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# The Council Connection

*your connection to City Council by:*

*Vice Mayor Justin M. Wilson*

Alexandria, Virginia

September 1, 2017

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You wouldn't know it by watching Washington, DC these days, but there are politicians who serve the public good, prize civility, and as Lincoln said, "appeal to the better angels of our nature."

Our former Mayor and State Senator, Patsy Ticer, was such a politician. [Last month she left us at the age of 82.](#)

There are not many aspects of Alexandria life that Patsy did not touch, serve and improve. She was a trailblazer and had that rarest of political qualities: She was loved.

My thoughts continue to go out to Patsy's family, and I thank them for sharing her with us for so long.

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

## Council Initiatives

### Making Infrastructure Actually Happen

In May of 2010, the City Council adopted the [Capital Improvement Program covering Fiscal Year 2011 \(July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011\) through Fiscal Year 2020 \(July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020\)](#). This Capital Improvement Program was notable as it was the City's first 10-year program. Prior to Fiscal Year 2011, the City had planned capital investment in a six-year time horizon.

The City's first 10-year plan included \$707 million of capital investment planned over the 10-year period. In May of this year, the Council adopted the [Capital Improvement Program covering Fiscal](#)



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## Events/Updates

### Register to Vote

The deadline to register to vote for the November 7th General Election is October 16th.

[Registration can be submitted online. Verify your registration today!](#)

### Crabs N Suds

The Alexandria West Rotary Club introduces their inaugural "Crabs N Suds" event on Saturday September 16th.

From 2 PM until 6 PM at Hensley Park (4200 Eisenhower Avenue) enjoy bushels of crabs and beer from local breweries.

[Tickets are available online and benefit local Alexandria non-profits!](#)

### Commonwealth's Attorney Community Academy

[Alexandria's Commonwealth's Attorney, Bryan Porter is introducing the first ever "Community Academy."](#)

Scheduled on Wednesday November 8th from 6 PM until 9 PM, this program will introduce residents to the office charged with prosecution of criminal offenses in Alexandria.

Space is limited. [RSVP by e-mail today!](#)

### Car Free Day

[Year 2018 through Fiscal Year 2027](#). This 10-year plan includes \$2.1 billion of capital investment.

The dramatic increase over seven years is the direct result of the Council's efforts during the past several budgets to address decades of infrastructure deferral and delay.

Yet, budgeting the money for capital investment is just the beginning. We must execute.

We cannot assume that the same methodologies, staffing, planning, and engineering that supported \$707 million of capital investment can support \$2.1 billion of capital investment.

Candidly, we have had challenges.

[A City project to address pedestrian and transit challenges at the King Street Metro](#) originally was programmed in our Capital Improvement Program during the Fiscal Year 2011 budget process. At that point, we believed it would cost \$4 million to make the necessary improvements.

Construction will begin next year and it is now budgeted at \$12 million. Significant additional resources were required to make this project a reality.

Construction is now underway to build a new Patrick Henry Elementary School and Recreation Center. [Last month the School Board voted to allocate an additional \\$3.8 million to this project.](#)

Earlier in the year, an additional \$5.7 million was allocated to the project.

The project now totals \$61.8 million, with \$52.3 million attributable to the new school and \$9.5 million attributable to the recreation center and artificial turf.

These are two examples. There are perfectly good reasons why these costs have increased (procurement challenges, scope changes, unknown conditions, etc). However, we must prevent these overruns in the future.

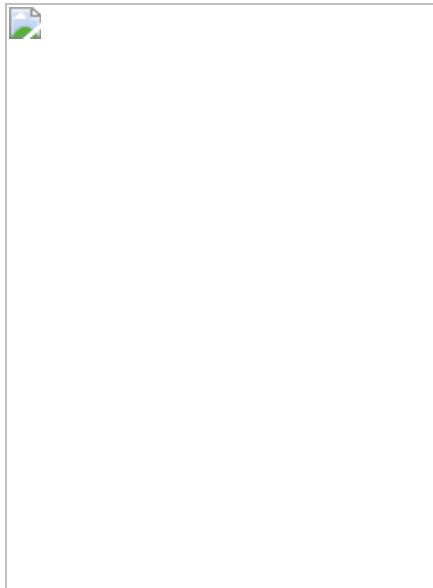
In both of these cases, filling the funding gaps in these projects required taking money from other projects. This means that other capital initiatives are delayed or cancelled.

This cannot happen.

