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# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

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Alexandria, Virginia

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## Events/Updates

### Hooffs Run Park Playground

An [open house](#) will be held on Thursday October 3rd from 10:30 AM until 12:30 PM and from 4:30 PM until 6:30 PM at the playground (99 E. Rosemont Avenue).

The meeting will discuss the [planned renovation](#).

### Art on the Avenue Returns!

Every year, I look forward to Alexandria's Citizenship Day event.

Hosted by the City in Market Square last month, we witnessed 25 new citizens taking the oath of allegiance to our country.

It's always a sobering moment when you imagine the heartache, worry and hard work that have led each of them to take the oath and become Americans.

On a day like today, when our country wakes up to discover that its government is closed because our leaders cannot compromise, I must feel a bit of hope from those new Americans ready to keep the idea of our nation going.

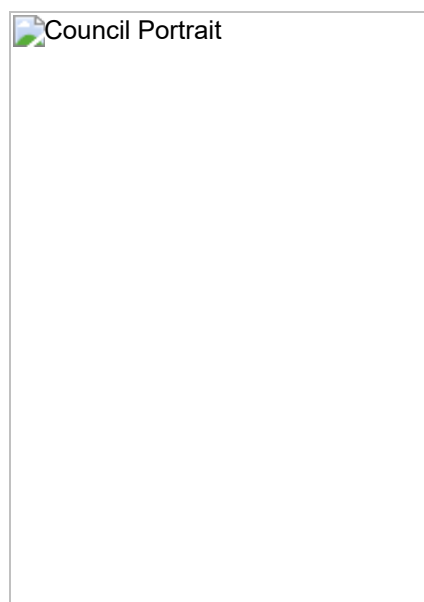
Please let me know how I can be of assistance. [Contact me](#) anytime.

## Council Initiatives

### Expanding Recycling

During the budget process I wrote about the City's recent renegotiation of our operating agreement for the [Covanta Waste to Energy](#) facility. A consequence of the new agreement was to significantly lower the fees paid by the City to dispose of refuse.

In our approved budget, we directed a portion of that reduction back to our residents in the form of a lower Residential Refuse Fee. Additionally, we set aside some of the savings to expand recycling services.



Fall is definitely here, and [Art on the Avenue](#) returns this Saturday.

The landmark festival that brings 50,000 people to Mount Vernon Avenue returns from 10 AM until 6 PM on Saturday the 5th.

I will see you there! Don't miss it.

### **Car Tax Due Monday**

[Payments for the Vehicle Personal Property Tax are due on Monday.](#)

To avoid late fees, payments must be postmarked on the 7th, or they can be submitted [online](#).

### **The Other End of the Drain**

[On Saturday October 11th, Alexandria Renew Enterprises will be hosting an Open House.](#)

With activities for families, this event from 10 AM to 2 PM is designed to introduce families to one of the most basic services provided in our community.

Alexandria Renew is located at 1500 Eisenhower Avenue.

### **Waterfront Design**

A [community meeting](#) will be held on Tuesday October 15th at 6:30 PM at the United Way Building (701 N. Fairfax Street).

Please attend to help plan the new public spaces on our Waterfront.

Last month, the City Council [approved allocating that money to four new initiatives](#):

1) Recycling on the Go: New outdoor recycling receptacles will be installed and serviced in high-traffic pedestrian areas and heavily used athletic fields.

2) Food Composting: Visitors to farmers markets will have the option



to purchase food waste collection containers and later drop off the material to be composted. This is designed as a pilot for a future municipal composting effort.

3) Waste Minimization: 100 families will be recruited to participate in a waste minimization pilot.

4) New Waste Collection at T. C. Williams: One garbage compactor and one recycling compactor will replace 8 existing containers.

While modest efforts, I'm proud that we were able to advance these initiatives to expand recycling, and I look forward to new solutions to allow us to meet our overall environmental goals.

### **Extraordinary Alexandria**

In 2012, [visitors to Alexandria spent \\$739 million in our City, an increase of 4% from 2011](#). That spending supports 6,158 jobs and provides \$23.7 million of tax revenue.

That equates to 7 cents on our real estate tax. Tourism in our City essentially saves the average homeowner \$330 per year.

In our most recently approved budget, the Council increased the budget of the [Alexandria Convention and Visitor's Association](#) (ACVA) destination marketing effort by \$200,000. That new investment is expected to leverage an additional \$500,000 in revenue to the City.

Yet our City cannot rest on its laurels. During difficult times, communities around our country and particularly our region are working to offer unique experiences to visitors.

With that in mind, ACVA recently launched its new branding: [Extraordinary Alexandria](#).

Designed to showcase the best of Alexandria, this new marketing effort draws on our residents and businesses to attract visitors from around the country to our City.



### **Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!**

My regular series of Town Hall Meetings are back!

