

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

*Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson*

Alexandria, Virginia

May 1, 2017

## In This Edition

[Council Initiatives](#)

[Infrastructure Matters](#)

[Cleaner Water](#)

[Crime Stats](#)

[Aquatics In Alexandria](#)

[Host a Town Hall](#)

[Upcoming Issues:  
Updating Laws, North  
Potomac Yard  
Planning & Cameron  
Run](#)

## 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](#)

[Last month, ACT For Alexandria reprised their "Spring2ACTion" event.](#)

In one 24-hour period, Spring2ACTion raised \$1,592,459 for 158 non-profit organizations that serve Alexandria.

This year there were 9,058 donors! This is an incredible outpouring of generosity from our community.

Thanks to everyone who gave during this time.

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

## Council Initiatives

### Infrastructure Matters

The City Manager's proposed Capital Improvement Program includes just about \$2 billion of capital investment over the next 10 years.

In Fiscal Year 2018, which begins on July 1st of this year, the City Manager has proposed \$150 million of capital investment. The list reads like a journal of the arcane. The highlights include:

- \$33 million to support the City's capital contribution to Metro (mostly to fund new MetroRail cars and separate from the operating budget transfer)
- \$19 million to be transferred to the Alexandria City Public Schools for capital investment (separate from the operating budget transfer)
- \$5.3 million for street reconstruction and resurfacing



[Real Estate Tax Receipt Calculator](#)

[License Your Dog or Cat](#)

[Report a Street Light Outage](#)

## Events/Updates

### Leading the Commonwealth

The process of choosing our new Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General is underway.

On Tuesday June 13th, both the Democratic and Republican parties will be holding statewide primaries to choose their nominees for office.

Polls across Alexandria will be open from 6 AM until 7 PM at your normal polling place.

The Democratic Party will be choosing a nominee for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Attorney General Mark Herring is unopposed for the Democratic nomination for reelection. [You can review the sample ballot online.](#)

The Republican Party will be choosing a nominee for Governor and Lieutenant Governor as well. John Adams is unopposed for the Republican nomination for Attorney General. [You can review the sample ballot online.](#)

Absentee voting has now begun for the primary. [Details and applications are available online.](#)

[Monday May 22nd is the deadline to register \(or change your registration\) to vote to participate in the June 13th primaries.](#)

### Cinema Del Ray Returns!

Thanks to the generosity of Realtor Jen Walker, Cinema

- \$3.3 million to replace aged DASH buses
- \$2.5 million to replace worn-out turf athletic fields
- \$2.2 million to install new turf fields and playgrounds at the rebuilt Patrick Henry Recreation Center
- \$1.6 million to make critical repairs at Chinquapin Recreation Center
- \$6.6 million to make critical repairs on other City facilities
- \$8 million to rebuild the Cameron Mills Fire Station
- \$3.5 million to perform critical upgrades and renovations to the Alexandria Courthouse
- \$2.4 million to address critical building issues at City Hall
- \$7.8 million to address sanitary and stormwater sewer issues (addressed later in this newsletter)
- \$5.8 million for infrastructure investments on the waterfront
- \$12.3 million for investments in Information Technology infrastructure including a portion of the Municipal Fiber build-out

[This is now the seventh City budget](#) that I have worked on during my time on the City Council. While I've never had the opportunity to work on a budget when revenues were skyrocketing, some years have been worse than others.

I've tried to have the same approach in each budget; push for efficiency and savings within the operating budget, but maintain strong levels of investment in capital infrastructure.

At various points, this philosophy has gotten me in trouble with people on either side of the debate about the relative size of government. I have generally opposed extensive growth in the operating budget but strongly supported addressing deferred capital needs.

The operating budget provides the resources to fund employees and their benefits. A competitive regional labor market have pushed employment costs higher. That drives our operating expenses to grow at a rate greater than general inflation.

Capital expenditures are the City's investment in our infrastructure. These investments can reduce operating costs, promote economic development and reduce the need for larger tax increases in the future.

Despite large efforts to address deferred capital investment in recent years, the City stands at a crossroads. With a perfect storm of infrastructure needs for school, sewer, city facility, transportation and recreation, the practices of the past will not sustain us in the future.

The City Manager's proposed Capital Improvement Program identifies over \$500 million of unfunded capital investments that he was unable to include in his proposal despite funding \$2 billion of needs over the next decade.