Maintaining public support for the taxation required for needed capital investment requires that we plan and execute: on time, on budget, and within the planned scope.

In recent years the [City created the new Department of Project Implementation](#). The department is designed to be a "Center of Excellence" for project management to execute upon the City's major capital infrastructure efforts.

I have written previously about the [City's Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force](#) that has been hard at work this summer. Most of the attention has been around the group's charter to



[Friday September 22nd is Car Free Day in the DC region.](#)

Sign up on-line to ditch your car for a day and try some of the many, non-vehicular alternatives!

### US Coast Guard Tall Ship Eagle

[The United States Coast Guard Cutter Eagle will dock in Alexandria on Monday morning.](#)

The Eagle is the only active commissioned sailing vessel in military service.

Free tours will be available on Monday from 1 PM until 7 PM and again on Wednesday from 10 AM until 7 PM.

### Preventing Domestic Violence

[The Annual Alexandria "Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil" will be held on Thursday September 28th from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM in Market Square.](#)

The event is designed to remember those victims of domestic violence and ensure awareness remains in our community.

### Harness The Sun!

[Beginning Monday and through October 15th, you can sign up to participate in Solarize Alexandria.](#)

Solarize Alexandria is a partnership between the City, the [Northern Virginia Regional Commission](#), and [LEAP](#).

The goal is to increase the deployment of solar power generation in our residential communities.

The program begins with a free assessment from the program installer. Sign up today!

### Four Mile Run Ribbon Cutting

help the City synthesize the City and School capital plans. Yet, the group is also charged with looking at alternative construction methodologies and financing arrangements.

With significant municipal facility, sewer and transportation initiatives ahead of us, we must improve our execution and management of capital projects.

### Academic Achievement

On Tuesday, I will drop off my kids for 7th grade and 4th grade in the Alexandria City Public Schools. With their hard work, great educators in the classroom and our efforts at home, my kids will meet success. That's typically the measure most parents hope for.

Whether we like it or not, our schools, our kids, and our educators will ultimately have their success each year measured by standardized tests. In our case, [the battery of tests we call the Standards of Learning \(SOL\)](#) is how we measure that success.

[With the release of the SOL testing results for the Alexandria City Public Schools last month, we see a mixed bag of results across the system.](#)

Last year at this time we were celebrating modest increases and the narrowing of the achievement gap for students of color, students with limited financial means, and students with limited English proficiency.

This year, some of those increases from last year have been offset by modest decreases.

Alexandria continues to have good schools, filled with dedicated, creative, and hard-working educators that inspire our children everyday. I see it in my own children when I drop them off excited to learn, and I see it in their faces when they recount their days after school.



**However, we cannot be satisfied with the fact that we have children who are not achieving in our schools.**

There are certainly plausible explanations. [Alexandria maintains the highest percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches in Northern Virginia, with a rate double or triple that of our neighbors in Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties.](#) There is [ample data to suggest that poverty is one of the most significant impacts on academic achievement.](#)

[Of that peer group of jurisdictions, Alexandria has the highest percentage of English Language Learners with just under 30% of our students arriving with limited English proficiency.](#) Again, this presents another set of challenges to student performance.

Yet there are school systems around the country that have excelled in educating children challenged by poor backgrounds or limited English proficiency.

[On September 23rd at 1 PM there will be a ribbon cutting to celebrate the long-awaited completion of the Four Mile Run Restoration Project.](#)

The project, a joint effort of the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and former Congressman Jim Moran, has resulted in restored stream banks, new trails, new public art and more!

The event will be on the Arlington side near the intersection of Mount Vernon Avenue and South Glebe Road.

### **King Street Art Festival**

The King Street Art Festival returns to Old Town.

[With live music, family fun and more art than you know what to do with, the festival will be September 15th and 16th from 10 AM until 5 PM on King Street.](#)

### **Rain Barrel Workshop**

On Saturday September, the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District will host a Rain Barrel Workshop in Alexandria at the Alexandria Renew Enterprises office (1800 Limerick Street).

[The workshop is from 9 AM until 11 AM and is available for \\$55 \(including rain barrel\).](#)

[Sign up on-line to reserve your spot today.](#)

### **Back to School Nights**

With schools back in session this month, the Alexandria City Public Schools have scheduled Back to School Nights for parents throughout this month.

[Mark your calendars today and plan to learn more about your student's teachers.](#)

The variation in test scores within our City show that there are schools in Alexandria that have even excelled in educating these children.

