

APRIL 2024 ISSUE 16

ADVISORY GROUP ABOUT US ENEWS

MANAGER'S MESSAGE



events.

of year we 'spring forward' and head back to work groggy and bleary eyed from missing that hour of sleep. Trees 'spring forth' with new growth and flowers, like the iconic cherry blossoms that recently peaked bloom, are reborn. Birds 'spring' into morning with lovely songs that awaken the day, and the weather 'springs' back and forth between lovely dry sunny days to bitter cold to remind us that life is often in a state of flux just like the changing of the seasons.

Ah, the spring season is here! This is the time

The City's stormwater management program has recalibrated in the past few years with shifting weather patterns due to the changing climate bringing more intense storms that have caused inland flooding, and impacted communities and property.

In response, the City Council and Staff repurposed existing resources and added new resources to support Flood Action Alexandria, a comprehensive initiative to address flooding issues, mitigate the impacts of flooding, and build community resiliency. Flood Action Alexandria serves residents to 'spring back.' Through the implementation of capital infrastructure projects and operations & maintenance programs, this community can be better equipped to weather the storm and spring back quickly from these more frequent flooding

Spring is also budget season for some localities. This is the time when City Council focuses on the community's priorities by highlighting and by committing investments in those priorities through the budget process. This year's proposed 10-Year Stormwater Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget includes a five percent increase in the Stormwater Utility (SWU) Fee to fund over \$280 million in capital infrastructure projects. The SWU is the dedicated funding source for the City's Stormwater Management Program, of which Flood Action Alexandria is the central focus.

Progress is being made through the delivery of spot projects, and by furthering the design for implementation of more complex large capacity projects, by incentivizing property owners to install floodproofing with matching funds through the City's Flood Mitigation Grant Program, and continuous maintenance of the City's existing stormwater infrastructure through inlet cleanouts and maintaining a state of good repair. The City continues to collaborate with the Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group, listening to issues that concern the community members, and communicating the City's expectations and actions. This proposed budget investment is a testament to the continued support of Flood Action Alexandria to continue to build a more resilient City of Alexandria.

Recently, the City was awarded another Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) grant. This grant of over \$500,000 will support the development of the City's Flood Resilience Plan. The Plan will provide a comprehensive approach to addressing flood resiliency within the City. Working together with the community to continue progress on capital infrastructure projects, operating programs, and on the development of the Flood Resilience Plan to guide actions, the City is becoming better equipped to withstand the storm and be more resilient.

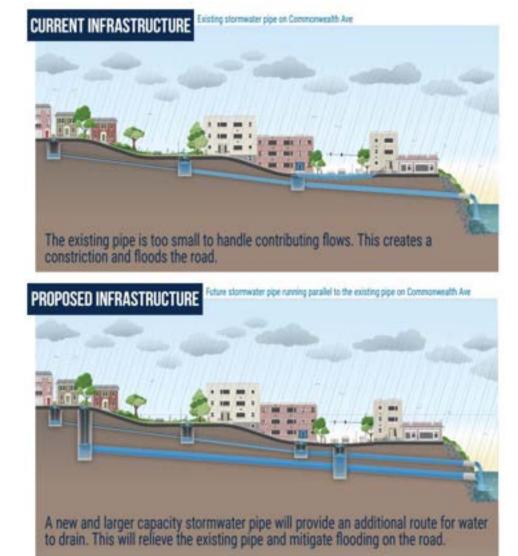
Jesse Maines, Stormwater Management Division Chief Editor's note: The Manager's Message is a periodic editorial authored by senior leaders of the

City of Alexandria.

PROJECT UPDATES

LARGE CAPACITY PROJECTS

Next Design Milestone for Commonwealth, Ashby, and Glebe Flood **Mitigation Project Expected This Month**



City staff and project consultants continue to make progress on designing the Commonwealth, Ashby, Glebe Flood Mitigation Project.

Last fall, the project reached the milestone of 30 percent design completion. Now project teams are nearing the 60 percent design milestone.

This milestone submission will include additional project details, such as structural details of the culvert and storm sewer system, right-of-way acquisition, and a more detailed review of constructability and construction methodology.