**We have to do something dramatically different.**

Deferring capital investment further will threaten economic growth and ultimately exacerbate the challenges we face.

From 2002 until 2009, the City was enjoying the run-up in the residential real estate market. Taxes from this run-up helped our General Fund budget increase by an average of 6.5% per year. The



Del Ray returns on Saturday May 20th.

The monthly free outdoor movie on the field next to Mount Vernon Recreation Center has become a summer tradition.

[This month's movie is "Finding Dory" and it starts when it's dark enough!](#)

### **Saturday is Water Discovery Day!**

This Saturday from 10 AM until 2 PM, Alexandria Renew will be hosting Water Discover Day at their headquarters at 1800 Limerick Street.

[This family event is designed for learning and fun with food, music, tours and activities.](#)

### **Opinions On Our Schools**

The Alexandria City Public Schools are conducting a survey as they work to implement their new strategic plan.

[Regardless of your connection to our schools, please take the time to share your opinion!](#)

### **First Thursday**

Thursday is "First Thursday!"

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

### **Real Estate Assessment Appeals Due June 1**

Any appeal of 2017 Real Estate Assessments must be filed by June 1 for hearing by the Board of Equalization.

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

### **Bike To Work Day**

work force in City Government grew from 2,229 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) to 2,660 FTEs during that period.

In Fiscal Year 2010, the bottom fell out as the Great Recession took hold. The City adopted its first negative budget in at least 40 years, reducing spending from Fiscal Year 2009 to 2010 by over 2%. From 2010 to 2017, the General Fund budget increased by an average of 2.9% per year.

Today, the City workforce is proposed to be 2,563 FTEs, 4% lower than 2009.

Under current rates, projections are that we would experience an anemic 1.6% revenue growth. That would provide an additional \$11 million of new revenue.

It is impossible to sustain an average budget growth of less than 3% per year with 4% annual student enrollment growth, employee healthcare costs increasing far above rates of inflation, long-deferred infrastructure needs, and ever-escalating funding challenges from Metro.

Competing for the \$11 million of new operating revenue:

- [The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority \(WMATA\) is demanding an additional \\$7 million of operating funds from Alexandria next year. This is to support existing operations and safety initiatives.](#)
- [The School Board's proposed operating budget for the Alexandria City Public Schools has requested an additional \\$9.6 million.](#)
- [Increases to debt service and cash capital contributions to our capital budget require an increase of \\$6.5 million.](#)
- [Providing City employees with scheduled merit increases alone costs an additional \\$5 million.](#)
- [Increases in employee healthcare costs were projected to total another \\$1.1 million. We just learned last month that they will grow by \\$2.8 million.](#)

While not an exhaustive list, those costs alone total \$29.1 million of new spending. One cent on the real estate tax rate this year generates \$3.9 million of general fund revenue. So that represents nearly 7.5 cents of the real estate tax rate of requested new expenditures.

To address these funding challenges, the City Manager employed a series of efforts, including:

- \$5 million of General Fund reductions to City spending
- \$2 million reduction to the request of the Alexandria City Public Schools (providing a \$7.5 million increase, which amounts to 3.6% growth)
- 2.7 cent increase in the real estate tax rate
- [Creation of new Stormwater Utility Fee to remove stormwater costs from the City's General Fund](#) and more equitably distribute the costs
- Changes to the City's Supplemental Pension Plan

The proposed general fund operating budget is \$712.4 million, an increase of 3.5% from Fiscal Year 2017. With revenue growth in the low single digits, the City Manager included a proposed increase of 2.7 cents in the real estate tax rate.

[I wrote in an earlier edition of this newsletter about my concerns over new Federal budget policies and their potential impact on Alexandria's economy.](#) In order to prepare the City for these challenges, the City Manager [has proposed a \\$9.1 million contingency to address sudden revenue shortfalls.](#) Nearly all of the

Friday, May 19th is Bike to Work Day across the region.

[If it will be your first time biking to work or you're an old pro, sign up online today.](#)

There will be four Alexandria "Pit Stop" locations, including [Carlyle](#), [Del Ray](#), [Old Town](#) and [Mark Center](#).

I'll see you there!

## **Parkfairfax Gardens in the Park**

[On Saturday, the Parkfairfax week-long Gardens in the Park celebration culminates with the annual plant sale.](#)

Held from 9 AM until noon in the Valley Drive tennis court parking lot, the event will have food, prizes and lots of plants!

