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The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by Mayor Justin M. Wilson

November 1, 2020

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In This Month's Edition:

- **Vote on Tuesday!**
- **Real Estate Tax Deferral**
- **Leaf Collection**
- **School Reopening**
- **Policing**
- **Electric Buses**
- **Saving Small Businesses**
- **Mobility Plan**
- **ADUs**
- **Clean Water**
- **Our Bridges**
- **Torpedo Factory**
- **Juvenile Detention Center**



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](#)

Next weekend, the City Council will [convene for our fall retreat](#). While the ongoing pandemic, its human impacts and economic impacts continue to command our focus, the normal cycle of Council business continues.

We will spend half of the day discussing the City Manager's initial budget outlook for the upcoming fiscal year. Following this sobering discussion, the Council will work to develop our Council work program for next year.

This will be the third year the City Council has adopted a work program. This new planning effort is designed to

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[Alexandria Health Department
Restaurant Inspections](#)
[Report Potholes](#)
[Schedule Child Safety Seat
Inspection](#)
[Smoke Detector Installation
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ensure that the City Council is much more deliberate about the policy initiatives we undertake as a body.

While the work of our City continues, we must sadly recognize the loss of two notable Alexandrians.

[Former Delegate Bernie Cohen passed away at the age of 86.](#) Bernie successfully led the legal battle all the way to the United States Supreme Court, ultimately striking down anti-miscegenation laws in place across our nation and in our Commonwealth. The Loving versus Virginia case is a landmark accomplishment which has been used for precedent for further expansion of rights around our nation.

While this accomplishment occurred early in his career, Bernie would go on to serve the City of Alexandria in the House of Delegates for 16 years, fighting for unpopular causes long before such efforts became commonplace.

We also note the passing of [Alexandria Living Legend Joe Shumard](#). When there were good things being done to celebrate Alexandria and its history, Joe was usually there doing them.

While Joe was most associated with the George Washington Birthday Parade, he found the time to be a leader in the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, and much more.

Alexandria will miss both Bernie and Joe and we thank them for lifetimes of service to our community.

Our City remains in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to make progress:

- COVID-19 testing [has become widely available](#), with Alexandria having one of the highest testing rates in the Commonwealth and our region.
- Last month we had our 50,000th COVID test performed in the City and October marked the highest testing volume yet.

- **Our targeted testing initiative in partnership with [Neighborhood Health](#) held weekly free testing events in October.**
- **[Four free testing events are now scheduled this week and next as we start November.](#)**
- **Our hospitalization rates have remained low.**
- **Our hospital capacity has remained stable.**
- **Our testing positivity rate remains low, reaching our lowest point ever last month (3.3%) and we are now at 5.0% as of yesterday ([at the WHO recommended criteria](#)).**
- **[In August the Commonwealth released the free COVIDWISE exposure notification app for iOS and Android devices. Download it today!](#)**
- **[While no vaccine is yet available, in August the Alexandria Health Department published the framework plan for vaccine distribution](#)**

[While the Governor's existing Executive Order](#) requires face coverings in all indoor public spaces, [the City Council approved an ordinance that extended that requirement to outdoor areas \(where social distancing is not possible\) as well.](#)

[In July, I had the opportunity to appear on PBS NewsHour to discuss our City's efforts more comprehensively.](#)

[The ACT Now COVID-19 Response Fund has now re-branded as the Alexandria Resilience Fund., which is distributing money into our community to support the many needs this crisis has created. Please join me in supporting this fundraising effort.](#)

The latest updates will continue to be posted regularly on the [City's Coronavirus website](#).

[The Virginia Department of Health posts data daily online regarding positive tests, hospitalizations and deaths.](#)

[The Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association is posting daily updates regarding hospital capacity and capabilities.](#)

I continue my monthly Virtual Town Hall meetings on the first Thursday of each month.

You can watch last month's Town Hall online and please join me at this link on the evening of Thursday the 5th at 8 PM to watch and participate live.

Volunteers are needed throughout our community. Please refer to Volunteer Alexandria for opportunities to give back to those in need.

We are now launching our "Adopt-A-Hand Sanitizer" partnership program. We are looking for private partners to host hand sanitizers throughout our community.

If you have any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that you can donate, please submit information online.