The Commonwealth, Ashby, Glebe Flood Mitigation Project will provide flood relief to residents and businesses near the intersections of Commonwealth Avenue and E. Glebe Road, and E. Glebe Road and Ashby Street. Proposed design for the project includes installing new box culverts along Commonwealth Ave, E. Glebe Rd., and Montrose Ave. A new outfall to the north of Commonwealth Ave. to Four Mile Run is also proposed. This work will increase stormwater conveyance and reduce flooding in the area.

Project teams are currently working with area utility companies to coordinate any required relocations for the new storm sewer. The 60 percent designs are expected to be submitted by the end of April.

Planning Phase Continues on Hooffs Run Culvert Bypass Project



City staff are working towards a solution to bring flood relief to residents and businesses along the Hooffs Run and Timber Branch culverts. Project teams are working with its consultant to develop alternative designs for the Hooffs Run Culvert Bypass Project, which may include increased stormwater storage options, as well as

new, large-capacity stormwater sewers. Topographic and utility surveys have been completed along Russell Road and Cedar Street.

The contractors is now preparing for geotechnical testing. The results for this testing will provide the soil's capacity to support the proposed infrastructure.

City staff and project consultants are developing a set of possible design alternatives, which are being analyzed and evaluated. As the planning phase continues, project teams will be narrowing down the alternatives, based on several different aspects, including flood mitigation effectiveness, cost, project schedule, construction impacts, and complexity.

See More Large Capacity Projects ->

SPOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Construction Underway on North Overlook Drainage Improvement Project



The City contractor has started work to improve drainage and provide flood relief near the intersection of North Overlook Drive and South Overlook Drive. The project will increase inlet capture and runoff conveyance capacity to mitigate flooding for residents in the area. Traffic is being managed near the project site and drivers can expect some delays.

Construction on the \$600,000 project is expected to be complete in July 2024.

Design on Edison Street Drainage Improvement Project Nears Completion



Design work continues for this drainage improvement project that will reduce flooding along Edison Street. In February, City staff received the 90 percent design submission. The City project team completed its review of the design. Th plan includes installing additional inlets along the street to capture stormwater runoff and a larger storm sewer outfall pipe to convey the stormwater. As design nears completion, the City is working with utility providers, as well as state and federal permitting agencies, to coordinate the proposed work. The design phase of the \$1 million project is expected to be complete in summer 2024.

Final Design Phase Now Underway on Hume Avenue Stormdrain **Bypass Project**



City staff are awaiting the final design of a flood mitigation project targeting homes along Hume Avenue and E. Raymond Avenue. In February, the City completed the 90-percent design of the Hume Avenue Stormdrain Bypass

Project. The project includes plans to install a new storm sewer along Hume Avenue to bypass the existing pipe behind the townhomes on the north side of Hume Avenue. New inlets will also be installed on E. Raymond Avenue to capture stormwater runoff before it accumulates in lowlying areas.

The project plans include rebuilding Hume Avenue to restore a constant curb height and address low lying areas.

City staff expect to receive final design of the \$4.4 million project in Spring of this year.

See More Spot Improvement Projects ->

SANITARY SEWER PROJECTS

Del Ray East Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project Moves Forward



Del Ray East Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project. The contractor has rehabilitated more than 12,000 feet of mainline sewer since work began last October, equivalent to about onethird of the total project.

The contractor has also started working on rehabilitating manhole structures in the area. In total, 111 manhole structures are set to be rehabilitated as part of the project through October 2024.

The rehabilitation project is part of the City's Sanitary Sewer Asset Renewal Program, which provides for the inspection and rehabilitation of all sanitary sewers, manholes, and City-owned portions of lateral sewers. The program will help preserve and protect existing City-owned sewer infrastructure, extend its useful life, and protect against pipe collapses and other emergency repairs. The program will also help to reduce the amount of infiltration and inflow (I&I) into sanitary sewer system. Excessive amounts of I&I can result in sanitary sewer backups into homes and businesses.

