

**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 31, 2024  
**TO:** Mayor Justin Wilson  
Members of City Council  
James Parajon, City Manager  
**FROM:** John Hill, Chair  
Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Stormwater Fee for FY 2026`

**Progress is being made to combat stormwater flooding in Alexandria**

Alexandria has made considerable progress in addressing the backlog of smaller “spot improvement” projects. At the start of the Flood Action Program, twenty-seven spot improvements were identified. As of September 2024, eight of these have been completed and eleven are actively under design and construction.

Two of the large capacity projects are currently being designed. The Commonwealth/Ashby/Glebe project has reached its “90% design” milestone. The Hooff’s Run Bypass project will reach “30% design” later this year. The two large projects in the combined sewer area, at the intersection of Pitt and Gibbon and at Nethergate, are in the planning stage, with design contracts to be awarded later this year.

**Committee support for proposed Stormwater Fee increase**

When the Flood Action Alexandria Program was launched in 2021, it proposed a ten-year \$260 million investment in stormwater infrastructure. The Committee acknowledges that the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget for FY 2026, together with the proposed 5 percent increase in the Stormwater Fee, continues to honor that commitment. Moreover, the Committee applauds the addition of funding for the project at Pitt and Gibbon in the ten-year Sanitary Sewer CIP, as well as the City’s use of federal funds from the American Rescue Plan for stormwater projects.

**Despite progress, the Committee has two concerns**

1. The large capacity projects are slow-moving. Actual construction for the first large project will not begin until April 2026 – almost two years from now. And, unlike the smaller spot improvements, the large projects bring with them traffic disruption and noise – making community engagement essential.

The Committee urges more community engagement for these projects. There have been no public meetings or organized outreach for the large capacity projects since May – and nothing is scheduled for the near future. The projects at Commonwealth/Ashby/Glebe and along Hooff’s Run will have a considerable impact on the residents in those areas. Public support for these projects requires that the impacted neighborhoods be informed as project designs are being finalized.

2. The ten-year CIP does not address the stormwater flooding around the Braddock Road Metro Station that can prevent emergency vehicles from reaching sections of Rosemont and Del Ray during severe rainstorms. This problem may become worse in the future when the rail bridges over Commonwealth Avenue and King Street are replaced – further blocking access.

The Committee urges Alexandria to develop solutions that will, at the very least, enable the passage of emergency vehicles along Braddock Road during periods of stormwater flooding.

In its 2024 annual report (attached), the Committee analyzed the ten-year Capital Improvement Program for Stormwater for FY 2025. 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 and is adequately funded. However, the report also recognizes that creating a more flood-resilient Alexandria will require more than 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.*

Thank you for your consideration. The Committee 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.

