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The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by Mayor Justin M. Wilson

March 1, 2024

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In This Month's Edition:

- Budget Presentation
- Potomac Yard
- Choosing a President
- Assessments
- Road Paving
- Swatting
- Transparency
- Water Rates



Quick Links

[E-Mail Me](#)

[Past Newsletters](#)

[City of Alexandria Website](#)

[Pay City Taxes Online](#)

[Review Real Estate Assessments](#)

[Crime Mapping & Statistics](#)

[Alex 311](#) (Submit Service Requests to City Agencies)

[Board & Commission Vacancies](#)

[Real-Time Traffic Data](#)

[Alexandria Health Department](#)

[Restaurant Inspections](#)

[Report Potholes](#)

[Schedule Child Safety Seat Inspection](#)

On Saturday, the [St. Patrick's Day Parade](#) returns to the streets of Old Town, brought to our community by [The Ballyshanners](#). The parade steps off a little after noon and I'll see you there!

[Monday, the City will begin accepting orders for the delivery of leaf mulch. Orders can be placed online.](#)

The following Monday, our street sweeping program will return throughout the City.

The City is again offering slots in our [Mental Health First Aid class](#). This important class teaches the appropriate

- [Smoke Detector Installation Request](#)
- [Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)
- [License Your Dog or Cat](#)
- [Report a Street Light Outage](#)
- [Report a Traffic Signal Outage](#)

initial help to be provided to people in a mental health crisis. [Sign-up is available online.](#)

On March 13th, [the Friends of the Beatley Library](#) will kick-off their annual Spring Book Sale! The sale, which benefits the library and its operations, will operate through March 18th.

The non-profit Community Housing Partners (CHP) Energy Solutions is working to help improve homes and apartments across our community. CHP Energy Solutions provides no-cost, government and utility-funded improvements to increase the energy efficiency, health, and safety of your home. This can include installation of insulation, LED light bulbs, heating & cooling repairs and upgrades, and more!

Homeowners AND renters can see if they qualify by calling 888-229-3714 [or by applying online.](#)

If you would like me to host a town hall in your neighborhood, [please drop me a line](#) and we'll get it on the calendar!

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

Initiatives and Updates



Budget Proposal

On Tuesday night, the City Manager [presented his proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 \(July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025\) and his proposed Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) for Fiscal Year 2025 through Fiscal Year 2034.](#) This begins City Council's annual budget process, which will culminate in the adoption of the budget on May 1st.

We would like your input on the proposed budget! In two weeks, the City Council will hold our public hearing on the proposed budget. The public hearing will be held on March 11th beginning at 5:30 PM. [If you wish to address the Council on the proposed budget, you may sign-up to speak online.](#) You can address the Council in-person at City Hall or virtually on zoom.

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 on-going costs of government (primarily personnel), while the capital budget funds one-time expenditures that provide the community with an asset (new schools, new roads, new playing fields, transit buses, etc).

This budget will be adopted in an uncertain environment, with impacts in the real estate market driven by higher interest rates, and where we continue to see inflation impacting the cost of talent and raw materials, two things local governments buy in large quantities.

In November, the City Manager presented his initial outlook for the upcoming budget to our annual Council retreat.

In Virginia, the structure of municipal finance is heavily reliant on real estate taxes. Consequentially, in Alexandria the real estate market, both residential and commercial, dictates our budgetary fate. After seeing the healthiest growth in our real estate tax base in over 15 years, last year we saw slowing. For 2024, we are now seeing the slowest growth in our real estate tax base in 15 years.

The City Manager's budget includes a 3% growth in the General Fund, providing \$26.9 million of new revenue to fund a \$911 million General Fund operating budget.

Only \$7.5 million of the new revenue came from the real estate tax. Another \$8 million is projected to come from new consumption-based taxes, including the dining tax, sales tax, and the hotel tax. Another \$5 million of new revenue is projected to come from personal property taxes, including the vehicle tax.

Yet on the expenditure side of the ledger, we are seeing increases in costs across our balance sheet, driven by new costs for cash capital and debt service to support City and School capital investments, new investments to support student enrollment growth, the costs of regional and local transit services and the impacts of new collective bargaining agreements for our City employees (police, fire and labor and trades)..

