

FY 2026 Budget Comments Received



New comments on top.

Date Received	Comment
Tuesday, April 22, 2025	<p>As a member of the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission (and as a citizen of Alexandria), I'd like to urge the City Council to support the budget amendment that provides \$76,800 in funding for additional Therapeutic Recreation seasonal staff members to support the Out of School Time program.</p> <p>This year, the CYFCC has examined the importance of having high quality out-of-school time (OST) activities such as sports, tutoring programs, and career readiness initiatives available to our youth. These programs provide youth with a safe "third space" (beyond formal schooltime and home) to forge relationships, develop skills, and promote a sense of belonging and shared identity. They also provide parents with the reassurance that their children are in a safe, supportive environment during out of school hours.</p> <p>Despite the existence of a robust array of programs, far too few of our City's youth participate in these OST programs. According to the Developmental Assets survey administered by Alexandria City Public Schools, under 50% of youth surveyed reported participating regularly in a youth program in 2022, which represents a 10% decrease since 2010. Black, Asian, and Latino students are significantly less likely to participate in a youth program when compared with White students. Perhaps not coincidentally, only 17% of Alexandria youth reported that they felt their community values them.</p> <p>One of the groups most in need of OST programming is students with disabilities, due to an array of issues, one of which is the lack of staff trained to work successfully with these young people. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support this General Fund amendment.</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <p>Catherine Clinger</p>
Monday, April 7, 2025	<p>Dear City council & 'city staff,</p> <p>Q) who do you hate the legal tax paying citizens of Alexandria ?</p> <p>You do everything possible to make our lives miserable with higher fees & taxes, more crime , declining public health, degrading & unsafe roads, mismanaged public education and wasteful & inefficient public transportation.</p> <p>Get woke go broke</p> <p>Make Alexandria safe again</p> <p>Make Alexandria healthy again</p> <p>Make Alexandria wealthy again</p> <p>Make Alexandria great again</p> <p>Make America safe again</p> <p>Make America healthy again</p> <p>Make America wealthy again</p> <p>Make America great again</p>
Friday, April 4, 2025	<p>It is extremely concerning to me that the steep property tax rate of last year is now baked into the budget. It is disingenuous to say there is no increase, when the property assessment upon which it is based is raised every single year. The property owners' tax is raised every year. It now akin to tithing to the city. It is too high. Please think about how this is driving away seniors/retirees, who may have bought their home decades ago. Not everyone in a wealthier neighborhood is rich.</p> <p>--The Real Estate Tax Relief Program for Elderly & Disabled Persons needs serious adjustment. The income ceilings need to be raised considerably with more nuanced percentages for relief. Please.</p> <p>--Those qualifying for relief as disabled should be re-evaluated. If they can work as a full-time, gainfully employed person, they should not have this relief. A case-by-case reassessment is needed.</p> <p>--City Council does not deny themselves any "nice to have" projects. To afford the school budget, in particular, the Council needs to adopt a more analytical approach and delay or deny many "nice to have" projects.</p> <p>--More revenue should be sought from businesses, rather than homeowners. Please.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my feedback. This is a time of high anxiety, and the city property taxes are simply too steep.</p>
Thursday, April 3, 2025	<p>Hi, Kaliel</p> <p>I could use the job as well as shorter wait times between buses.</p> <p>Thanks</p>
Thursday, April 3, 2025	<p>More frequent bus line 32</p>
Wednesday, April 2, 2025	<p>Has City Council considered examining the aftercare program fees to determine if they should be raised for families above a certain income level? Raising aftercare program fees seems like it could be a good source of revenue for recreation-related costs in the ACPS budget, e.g. middle school athletic program expansion.</p>
Wednesday, April 2, 2025	<p>As housing and other prices continue to rise in the area, a budget that only provides a step increase is not enough for staff . It is rapidly becoming a situation where teachers can not afford to either live or work in ACPS.</p>

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Tuesday, April 1, 2025	<p>Dear Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>My name is Fernando Torrez and I am a member of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office Community Advisory Board (ASO CAB). As an ASO CAB board member, I have seen firsthand the impact that understaffing has on incarcerated individuals. Eliminating classification counselor positions will severely limit access to vital services such as ID and birth certificate assistance, reentry resources, and community connections. Without these services, individuals leaving incarceration will struggle to reintegrate, placing greater strain on our city's resources elsewhere.</p> <p>Classification counselors play a crucial role in rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Studies show that access to these services lowers repeat offenses and improves reentry success. Removing these positions will likely increase strain on remaining staff and lead to higher long-term incarceration costs.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider and add at least one of the two classification counselor positions back into the ASO budget. This investment will support both the individuals in our system and the broader Alexandria community.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
Tuesday, April 1, 2025	<p>Hello and thank you for the opportunity to comment. I ride the DASH 32 bus several times a week to commute between home and work. My experience has been positive on this bus line and would like to see the run frequency increase. Increasing the number of runs would allow me a bit more flexibility in my commute which I would greatly appreciate. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Tuesday, April 1, 2025	<p>As a retired ACPS teacher it is my opinion that in today's world, the city needs to make sure that teachers are compensated fairly. This includes step, MRA, and a salary increase commensurate with the surrounding counties.</p> <p>The city needs to work hard to bring more businesses into the city to help raise revenue. It seems like all the city is doing is focusing on residential housing. Of course the more residential housing the more the schools need...new buildings, more staff, etc.</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>Please fund Alexandria City Public Schools at the level (or higher) requested by the Superintendent.</p> <p>I understand that the City Council has an \$80 million fund balance to draw from. In addition, I've heard that you are 8.6% above your self-imposed target expenditures for emergencies.</p> <p>Take a look at what's happened in recent years by not investing in our infrastructures. First, our Metro service was severely interrupted when our part of the Blue Line was closed for months in order to repair neglected repairs on outdoor track work. Then, we needed to address sewage overflows that hadn't been addressed for many years through the RiverRenew project. Let's not do the same thing with our investment in education.