As a member of the City Council, it can be easy to make the case that this is an issue for our School Board. There is no question that the Board, which was elected to lead our schools, have an enormous responsibility for ensuring our students' success.

That being said, our children are in school for 32.5 hours a week. What they experience in the other 135.5 hours of each week (as well as the five to six years before they enter our schools) has a dramatic impact on their achievement.

We cannot ignore the significant role that the City government plays in the success of our children.

Many of our children receive pre-school, day care, after-school and summer camp from City government. They may access programs from our Health Department, our Recreation Department, our Court Services Unit, or some of the many non-profit organizations that receive City funding.

The children may live in public housing units owned and operated by the [Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority](#) or in affordable housing units created or supported by the City.

Throughout the past three years, the Council and School Board have been working collaboratively to improve coordination and delivery of [early childhood services](#) and [after-school services](#). These two areas are currently provided in partnership with existing public and private providers and provide us with a great opportunity to improve the success of our children.

This is part of the rationale behind our effort to adopt our [Youth Master Plan](#). A coordinated approach tailored to each child, utilizing all of the resources available within our City will best equip us to reach every child.

### **Old Town Commercial Property**

In the Spring, before the Council recessed, we were caught up in a debate about [a proposed Business Improvement District for Old Town](#).

Opinions were varied. However, nearly all involved agreed that our central business district is challenged. During the discussion I requested specific data on retail and dining activity in the 22314 zip code (which includes Old Town). What we learned was alarming. Since 2013, sales tax revenue has dropped in the 22314 zip code every year. At the same time, meals tax revenue has increased. Sales tax revenue Citywide even increased.

After a community worksession and a lengthy public hearing, the Council took its first formal action on the matter in June. [You can watch the Council's discussion online.](#)

[The Council voted unanimously to refine the proposed Business Improvement District, distribute a proposed budget and set of performance metrics, and hold a vote of the impacted businesses to determine if there is sufficient support to proceed.](#)

While we were discussing the merits of a Business Improvement District, something larger was occurring right under our noses. [Asana Partners](#), a real estate entity from Charlotte, [was systematically purchasing large swaths of commercial properties in Old Town](#). With over \$100 million quickly invested in Old Town, and potentially more to come, these acquisitions has the potential to drive considerable change.



One of the arguments for a Business Improvement District stemmed from the fragmentation of the ownership of Old Town commercial properties. A Business

Improvement District held the potential to bring together varied commercial interests to advance collective investment around the district. Yet, if the ownership of commercial properties consolidated, that investment could occur unabated, with less coordination required.

It's still early to tell what this means. However, Asana has clearly seen opportunity in Alexandria's central business district. Through the [Waterfront Plan](#), the [King Street Retail Strategy](#) and other planning efforts, the City has attempted to shape the future success of Old Town.

Asana has now bought a seat at the table to help shape that future. City government has a unique opportunity to work to ensure that Old Town's business district will thrive long into our future.

### **When It Rains, Avoiding Pours**

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.](#)

[Almost two years 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.

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)

As a result of the new legislation, the City must work to engineer and implement a solution to CSO-001 on a more accelerated timeline than we believe feasible. On the remaining outfalls, our direction is set and we are moving forward.

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 than most. This is not a new issue for Alexandria,

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

To fund these obligations, the City Council adopted 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 going forward.

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

[In June, prior to our summer recess, the Council approved a funding agreement with Alexandria Renew Enterprises and Fairfax County.](#) This agreement combines planned work at the Alexandria Renew facility to reduce wet weather overflows into Hooff's Run with the remediation required to address CSO-003 and CSO-004. These projects are now under the same umbrella and have been labeled the "West Side Wet Weather Facilities"

These projects will cost a little over \$100 million in 2017 dollars. With Fairfax County now sharing roughly a third of the cost, the City's commitment is expected to be \$76.5 million.

We have a lot of work to do, but getting organized for success in executing these large projects will yield us dividends in the future.

## The Evolving Alexandria Waterfront

Our Potomac River waterfront is the reason Alexandria exists as a community. [The history of our waterfront](#) is the history of Alexandria. It is what has brought people and commerce to our community for generations.

The implicit compromise of the [approved Waterfront Small Area Plan](#) was as simple as it was controversial. Can we allow some increased development on three derelict sites in exchange for the following: new waterfront parks, public accessibility throughout the shoreline, new flood mitigation, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality?

While achieving this vision has not always been easy, we now stand closer than ever.