While the City Manager's proposed budget increases overall City spending by 3%, the City Manager proposed a higher 4% increase in spending for the Alexandria City Public Schools. The City Manager's proposal suggests \$13.3 million of new money to cover increases in the debt service for ACPS construction projects and \$10.3 million of new money to cover increases in the ACPS Operating Budget. The \$10.3

million increase in the operating budget fully funds the Superintendent's proposed budget request, **but it does not fully fund the additions to the budget request made by the School Board**. Together, the increase in ACPS debt service and the proposed operating budget increase directs nearly all of the new revenue available to the City, to ACPS.

This will be a challenging environment to adopt a budget. With many residential taxpayers already paying more this year due to the appreciation in our residential tax base, I believe we should again work to avoid a rate increase while protecting the core services our residents depend on. Last year was the 7th budget in a row without a tax rate increase and I am hopeful we can continue that pattern. The City Manager has not proposed a real estate tax rate increase this year.

With the impacts of average assessment increases included, this means the average single-family homeowner would pay \$243 more in 2024 than in 2023. The average condo owner would pay \$179 more in 2024 versus 2023.

In addition, the City Manager has proposed no increase in the annual Residential Refuse Fee of \$500, which covers the costs of trash, recycling and yard waste collection (among other services). This fee is paid only by the 20,647 homeowners who receive City trash collection.

The stormwater utility fee is proposed to increase to address stormwater management and Chesapeake Bay clean-up mandates. This fee is paid by all property owners, including non-taxable properties. The new annual fee will be \$90.75 for condos, \$136.12 for townhomes, \$324.10 for small single-family homes and \$541.25 for large single-family homes.

On March 12th, City Council must make the first big decision of this year's budget process. State law requires that the Council vote to "advertise" a tax rate. The rate that the Council chooses to advertise becomes the ceiling for the Council during the budget process. We can adopt a lower rate, but we can go no higher.

In additional the budget documents linked above, all questions asked by members of Council during the process are posted, along with answers, online for the public to review. Any request to change the proposed budget must be initiated with a budget question, so it is a good window into the thoughts of your elected representatives.

Starting this week, **the City Council will meet weekly to review every aspect of the budget during topical**

budget worksessions. These sessions are open to the public and recorded.

There is no more important process than the adoption of our annual budget. The budget is a reflection of the values of our community and I look forward to working with our residents and my colleagues to craft a budget that is reflective of those collective values.

Let me know your thoughts!



A Proposal For Potomac Yard

Since the December economic development **announcement for North Potomac Yard**, the City has **commenced with an extensive schedule of community engagement** as we work to discuss this proposal with the residents of Alexandria, solicit their input and determine the future of this important area of our City.

According to analysis by HR&A Advisors this proposal will provide nearly a billion dollars of permanent annual economic output for City, just from the first phase, which includes the corporate headquarters for Monumental Sports, the Monumental Sports Network Studio, the arena, the performing arts venue, team facilities and the arena parking garage. That same analysis shows that this first phase, would catalyze an additional \$5.6 billion of permanent annual economic output within the City. Together, this is projected to be \$3.6 billion of additional permanent annual economic output beyond what would occur without this catalyst.

On Tuesday evening, Alexandria's Finance staff provided **the most detailed view yet of the estimated financial impact on the City's budget.** This estimate shows that in the first year of operation, the project will be cash flow positive, and it will generate \$8.4 million of NET NEW revenue for the City, AFTER debt service and expenses related to the use are satisfied. The net return to the City's balance sheet is projected to continue to appreciate, leading to a \$490 impact (either tax decrease or service increase) for the average Alexandria household after only the first phase.

These economic impacts have now been validated by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University.

While this economic impact is significant for the City, it is proposed to occur in a rather compact space. The arena, studios, headquarters and performing arts venue are all proposed for the area just south of the new Virginia Tech Innovation Campus building under

construction, just north of the recently opened Potomac Yard Metro, just east of the existing Potomac Avenue and just west of the railroad tracks.

The City has held four listening sessions which can be reviewed online:

- [Financial Proposal and Economic Impact](#)
- [Community Benefits](#)
- [Small Business and Economic Opportunity](#)
- [Transportation](#)

In January, the entire City Council participated in a Town Hall meeting where we took questions from the audience on the proposal. [You can watch this entire session online.](#)

At the last City Council legislative meeting of January, [City Council members received a presentation and asked questions of our project team reviewing the specifics of the proposal before the community.](#)

Our staff has worked to [answer numerous questions that have been posed by the community.](#)

The [attraction of the corporate headquarters of Monumental Sports, a new arena for two professional sports teams, a performing arts center, broadcast studios, practice facilities, and other ancillary uses will catalyze thousands of units of new housing \(including a large infusion of committed affordable units\), the creation of a new school, parks and more.](#)

You can [watch the formal announcement online](#), including myself, Governor Glenn Youngkin, Senator Mark Warner, House Majority Leader Charniele Herring, and the owner of Monumental Sports, Ted Leonsis.