In March, my colleagues and I worked to propose a list of emergency actions to support our residents, our businesses and our municipal finances. These proposed actions are now either in place or in progress. Some are detailed below.

The entire City Council thanks our community for pulling together during this crisis.

Contact me anytime. Let me know how I can help.

Initiatives and Updates

Last Chance to Vote

Yesterday was the last day of in-person early voting. This is the first election in Virginia history with "no-excuse" early voting. A total of 36,532 Alexandrians chose to vote early in-person in this election at one of the 4 locations open for this purpose. Another 27,752 Alexandrians have returned mailed ballots. There are 4,578 ballots that were mailed to voters that can still be returned.



That means 62% of our active voters in Alexandria have already voted. In 2016, **20,083 voters in Alexandria voted in advance of Election Day** and 83% of voters overall.

This election will select our next President, United States Senator, Member of the United States House of Representatives and make a decision on two proposed amendments to the Virginia Constitution.

Any Alexandria voter can return their mail ballot prior to 7 PM on Tuesday. They can be returned to our Registrar's Office at 132 N. Royal Street, where a 24/7 ballot drop-box is located, or brought to any polling place on Tuesday, where drop-boxes will also be available.

For voters who have not voted or requested a ballot in the mail, our **polling places** will be open on Tuesday, as normal, from 6 AM until 7 PM.

There will be three polling place changes for this election:

1. Voters who normally vote at the Ladrey Senior Building will instead vote at the Charles Houston Recreation Center
2. Voters who normally vote at the Hermitage will instead vote at the John Adams Elementary School
3. Voters who normally vote at MacArthur Elementary School will instead vote at the George Washington Masonic Temple.

We have already seen an amazing turnout in this election and I hope you will be counted in this important process.

Real Estate Tax Hardship Deferral

Over 63% of Alexandria's General Fund revenue is derived from our Real Estate Tax. Each of the two collections, due in June and November, are alone nearly a third of our City's overall tax revenue. Combined, the tax on residential and commercial properties generates \$477.5 million to support City services.

During normal times, the City offers a **few real estate tax relief programs** to assist taxpayers in need throughout the City. Together, these programs reduce City revenue by \$4.6 million.

Yet, these are not normal times. With large increases in unemployment and underemployment, many of our residents are struggling to pay their bills.

To address this concern, last month, the City Council **approved a hardship waiver option** for the second half real estate tax payment, due on November 16th.

If the pandemic has impacted your ability to pay your real estate tax bill, **please e-mail the City's Finance Department before the current due date to make arrangements for a delayed payment.**

Leaf Collection

Alexandria's annual leaf collection begins tomorrow!

Leaf vacuuming will proceed to each of the designated zones beginning on the scheduled dates. Each zone will take several days to complete.

Additionally, the City is making up to 15 leaf bags available for each residential household. The bags can be picked up at City Hall, the City's self-service shed at the corner of Roth and Business Center Drive or at Charles Houston, Patrick Henry or Mount Vernon Recreation Centers.

These leaf bags can be placed out for collection on your regulation collection day.

School Reopening

In a season of many tragedies and loss, the loss of a considerable amount of education for our children has been particularly frustrating. Children should be in school learning. Watching some students miss the traditional senior year of high school and others miss the beginning of Kindergarten is a loss that can never be replaced.

Last month, **the Alexandria School Board approved a phased reopening plan.** This plan calls for a return to in-person learning later this month, beginning with students with disabilities. This process, as currently planned, will take several months assuming staffing availability.

Last month, **the Virginia Department of Health posted a new view of the Commonwealth's COVID data that reflects the new "Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making" that were issued by the Centers for Disease Control.** While this data is not intended to be decisive for policymakers, it does provide a useful input.

Educational policymakers around our nation are in an impossible situation as they attempt to provide a first-class education to our students against the backdrop of an extraordinary pandemic.

For our students and families, our schools serve many important functions beyond educational instruction. They provide child-care, food and nutrition services, health care services, transportation and more. The pandemic has forced a disaggregation of how we provide school. Filling the gaps has required difficult choices and partnerships with various public agencies, non-profits and private providers.