Residents and businesses within 350 feet of construction will receive a letter of notification 14 days prior to construction, and a second notification 48 hours prior to construction. No parking signs will also be posted along impacted sites 72 hours in advance of construction. The Del Ray East project area is Phase I of the program, which includes areas bounded by

City of Alexandria to Install 870 Manhole Inserts

Commonwealth Avenue, Four Mile Run, Route 1, and the Metro rail lines.



manhole inserts in the Four Mile Run and Commonwealth Sanitary Sewersheds. These inserts will help prevent stormwater runoff from entering sanitary sewer manholes during wet weather. This inflow can overwhelm the capacity of the sanitary sewer system, which can lead to sewer backups in basements during periods of heavy rainfall.

Manhole inserts are pan-shaped devices that sit at the top of the manhole, directly underneath the manhole cover. The inserts have a hole that slowly drains accumulated stormwater into the sewer after the storm ends. Manhole inserts are one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce inflow into the sanitary sewer system.

The City plans to install a total of 870 manhole inserts in the area. Installation began in February 2023, and is expected to be completed by the end of June 2024.



NEWS

City of Alexandria Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Members of the City

Council Recognize Virginia Flood Awareness Week



Medina, during the Flood Awareness Week proclamation. Alexandria Mayor Justin M. Wilson and Members of the City Council recognized the Flood Action Alexandria team and its effort to build flood resiliency with the reading of a proclamation during the City Council Legislative Meeting held on March 12. The proclamation was read in observance of Virginia Flood Awareness Week, March 10 to

Jesse Maines, Advisory Committee Chair John Hill, and Flood Action Alexandria Program Manager Dan

March 16. Held annually in March, Virginia Flood Awareness Week is an opportunity for residents to learn about local flood risk, steps they can take to stay safe, and the importance of flood insurance. During the proclamation, Councilman John Chapman thanked members of the Stormwater

<u>Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group</u> for collaborating with City staff as they develop projects and programs to mitigate flooding. The group, originally established as the Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation

Advisory Group on January 23, 2021, was extended as a ten-year commitment by City Council on December 16, 2023. "Thanks to the efforts of some of our residents, particularly individuals on the ad hoc

committee, we were, again, able to make that a permanent committee, so we are going to have an opportunity to have residents working hand-in-hand with City staff as we work through how we better prepare ourselves as a City," Chapman said. The Councilman also praised the Flood Action Alexandria team for its leadership on flood

mitigation efforts. The City launched the Flood Action Alexandria program in 2021, which coordinates a team of experts across multiple departments and consultants to mitigate flooding issues through

maintenance programs and capital infrastructure project implementation. "I'm especially glad this year to recognize you all for the joint work that you're doing, particularly the leadership of staff on this important topic," Chapman said.

The City of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services recognized Virginia Flood Awareness Week with a social media campaign on flood insurance tips, recommended flood mitigation efforts, and how the City is working to build a more resilient future.

Proposed City Budget Includes Five Percent Increase in Stormwater **Utility Fee**

On February 27, City Manager Jim Parajon presented a budget proposal to the Alexandria City Council for Fiscal Year 2025. Included in the proposed budget is a five percent increase in the Stormwater Utility Fee (SWU),

from \$309 in FY2024 to \$324 in FY2025 for a typical single-family home to fund future stormwater project efforts.

There is also a proposed increase in the FY2025-FY2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for stormwater infrastructure. A \$221 million investment is proposed, compared to the \$197 million included in last year's CIP over the same period of time.

The SWU fee provides a dedicated, equitable funding source for the City's Stormwater Management Division. These funds go towards stormwater management services, operations and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, flood management programs, and capital infrastructure projects. The proposed increase maintains funding for the increase in infrastructure investments.

The ten-year CIP includes \$264.1 million for stormwater infrastructure and flood mitigation. This proposal maintains stormwater projects on track and reinstates a commitment to flood mitigation initiatives to build resiliency across Alexandria.

If the proposed budget is approved, it will be adopted by City Council on May 1. Fiscal Year 2025 begins July 1.

The City of Alexandria to Celebrate Earth Month Throughout April



Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and Members of the City Council participated in the 2023 Tree Planting event. The 54th annual Earth Day celebration will take place Monday, April 22, as an opportunity to recognize sustainability, and support a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. For Alexandria residents, this celebration will run throughout the month of April.

