

City of Alexandria, Virginia
MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 30, 2023
TO: James Parajon, City Manager
FROM: John Hill, Chair
Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group
SUBJECT: Proposed Stormwater Fee for FY 2025

Neighborhoods in Alexandria were flooded twice this summer. In July and again in August, severe rainstorms overflowed Alexandria's stormwater system causing damage to homes and property along Hoofs Run, Four Mile Run, and in the combined sewer area of Old Town. As extreme weather becomes commonplace, Alexandria must again confirm its commitment to the Flood Action program.

In its 2023 annual report (attached), the Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group analyzed the ten-year Capital Improvement Program for Stormwater. Our analysis suggests that the first phase of the City's stormwater mitigation effort is properly focused on the most urgent stormwater flooding challenges facing Alexandria. However, the report concludes *"creating a more flood-resilient Alexandria will require at least a decade of sustained investment and effort. The true measure of progress will be when the City has proven its ability to build the large infrastructure projects that fundamentally increase Alexandria's capacity to move stormwater."*

For this reason, the Advisory Group supports an increase in the Stormwater Utility Fee and related FY 2025 funding to:

- Construct the large stormwater capacity-building and flood mitigation projects that are currently being designed;
- Continue the vigorous program of spot improvements and maintenance that is already underway;
- Ensure the relevant City departments are fully staffed and funded to implement a growing number of water-related projects;
- Apply sufficient resources to meet the future maintenance requirements of a growing stormwater system;
- Maintain the solvency of the Flood Mitigation Grant pilot program;
- Apply for relevant state and federal grant funding for flood mitigation and resiliency projects, and;
- Continually evaluate and revise the stormwater program to reflect the input of residents and changing climate conditions.

As Alexandria's stormwater program becomes more visible to residents, there is a growing need for accessible and concise communication regarding the program and its component projects. To maintain Alexandrians' support for continued investment, the City should not waiver in its efforts to inform residents of the Flood Action Program and the availability of flood mitigation resources. The Flood Action Alexandria website is a strong foundation for communication. Project-specific materials such as door hangers and street signs are essential for keeping impacted neighborhoods informed.

Looking ahead, continuing these efforts, and keeping the website as up-to-date as possible, will be paramount -- especially as the large capacity projects begin construction.

Thank you for your consideration. The Advisory Group stands ready to work with City staff to shape the measures and the messages to engage residents in a multi-year program to prepare Alexandria for the climate challenges of the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Van Hill".