## **Host an Ace**

The [Alexandria Aces](#), Alexandria's own collegiate summer baseball team, plays at Frank Mann Field next to Cora Kelly Elementary School.

This summer, the Aces will be starting their 10th season affiliated with the Cal Ripken League.

As a non-profit organization, the team relies on host families throughout Alexandria to provide a room for players.

If you have a room to spare, sign up to be a [host family this summer](#).

## **Memorial Day Jazz Festival**

[The 40th Annual Alexandria Memorial Day Jazz Festival returns!](#)

Back on the waterfront at Waterfront Park (1 Prince Street), the festival starts at 1 PM on Monday, May 29th.

revenue that is generated by the City Manager's proposed 2.7 cent increase is proposed to fund this contingency.

The City Manager's proposed 10 year Capital Improvement Program continued the focus on expanding infrastructure investment. The 10 year plan increased by nearly 20%, driven largely by \$368 million to address Combined Sewer projects, an additional \$161 million for increases for WMATA capital funding, \$144 million of increases for Alexandria City Public Schools capital funding, and \$47 million to address City facilities deficiencies.

At the proposed real estate tax rate of \$1.10 and including the impact of assessment increases, the average single family homeowner will pay an additional \$294 during 2017. The average condominium homeowner will pay an additional \$89.

Yet, even with a 10 year, \$2 billion Capital Improvement Program, the proposal leaves large gaps in the Alexandria City Public Schools capacity and modernization plans, as well as in City efforts to address deficient municipal facilities.

Knowing that it would be unable to address all our infrastructure needs, Council requested that the City Manager also include a [Supplemental Capital Improvement Program](#).

[Alexandria currently has the second lowest real estate tax rate of major Northern Virginia jurisdictions](#) and given the current budget proposals of our neighbors, that is unlikely to change significantly. Our City is not unique in the region. Other jurisdictions face similar challenges.

In March, the Council was obligated to "advertise" the highest tax rate that we might consider during this budget process. [The Council voted 6-1 to embark on a new direction](#).

You can [watch the Council's full discussion on the matter online](#).

Mindful of the significant capital overhang as well as the opportunity to collaboratively plan truly joint municipal facilities, the Council voted to advertise a total rate increase of 5.7 cents, which would bring our rate to \$1.13. [The Council also provided direction to the City Manager to develop the composition of a new group that would be empowered to develop a truly joint facilities plan](#), providing recommendations as to how the community might prioritize over \$600 million of municipal facility spending for both the City and the Schools over the next decade.

The City is entirely too small and dense to continue building single use municipal facilities. It is imperative that we break down the barriers between the City, the Alexandria City Public Schools and other public agencies and use our scarce capital funds to truly collaborate. I'm hopeful this newly proposed process will help facilitate that.

[The City Manager has now returned to Council with a formal proposal as to how such a group might work.](#)

Last Tuesday evening the Council held our "Preliminary Add/Delete" worksession. This is where the Council considers [the initial submissions for additions and deletions to the proposed budget](#).

Tonight the Council will finalize that list and on Thursday we will formally adopt the budget.

[Please let me know your thoughts.](#)

## **Cleaner Water, Murky Process**

Don't miss this great, free event!

Late in February, the General Assembly adjourned "sine die," thus concluding their session. [Prior to adjourning, after considering a variety of different bills, they unfortunately adopted a piece of legislation that requires the City to do something that our engineers indicate is not possible.](#)

Early in the last Council term, the members grappled with the challenges that the City faced from federal environmental regulations. These govern how we handle sewage from homes and businesses. Those efforts culminated in the adoption of the [City's Sanitary Sewer Master Plan](#). In conjunction with our partners at [Alexandria Renew Enterprises](#), we are working to implement that plan.

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

In 95% of our City, stormwater (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.

Essentially, this permit requires the City to work with the community to adopt a new Long Term Control Plan. The plan reduces the presence of dangerous bacteria in the flow that is returned to the water. The new plan was submitted to the state last year.

The Plan, to be implemented over the next two to three decades, is a significant undertaking.

It will be disruptive to some areas of our City and it will require \$125 - \$188 million, primarily funded by ratepayers as an addition to bills from Alexandria Renew Enterprises.

[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.](#)

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

The [committee made its recommendations](#) which came before the Council in May of last year.

