the City to make transit more relevant and vital for more of our City's residents.](#) To do so, we need your input.

The [results of the initial study and community input were provided to joint meeting of the Alexandria Transit Company Board and the Alexandria Transportation Commission.](#)

We are asking that residents [complete a survey on transit usage and patterns in our City.](#)

Additionally, we have scheduled three community workshops around our City. The first session will be on Tuesday March 5th from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM at Hammond Middle School (4646 Seminary Road). The second session will be on Wednesday March 6th from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM at Armstrong Recreation Center (25 W. Reed Avenue). The final session will be on Thursday March 7th at Nannie Lee Center (1108 Jefferson Street).

Let me know your thoughts as we create a transit system that serves more of our community.

Mayor Justin M. Wilson
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12/3/24, 4:02 PM

March 2019 Council Connection

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Paid for by Wilson For Mayor