</p> <p>In recent years, I've heard of teachers leaving ACPS to take better jobs in neighboring districts like Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. Those jurisdictions are drawing on their fund balance.</p> <p>If we can follow Fairfax and others in school closing decisions when it snows, we can also follow their lead to prioritize education.</p> <p>Don't punish our kids because past officials didn't grow schools as they should have. Without the resources needed, we won't be able to provide the best education possible for our kids, plain and simple.</p> <p>I realize City Council has tough choices to make in regards to the budget, but please make cuts in other areas besides education. I've been living in Old Town since 2005 following 10 years living in DC, and can confidently say that the services provided by the City of Alexandria are superior to those offered by DC, particularly in terms of sanitation, transportation, and overall response time/customer service when issues get reported. I've seen many families move out of Alexandria to have access to better schools for their kids, so, investing in ACPS can not only attract future residents but retain them as well.</p> <p>Should City Council fail to fund schools at necessary levels, I'm one of many voters who will take note when it comes time to vote in the next elections.</p> <p>Thanks for your time and consideration.</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I am told there is a 7 million dollar difference between the FY2026 budget approved by the Alexandria School Board and the City Manager's proposed allocation. I am concerned that the City is not focusing adequate resources for the support of students in Alexandria City Public Schools.</p> <p>In addition, ACPS only has ONE high school, and our student population is growing and is expected to grow even more in the coming years as the Landmark development continues in the West End.</p> <p>I urge the City Council to re-examine the needs as outlined in the FY2026 School Board budget and fully fund them to support our children. Without it, ACHS cannot afford to hire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 6 NEW core teachers in Math, Science and English; · Up to 4 NEW English Language (EL) teachers for the largest and most diverse high school in the state; and, · 1 NEW Special Education teacher for the 1300+ students at AC who receive special services. <p>Great teachers make great schools. But this cannot happen unless you support the teachers. Be Better!</p> <p>Thank you, Ray Espiritu</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>Good Afternoon,</p> <p>I am a city resident, apparent of a student at Alexandria City High School, and an employee of Alexandria City Public Schools.</p> <p>I implore you to please support and pass the proposed School Board budget.</p> <p>I am especially concerned about the lack of a market rate adjustment or cost-of-living adjustment.</p> <p>I have been an educator for 30 years and plan involved in our hiring and retention. We are not going to be able to hire or retain the most qualified teacher candidates. The pool of qualified educators is smaller and smaller each year. If we cannot compete with our neighboring jurisdictions our children will suffer.</p> <p>Please support the Alexandria City Public Schools.</p> <p>Sincerely, Maggie Tran</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>Everywhere I look, new building is happening - especially on the West End. I have no issues with housing, but the schools are already crowded. My biggest priority as a tax payer is well funded schools. Without an educated population, our city will fall apart. More housing requires more teachers. You opened a whole 2nd building at the high school level and did not increase staffing and it was a disaster. Kids spent days going between buildings losing valuable instructional time. Well I think we can be one connected high school. We will need to staff it like two separate buildings a.k.a. two separate high schools. When you don't compensate your teachers competitively and staff, the buildings adequately, you will lose our most talented teachers talented teachers are more than just instructional They are the ones who coach and inspire new teachers. You need to make sure our staff gets its MRA and the new positions are staffed. Trust the superintendent proposal and do what needs to be done.</p>

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Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>We are in desperate need of more FTE positions for SPED and ELL departments. These students are not receiving the full support that they should be due to a constant lack of staffing. And the good teachers we have in these departments end up leaving because other schools offer them more. We cannot cut positions that support our most vulnerable students. But, there are definitely expenses that can be cut to preserve these spots. For example, we are spending a couple million on new math textbooks that no math teacher wants, but we are being told we have to spend. A huge waste of money that can be repurposed to something else. Also, in helping with recruiting last year I saw money being sent to fly people to all kinds of states and put them up in hotels instead of focusing on recruiting locally, which requires so much less money.</p> <p>There is money being wasted in all kinds of places, yet important positions are being cut or not funded. ACPS needs to better look at how it's spending some of its money, and getting teacher input on what funds are worth spending versus not could help.</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - need to add SHADE to playgrounds at our rec centers and schools to make them accessible to all during the hot summer months and beyond. They are not usable when there is a lack of proper shade to keep the equipment usable. - complete Holmes Run trail in a timely manner (including the completion of the trail to Dora Kelley/Dowden Pool) and upkeep maintenance regularly. Add night time lighting for safety if studies indicate it does improve safety. Clean up the unpaved trails regularly as pedestrians/homeless people currently trash them with garbage. Presence of law enforcement/ security would help to keep families feel safe. - reinforce walking bridge connecting Holmes Run trail to N Pickett St with additional railing. Currently the railing structure is completely open and poses risk to injury particularly children and the elderly. Have witnessed too many close calls on people being pushed too close to the open railings and tripping close to the edge. It is a highly frequented bridge connecting Seminary Hill to the Beatley library, Ben Brenman, West End farmers market, and businesses on Duke. - more outlooks along Holmes Run trail overlooking the creek. More family friendly structures along the trail. The demographics in Seminary Hill are changing with families with younger children coming in the last five years and currently. - Taney Ave in front of Patrick Henry has been completely obliterated after construction vehicles have ripped up the pavement. Potholes need to be filled. - N Jordan Street between Duke and Seminary Road need complete rehabilitation. The number of potholes is ridiculous. - All Veterans Park needs a facelift. Add a shaded playground, a tennis court, a mobile coffee shop, make it a place where community can gather. It's severely underutilized space considering how centrally located it is right by the trail and the library. - continue to develop up Foxchase shopping center! It is going in the right direction! - add tennis courts to Brookvalley Park! Or pickle ball courts. Update the playground.