But to understand why we are here requires a step back a bit.

This year, [the City will collect \\$856.4 million from a variety of tax and fee revenue sources to fund the costs of the City's government, including our schools, public safety, human services, transportation, infrastructure investment, debt service and more.](#)

A little over 62% of that money will be raised from the real estate tax. [Twenty years ago, 51.5% of our budget was funded by the real estate tax.](#) By digging a little deeper, the story becomes even more stark. Two decades ago, 69.6% of our real estate tax revenue came from residential sources, either residential taxpayers or the owners of residential multi-family buildings. Today nearly 81% of real estate tax

revenues come from those sources, with only 19% coming from our commercial tax base.

As a contrast, while our friends in Arlington have faced some of the same factors, **their commercial tax base is 23% of their total tax base**, which has led to Arlington having the lowest real estate tax rate of any major jurisdiction in the region. **In Fairfax County, their commercial tax base is now just a little over 16% of their overall base.**

What happened? The short answer: A lot of things:

- Obsolete office space converted to other uses, demand for office space dropped and retail space consumption plummeted, leading our office and retail sector to drop from over 24% of our tax base to 17%.
- With high demand for multi-family rentals, our multi-family rentals went from 12% of our tax base to 20.5%
- Our residential properties generally appreciated at a much higher rate than commercial properties over those two decades.

That leaves us in a place where today residents of Alexandria are footing a larger percentage of the cost of their government than they ever have. The trajectory that we have seen over the past two decades shows no sign of abating in the future.

The only true way to change this trajectory is through economic development. Alexandria has had some successes:

- **Landmark Mall is becoming the mixed-use village that we always intended, anchored by the new Inova Alexandria Hospital.**
- **We successfully attracted the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus to Potomac Yard, joining the neighborhood with the Institute for Defense Analysis, the American Physical Therapy Association and more.**
- **We successfully attracted the National Science Foundation and its 2,400 jobs to Carlyle.**
- **We have begun to achieve the economic potential of our waterfront with the development on the south end of our Potomac River shoreline.**
- **We are seeing the Oakville Triangle mixed-use vision come to life, anchored by an Inova HealthPlex.**

- **Hilco Redevelopment Partners is transitioning an obsolete coal-fired power plant on our waterfront to a modern mixed-use community.**
- **Decades of planning in Carlyle is paying dividends, as further mixed-use comes to life in that corridor.**
- **We have also made large investments in the infrastructure to drive economic growth long into the future, most significantly with the Potomac Yard Metro opening last May.**

That Metro Station is a key component of a larger vision for a mixed-use North Potomac Yard. For decades, City plans have assumed that over time, the existing shopping center and its acres of surface parking, would give way to a new mixed-use neighborhood, with residential, commercial, entertainment, a school, park land and much more. The North Potomac Yard Plan, includes the area north of East Glebe Road continuing to the City border, and allows over 7.6 million square feet of development. That future is now.

Much has changed since those plans were originally approved. New office development was on life support before the pandemic. In a post-pandemic world, there is essentially zero new office development occurring in the DC region. Existing office portfolios are defaulting at an alarming rate as tenants decide not to renew their leases. The economic growth of our region's future will be experiential, the types of non-residential uses that cannot be virtualized.

While this exact proposed use was clearly not specifically envisioned during the Small Area Plan process, it was not far from mind. From our Master Plan: "In addition, uses such as entertainment and/or live performance arts are encouraged. An entertainment district could provide a unique identity for Conceptual rendering of Metro Plaza. this neighborhood and would differentiate this new town center from others in the region. The entertainment and theater uses can utilize the office parking during the evening hours, and add evening activity within the neighborhood."

Like so many competitive economic development initiatives in the City's history, the formal announcement is the first time most residents of our community learned of this proposal. The competitive nature of these efforts require confidentiality. With the announcement now behind us, we are entering a phase of very active engagement with the community to discuss the details of the framework agreement, and ensure community voices are heard as many more

details are determined. We will work to ultimately settle on a proposal that is in the best interest of our City and our quality of life.