Eco-City Alexandria will be hosting several events, both virtual and in-person, to celebrate the planet and encourage residents to take steps in protecting the environment.

Senior Environmental Specialist Melissa Atwood says the events and activities happening throughout the month will help bring the Eco-City mission to life in a fun, educational way. "At Eco-City Alexandria, living sustainably is a goal we have all year long, and we know this is also a goal for many of our residents," Atwood said. "Earth Month is a great opportunity to come together as a community, enjoy environmentally focused activities, and explore new ways to protect our environment."

The theme for Earth Month 2024 is "I am an Eco-City Superhero," to empower residents to take action in a safe manner. Organizers say every small step can make a difference towards a sustainable future.

Stream Cleanup on April 6: The City Stormwater Management Division will host a stream cleanup event along the Windmill Hill Park living shoreline. Help protect our waterways by volunteering to pick up trash.

Several environmentally focused events are scheduled throughout the month:

We Are Eco-City Alexandria on April 13: Join Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, and the Members of the City Council, and ACPS students to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day. Eco-City Alexandria will host a tree planting, Earth Day proclamation, and an art show of pieces made by ACPS students with an Earth Day theme.

Del Ray GardenFest and Ellen Pickering Award Presentation on April 21: The Del Ray Citizens Association is celebrating Earth Month by hosting garden-centric demonstrations, activities, and informational booths. The event will also include the Ellen Pickering Environmental Excellence Award presentation by AlexRenew and the Environmental Policy Commission.

The City has also organized Eco-City BINGO, filled with activities that focus on protecting the environment and can be completed throughout the month of April. Participants who complete a BINGO card and turn it by May 1 will receive a participation certificate and Earth Day T-shirt. Participants will also be entered for a chance to win from a selection of drawing prizes. BINGO cards, as well as more instructions on how to participate, are available on the Earth

Day Website. On the website, you can also find more information on other Earth Month events, and tips on how to build a more sustainable future.

City of Alexandria to Plant 275 Trees in Recognition of City's Birthday This year is a significant milestone in the City of Alexandria's history as it commemorates 275 years since the City's founding. In honor of this momentous year, the City's Stormwater

Management Division will be planting 275 trees in specified locations throughout the city. The first of the 275 will be planted at Windmill Hill Park on Saturday, April 6 as part of the City's Birthday Kick-off Event. Planting is expected to run through the end of May 2024, with the final tree reserved for the City's 275th anniversary commemoration event on July 9.

The planting is being funded by the <u>Stormwater Management Division</u> through the Stormwater Utility Fee. The trees will help improve the water quality and help create a healthy, thriving City. Urban trees help in reducing nutrient runoff, absorbing stormwater to mitigate flooding, and enhance the City's tree canopy to provide shade to reduce the heat index and lower the temperature of stormwater flowing into the system.

Native trees will be selected to replace empty tree wells and provide canopy shade along roadways. The project will focus on adding shade trees in high heat index areas of the City and replenishing community locations with canopy cover.

Division staff are partnering with Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA) Urban Forestry in selecting locations for each of the trees and project development.

Project organizers are also including one of the 275 trees for the We Are Eco-City Alexandria event on Saturday, April 13, when there will be a proclamation by Mayor Justin Wilson and the Members of the City Council recognizing Earth Month and Arbor Day. The event is scheduled to take place at City Hall.

About the City's 275th Birthday:

Event

Alexandria at 275: Connecting to our past to define a brighter future. Since its 1749 founding, the historic city of Alexandria has played a major role in our nation's story and reflected its progress toward inclusivity. Join us at events from April through September as we mark Alexandria's 275th anniversary and embark on the next chapter in our city's vibrant history at alexandriava.gov/ALX275.