## Family Fall Festival

On Saturday October 19th from 10 AM until 2 PM the City's annual [Family Fall Festival](#) will be at Armistead Booth Park (520 Cameron Station Blvd).

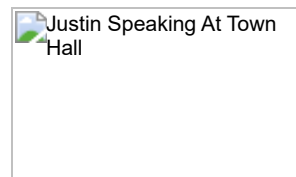
The festival promises to be fun for all ages, with entertainment, kids activities and food!

## Four Mile Run Cleanup

Help keep our City clean. Volunteer the morning of Saturday October 26th to participate in the [Four Mile Run & Monticello Park Clean Up!](#)

Meet at the Community Center at 4109 Mount Vernon Avenue to join a committed group of volunteers making our City a better place.

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

### What is Happening in the Middle of Route 1?

In the spring next year, the first [Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\) system](#) in our region will begin rolling. The new service will connect Pentagon City Metro to Braddock Road Metro by way of Crystal City and Potomac Yard.

80% of the route will operate in dedicated lanes, including a new section being completed on Route 1 in Alexandria. The new transit



system will provide the first operating model of the modern, frequent and comfortable service that the City's [Transportation Master Plan](#) envisions for the East, Center and West of our City.

The system has long been envisioned by Arlington and

Alexandria, and will initially be operated by WMATA branded as "[Metro Way](#)."

With headways as low as every 6 minutes, raised platform stations and real-time bus information, this new service will provide a critical transit link for residents and workers in this rapidly growing corridor.

### New Neighbors on the Waterfront

Last month I wrote about the progress the City is making is moving forward to plan new park spaces, implement needed flood mitigation, and move past litigation in implementing our Waterfront Plan.

The [Adopted Waterfront Small Area Plan](#) identified three [redevelopment sites](#). Two of those sites are owned by the Washington Post Company; [Robinson Terminal North and Robinson Terminal South](#).

Prior to the recent sale of the Washington Post to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, the company announced that it was selling the two Alexandria Robinson Terminal locations. That process [culminated last month](#) with the purchase of Robinson Terminal South by a partnership of [EYA](#) and [JBG](#), and the purchase of Robinson Terminal North by [CityInterests](#).

The new owners will now be sitting down with the community and City staff to begin the process of making their plans for development of these sites. While every landowner will have their own take on the development of a particular property, the approved plan sets a very high bar for development of some of the most sensitive property in our City.

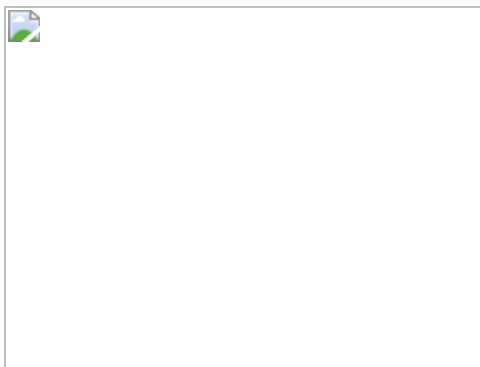
While we are very early in the process, there are some [very exciting possibilities](#) for these properties that could help bring the vision of a vibrant extension of Alexandria's artistic community alive.

## Expanding Recreation Opportunities

In June, I wrote about an [unsolicited proposal](#) that had been received for a private recreational use of Hensley Park. In the end, research by members of the community, the City and State agencies revealed that Federal dollars used to purchase the property in 1977 carried with them restrictions that prevented the envisioned use.

While the proposal is dead, the brief community consideration of it prompted a discussion of the availability of recreation uses in our City. As Arlington moves ahead with a new [aquatics facility at Long Bridge Park](#), and enjoys the use of [Kettler Iceplex](#) in Ballston, the lack of recreational opportunities for Alexandrians of all ages becomes more pronounced.

One common refrain, from many residents bemoaning the lack of recreational opportunities in our City, is a willingness to pay for more. Historically, our parks and recreation services have operated with very little revenue from users, and a significant subsidy from the taxpayers.



The national average for cost recovery for recreation services is 34%. Alexandria's services generate 12% of their costs from fees--the lowest in our region. In Loudoun County, they bring in 63% of their costs from fees.

Ensuring that our residents have access to high-quality and accessible recreation and fitness facilities is an important goal for a healthy community. Therefore, I would not support a cost structure that prices our residents out of these services. That being said, strategic cost recovery will allow Alexandria to bring in additional revenue to support maintenance and expansion of services.

Last month, the Council adopted a new [Cost Recovery Model](#) for these services. The new model divides services we provide into different tiers. Once fully implemented, these tiers will provide for some services to be completely supported by the taxpayers, and some services to use fees to generate significant profit.

Taken together this will provide for a future cost recovery of 40%--bringing in over \$5 million of net new revenue available for investment in new services.

In adopting this policy, the Council also adopted a new [Financial Assistance Policy](#) to ensure that our services do not become out of reach for our residents in need.

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