

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 22, 2025

TO: Mayor Alyia Gaskins
Members of City Council
City Manager James Parajon

FROM: John Hill, Chair
Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Annual Report to City Council

Alexandria City Ordinance 5509 established the Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee to “review recommendations for Program funding and, as appropriate, support funding requests” and “serve as liaison between City staff and the community regarding the Flood Action Alexandria Program”.

Attached is the annual report of the Advisory Committee. The report was developed with input from concerned residents as voiced during our public meetings, presentations by City staff, and analysis by Committee members of the proposed FY 2026 budget and ten-year Capital Improvement Program.

The report concludes that Alexandria’s investments in stormwater infrastructure are directed to the most urgent flooding problems. Moreover, the level of funding in FY 2026 and proposed for future years will adequately support the project plans of the Flood Action Program. The report acknowledges – and applauds -- the considerable progress the City has made to-date in its stormwater flood mitigation efforts.

When launched in 2021, the Flood Action Program envisioned a portfolio of proactive maintenance, a number of small “spot” projects, and twelve large capacity-building stormwater projects with a total price tag of approximately \$250 million over ten years. The detailed engineering work of the past year suggests that the plan was, perhaps, too optimistic. The committee suggests two changes to the Flood Action Program:

1. Making Alexandria truly flood-resilient will take longer than the 10 years originally envisioned in the Flood Action Program. The Flood Action Program should be re-thought as an on-going portfolio of flood-mitigation projects that addresses ever-worsening rainstorms and that fits within the financial constraints of the Stormwater Fee and the city’s capacity to execute large construction projects. As designs of the large stormwater projects are completed and their true cost and timelines better understood, the Committee should work with City staff to continually update the ten-year capital improvement program and the Stormwater Fee required to finance it.
2. Home and business owners in Alexandria’s most flood-prone areas need more incentives to invest in flood improvement measures for their properties. Although the city’s projects will address much of the flooding problem, many home and business owners will not see relief for years. And for some, the flooding will never be totally eliminated. Alexandria’s flood mitigation grants and stormwater credits are popular incentives for home and business owners to make necessary improvements. Our attached report suggests expanding these programs and proposes other creative ways that have a “multiplier effect” in encouraging private investment in flood mitigation.

Climate change will not stop in ten years – it is unreasonable to think of Alexandria’s Flood Action Program as having an end-date. These two suggestions enable the continuous public

and private investment that is necessary to meet the challenge of worsening stormwater flooding in Alexandria over the years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Alexandria's Flood Action Program. The Committee stands ready to assist city government in engaging the residents in the neighborhoods most impacted by stormwater flooding and the construction of large capacity-building projects.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John P. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".