As the City engaged in this discussion with the Commonwealth and Monumental Sports and Entertainment over the past few months, we were mindful of the litany of public/private partnerships around the nation that turn out to be bad deals for the taxpayers, particularly when it relates to sports facilities. We have worked to make this deal different.

The arena and that land that it will sit on is proposed to be owned by a new Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority.

The construction of the arena will be financed by three sources:

- A \$403 million up-front private investment by Monumental Sports and Entertainment
- A \$1.05 billion Project Revenue Bond issued by the new Authority
- A \$416 million Lease Revenue Bond issued by the new Authority

The debt from these bonds will be serviced and ultimately paid off over time by three sources:

- Annual lease payments that will be paid by Monumental Sports and Entertainment
- A portion of NEW tax revenues that are paid to the City of Alexandria by these new uses
- A portion of NEW tax revenues that are paid to the Commonwealth of Virginia by these new uses

Included in this deal is an ongoing fund that will renovate and upgrade the arena over time, to avoid the obsolescence that ultimately occurred at Capital One Arena.

Additionally, the City will have long-term agreements with Monumental Sports and Entertainment to ensure long-term tenancy and protect the City's taxpayers from risk.

There is no City or Commonwealth tax dollars being invested in the arena.

In addition to the arena, there will be two components that the City will be invested in. As part of this arrangement, the City will be investing in the new performing arts Center and the parking facilities, as a joint venture with Monumental. As part of that arrangement, the City is entitled to a share of the revenues from both of those uses.

Of the overall \$2 billion of investment from this project, 42% will be financed by Monumental, 53% will come from a portion of the new tax revenues generated by the project and 5% will come from the City.

The City's long-time municipal finance advisors, Davenport & Company, have closely advised us as we have gone through this process. [You can watch our advisors and our City's Director of Finance discuss the financing of this project in a video we released.](#)

You can also [watch our City Manager and the CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership present the full proposal to our City Council meeting in December.](#)

While the contours of the financial relationship between the City, Monumental and the Commonwealth has been negotiated, there is a lot of detail associated with this proposal that must be determined. Protecting our existing neighborhoods from any negative impacts, ensuring that our transportation infrastructure can support any plans for use of these facilities and prioritizing public investments are just a few of the critical details that must be determined in close collaboration with our residents over the next year and beyond.

In addition to broad, city-wide engagement, we will have very targeted engagement with directly impacted neighborhoods, as we work through details specific to those communities.

While this discussion is playing out in Alexandria, there is also action occurring in Richmond at the State Capitol. The General Assembly considered legislation that was filed in both the [Senate](#) and the [House of Delegates](#) that would create the authority necessary for this proposal to become reality. The language authorizing the creation of the authority is now in the House of Delegates budget (but not in the Senate budget). The fate will be determined as the budget conferees negotiate to reconcile the differences.

This is a large opportunity for our City and its future. We are in this discussion because the City Council, the Governor and leaders in the General Assembly believe that this proposal can be beneficial to our community. Those benefits will accrue to the many services that our residents expect and demand, including our schools, our public safety agencies, transportation, housing, human services and more.

I look forward to extensive engagement as we shape this proposal to realize those benefits. Let me know your thoughts as we continue this discussion.



Choosing a President

The United States has begun choosing its next President. Virginia voters can now cast their first votes in this process!

In Virginia, both the Democratic and Republican Presidential primaries will be held as part of Super Tuesday, when about a third of the delegates for both the Democratic and Republican nominations will be selected. This year, Super Tuesday is next Tuesday March 5th.

On primary day, all City polling places will be open from 6 AM until 7 PM.

While we do not have party registration in Virginia, and primaries are open to all voters, when you vote, you will be asked to select which party's primary you would like to participate in.

[Here is the Democratic Sample Ballot.](#)

[Here is the Republican Sample Ballot.](#)

Virginia voters have three alternatives for voting in this primary:

1. If you previously requested a ballot, it can be mailed back or dropped 24/7 at the drop-box located in front of 132 N. Royal Street.
2. [**You can vote in-person tomorrow at the Alexandria Registrar's Office from 8 AM until 5 PM.**](#) This is the last day of early voting.
3. You can vote in person [**at your precinct**](#) on the Primary Day of March 5th.

I'll see you at the polls!