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am an ACPS teacher, parent and community member. I am concerned that ACPS presents a false dilemma to the community to fully fund their requested budget or they will be forced to cut student facing positions. This obviously is not the only way to balance the ACPS budget.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years, spending has increased disproportionately for central office positions and departments when compared to student facing positions, which includes much needed general education, EL and special education teachers. Student-staffing ratios have increased, which negatively impacts student learning & safety and contributes to teacher burnout. Student enrollment is growing and changing, but we don't see a relevant growth and change in the number and type of positions for ACPS staff that work directly with students. Instead, we see a 29% increase in spending for the HR department and 4 new positions.</p> <p>ACPS does not need more funding from the City of Alexandria. School staff should be directed to find different ways to balance the ACPS budget that recognize the shifting demographics of our student population and prioritize student learning.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kelley Organeck</p>
Monday, March 31, 2025	<p>There is a war on public education. Alexandria City Public Schools cannot afford to lose teachers due to lack of compensation. The budget process needs to strongly look at where funds can be cut/adjusted to ensure teachers get a step increase and MRA. Teaching is only getting harder and we don't want to lose our best staff to neighboring districts.</p>
Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I'm an Alexandria city high school parent writing to strongly advocate for the City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding at risk – and the disproportionate impact that will have on our most at-risk students - the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>This funding directly addresses urgent needs within our community, particularly at Alexandria City High School (ACHS). Key priorities in the budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •6 new core teachers to address current class sizes and anticipate future enrollment increases. •1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. •4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS. •4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff. •A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>These positions are vital to meeting the academic and safety needs of our students. More core teachers would reduce the burden of students switching campuses by allowing additional sections of each subject at both campuses.</p> <p>Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources. A partially funded budget could force detrimental cuts across the division, compromising the quality of education and support our students deserve.</p> <p>Now is the time for decisive action to support our schools and community. I urge you to review the proposed budget through the lens of its impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria's parents, teachers and families.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration!</p>

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Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, City Council Members and City Manager Parajon,</p> <p>I am an Alexandria City High School community member writing to strongly advocate for the City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding at risk – and the disproportionate impact that will have on our most at-risk students - the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 new core teachers to address current class sizes 1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. 4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS 4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>Now is the time for decisive action to support our schools and community! I urge you to review the proposed budget for the impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria’s parents, teachers and families.</p> <p>Thank you for your support of the teachers, students and staff of Alexandria City High School.</p> <p>Sincerely, Judy Davis</p>
Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>My name is Rosemarie Davis and I am a member of the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office Community Advisory Board (ASO CAB). As an ASO CAB board member, I have seen firsthand the impact that understaffing has on incarcerated individuals. Eliminating classification counselor positions will severely limit access to vital services such as ID and birth certificate assistance, reentry resources, and community connections. Without these services, individuals leaving incarceration will struggle to reintegrate, placing greater strain on our city’s resources elsewhere.</p> <p>Classification counselors play a crucial role in rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Studies show that access to these services lowers repeat offenses and improves reentry success. Removing these positions will likely increase strain on remaining staff and lead to higher long-term incarceration costs.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider and add at least one of the two classification counselor positions back into the ASO budget. This investment will support both the individuals in our system and the broader Alexandria community.</p> <p>Sincerely, Rosemarie Davis</p>
Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>My name is Roberto Gomez, and I am a member of the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office Community Advisory Board (ASO CAB). As an ASO CAB board member, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that understaffing has on incarcerated individuals. Eliminating classification counselor positions will severely limit access to vital services such as ID and birth certificate assistance, reentry resources, and community connections. Without these services, individuals leaving incarceration will struggle to reintegrate, placing greater strain on our city’s resources elsewhere.</p> <p>Classification counselors play a crucial role in rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Studies show that access to these services lowers repeat offenses and improves reentry success. Removing these positions will likely increase strain on remaining staff and lead to higher long-term incarceration costs.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider and add at least one of the two classification counselor positions back into the ASO budget. This investment will support both the individuals in our system and the broader Alexandria community.</p> <p>Sincerely, Roberto Gomez</p>
Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>My name is Roberto Gomez, and I am a member of the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office Community Advisory Board (ASO CAB). As an ASO CAB board member, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that understaffing has on incarcerated individuals. Eliminating classification counselor positions will severely limit access to vital services such as ID and birth certificate assistance, reentry resources, and community connections. Without these services, individuals leaving incarceration will struggle to reintegrate, placing greater strain on our city’s resources elsewhere.</p> <p>Classification counselors play a crucial role in rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Studies show that access to these services lowers repeat offenses and improves reentry success. Removing these positions will likely increase strain on remaining staff and lead to higher long-term incarceration costs.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider and add at least one of the two classification counselor positions back into the ASO budget. This investment will support both the individuals in our system and the broader Alexandria community.</p> <p>Sincerely, Roberto Gomez</p>