Two and a half years ago, [the Virginia Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City](#) in the final litigation related to the Waterfront Plan. A short

while later [the Court denied a request for the case to be reheard](#), thus ending the litigation.

A little over two years ago, the property exchanges occurred between the City and the Old Dominion Boat Club. The [City now owns the previous Club property](#) and the Club [now owns properties farther south along the waterfront](#). Creating a seamless, uninterrupted park along the waterfront required this exchange.

With City funds from our settlement, the Boat Club expects to [complete construction of a new club for their members on the new site](#) very soon.

The [demolition of the long-shuttered Beachcomber Restaurant was completed](#). In March, [the City's Board of Architectural Review for the Old and Historic District approved demolition of the existing Boat Club location](#).

Upon conclusion of the project, the City will create a landmark park named Fitzgerald Square. With integrated flood mitigation at the base of King Street, it will address flood challenges that have long plagued the corridor. Last May, the Council [received the plan for the first phase of this park implementation](#).



Over three years ago, the Council approved [Phase One of the Waterfront Landscape and Flood Mitigation Design](#). This exciting design marries the vision of the Olin Group and the input of hundreds of

residents who participated in the planning efforts. It also received input from the [Art and History Report](#) to ensure our history is a key component of the future of our waterfront.

Elsewhere on the waterfront, [the new Indigo Hotel](#) recently opened and is serving customers with a brand new restaurant facing the Potomac River. [Construction of this hotel yielded exciting historical discoveries](#) and provided some international acclaim.

Just next to that, on the site of the Robinson Terminal South, [Robinson Landing](#) is under construction. [This effort will conclude in 2019](#).

In the fall of 2015, the [Council unanimously approved the redevelopment of Robinson Terminal North](#) at the other end of the waterfront. Last summer, the [City was notified that the developer wished to place the project on hold](#) due to the market conditions. Last month [we learned that the property is on the market to be sold](#).

The pending sale certainly slows down the process of achieving the approved vision for Robinson Terminal North. However, a new owner, with a lower cost basis and better capabilities for redevelopment, will likely be a good thing for all involved.

Please [let me know your thoughts](#) as we work to achieve the vision of a more vibrant and accessible waterfront for our City.

### **Win Some, Lose Some**

In 2005, the Army Material Command moved out of what was later dubbed [The Victory Center on Eisenhower Avenue](#) in the City's West End.



Little did we know at the time, but the departure would doom the Victory Center to over a decade of vacancy. This one vacant building today constitutes 22% of the vacant commercial real estate in our City.

In August of 2015, that vacancy potentially ended.

[The General Services Administration \(GSA\) announced that it had awarded a lease to the owners of the Victory Center for the new headquarters of the Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\).](#)

This move would have brought 3,800 new employees to the Victory Center, a stone's throw from the Van Dorn Metro and easily accessible to the Beltway.

With the Federal Government leasing (not owning) this property, it would remain taxable. This would have been a huge win for the taxpayers of the City.



This would have been a shot in the arm for our ongoing efforts to revise the [Eisenhower West Small Area Plan](#). Coupled with our [successful attraction of the National Science Foundation](#) (opening officially in a few weeks), this again demonstrates that the City is willing to aggressively compete in the

regional battle for commercial office tenants.

Under normal circumstances, that would have been the end of the story. Unfortunately, it was not.

Boston Properties, the owner of a property in Springfield that had unsuccessfully competed for the award, appealed the lease award to the United States Court of Federal Claims. While such appeals are not unusual, rarely does anything occur as a result.

In this situation, that was not the case. On [November 11th of 2015, Judge Charles Lettow voided the lease issued by GSA for the TSA Headquarters at Victory Center.](#)

This was certainly a stunning and unexpected result. To make the situation more mysterious, the Judge issued his ruling under seal, initially pending a series of redactions to protect the bid process.

Eventually, [the Judge did release the public version of the decision.](#) Essentially, the crux of the ruling related to free space that was provided by the owners of Victory Center in excess of what was provided for in the Congressional authorization.

[While the decision was ultimately not appealed, the General Services Administration re-advertised the solicitation seeking applications only from the finalists in the previous round.](#)

[Unfortunately, last month the GSA announced that Boston Properties had now been awarded the new location for TSA.](#)

This is deeply disappointing. While there are other opportunities for this building to find a tenant, they are few and far between.

I look forward to the continued dialogue with the owner of Victory Center to determine how we as a City breathe some life into the site.