The Combined Sewer System has four outfalls:

- CSO-001 which discharges into Oronoco Bay
- CSO-002 which discharges into Hunting Creek
- CSO-003 and CSO-004 which both discharge into Hoofs Run

The permit requires that the City address CSO-002, CSO-003, and CSO-004. While CSO-001 is not covered under the permit requirements, the committee and the City have voluntarily chosen to begin addressing this outfall under this plan.

The plan proposes to use a variety of solutions between now and 2035 to reduce pollution from CSO-002 by 80%, from CSO-003 by 99%, and from CSO-004 by 99%. This would provide for a total pollution reduction of 86%.

This reduction is achieved by:

- Construction of a 10-foot, 1.6 million gallon tunnel to address CSO-003 and CSO-004
- Construction of a three million gallon storage tank to address CSO-002
- New "green" infrastructure (improvements to the permeability of surfaces)
- Targeted sewer separation (typically funded by developers in the context of redevelopment)

In the proposed plan, CSO-001 is addressed by targeted sewer separation and green infrastructure.

In May of last year, the Council approved the draft plan for submission to VDEQ. In addition, the Council requested that our Staff return with recommendations as to how we might speed the remediation of CSO-001.

[Last year, our staff accomplished this task.](#) The revisions proposed by the staff accelerated the feasibility study by 14 years. This study would explore where a storage tunnel or storage tank near CSO-001 could be located and the pros and cons of these alternatives.

The revisions also accelerated the assessment of CSO-001 by six years. This assessment would help us determine the sizing of any proposed infrastructure that must be built.

In addition, the revisions proposed greater prioritization of capital improvement program funds for green infrastructure and separation activity in the sewershed.

Ultimately, the cost of the remediation for CSO-001 could total up to an additional \$130 million.

The Council ultimately approved these revisions and submitted the revised plan to the VDEQ.

Enter the General Assembly. In the past, [the General Assembly has provided money to localities elsewhere in the Commonwealth, including Lynchburg and Richmond, to assist with the remediation of their Combined Sewer Systems](#). In 2013, [then-Governor McDonnell proposed new funding for the City to address this issue](#).

Unfortunately, the General Assembly removed the funding before the budget was adopted.

Despite the General Assembly's previous reluctance to assist our efforts, this year there was a flurry of legislation proposed to force Alexandria to further accelerate the remediation of the Combined Sewer System.

A State Senator, Richard Stuart, [proposed one of the more draconian pieces of legislation](#). As proposed, the legislation would have required the City to bring all four outflows into compliance by 2020, a little over three years from now. From an engineering perspective, that timeline is impossible. To make matters worse, that legislation proposed that if the City fails to comply with the 2020 timeline, we would have ALL state funding of the City removed, including funding for schools, public safety, human services, etc. It is basically the state funding equivalent of the "death penalty," and has never before been proposed.

Thanks to the efforts of Senator Adam Ebbin, the "death penalty" provision was removed, but the legislation that was enacted requires the City to complete ALL work on these remediation activities by July 1, 2025. While I strongly support addressing this issue as quickly as possible, our engineers indicate that this timeline is not feasible.

- This legislation potentially undermines the City's efforts to reduce pollution in the River by forcing us to redo all plans that were under way.
- This legislation undermines the Commonwealth's own regulatory process under the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which the City has been in FULL compliance with at all times.
- This legislation treats the City differently than every other locality in the Commonwealth.
- This legislation takes an orderly and coordinated approach to address decades of work and mandates chaos and massive disruption to one portion of our City.

This is the worst kind of legislating and [I was pleased that the Governor proposed amendments to this legislation](#) to be considered by the General Assembly.

[Under the assumption that some form of this legislation will be enacted, the City Manager's proposed budget includes \\$370 million of new capital funding to address Combined Sewer remediation.](#)

The City Manager has proposed a 30% increase in the Sanitary Sewer Maintenance fee that is paid on Alexandria Renew Enterprises bills across the City. The estimates are that ANNUAL 30% increases will be required.

Ultimately, the General Assembly rejected the amendments proposed by the Governor. [Despite a request by the City to veto the un-amended legislation, the Governor signed the legislation into law.](#)

The challenge is significant. We certainly did not plan to rectify CSO-001 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.

It is disappointing that politics has again trumped science in the General Assembly, but the City must do the only reasonable thing: work to comply with this legislation to the extent possible.

### **A Safe Alexandria**

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's Public Safety Valor Awards. The annual event honors the men and women of the Alexandria Police, Sheriff and Fire Department who work tirelessly to keep our community safe.