Sunday, March 30, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins & City Council Members,</p> <p>I am very grateful for the support Council provided our school last year by approving a tax increase to fund the School Board additions. I also know this year is a very different reality.</p> <p>I, like many other ACPS parents and supporters, are asking that you consider allocating more funding to our school division than what the City Manager has proposed. Additional funding will allow ACPS to hire more teachers and/or school-based positions that are sorely needed due to increased school enrollment projections and the complexities of a two HS campus model. The VA DOE will also be implementing a new accreditation accountability model which will now include English Language Learner students, so it will be critical to ensure there are an adequate number of ELL teachers to prepare our students for testing.</p> <p>We are truly appreciative of City Council’s support for our students and staff.</p> <p>Thank you very much, Maureen McNulty</p>

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Saturday, March 29, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, City Council Members and City Manager Parajon,</p> <p>I am an Alexandria City High School parent writing to strongly advocate for the City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding at risk – and the disproportionate impact that will have on our most at-risk students - the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>This funding directly addresses urgent needs within our community, particularly at Alexandria City High School (ACHS). Key priorities in the budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 new core teachers to address current class sizes and anticipate future enrollment increases. 1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. 4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS. 4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff. A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>These Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) are vital to meeting the academic and safety needs of our students. More core teachers would also reduce the logistical burden of students switching campuses by allowing additional sections of each subject at both campuses.</p> <p>Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources. A partially funded budget could force detrimental cuts across the division, compromising the quality of education and support our students deserve.</p> <p>Now is the time for decisive action to support our schools and community. I urge you to review the proposed budget through the lens of its impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria's parents, teachers and families.</p> <p>Thank you for your support of the teachers, students and staff of Alexandria City High School.</p> <p>Sincerely, Erin White</p>
Saturday, March 29, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, City Council Members and City Manager Parajon,</p> <p>I am an Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) parent and community member. I am writing to strongly advocate for the City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding at risk – and the disproportionate impact that will have on our most at-risk students - the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>This funding directly addresses urgent needs within our community, particularly at Alexandria City High School (ACHS). Key priorities in the budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 new core teachers to address current class sizes and anticipate future enrollment increases. 1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. 4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS. 4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff. A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>These Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) are vital to meeting the academic and safety needs of our students. More core teachers would also reduce the logistical burden of students switching campuses by allowing additional sections of each subject at both campuses.</p> <p>Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources. A partially funded budget could force detrimental cuts across the division, compromising the quality of education and support our students deserve.</p> <p>Now is the time for decisive action to support our schools and community. I urge you to review the proposed budget through the lens of its impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria's parents, teachers and families.</p> <p>Thank you for your support of the teachers, students and staff of Alexandria City High School.</p> <p>Sincerely, Julia Egy</p>
Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>Please FULLY FUND THE ACPS FY 2026 SCHOOL BOARD-APPROVED BUDGET. Both my kids go to ACHS and the school needs 6 new core teachers, 1 Special Education Teacher, 4 English Language teachers, 4 school security guards and a 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff. Those additional FTEs would address current class sizes and the anticipated increase in enrollment next year. More core teachers would also minimize the need to switch campuses as more sections of each subject would be available at both.</p> <p>PLEASE FULLY FUNDING THE ACPS FY 2026 SCHOOL BOARD-APPROVED BUDGET.</p> <p>Thank you, Katy Matthews</p>

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Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>Dear Members of the Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>I am writing as a concerned parent to strongly advocate for City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding uncertain, the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>This funding directly addresses urgent needs within our community, particularly at Alexandria City High School (ACHS). Key priorities in the budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 new core teachers to address current class sizes and anticipate future enrollment increases. - 1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. - 4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS. - 4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff. - A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>These Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) are vital to meeting the academic and safety needs of our students. More core teachers would also reduce the logistical burden of students switching campuses by allowing additional sections of each subject at both campuses.</p> <p>There is a difference of \$4,300,014 between Superintendent Dr. Melanie Kay Wyatt's budget and the City Manager's proposal, and a difference of \$7,000,014 between the School Board's budget and the City Manager's proposal. The City Council has an \$80 million fund balance available for use. Although the Council typically aims to maintain 15% of target expenditures as a spendable fund balance for emergencies, it currently holds 23.6%, which is 8.6% above the self-imposed target.</p> <p>It is also noteworthy that neighboring jurisdictions such as Arlington, Fairfax, and Falls Church are facing similar financial conditions but are utilizing their fund balances. This ultimately reflects the priorities of the City Council. The City of Alexandria experienced 35 years without investing in school infrastructure—no new buildings were constructed between 1965 and 2000—despite continuous growth during that period. As a result, we now need to either build new schools or significantly expand existing ones. The Capital Improvement Plan for the City has increased costs, creating a debt burden that impacts our operating budget. However, it is important that our children do not suffer due to past failures to properly expand and maintain school infrastructure.</p> <p>Without the necessary resources, we simply cannot provide the best possible education for our children. Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources. A partially funded budget could force detrimental cuts across the division, compromising the quality of education and support our students deserve.</p> <p>I urge you to review the proposed budget through the lens of its impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria's residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to our community's future.</p> <p>Sincerely, Rachel A. Dixon</p>
Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>Dear Decision Makers,</p> <p>Alexandria city needs FULL 100% school funding. We are a community driven by greatness and in order to provide for our students, we must deliver on a fully funded school budget. Budget shortfalls would result in teacher attrition, and it will be the good teachers that leave. Alexandria does not match the quality salaries of surrounding counties and private schools. If we want our students to succeed in basic reading and writing milestones, we need quality instruction. And those teacher deserve quality paychecks. In addition, our city continues to grow, grow, grow but our schools are not sufficient for the number of students. The Capital Improvement Plan for the City went up in cost and now we have to pay the debt which is hurting our operating side, but our kids shouldn't be punished because past officials didn't grow schools as they should have. In fact, our kids shouldn't be punished at all. After surviving through a global pandemic and now living in fear of the Trump administration, we owe it to your kids to provide the best school experience that we can. Please fund our schools because we know our federal leaders do not want to support us in any way. Thank you.</p>
Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>As the leaders of our city I would like to remind you that excellent schools are the cornerstone of thriving communities. Our infrastructure needs were ignored in the past and we are paying that price now. We will lose the best teachers and administrators if our funding needs are not met. ACPS faces challenges far greater than most other school systems and we need a city council that recognizes that and makes funding our schools a priority. Our kids deserve it and the community at large will benefit.</p>
Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, City Council Members and City Manager Parajon,</p> <p>I am an Alexandria City High School parent writing to strongly advocate for the City Council to fully fund the ACPS FY 2026 School Board-approved budget. With state and federal funding at risk – and the disproportionate impact that will have on our most at-risk students - the importance of ensuring adequate resources for our schools has never been more critical.</p> <p>This funding directly addresses urgent needs within our community, particularly at Alexandria City High School (ACHS). Key priorities in the budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 new core teachers to address current class sizes and anticipate future enrollment increases. 1 Special Education Teacher to provide essential support to students with disabilities. 4 English Language Teachers, designated for schools with the highest needs, such as ACHS. 4 school security guards to enhance safety for students and staff. A 1% Market Rate Adjustment for all eligible staff, to attract and retain high-quality educators. <p>These Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) are vital to meeting the academic and safety needs of our students. More core teachers would also reduce the logistical burden of students switching campuses by allowing additional sections of each subject at both campuses.</p> <p>Fully funding the ACPS FY 2026 budget is the only way to guarantee these much-needed resources. A partially funded budget could force detrimental cuts across the division, compromising the quality of education and support our students deserve.</p> <p>Now is the time for decisive action to support our schools and community. I urge you to review the proposed budget through the lens of its impact on our students and ensure it aligns with the priorities of Alexandria's parents, teachers and families.</p> <p>Thank you for your support of the teachers, students and staff of Alexandria City High School!</p> <p>Best, Missy Estabrook</p>

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Friday, March 28, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins & Distinguished Members of the Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>I am writing to urge you to fully fund the FY 2026 School Board-Approved Budget. We are a loyal ACPS family--my parents graduated from GW High School in 1961; our older daughter is a 2024 graduate of ACHS now attending UVA; and our younger daughter is an 11th grade special education student at ACHS. I have been active in the PTAs at Naomi Brooks and ACHS and am a longtime advocate for ACPS.</p> <p>Over the past 14 years in ACPS, we have witnessed an ever-growing student body but static facilities. Over the past two years at the ACHS King Street campus, the overcrowding has led to frequent student fights. That combined with administrative chaos that led to a significant number of teachers leaving caused severe anxiety in my older daughter that required therapy and medication. I'm having a harder time recommending ACPS to new families, and I don't want that to be the case.</p> <p>ACPS has a chance right now to continue on an upward trajectory that started with the new Minnie Howard building. In one year we have already seen that the lower number of students in that building has made a demonstrable difference in the culture and environment. We can't afford to go backwards.</p> <p>ACHS in particular needs to retain its hardworking teachers and recruit & hire new ones, especially in special education, through MRA for eligible staff and competitive salaries. I want to see an ACPS that is ahead of hiring, not always being behind it with students frequently missing weeks--and sometimes months--of instruction. It needs to reinforce school security and increase the number of bilingual teachers and staff to help our students trying to adjust to a new country and language.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Council to fully fund ACPS to give our children and teachers the learning environment they need and deserve.</p> <p>Thank you, Kristen Creighton</p>
Wednesday, March 26, 2025	<p>Please consider adding more funding to the ACPS school budget.</p> <p>The current city allocation of a 3% increase on last year's budget does not allow for teachers to be adequately increased for retention (or to match what is being offered city employees in non-collective bargained positions) in addition to allowing for staffing to correspond with the increased enrollment for next year. ACPS has also proposed several much needed school based positions to be added this year, including much needed EL staff, social workers, psychologists, and core subject teachers to help with high class sizes at the high school.</p> <p>With next school year being before the redistricting lines go into effect, it is vital that we can staff school sufficiently in order to avoid already over utilized schools getting even larger.</p> <p>Schools need more funding from the state, but until we can advocate successfully for increase state funding, we have young people in Alexandria that need to be educated now. ACPS has made steady positive progress with increase SOL schools and decreased graduation drop out rates. Let's keep the positive momentum going.</p>
Wednesday, March 26, 2025	<p>More frequent for Dash line 32 and 30 please.</p>
Tuesday, March 25, 2025	<p>I hoped to speak to someone at the Budget Bonanza today but unfortunately it shutdown before 1:45PM when the stated end time was 2PM.</p> <p>I'm here to advocate for the Alexandria City High School Community.</p> <p>Please fund our 6 much needed new core teachers, our 4 elementary teachers, 1 special education teacher and 4 security guards.</p> <p>The bigger high school in Virginia needs those resources to help our 4,700+ students and 4 campuses succeed. Thank you!</p>