### **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!

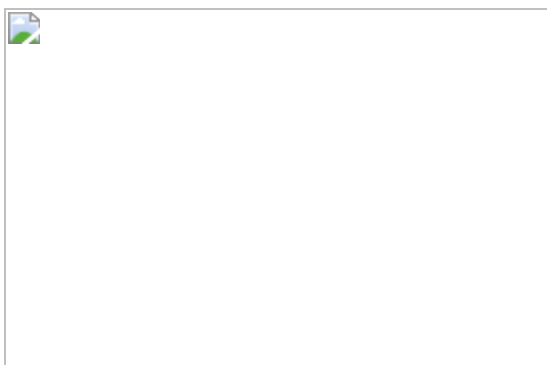
## Upcoming Issues

### A New Owner In Beauregard

In June of 2012, the City Council adopted the [Beauregard Small Area Plan](#) which laid out a vision for a 395-acre swath of land constituting a major portion of the City's West End.

As in much of the City, the landowners in the plan area had millions of square feet of development permitted (5.5 million constructed, 10 million permitted) under their existing zoning, but not currently developed.

Through the planning process, the City attempted to incentivize the provision of significant public amenities and encourage land usage other than additional townhomes by granting additional development rights.



The approved plan provides a funding formula (including developer funding, tax increment financing, and City Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars) for the creation of at

least 800 new units of committed affordable housing, funding for a new fire station, a new "ellipse" at the intersection of Seminary and Beauregard Roads, a new transitway, additional tree canopy, and 44 acres of new open space.

In total, the Plan exacted \$150 million of developer-funded public amenities.

Yet it didn't happen.

In the aftermath of a corporate merger, the owner of the [properties placed them on the market](#). Earlier this week, [we learned that a new owner has purchased the properties, with a much more modest vision of their potential](#).

It is generally a positive to see new investment in the City. It will probably be a while until we fully appreciate what the new ownership's long-term intentions are for these properties.

The Beauregard Small Area Plan was designed to capture the value of new development to provide for private funding of new public infrastructure. Absent new development, this infrastructure will not materialize.

More significantly, the Plan area included nearly a quarter of the

market rate affordable housing remaining in the City at the time of adoption. In the years since, that supply has further eroded, as market rates have increased at ever-higher rates. The implicit bargain in the adopted Plan was to use the value of higher density levels to convert market-rate affordable housing units to committed affordable housing units. Again, absent the new development, these committed units will not materialize.

The economics of development in our City are changing dramatically. The rise and potential fall of the Beauregard Small Area Plan is an object lesson for us all.

### Potomac Yard Metro

For decades, the City has discussed, planned, and just plain hoped for a Metro Rail station at Potomac Yard.

At the end of last year, [the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority \(WMATA\), issued the pre-solicitation notice to hire the contractor to design, construct, test and commission the new Potomac Yard Metro station.](#) The formal solicitation was released shortly thereafter, we are now closer than we have ever been to bringing Metro to Potomac Yard.

The procurement process remains under way. [Discussions with the bidders who are seeking the award have continued, including requests to reduce cost.](#) An award of a contract to build the station is now expected in the spring of 2018.

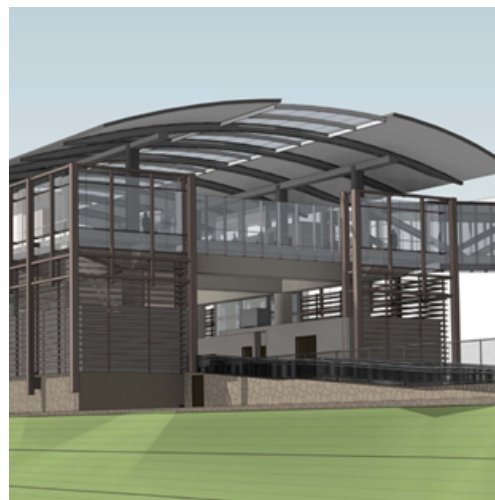
In June of last year, the City achieved two major milestones in the effort to bring this station to reality. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the land-use applications for the construction of the station itself. [The Council scheduled a special meeting and adopted the approvals as recommended.](#)

Also in June of 2016, [the Final Environmental Impact Statement was completed.](#)

[It was two and a half years ago that the City Council unanimously adopted Alternative B as the site of the future Potomac Yard Metro station.](#)

[In May of 2016, the Council approved revisions to the formal agreement between the City and the National Park Service.](#) This agreement was necessary to select Alternative B, which requires the use of some National Park Service land. Implementing this agreement will expand National Park Service land, improve existing public spaces, and protect the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

In 2008, along with then-Councilman Rob Krupicka, I proposed a new start to efforts to bring Metro to Potomac Yard. [We included language in the City's Transportation Master Plan](#) explicitly calling for a new station at Potomac Yard. We also tied the construction and funding of Metro to the development occurring in the Yard.