As part of the current VirtualPlus+ plan, there are school-day care available for students from various providers. **APCS has provided a list of available alternatives** and the City's Department of **Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities has also provided a detailing of their programmatic offerings.**

While the decision to close schools in March was a difficult one, it was rather binary. Once it was clear school buildings could not remain safely open, they were closed.

The decisions surrounding the reopening of schools in the fall are much more difficult, nuanced and complex. **The first building block of that decision-making process is the guidelines, entitled "Recover. Redesign. Restart," that was issued four months ago by the Virginia Department of Education.** This 136 page document details how local school divisions in the Commonwealth should undertake a fall reopening.

There is no question that policymakers influencing school decisions want to see our students back in school. As a parent of two ACPS students myself, I share that desire. **The health benefits of students being in school together are considerable.**

I recognize there are stark realities presented by virtual education. Many of our students cannot learn virtually. Students will fall behind academically, socially and emotionally. Some of our more vulnerable students (lower-income, special education, limited language proficiency, etc) are in an even more precarious situation. I don't believe you will find anyone involved in educational policy-making right now who believes this is optimal.

Yet, I also recognize that the public health challenge we are facing is quite real, exacerbates existing inequality, and requires engagement with all stakeholders prior to committing to a particular reopening approach.

The work of supporting our families is not solely the work of ACPS. The City government, our non-profit partners and our community will need to collaborate to provide the critical services our students and their families require during this time. The City has committed additional resources to our schools,

identified facilities and staffing support. Those efforts will continue as long as they are necessary.

While the conditions are clearly sub-optimal, we owe it to our students to support every student during this extraordinary time in their lives.

Policing in Alexandria

At various points over the years, [I have written in this newsletter attempting to relate the national conversation on policing to our experiences in Alexandria.](#)

While the national discussion is instructive, Alexandria must engage in this reform conversation using the facts and experiences of our residents with the public safety personnel that serve our community. So far, the City Council has been focused in two areas:

- Refining Civilian Oversight
- Reducing the Burden on Police (alternative response techniques)

Last month, the City Council received the [initial feedback from our staff on Council efforts to explore alternative response techniques, focused on efforts to use non-police response for quality-of-life complaints, homelessness, behavioral health crisis, intoxication and beyond.](#)

In September, [the Council received an initial proposal for alternatives to improve civilian oversight.](#) While I was comfortable bringing this proposal to the public for feedback, my colleagues wished to see further alternatives. You [can watch the discussion of Council on this matter online.](#) This issue will return to Council later this month.

We have a highly skilled and diverse police force serving Alexandria. The department is taking steps to improve the diversity of the workforce in future recruiting efforts. We are fortunate to have a skilled and professional Sheriff's Department with a sworn workforce that similarly represents our community's diversity.

Our officers participate in training aimed at de-escalation of volatile situations. We outfit our police officers with non-lethal force options to assist in the de-escalation of these incidents. Our officers have been trained in crisis intervention and the proper ways to address civil disobedience.

We have officers that participate in [training designed to address implicit bias in policing.](#)

In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, our [Police Department](#) and our [Sheriff's Department](#) provided summaries of use of force guidelines, procedures and practices for public review and comment.

[The Alexandria Human Rights Commission conducts a review of each police](#) use of force incident. The Commission also reviews internal investigation data to question and provide accountability of the department.

At the end of April, the City Council approved our FY 2021 - FY 2030 Capital Improvement Program. Included in that budget was a [placeholder within the CIP to fund the deployment of body-worn cameras for our police officers](#). We are now advancing that effort with timing and further updates expected later this year.

The City has also worked to improve the transparency of data related to policing in Alexandria.

In 2017, [the City released a first of its kind external study and analysis of five years of Alexandria Police traffic citation data](#). Conducted by the [Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University](#), this effort looked at over 91,000 citations issued from 2011 - 2015.

In February of 2018, the City Council [adopted this procedure as policy to ensure that this type of accountability and analysis remains a practice in the future](#).

Since that time, the analysis has been conducted annually, with the [2019 data released earlier this year](#). With [the adoption of new legislation during the most recent General Assembly session](#), our Police Department will work to modify data collection and reporting to comply with new mandates.

The goal of this analysis and review was to identify possible areas of biased policing. While the study authors provide significant detail as to the challenges of bench-marking this type of data, the result of the study should prompt further analysis and conversation.