Tuesday, March 25, 2025	<p>Public Access to Conference on the Second (2) floor</p> <p>Discuss Budget:</p>
Tuesday, March 25, 2025	<p>Public Access to Conference on the second (2) floor</p> <p>Discuss Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waterfront: Currently flooding - Cybersecurity hygiene - Budget for Cybersecurity
Thursday, March 20, 2025	<p>I appreciate the City's investments in infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and education in the FY 2026 budget. Cybersecurity must be part of this discussion. The systems that power our city—emergency services, flood mitigation, public transit, hospitals, and schools—depend on digital technology that needs protection to stay operational.</p> <p>Many of Alexandria's critical services rely on cloud platforms, automated control systems, smart sensors, and interconnected databases. Security gaps in these systems can lead to service outages, data breaches, and operational failures that impact residents. Investing in cybersecurity protects public services from these risks.</p> <p>Some key areas where cybersecurity plays a role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 911 and Emergency Services – Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, radio networks, and GPS tracking allow first responders to coordinate effectively. These systems need security to prevent interference and downtime. - Flood Mitigation Systems – Stormwater pumps and floodgates are controlled by Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems. Unauthorized access can disrupt flood response efforts. - Public Transit – GPS-based fleet tracking, traffic signal controls, and digital fare payment systems keep transportation running. Cyber protections are needed to prevent disruptions. - Hospitals and Healthcare – Electronic health records (EHRs), medical IoT devices, and patient scheduling platforms require security to prevent unauthorized access and system failures. - Schools and Education – Learning management systems, cloud storage for student records, and school administrative networks need protection from data breaches and ransomware attacks. <p>Cybersecurity funding ensures these systems remain secure, reliable, and resilient.</p> <p>If cybersecurity isn't already part of the City's budget discussions, I want to be part of the conversation. As an Alexandrian and Cybersecurity Analytics Professional, I help municipalities secure critical infrastructure, identify risks, and strengthen essential services.</p> <p>A proactive approach today ensures our city's critical services remain secure tomorrow.</p>

Date Received	Comment
Thursday, March 20, 2025	Please fully fund the Superintendents budget for Alexandria City Public Schools.
Thursday, March 20, 2025	Please fully fund the Superintendents budget for Alexandria City Public Schools.
Thursday, March 20, 2025	Fully funding Alexandria city public schools for FY 2026 is essential for the success of our students
Thursday, March 20, 2025	<p>Fully funding the 2026 budget is essential for the success of our students! With so much crisis in our country, the only hope we have for a positive future is to give our younger generation every advantage. We cannot let them down. Besides, good schools are critical for strong local economies.</p> <p>We critically need the proposed 6 new core teachers in math, science, social studies and English.</p> <p>Our immigrant neighbors and mixed status families deserve two new English language teachers.</p> <p>Four new security guards will keep our kids safer in this era of scary school shootings.</p> <p>And one new American Sign Language teacher will help our deaf students excel.</p> <p>As the biggest high school in Virginia with 4700+ students and 500+ teachers and staff on four campuses, this truly is the bare minimum. And with state and federal funding drying up, we cannot take chances on the future of our children.</p>
Thursday, March 20, 2025	Fully funding Alexandria city public schools in the FY 2026 budget is essential for the success of our students! At ACHS, We're asking for 6 new core teachers in math, science, social studies and English. Two new English language teachers for our immigrant and mixed status families. Four new security guards. And one new American Sign Language teacher. As the biggest high school in Virginia with 4700+ students and 500+ teachers and staff on four campuses, this is the bare minimum. And with state and federal funding drying up, we cannot take chances on the future of our children. Great public schools = great communities!
Thursday, March 20, 2025	We're need 6 more core teachers in math, science, social studies and English. We need two new English language teachers for our immigrant and mixed-status families. We also need more security guards. And we need at least one new American Sign Language teacher. As the biggest high school in Virginia with 4700+ students and 500+ teachers and staff on four campuses, this is the bare minimum we require. Our children deserve to have a variety of skill sets to pursue when mapping out their careers. And we ALL will want even manual laborers to have the knowledge to step in to provide SOME assistance when needed.
Wednesday, March 19, 2025	<p>Dear Alexandria City Council & Staff,</p> <p>Please include money to fund staffing hours and implementation of quick-build street safety projects. With low-cost, quick-build measures like street bollards or paint on the road, we can seriously advance our Vision Zero goals and make our city a much safer place to navigate.</p> <p>There are so many opportunities to tighten turning radii at intersections, to neck down dangerous crosswalks on routes to school, and many others as identified by the community that would require minimal expenditure of funds for major safety gains. But the City's long, arduous process of study-outreach-contract-build unnecessarily puts vulnerable road users at risk while the process percolates to completion.</p> <p>To fill this safety gap, Council should champion and Staff should execute incremental street safety improvements that are easy to build and easy to reverse, as needed. Incrementally improving street safety is a proven approach and one which Alexandria should adopt and fund. Please include funding for this quick-build street safety projects in the FY26 budget.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of this request.</p> <p>William Buschur</p>
Monday, March 17, 2025	<p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, Vice Mayor Bagley, and Members of Council,</p> <p>I am a member of Friends of Duncan Library, and I am writing to ask you to prioritize funding for Alexandria's libraries in the FY 2026 budget and maintain, at a minimum, the funding recommendation in the City Manager's proposed budget.</p> <p>My family has used Duncan extensively. My kids grew up playing with the educational toys and reading books there as toddlers. Now as older kids, they devour the middle grades books. I attend a free writing group, which has supported my goal of becoming a published author.</p> <p>Our libraries matter to me because they are a community gathering place dedicated to the written word.</p> <p>I'm grateful for your continued investment in our libraries, which will allow them to serve city residents of all ages and backgrounds and deliver programming that makes a positive impact on their lives.</p> <p>In 2024 Duncan Library welcomed more than 144,000 visitors. Last year 308,000 books were borrowed from Duncan Library. Last year Friends of the Duncan Library supported over 800 programs at the library including youth book clubs, an authors' consortium, after-school activities, Lego competitions, and Dungeons and Dragons for teens. Additionally, 25,000 infants, youth and teens took advantage of programs in 2024.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Monday, March 17, 2025	Don't take any bows for not raising the property tax rate after you raised it last year and this year and hiked out property tax assessments--AFTER the elections last November.