Assessments

Last month, the City mailed 2024 assessment notices to each Alexandria property owner. You may [**view your assessment online.**](#) Included online is information about comparable transactions that were used to calculate individual assessments.

Twenty three years ago, City Council received its assessment report from our City Assessor. The City Council learned that between 1999 and 2000, the City's real estate tax base grew by a little over 9%. For the next 6 years, annual tax base growth never went below double digits, as the City AVERAGED 15.3% ANNUAL tax base growth between 1999 and 2006.

This was an unprecedented appreciation in our tax base.

From 2006 to 2007, the City's real estate tax base grew by just a little over 4%. For the next 12 years, annual growth in the tax base never again reached 4%. From 2008 until 2019, the City's tax base grew annually by an average of 1.47%. There were two years during this period where the tax base actually shrunk.

For four years, we began to transition from this very low-growth period. From 2020 until last year, we saw uneven but more significant annual growth, averaging just over 4% each year.

This year ends that period of healthy growth, with the most anemic tax base growth since the Great Recession.

This year, our overall real estate tax base grew by 0.33%. **This brings the City's real estate tax base to \$48.5 billion.**

Over 61% 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.

The City did experience \$522.1 million of new development in the tax base last year, of which residential development constituted \$284.4 million and \$237.7 million came from commercial growth. Between 2020 and 2024, \$2.6 billion of new development has been added to the tax rolls. At the current tax rate, the taxable value of that growth generates a little over \$28.8 million in annual real estate tax revenue, the equivalent of over 6 cents on the current real estate tax rate.

Unfortunately, this year's new growth was more than offset by \$736.88 million of value that was lost from our commercial tax base.

The loss of value in office properties in Alexandria has significantly accelerated this year. Values for office properties dropped by over 12% this year and almost 2% last year.

Alexandria had \$4.16 billion of office space in 2019. Today Alexandria's office space is worth \$3.14 billion. That lost value alone generated over \$11 million of annual real estate tax revenue for the City. For much of the aged office space in our City, it is only the possibility of residential conversion that is providing some floor for the valuation. Last Saturday, the City Council approved another commercial to residential

conversion, **as we continue to lead the nation in such conversions.**

While the post-pandemic focus continues to be on the changes we have seen in our commercial tax-base, this year's story was defined by change in our residential tax base, driven by increased mortgage rates and a dearth of sales. In 2023, there was an 18.27% decrease in the volume of single-family home sales and a 25.58% drop in the volume of condo sales.

On the residential side, the average assessed value for a single family home increased 2.33% to \$962,276. Of those properties, 50% of single family homes increased in value, 5% decreased, and 45% stayed the same.

The average assessed value for a condominium increased 3.96% to \$407,616. Of those properties, 74% of condominiums increased in value, 2% decreased, and 24% stayed the same.

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.

The City **also has a variety of tax relief programs available for eligible property owners.**

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.



Road Paving

The City Manager's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) continues a multi-year effort to address the condition of the City's roads. **The proposed budget includes \$5.25 million for this upcoming fiscal year (\$64.6 million for the next decade) to pave miles of roads around our City.**

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. This year's schedule is based on the 2022 survey rankings.

While the PCI score informs the schedule, our staff must also coordinate these investments with utility work planned by private and public entities, as well as other projects.

Based on the current budget, **there are numerous roads that were funded previously and will be completed when we begin paving again in the Spring.**

If the currently proposed funding level is approved, we are scheduled to resurface the following roads next fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2024):

- Seay Street from Longview Drive to End
- Viewpoint Road from Longview Drive to End
- Emerson Avenue from John Carlyle Street to Holland Lane
- Wilkes Street from South Patrick Street to End
- Mayer Place from Allison Street to End
- Milan Drive from West Glebe Road to Four Mile Road
- West Windsor Avenue from Russell Road to Commonwealth Avenue
- Herbert Street from Commonwealth Avenue to Mount Vernon Avenue
- Manning Street from Commonwealth Avenue to Clifford Avenue
- North and South Lee Street Entire Length
- North Garland Street from Fort Worth Avenue to End
- Sharp Place from Saint Stephens Road to End
- Vicar Lane from Bishop Lane to End
- Adams Avenue from Newton Street to Mount Vernon Avenue
- Newton Street from East Braddock Road to East Luray Avenue
- Gunston Road from Valley Drive to North Quaker Lane
- Elizabeth Lane from Eisenhower Avenue to Courthouse Square
- Metro Road from Eisenhower Avenue to South Van Dorn Street
- Boyle Street from Buchanan Street to End
- Second Street from Colonial Avenue Drive to North Fairfax Street
- Laird Place from Manor Road to Tennessee Avenue
- Stovall Street from Eisenhower Avenue to Mill Road