To ensure that the conversation does not end here, [our Police Chief Michael Brown has appointed a Community Advisory Team to advise the Police Department on these issues](#).

Yet we can never declare "victory," Every day, these efforts must continue as we work to provide a level of transparency that increases public confidence in the great work done by the men and women who serve and protect our community every day.



DASH Electric Buses

Motor vehicles are the largest non-stationary sources of greenhouse gas emissions. One of the City's most significant efforts to reduce emissions and fulfill our obligations in battling climate change are our investments in mass transit. While most of that investment goes to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), for over 35 years the City has run the **DASH Bus system** to serve our local needs.

While DASH is experiencing the ridership crisis that is facing all transit agencies, prior to COVID, DASH carried a little over 3 million passengers per year.

In 2011, the **City made a decision to purchase hybrid diesel/electric buses to begin replacing the all-diesel fleet of buses that was in operation at that point.** At that time, a diesel bus cost \$450,000 apiece, and the hybrid buses cost \$700,000. Yet it was believed that the combination of the fuel savings and potential maintenance savings would cause the total cost of ownership to be lower over time for the hybrid buses. With reduced emissions, fuel consumption and particulate matter, this switch was in alignment with the City's **Environmental Action Plan.**

Two years ago, the Council directed a brief return to diesel bus purchasing in order to retire the oldest (and highest polluting) buses in the DASH fleet. This interim move allowed for DASH to prepare for electrification of its bus fleet.

DASH was the **recipient of \$5.1 million from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust,** which has allowed the purchase of electric buses for its fleet.

Last month, the Governor of Virginia and his Secretary of Transportation were in Alexandria to join me in unveiling our first electric buses!

As electric transit bus technology matures and comes down in cost, the City should lead the way by putting these cleaner transit vehicles on the streets of Alexandria. I am excited to see these buses hit the road.

Saving Alexandria's Small Businesses

Last year, at this time, **we were noting a record \$859 million of visitor spending, which generated \$27.9 million of local tax receipts,** easing the burden on Alexandria's local taxpayers.

From February through July of this year, **the City has lost over \$12 million from the combined impact to**

our consumption-based taxes. The revenue loss from that period alone is equivalent to the revenue from three cents on our real estate tax rate.

Protecting our taxpayers, protecting thousands of jobs and protecting our quality of life require that we work to save the small businesses that make this City special.

On Tuesday evening, the City Council unanimously approved an additional \$1.5M to support these important small businesses. These new funds will allow the City to fully fund all 400 applications for Round 2 of **the Alexandria Back to Business Grant Program**. This program, utilizing a portion of the City's Federal CARES Act funding, distributed \$3.5 million in the first round of grants to over 300 Alexandria businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19.

Together we will have distributed over \$7 million to support the survival and transition of our local economy.

The grants, of up to \$20,000, are intended to support the investments that our businesses must make to adjust. Designed to fund the purchase of PPE, health and safety equipment, cleaning services, etc. Anything that helps ease a business' transition to this new environment is considered for this program.

Additionally, we are launching the **Back to Business All Weather Grant program**. This program is designed to support restaurants, retail and fitness businesses working to "winterize" their outdoor areas as we prepare for colder weather.

Early in this crisis, the City **approved millions of dollars of tax deferrals** to provide Alexandria small businesses with the liquidity to assist them in surviving and later reopening.

We have worked with businesses to access Federal grants and lending. We have made a variety of regulatory changes to support the transition of our businesses to a "new normal," **including suspending enforcement of outdoor dining restrictions, hours of operation, sidewalk vending, etc.** Last month, the City Council voted **to extend these regulatory changes until the end of March of 2021.**

In addition to these financial and regulatory efforts, the City launched ALX Promise. This program recognizes those businesses that have gone beyond the minimum standards to keep their customers and employees safe. Watch for the logo around our City!

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reminded us not only of the importance of our City's consumption-based revenues, but also of the incredible

vulnerability these small businesses operate under, even under the best of circumstances.

Our residents have been committed to supporting these businesses during their time of need. I look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure that small business can thrive in our community for years to come.