[This year the event honored twenty personnel who risked their lives to protect the community and save the lives of others.](#) We are indebted to these dedicated public servants, and hope that their sacrifice will be an inspiration to others to serve.

[Last month the City also announced the 2016 crime statistics.](#)

Part I crime are the most serious offenses, as classified by the



Federal Bureau of Investigation. Alexandria's Part I crime dropped by 4% in 2016.

There were only two Part I crime categories where the City saw any increase: homicide and auto theft.

The City did experience an increase in homicides from four in 2015 to seven in 2016. Five of the seven were closed during the calendar year.

While incidents of serious crime remain at the lowest rates the City has experienced since the 1960s, we should never become complacent. Engagement with the community as well as vigilance and awareness by residents can help prevent crime.

[The Alexandria Police Department is in the process of transitioning to a new Records Management System. During this transition no new information will be provided online. This should be completed shortly.](#)

Alexandrians can continue to have the highest degree of confidence in the dedicated work of the Alexandria Police Department, the Alexandria Sheriff's Department and the Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney's office to work to prevent residents from becoming victims.

### **Aquatics in Alexandria and the Future of Public/Private Partnerships**

Politicians of nearly every stripe extol the virtues of "Public/Private Partnerships," sometimes called "P3" for short. While the partnerships come in many flavors, it usually involves the blending of private and public resources to achieve a community good.

[An amazing group of residents and organizations raised money to build the Miracle Field next to the Lee Recreation Center to help provide recreation opportunities for the special needs community.](#)

Residents in Arlandria are continuing [to raise money to support Four Mile Run Park](#) , and have used private donations to create the park



plaza that hosts the [Four Mile Farmers and Artisan Market](#) on recently acquired public space. [Last month, these efforts were nationally recognized as the City Parks Alliance touted the results of these partnerships.](#)

Residents and business leaders worked together to [raise significant resources to build the new Alexandria Police Memorial.](#)

The Del Ray Citizens Association [came forward to sponsor some park improvements in the pocket park at the corner of Commonwealth and E. Del Ray Avenue](#), which was renamed the Judy Lowe Memorial Park.

Residents and businesses have partnered to make improvements at [Ewald Park.](#)

Last month, [we dedicated a brand new playground at Maury Elementary School.](#) The playground was the result of public money, donated money, donated services and the support of non-profit organizations.

[A group of residents continue to work to match City funds and raise money to light up basketball courts in Potomac Yard.](#)

[We even created a new "PARKnerships" programs to foster these arrangements.](#)

When these partnerships work, they can be an exciting way to leverage private resources to create public amenities.

But they don't always work out.

Almost eight years ago, [when the City government and Alexandria City Public Schools were planning a new Jefferson-Houston Elementary School, a public/private partnership was actively considered.](#) The valuable land, adjacent recreation uses and available space made it an ideal site for such an arrangement.

Community opposition to land-use concessions required to support the private component of the partnership scuttled the arrangement. In the end, the City simply budgeted and built a new school building on the site.

Nearly a decade later, the Joint Municipal Facilities effort described earlier in this newsletter will explore other public/private partnerships for school facilities.

Over a decade ago, [private efforts began to partner with the City to create an "All City Sports Facility" in the Eisenhower Valley.](#) Designed to provide a unique community resource for interscholastic athletics, the facility was also designed to address community concerns regarding the impact of such uses.

As revenues fell during the worst of the Great Recession, so too did the appetite for significant public spending on such a facility. [The All City Sports Facility project suffered a premature death as the result of budget constraints.](#)

Recently we tried again with aquatics.

Several years ago, the City had seven municipal pools: the [indoor pool](#) at Chinguapin Recreation Center, two large outdoor pools ([Old Town and Warwick](#)), and four small neighborhood pools (Ewald, [Charles Houston](#), Lee and Colasanto).

Over the past six years, with little new financial resources devoted, and mounting capital needs, the City closed Ewald, Lee and Colasanto. In the summer of 2015, Warwick did not open with the other outdoor pools.

In the spring of 2013, in adoption of the FY 2014 budget, the Council made a [significant financial investment in the future of municipal aquatics](#).

In partnership with [Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics](#), the Council proposed a partial rebuild of Chinguapin Recreation Center to include a new 50 meter pool, as well as aquatics improvements throughout the City.

While Warwick is now closed, [in the Fall of 2014, the Council gave the direction to the City Manager to begin engineering and building a new pool on the site](#). A new Warwick Pool [is now under construction and will reopen this summer](#).

