

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 1, 2025

Question:

As part of the next phase of community engagement on the City Hall, Market Square Plaza, and Garage Renovations capital project, Council would like the public to weigh in on costs. What features might the public be willing to pay more for?

Response:

For the City Hall, Market Square Plaza, and Garage Renovation project between February and March 2025, the following engagement was conducted:

- a community virtual meeting on February 20th (series #4, included feedback on budget drivers),
- an employee open house on March 5th,
- presentation to the Environmental Policy Commission on March 10th, and
- an online survey that remained online through March 23rd.

300+ individuals were engaged through these myriad mechanisms. These opportunities were publicized through a variety of channels, including social media, e-news, printed fliers, and direct e-mail to community organizations.

The key findings of the survey (including polling participation at meetings) are summarized below and in the attached survey report:

1. Budget Drivers

Respondents expressed support for additional investment across all features that were presented, including, the Market Square Garage Replacement, Market Square Plaza Upgrades, Geothermal, and the 5th Floor Expansion. Between a low and high investment, most respondents selected the higher investment option across all features.

2. King St. Façade Design Solutions

Respondents indicated that it was important to enhance the 1960's façade facing King St., especially, defining a more visible entry and cultivating a vibrant/civic presence. 67% of respondents indicated yes or maybe when asked if the design team should continue exploring alternations to the existing façade.

3. Building Programming Features

Respondents indicated that the ground floor multipurpose rooms would be best utilized for meetings and community events, with less interest in commemorative events. Respondents indicated that the 2nd floor Council Chambers would be most important for City staff meetings, with some usage available for commemorative events and historical/educational tours. Respondents indicated that the 5th floor expansion space should primarily be used for receptions/gatherings and outdoor events, followed by interest in historical/educational tours, City staff meetings, and commemorative events.

Market Square Garage Repair vs. Replacement:

The budget for the repair of Market Square Garage included in the Approved FY 2025 – 2034 CIP was \$13M. This repair work would give the garage a projected life span of 20 years, and would not address needed universal design and accessibility standards. The additional investment of \$15M proposed in the FY 2026 – 2035 CIP supports the replacement of the garage, which supports a projected life span of 50 years and is modernized to accommodate universal design and accessibility requirements.

Since the presentation and survey were issued regarding the Garage Repair vs Replace options, the project team has quantified how much additional costs would be incurred over the next 30 years if it were to pursue the repair option. While the replacement option requires an additional \$15 million now, the repair option is projected to cost the City an additional \$63 million within the next 30 years.

Repair Option:

Repair of Garage: \$13M

Replacement of Market Square Plaza: \$15M

Replacement of Garage and Market Square Plaza in 20 years (utilizes a 3% year-over-year inflation factor): \$78M

Total: \$106 M

Replacement Option:

Replacement of Garage: \$28M

Replacement of Market Square Plaza: \$15M

Total: \$43 M

Attachments:

[Attachment 1: Series #4 Survey Report, How Can City Hall Serve You?](#)

[Attachment 2: 2/20/2025 Series #4 Virtual Community Presentation](#)