Sunday, March 16, 2025	I feel the city of Alexandria should really consider its budget when it comes to public schools. I understand education is a big priority for the school for kids, but we should really consider who actually lives in the city and who currently attends our school. I've seen a lot of students who are currently being dropped off by parents in Maryland, with a DC license plate, and are currently attending Alexandria City High School and Mini Howard. It baffles me because we spend so much money on public education when probably the majority of the kids that currently attend school in our city don't really actually live in the city of Alexandria. They are the ones who cause problems skipping school and cause students who are trying to improve themselves for the future go in downfall and become a bad influence to them.
Friday, March 14, 2025	Thank you to Mayor Gaskins, City Council and City Manager Parajon, for your continued support of Alexandria Library. I appreciate the funding for mobile hotspots and small increases for staff. As Alexandria residents face a number of impactful federal actions, we want City residents to find resources and safe spaces in the Library to navigate these transitional times. We also want to stay competitive with salaries in neighboring jurisdictions so that we can retain staff and pay them enough to live within the communities they serve. We don't want to sleep on the Alexandria Library salary increases that were implemented in December 2023, which was so welcome, needed and appreciated. We are making up years of lagging behind and have more work to do in budget planning for future FYs. For example, let's compare two similar open positions online today: an Alexandria Library branch manager requires a master's degree and starts at \$73k, versus a Prince William County branch manager that requires a high school diploma/G.E.D. and starts at \$83k. Can more be done in future FYs for Alexandria librarians and staff, particularly for those who have spent years/decades serving the system, those who innovate with new programming and services, and those who go beyond their job descriptions to reach out into Alexandria's communities? I understand the financial situation in Alexandria for FY26 is tight, and I appreciate the work you are all doing toward that.

Date Received	Comment
Tuesday, March 11, 2025	<p>These questions arise in the context of ongoing cuts to the federal workforce, which will hit some workers, including some who are Alexandria residents, near retirement age and will cause some to be forced to continue working past planned retirement. According to the Proposed Budget-in-Brief, the City budget funds a business accelerator pilot program operated by the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are funds being set aside to support business development efforts specifically by older workers? - The City's Workforce Development group previously received COVID relief funds that were used to support stipends for enrollees in the Workforce Development Program during the enrollees' 12-week internship. - Since the COVID relief funds have been exhausted, is the City making plans to identify alternate sources of funding to continue the internship program? - If so, can the City create a set-aside, offering a portion of those funds to support internships filled by older workers?
Sunday, March 9, 2025	<p>West Glebe road (Arlandria between Mt Vernon and Charles Barrett Elementary) is home to many multifamily buildings with many who rely on alternate means of transportation including bikes, pedestrians, public transit. It can be a busy and sometimes dangerous street with mostly low income children walking to school. It truly feels neglected. This street is in need of a serious look from the city—the sidewalks are TINY and cars fly through this residential area. Those on bikes are forced to ride amidst pedestrians on the tiny sidewalks because the street is notably unsafe. I advocate for PROTECTED BIKE LANES, WIDER SIDEWALKS, more regulation of traffic and potentially camera tickets, beautification and addition of vegetation to the public spaces. With the new Sanse Naja building adding density, we are in desperate need of infrastructure to protect and protect encourage safe walking and biking. Ideally before this building is finished and people move in.</p>
Saturday, March 8, 2025	<p>Warwick pool often has a line for entry as soon as it opens during peak summer weekends. At certain times last year, they were forced to limit capacity due to not having enough lifeguards on duty. Under the current operating hours schedule, many families elect to go to smaller Warwick and Charles Houston pools because the larger Old Town pool does not open until the noon. The City should allocate additional resources to RPCA to (1) extend operating hours of all the outdoor pools during peak season, and (2) hire enough lifeguards to ensure that as many residents as would like to can safely enjoy our outdoor public pools.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Peter Carlson</p>
Wednesday, March 5, 2025	<p>We need to do something to stabilize the property taxes. I have been a 20+ year resident of Alexandria and in a dual working family and do not see a plan where I can retire in Alexandria. My mortgage just went up \$200 a month and that trend will continue. We need to figure out a way to work with the residents to not put the financial pressures on homeowners. I hope you will consider this request to challenge the city council to find ways to meet residents expectations but not continue to push cost to homeowners.</p>
Wednesday, March 5, 2025	<p>Roads, Roads, Roads!</p> <p>Hello,</p> <p>Many of our roads in old town were in bad shape prior to this year's snow, but at this point, they are delapidated. There are more potholes and craters in most areas. We need an aggressive repavement plan rather than filling potholes here and there. Is there a robust plan to address this issue?</p>