Mobility Plan

Getting around is central to our daily lives, even in the midst of a pandemic. The ability to get to places of work, education, worship and play shapes housing decisions for most of our residents. Your local government expends a significant amount of **your tax dollars** and civic energy working to improve your ability to get to those places that you want to go.

I chair the Planning and Programming Committee of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). A few weeks ago, **our committee received a sobering presentation showing the impacts of the pandemic on transit ridership, road usage and non-vehicular transportation (walking and biking)**. While it showed that our world will come back to normal, it will clearly be a while.

But we cannot use the pandemic as an excuse to cease progress in improving mobility in our City in the short-term and beyond. Over 12 years ago, the City brought together a group of residents **who developed our first comprehensive Transportation Master Plan**. This plan was the first time the City approved a transit-oriented vision for our future, designed to ease the impacts of congestion and provide alternatives to our residents beyond the single-occupancy vehicle.

That plan has led to new transit initiatives, new bike and pedestrian efforts and improvements to the road network throughout our City. Yet we have learned a lot in over a decade and it is time to update this plan.

Led by a group of Alexandria residents, we are working to update this plan for the future. Last month, our staff **released the draft strategies for this update**, focusing on:

- Transit
- Smart Mobility
- Streets
- Supporting Travel Options
- Curb Space and Parking

You **can watch the staff presentation of these strategies online**.

Once you have reviewed these strategies, **[we would like your input. The deadline for input in this phase is November 8th.](#)**

Community input is important as we work to ensure mobility in our community in the future.



Accessory Dwelling Units

At the beginning of the year, **[I wrote an op/ed in the Alexandria Gazette opposing proposed state legislation](#)** that would impose zoning policy changes on communities around the Commonwealth as a method to address affordability challenges. While the legislation was well-meaning I was fearful it would exacerbate other challenges faced by our community and remove local authority over land-use policy.

[One of the pieces of proposed legislation would have required the City to allow Accessory Dwelling Units \(ADUs\) by right.](#)

While the legislation failed, earlier this year, the City kicked-off its **[study of Accessory Dwelling Units](#)**. Our staff has now presented **[their draft policy recommendations](#)** and we want your input!

[Public comment on the draft policy can be submitted online until Friday.](#)

An accessory dwelling unit, affectionately known as a "granny flat" for its inter-generational living attributes, is an independent living unit attached or separate from an existing primary residence.

Accessory dwelling units were originally identified in the **[City's Housing Master Plan in 2013](#)** as a strategy to allow inter-generational living, provide supportive housing for disabled adults and support market-based housing creation. At our most recent Housing Summit, an Alexandria architect gave an interesting presentation on his effort to bring an ADU to his property nearby. **[You can watch the video online.](#)**

Accessory dwelling units are a modest approach to addressing some of our housing challenges. Employing market-based solutions to these affordability challenges is where the City can be most effective.

Protecting the Chesapeake Bay

In order to meet the City's obligations under the Federal Clean Water Act and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, the City holds an MS4 Permit (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System). **[The permit, issued by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, imposes a "pollution diet" on the City.](#)**

The conditions of the permit require the City to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment from entering waterways. These reductions are required to progressively increase over the life of the permit.

One of the most effective ways for the City to achieve these aggressive pollution reduction targets is to make improvements to City-owned properties.

To ease the burden on Alexandria's taxpayers, the City has sought funding from the Commonwealth. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality administers the **Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)**, which provides matching grants to assist local governments in addressing these requirements.

The City recently completed two major stormwater projects, the **Lake Cook Stormwater Management Retrofit Project** and the **Ben Brenman Pond Stormwater Management Retrofit Project**.

The Lake Cook project, was the beneficiary of \$1.5 million of SLAF funding, and made significant improvements to better treat stormwater and enhance the natural resources at this location along Eisenhower Avenue.

The Ben Brenman Pond project, was the beneficiary of \$1.75 million of SLAF funding, and made improvements to better filter pollutants and upgrade landscaping at this location in Cameron Station.

The City has now received SLAF funding for two other projects:

The Strawberry Run Stream Restoration received \$800,000 of SLAF funding and proposes making natural stream restoration improvements in an area bounded by Fort Williams Parkway, Taft Avenue and Duke Street.

The latest meeting regarding this project was held last week. The **presentation is available online**, as well as **a video of the meeting**. We are **seeking community input on this project between now and November 20th**.