For Chinguapin Recreation Center, the Council budgeted \$20 million to match the commitment of \$2.5 million of private fundraising.

One of the central components of that new investment was the exploration of feasibility and construction of a 50-meter pool at Chinguapin Recreation Center. The financing plan approved by the Council included assumptions for \$2.5 million of private fundraising from [Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics](#).



With funding from the Council for a feasibility study, the City [completed a comprehensive study of the potential expansion](#).

Last year, with next steps ready to begin, and an ever-mounting capital crunch, the City Manager paused the project. With the Council poised to adopt its Capital Improvement Program on Thursday, it does not appear funding will be included for this project.

Like the All City Sports Facility of a decade ago, the 50 meter pool at Chinguapin has fallen victim to the very same brutal capital prioritization driven by low revenue growth and mounting needs.

While there is hope that the Joint Municipal Facilities effort will yield opportunities to incorporate these indoor aquatics needs, it will not be easy.

Eventually we will need to address our City's indoor aquatics needs. It will require significant public resources and likely private resources. It will need to involve sustained commitment from the community and policymakers.

The sad tale of this project drives home the importance of establishing a sustainable funding level for capital investment, maintenance and reinvestment.

[Let me know your thoughts.](#)

## Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!

My regular series of Town Hall Meetings continue!



You supply the living room and a bunch of your friends and neighbors. I will supply a member of the Alexandria City Council (me) with the answers to any of your questions about our City.

Just [drop us a line](#) and we'll get a Town Hall on the calendar! Thanks for the interest!

## Upcoming Issues

### Keeping Things Up To Date

As an old City we have old laws. I have worked with our City Attorney over the past few years to modernize or repeal several old laws.

We [repealed antiquated laws that banned many massage services](#).

We [repealed laws that required bicycle registration](#).

We [got rid of laws prohibiting "for sale" signs on vehicles](#).

We [struck out code sections that required new streets to be named after Confederate Generals, banned cohabitation, and prohibited shoeshiners](#).

[To more systematically address these issues our City Attorney will be hiring a temporary position to work through our City Code and identify modernization efforts.](#)

While it's relatively easy to repeal anachronistic laws, it becomes more challenging when the laws need to be modernized.



In the summer of 2015, I [proposed that the City take a look at the so-called "72-hour Rule."](#) The 72-hour Rule [is officially 10-4-8 of the City Code](#). This code section has been on the City's books for many years and was last revised 30 years ago. This is in addition to any existing on-street restrictions.

Essentially the 72-hour rule provides that a vehicle cannot be parked on a City street for longer than 72 hours. The rule was enacted to prevent abandonment and long-term

storage of vehicles on our streets. Unfortunately, today it is primarily used as a tool in "neighbor versus neighbor" disputes.

From 2000 to 2015, our Police Department has been asked to check a vehicle for compliance 7,500 times and they have issued roughly 1,300 citations for violations. This is a law where enforcement is primarily initiated by complaint. That was true in 87% of the time.

In neighborhoods without off-street parking, the rule can become particularly problematic when residents are on vacation or on a business trip, without any place or anyone to move their vehicle.

[Our City staff has been working with the Traffic and Parking Board to conduct the review. They distributed an online survey to collect input. Over 700 participants provided input on the survey. Public meetings were also held to solicit input.](#)

In March, [the Traffic and Parking Board unanimously endorsed a reform proposal](#) that allows for residents to electronically request extensions to the 72 hour period to avoid ticketing during leisure and business travel. The proposal is to try this change for a year as a pilot.

Council held a discussion on this proposal last week. Ultimately Council unanimously decided to docket the ordinance for consideration in May. On Saturday May 13th, the Council will accept public testimony on this proposal. [You can sign up to speak online.](#)

Last week, Councilman Paul Smedberg and I brought another proposal for modernization of our City Code forward for consideration.

[Currently our Zoning Code treats tattoo parlors as "Amusement Enterprises."](#)

This classification includes bowling alleys, theaters, dance halls, and miniature golf courses. We believe this classification is an anachronism and serves to significantly limit where these businesses can set up in the City.