The result is [a funding plan for Potomac Yard Metro](#) that not only leverages the development activity in Potomac Yard, but also does so without requiring the contributions of General Fund taxpayers.

The largest environmental, [economic development](#), and transportation initiative in our City's history is being accomplished using [one of the most innovative funding mechanisms used anywhere in the country](#).

The funding package today consists of [two special tax districts](#), tax increment funding, [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority regional funding](#), a [Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Board loan](#), and a developer contribution.

[The Potomac Yard Metro project will facilitate the creation of up to 26,000 new jobs and will bring up to \\$2 billion of new tax revenue to the City. It removes thousands of vehicles from one of the most crowded corridors in our City. It promotes the creation of the kind of walkable community our City has long desired in Potomac Yard.](#)

## **Our Confederate History**

There are not many communities in our nation who can boast the treasure of history that Alexandria recognizes, acknowledges, commemorates and in many cases, monetizes. History is ingrained in every part of our City. Even our newer neighborhoods bring our history alive.

That history has not been without controversy. How we recognize that history has evolved over the decades, and will likely continue to do so.

As part of an effort to clean-up our City Code late in 2013, [I proposed a seemingly innocuous change to remove an anachronistic requirement that we name all new north/south streets after Confederate military leaders](#). While the change fortunately passed unanimously, it did remind me that these changes do not come easy.

In the aftermath of the tragic murders in Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, communities across the nation had reexamined their representations of Confederate history. None was more visible than the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the grounds of the South Carolina state capitol.

Here in Alexandria, we have received similar requests from residents to reexamine examples of such representations in our community.

### [A few notable examples in Alexandria:](#)

Since 1970, the City has displayed the first flag of the Confederacy (not the battle flag) on Robert E. Lee's birthday and Confederate Memorial Day.

There are at least 30 streets named for prominent leaders of the Confederacy. The most significant one is Jefferson Davis Highway (a portion of Route 1).

[The Appomattox Statue, owned by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, at South Washington and Prince Streets honors the dead soldiers of Alexandria who fought for the Confederacy.](#)

A plaque on the [Marshall House](#) (now "The Alexandrian" hotel) tells the story of the shooting of a Union officer from a Confederate perspective.

My view is that there is little gained for Alexandria to re-litigate a war that concluded 150 years ago. However, our community has changed over 150 years.

In September of 2015 the Council made the decision to end to flying of the flag of the Confederacy. We also created a community group to take public comment and advise the Council on other potential changes.

After five meetings, [the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Confederate Memorials and Street Names made its recommendations to the City Council.](#)

While the report goes into considerable detail, the group recommended that the Appomattox Statue remain in place, Jefferson Davis Highway be renamed, and other potential street renamings be initiated individually using the existing process.

The Council ultimately voted to proceed with the renaming of Jefferson Davis Highway. There [is a survey on the City's website to help up choose the Council choose the name.](#) It closes on September 15th and we will conclude that process later in the year.

The Council also voted to work with the General Assembly and the Daughters of the American Confederacy to pursue a move of the statue out of the street to the yard at the Lyceum.

All of that occurred PRIOR to the horrific events in Charlottesville last month. Seeing hate paraded on the streets of one of Virginia's great cities was jarring and sad. Seeing that hate devolve into violence and the murder of an innocent citizen and tragic deaths of heroic public servants prompted anger. The realization that Confederate iconography was the flash-point for this violence places this issue before nearly every community in America, including Alexandria.

Honors and commemorations that seemed appropriate a century or even 40 years ago, may no longer be appropriate in a modern Alexandria. Furthermore, a modern Alexandria should focus not just on what should be removed or renamed, but how to portray a more accurate and fair telling of our history.

In my view, that would be a just reaction to the events in Charleston, Charlottesville, and indeed many other injustices and tragedies in our country's history.

In the past few weeks, [members of the Alexandria General Assembly delegation have announced their intent to sponsor new legislation expanding local authority](#) to address these issues. The Attorney General [has issued new guidance on the applicability of existing laws.](#)

[Let me know your thoughts](#) as the Council continues to work through this issue.

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