The Taylor Run Stream Restoration has received \$2.55 million of SLAF funding and proposes making natural stream restoration improvements in an area near the Chinquapin Recreation Center. At the end of September our City staff hosted a virtual community meeting to discuss next steps on this important environmental project. You **can review that presentation online** and **watch the video of the meeting**.

The City has important obligations to improve the quality of the water in the waterways of our region. These investments help the City meet our obligations long into the future.



The Bridges of Alexandria and Arlington

Robert Frost wrote "Good fences make good neighbors." It's unclear what the poet would have said about good bridges.

Alexandria and Arlington have five bridges that connect vehicular traffic between the two jurisdictions, all along Four Mile Run:

- West Glebe Road bridge
- Arlington Ridge Road bridge
- Shirlington Road bridge
- Route 1 bridge
- Potomac Avenue bridge

In the case of the **West Glebe Road** and **Arlington Ridge Road** bridges, there are considerable maintenance needs. Both bridges were built in the mid-1950s and recent inspections by Arlington County showed that they have large deficiencies. Restrictions on their use are now in place.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) records show that the West Glebe, Arlington Ridge and Shirlington Road bridges are Arlington County's responsibility and the Route 1 and Potomac Avenue bridges are the City of Alexandria's.

Past bridge work has been split between the jurisdictions, but those agreements have never been formalized. With the West Glebe bridge requiring \$10 million - \$14 million of work and the Arlington Ridge bridge requiring \$23 million - \$28 million of work, these arrangements are not insignificant.

Through some negotiation between the two jurisdictions, we were recently able to enter into a new agreement providing for future cost-sharing of all 5 bridges, for maintenance and eventual replacement.

This new arrangement provides that the two jurisdictions will split the costs of the immediate work required to the West Glebe and Arlington Ridge bridges, 50-50.

Going forward, any work on bridges between the two jurisdictions will be split 67%/33%, with the jurisdiction recognized by VDOT as primarily responsible shouldering the larger portion.

This new arrangement ensures that these bridges will be kept in a state of good repair in the future, and clarifies the financial responsibility for doing so.



Torpedo Factory Arts Center

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

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

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

Our staff have now provided an action plan for the future of the Torpedo Factory to the Council and the community. This plan, along with private alternatives, will be considered by Council to determine our future direction.

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

With the lease nearing conclusion a few years ago, the Torpedo Factory Arts Center Board **commissioned another study to look at the strategic options available to the City and the Factory.**

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

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

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

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

As the efforts to chart that course continue, the City has taken steps to provide stability in the intervening time period. Effective October 1 of 2016, the City

assumed caretaker leadership for the Factory. Since that time, the City provided leases to the existing artist tenants, and is providing day to day management.

Ensuring the presence of a diversity of arts and artists in the Torpedo Factory Arts Center on our Waterfront is a priority of mine. I look forward to working with our community and various partners to see this vision to reality.

Juvenile Detention Center

Exactly four years ago, I used a **write-up in this newsletter** to address concerns that I held about the City's future relationship with the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home.

Last month, **the Arlington County Board and Alexandria's City Council held a rare joint meeting to receive and discuss recommendations for the future of the facility.**

Alexandria, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church jointly own **the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home** . Located in Alexandria, the facility has a capacity for 70 children who are awaiting disposition by the juvenile justice system and 10 children who have already received disposition. The home is run by a board with representatives from all three jurisdictions. **There is a school run by the Alexandria City Public Schools** .

The City spends a little over a million and a half dollars each year to contribute to the operation of this facility. The latest data shows that **a third of the capacity is being utilized with half of the usage coming from Alexandria.**

During recent budget cycles, questions have been raised about what alternatives can be devised given the lower usage of this facility. To frame the conversation, the three jurisdictions commissioned a consulting firm to provide analysis on various alternatives. **The report and recommendations concluded that the facility should be retained, but with operational refinements to improve utility and efficiency.**

This conversation the City is having is very much aligned with similar conversations around the Commonwealth. This is a good problem to have as it indicates crime is down, the community has developed alternatives to secure detention and we are able to keep youth in their communities for rehabilitation.

I am also hopeful that the three jurisdictions can work together to chart a new future for this facility.

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