City to Recognize National Building Safety Month with May Kick-Off





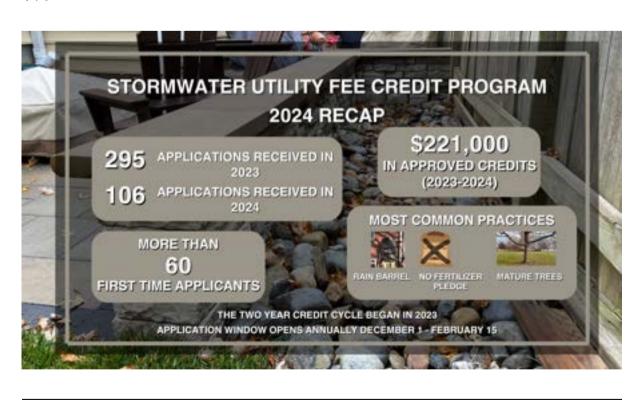
Join the City of Alexandria Stormwater Management Division as they raise awareness on local floodplains at the 12th Annual Building Safety Month Kick-Off Event on May 3. Hosted by the City Department of Code Administration, National Building Safety Month is an opportunity for residents to better understand how to create safe, sustainable structures, and what it takes to maintain them. Stormwater Management Division staff will be onsite during the event to share information

The theme for this year's Building Safety Month is "Mission Impossible." It takes place May 3 at Market Square at City Hall. Staff will be tabling from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

about Flood Action Alexandria, and to answer questions about local floodplains.



SNAPSHOT



FROM THE FLOOD ACTION ADVISORY GROUP

In February, the City Manager presented the City's budget for Fiscal Year 2025. The proposed budget continues the investment in stormwater infrastructure that began through the Flood Action Alexandria Program launched in 2021. The 10-year Flood Action Program is a \$260 million investment in projects for the City's most flood-prone

neighborhoods. The rainstorms of the past summer have confirmed the need for this critical investment. This past summer the City had two extreme rainstorms. The most severe dropped an inch-

and-a-half of rain in just 20 minutes. That is 400 million gallons of water dropped on the 15 square miles of Alexandria in just 20 minutes – enough water to bury a football field under 900 feet of water.

The Flood Action Program has two projects well underway to address the two areas that experienced the most flooding during these storms. The project at Commonwealth, Ashby and Glebe addresses the flooding in the Del Ray and Lynnhaven neighborhoods. The Hooff's Run project addresses the problem in the Rosemont neighborhood. The Flood Action Program includes several other capacity-building projects planned for the next decade.

The budget proposes a five percent increase in the stormwater fee that is paid by Alexandria residents. The Stormwater Committee will continue to oversee the Flood Action Program and ensure that the Stormwater Fee is spent on the most urgent projects and Alexandria makes progress every year toward a more flood resilient future.





Haweni Gobena, Civil Engineer, walks alongside Senior Engineer Brian Rahal inspecting the newly completed Lloyds Lane Spot Improvement Project Haweni Gobena is using her engineering expertise to help improve the quality of life for Alexandria residents as part of the Flood Action Alexandria team finding solutions to mitigate flooding. "The City's stormwater system is very old. Citizens suffer with a lot of flooding. Seeing those solutions take place makes me happy, and it also helps City citizens in a lot of ways," Gobena said. "Seeing those projects in place is an accomplishment for us." Gobena is a Civil Engineer III for the City's Stormwater Management Division. She helps develop several phases of flood mitigation capacity projects, from planning to design and construction. Working in a team, Gobena helps develop flooding solutions, reviewing plans, conducting site visits, and responding to complaints and concerns from residents. Since she began working for the City approximately two years ago, one of the projects Gobena has been working on is to bring flood relief to residents on Lloyds Lane. The project included the installation of a permeable sidewalk and underdrain. Construction on this project was completed earlier this year. Gobena says seeing the project come full circle has been a significant moment in her career. "The City has been planning to do this for years. We finally accomplished that one, that was a big moment," Gobena said. After moving to the U.S. from Ethiopia, Gobena began working in the Stormwater Management Division, and says she has found the path she plans to continue. Helping to develop these stormwater projects, she says, feels like she's making a difference for the residents. Gobena says she hopes to set an example for her own children, that if you work hard, you can accomplish big goals. "I'm blessed to do this," Gobena said. "Seeing myself accomplishing things and working hard, I'd like to pass those things on to my kids."

The Flood Action Alexandria newsletter is produced by City staff. Email us at <u>stormwater@alexandriava.gov</u>.