- South Bragg Street from City limit to End
- Ford Avenue from North Hampton Drive to End
- Banks Place from North Morgan Street to End
- Franklin Street from South Union Street to South Payne Street
- Commerce Street from South Fayette Street to South West Street
- Fern Street from North Quaker Lane to Osage Street
- Imboden Street from North Howard to Raleigh Street
- Sanford Street from West Mount Ida to West Del Ray Avenue
- Price Street from East Bellefonte Avenue to Cliff Street
- Ballenger Avenue from Holland Lane to Courthouse Square
- South Royal Street from Gibbons Street to Queen Street
- Slaters Lane from Richmond Highway to End
- Portner Road from Bashford Lane to Second Street
- Portner Place from Portner Road to End
- North Paxton Street from Duke Street to Holmes Run Parkway

For Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026), we are scheduled to resurface the following roads:

- Calvert Avenue from Richmond Highway to Murray Avenue
- Dearborn Place from Fort Williams Parkway to end
- Pryor Street from Richenbacher Avenue to Taney Avenue
- Rhoades Place from North Pryor Street to End (Pryor Street)
- Regency Place from North Pryor Street to End
- Peele Place from Taney Avenue from End
- Moore Place from Pullman Place to End
- Pullman Place from Cameron Mills Road to End
- Summit Avenue from Cameron Mill Road to Dogwood Drive
- Hillside Terrace from Crest Street to Valley Drive
- Louis Place from North Howard Street to End
- Hare Court from Louis Place to End
- Featherstone Place from Fort Worth Avenue to End

- Hatton Court from Doris Drive to end/Partial Doris drive (city limit)
- Hawthorne Avenue from Hatton court to Holmes Run Parkway
- Holmes Run Parkway from North Chambliss Street to End
- Mill Road from Jamieson Avenue to Eisenhower Avenue
- Peachtree Place from Gaillard Street to end
- Rapidan Court from Polk Avenue to End
- Canterbury Lane from Trinity Drive to End (Chancel Place)
- Trinity Drive from Fort Williams Parkway to End
- Commonwealth Avenue from Mount Vernon to End
- North Fayette Street (600 Block) Concrete Restorations
- Fayette Street from Duke Street to End
- Kingston Avenue from Janney's Lane to End
- Kingston Place from Kingston Avenue to End
- North Peyton Street from King Street to End
- Madison Street from West Street to End
- Oronoco Street from Earl Street to End
- Mount Vernon Avenue from West Glebe Road to the City Limit
- Business Center Drive from South Quaker Lane to End
- East Abingdon Drive from Washington Street to End
- West Abingdon Drive from Washington Street to End
- LaVerne Avenue from East Glebe Road to Wilson Avenue
- Walleston Court from Janneys Lane to End

For Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027), we are scheduled to resurface the following roads:

- East and West Walnut Street from Mount Vernon Avenue to King Street
- North Overlook Drive from Halcyon Drive to End
- Dogwood Drive from Valley Drive to North Quaker Lane
- Page Terrace from West Braddock Road to Dogwood Drive
- Crest Street from West Braddock Road to Dogwood Drive
- North Pickett Street from Seminary Road to End
- Maury Lane from North Pickett Street to End

- East and West Custis Avenue from Mount Vernon Avenue to Russell Road
- Manor Road from Cameron Mills Road to End
- South Whiting Street from Edsall Road to End
- North Armistead Street from N Beauregard to End
- North Ashton Street from North Morgan Street to End
- North Tracy Street from Dawes Avenue to End
- Fillmore Avenue from Seminary Road to North Chambliss Street
- Hilton Street from Duke Street to Upland Place
- Lloyd's Lane from Orchard Street to West Braddock Road
- Somerville Street from Duke Street to End
- Ansell Street from Commonwealth Avenue to Kennedy Street
- North Gaillard Street from Seminary Road to End
- Russell Road from West Mason Avenue to King Street
- West Alexandria from Commonwealth Avenue to End
- LaVerne Avenue from East Glebe Road to Wilson Avenue
- Bayliss Drive from Cross Drive to End
- Cross Drive from Scroggins Road to End
- Carolina Place from Beverley Drive to Lee Circle
- Clyde Avenue from East Uhler Avenue to East Bellefonte Avenue
- Wayne Street from East Monroe Avenue to Adams Avenue
- West Del Ray Avenue from Russell Road to Commonwealth Avenue
- Wilson Avenue from East Glebe Road to East Reed Avenue
- Summit Avenue from Dogwood Drive to Cameron Mills Road
- Summers Drive from Russell Road to End

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



Swatting

At the end of January, **there were two "swatting" incidents involving our schools.** These incidents created chaos and trauma for our students and educators and placed our public safety personnel at risk as they responded to what they believed to be an emergency situation.