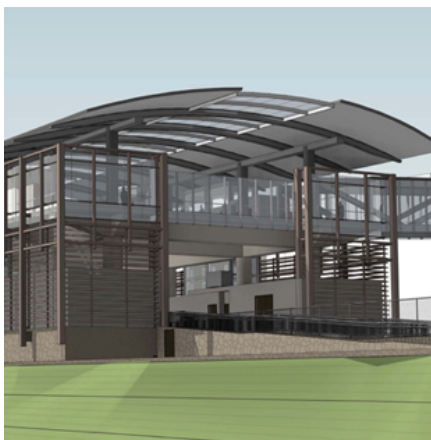
Councilman Smedberg and I initiated a "Text Amendment" to classify tattoo parlors in the same category as barber shops and beauty parlors to more accurately reflect the potential impact of the use.

This proposal will next come to the Planning Commission and later the City Council for further action.

### **North Potomac Yard Planning**

[As we speak the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority \(WMATA\) is working to conclude the procurement to select a company to build the new Potomac Yard Metro station.](#) When this process concludes later this year, we should be able to proceed with the construction of the long-awaited station.

With the site of the station finalized it became necessary to re-



calibrate the land-use plan for the area immediately adjacent to the new station. If the quality of development is somehow determined by the number of times an area is planned and re-planned, than I suspect Potomac Yard will come out on top.

In 1999, the City Council approved the first plan for Potomac Yard. In 2010, with the dream for a Metro station revived, the

Council approved a new plan for Potomac Yard. This is to speak nothing of the many ill-fated plans for Potomac Yard.

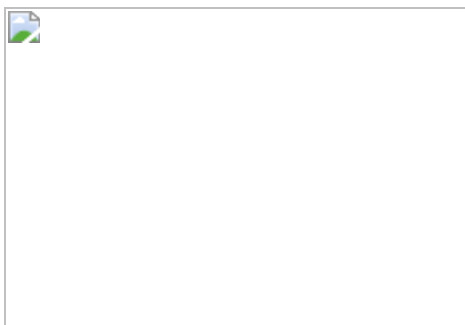
[Late last month, the City released a draft plan for North Potomac Yard, which provides an updated land-use plan and implementation plan for the northern most portion of Potomac Yard.](#)

The changes are not dramatic, but they work to bring to reality the City's most bold effort to leverage the economic benefit of transit-oriented development.

This plan revision will come to the City Council and Planning Commission for approval in June. [From now until May 12th, public comment is being accepted online to inform that recommendation. Let us know your thoughts!](#)

## Future of Cameron Run

The [Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority](#) (NVRPA) was created in the late 1950s as a public land conservation agency serving our region.



Today, the NVRPA is jointly funded and owned by Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun County, as well as the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church.

[The authority today owns over 10,000 acres of land and serves the dual](#)

[purpose of land conservancy and recreation agency with parks around the area.](#)

In Alexandria, NVRPA manages [Cameron Run Regional Park \(which is actually owned by the City of Alexandria\)](#), and owns and manages [Carlyle House in Old Town](#).

In full disclosure, during my 3.5 years off of City Council, I served as one of Alexandria's representatives on the NVRPA Board.

Cameron Run is a very active recreational park, with a wave pool, water slides, batting cages, etc. The property is very profitable for the authority and the [existing 40-year lease with the City expires in 2021](#).

Carlyle House is a historic site, with historical interpretation conducted by volunteers and NVRPA staff. NVRPA heavily subsidizes the operation of Carlyle House.

A few years ago, NVRPA came to Alexandria seeking to construct a new aquatics feature at Cameron Run. In order to finance the project, an extension to the lease was required. Prior to the issuance of any new lease, the City's Park and Recreation Commission sought to explore alternative uses for the property, as well as address some issues with the existing use.

In the intervening time, the authority came to the City with a new proposal. [NVRPA obtained an option to purchase 517 Prince Street](#) in Old Town. [This historic property](#) operated a livery stable from 1772 - 1792 and has remained in the ownership of one family for 184 years. It is in remarkably good shape.

After some negotiation, a tentative agreement was negotiated to extend the lease at Cameron Run for 20 years (cancelling the existing lease). In exchange, NVRPA will purchase 517 Prince Street and operate it as a historic site similar to Carlyle House.

In June of last year, the Council held a public hearing on this proposal and ultimately directed our staff to come back with a framework for how we might plan the future of the Cameron Run site.

That ended the consideration of NVRPA's purchase of 517 Prince Street. [The City separately worked with the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to purchase the property without any City funds.](#)

Since that time, public engagement on the future of the Cameron Run site has continued. [A survey is now available for public input on several scenarios for the site.](#) Let us know your thoughts!

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