We have had at least 25 such swatting incidents in the City in the past 4 years. Swatting is not a harmless prank. It places public servants and residents in danger, while diverting important personnel and equipment from their actual duties.

During last year's General Assembly session, **bipartisan legislation was adopted and signed by the Governor to increase criminal penalties for these types of incidents.**

Included in the enacted legislation was new authority for local governments to recoup the costs of swatting incidents from those convicted of these erroneous reports.

At my request, **the City Council considered an ordinance that was adopted unanimously by the Council last month that takes advantage of this new authority.** In the event of a future incident, the City will have the ability to recoup these costs.

Swatting is dangerous and we will continue to work to discourage this criminal activity in our City.



Transparency in Government

Last month, nearly **all elected officials in the state** were required to submit an annual **Statement of Economic Interests**. While these documents are subject to public inspection in our Clerk's office, at my request, over six years ago, Alexandria **became the first local government in Virginia to post these disclosures online.** We may still be the only jurisdiction that does so.

About 19 years ago, **Alexandria became one of the earliest jurisdictions in Virginia to post local campaign finance reports online.** Anyone can easily review who finances the campaigns of Alexandria's elected officials.

In 2009, I along with then-Councilman Smedberg and then-Councilman Krupicka, **successfully sought approval from Richmond** to impose new restrictions on land-use applicants. Specifically, the new laws we adopted **require land-use applicants to reveal any**

financial interests that they might have with policymakers.

A decade ago, we made improvements to the motions that the City Council makes and votes on to initiate executive sessions. These changes serve to provide our residents with more information about the closed sessions that Council conducts.

A decade ago, we moved the Council's work sessions from the Council Work Room (off camera) into the Council chambers so that the public can more easily observe our discussions.

The City also began **posting online the reports of our Internal Auditor for public review.**

In January of 2016, **the Council adopted a Transparency Resolution to consider ideas for improving transparency in City operations.** The adopted resolution included language that I drafted requesting that our Clerk begin producing an annual report detailing the Council's use of executive session during the previous year. Executive session is a closed meeting of Council, neither televised nor witnessed by any members of the general public, for specific purposes.

The **Code of Virginia strictly limits the circumstances where the City Council can meet in executive session.** As a practical matter, the sessions are used primarily to address personnel issues, litigation strategy, and the acquisition or disposition of public property. In the case of the latter two examples, the executive sessions are used to protect the City's negotiating posture and thus protect the taxpayer dollar.

Before going into executive session, the Council must vote on the reason for the executive session. After the executive session concludes, the Council must return into public view and each member must certify that we complied with the law during the private session.

The latest of these executive session reports is posted and available for public review. It shows that the Council met in executive session 16 times during the last Council term and each vote to go into executive session was unanimous.

I do believe that government should continue to seek new ways to provide public accessibility to information about their government, to ensure ethical and accountable government.



Water Rates

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

As a private utility, VAWC is subject to the authority of the [State Corporation Commission \(SCC\)](#) in Richmond. [In November of 2018, the utility filed before the SCC for a rate increase.](#)

In 2019, [the City Council voted to intervene in this application before the SCC and oppose this rate increase.](#)

At the end of 2020, the SCC concurred with the City's position and rejected most of VAWC's requested increase. [As such, all Alexandria water rate-payers received 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 November of 2021, [VAWC applied again for a rate increase](#), this time seeking a 28% increase in rates and a variety of other charges and rate supplements. The City again opposed this increase before the SCC and [refunds were again issued last year to ratepayers.](#)

At the end of last year, VAWC again applied for a significant rate increase, this time applying for a 29% increase. [City Council voted last month to oppose this increase, as it is excessive and would harm consumers.](#)

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. The City will continue to advocate for Alexandria's ratepayers in this process.

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