Tuesday, March 4, 2025	<p>February 27, 2025</p> <p>Dear Mayor Gaskins, Vice Mayor Bagley, and esteemed members of the City Council,</p> <p>We recognize this year's city budget process is particularly challenging due to the uncertainty surrounding federal funding. In light of these complexities, we strongly encourage Council to uphold the following values as the City budget and the ACPS school budget are brought into alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safety and Inclusion: Every student—regardless of ethnicity, country of origin, language, gender identity, or sexual orientation—deserves to feel safe, supported, and respected in their school and classroom. -Equitable Access: All students should have access to nutritious meals and the school supplies they need to succeed. -Welcoming Schools: Families of every language and cultural background should feel welcomed and empowered to engage in their children's education. -Support for Educators: Teachers deserve competitive benefits, professional development opportunities, and the resources necessary to feel valued, respected, and equipped to serve their students effectively, in line with other city employees. <p>By centering these priorities, the Council can ensure that the budget reflects a commitment to the equitable success of Alexandria City students, families, and educators. We ask you to have confidence in Superintendent Dr. Kay-Wyatt's request for the necessary funding to ensure our schools continue progressing on a positive path.</p> <p>With our deepest appreciation,</p> <p>Alexandria PTA Council Executive Board 2024-2025</p> <p>Catie Brownback, President Julia Sylla, Secretary Cynthia McKeever, Treasurer Maureen McNulty, VP of Advocacy Katie Palavecino, VP of Communications Emily Godfrey, VP of Outreach Meta Viers, Past President Keisha Brooks, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Co-Chair Sue Heiler Brown, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Co-Chair</p>
Thursday, February 27, 2025	<p>What is the average real estate tax bill increase for the proposed FY26 based on real estate assessments? What is the average residential real estate property value of Alexandria for the proposed FY26?</p>
Wednesday, February 26, 2025	<p>Please increase the city employee pay scale adjustment from 1% to 2% to match the FY2025 budget. Inflation is hitting everyone hard and the city must invest in compensation to stay competitive.</p>

Date Received	Comment
Thursday, February 20, 2025	<p>Dear City of Alexandria,</p> <p>I would ask the City of Alexandria to more fully budget the personnel and money for quick-build transportation projects. Quick build projects prioritize affordable and rapid improvements to street designs using low-cost materials that can be installed quickly. Quick build projects allow the City to test out street designs in efficient and affordable ways, which if successful in achieving goals like improved street safety can later be made permanent with more permanent (and costly) materials. Well-implemented quick-build projects would save the City time and resources, while also improving safety and accessibility for residents and visitors.</p> <p>In an era where the City may not be able to rely upon the Federal government to support its infrastructure needs, quick-build projects offer a means by which the City can continue to redesign its streets to improve accessibility and safety. The City can still pursue Vision Zero and other goals in the Alexandria Mobility Plan by using quick-build projects, even in a period where funding from the Federal government may prove unreliable.</p> <p>Despite the benefits, the City of Alexandria has largely not provided the support to consider or implement quick build projects. While quick-build projects are cheaper and faster to implement than major street redesigns, they still require intention and support from the City. There is nobody at Complete Streets department to identify potential quick-build projects, to implement quick-build projects, or to evaluate the outcomes. Our current approach is ad-hoc, and provides no dedicated resources to identify and implement quick build projects that could improve our streets, reduce maintenance costs, and increase safety. Thus, I'd urge the City to budget in a specific program to identify, implement, and evaluate quick-build projects throughout the City.</p> <p>Respectfully, Dane Lauritzen</p>
Wednesday, February 12, 2025	<p>The city needs to stop spending money on leaf collection. Do a public outreach program to inform residents on the benefits of leaving leaves in their yards. Enough wasting scarce City resources to help houses look like golf courses.</p> <p>Andrew Hartsig</p>
Wednesday, January 22, 2025	<p>As a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation District, Alexandria has the authority to levy a tax on commercial property of up to \$0.125 out of \$100 of value. Our neighbors and fellow members Fairfax County and Arlington County levy this tax, but Alexandria does not. Alexandria's share of funding to the NVTA comes out of our General Fund. Alexandria should join its neighbors in levying this tax in order to achieve a better balance of revenue from commercial and residential property. Proceeds from this tax would help fund the city's transit projects without placing undue burden on residents.</p> <p>Peter D Carlson</p>
Tuesday, January 14, 2025	<p>Please consider fully funding parking enforcement in Old Town .Since the ALX traffic data was collected in 2015, for the 2016 study, there has been an unforeseen increase in delivery traffic by 400 % during peak times . Enforcing existing ordinances that prohibit double-parking, idling, or parking within 200 feet of a crosswalk might generate money as well as calm traffic. (Proactively notifying delivery based businesses could accelerate adherence.)</p> <p>Louise Watts</p>
Friday, December 13, 2024	<p>I wanted to request that the budget to add a glass recycling drop off to better serve the Del Ray, Rosemont, and North Old Town neighborhoods. The city has recognized that glass recycling is an efficient solution, but existing sites are not convenient to our neighborhood. We hope that a new drop off would increase participation in the program enough to pay for itself within a few years.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of this request.</p> <p>Aaron Goldsmith</p>
Wednesday, December 11, 2024	<p>Please budget to add a glass recycling drop off to better serve the Del Ray, Rosemont, and North Old Town neighborhoods. City materials emphasize that dropping off glass at drop off locations is the "Least expensive, most sustainable option." The existing sites are not convenient to our neighborhood. We hope that a new drop off would increase participation in the program enough to pay for itself within a few years.</p> <p>We propose considering a new drop off bin near where Main Line Boulevard dead ends. The Main Line Boulevard location is far closer to Del Ray and North Old Town than any existing drop off, but far enough from residences to avoid creating a nuisance for neighbors. I and my neighbors have developed this idea in close and deeply appreciated coordination with city staff and with the Rosemont Citizens Association's PELT committee. We are particularly thankful for Gary Hensley's work advising us and getting input from his colleagues at T&ES. City staff sound optimistic that the Main Line Boulevard location is feasible, as might be a second additional location near the Southern Towers.</p> <p>There is more about this request, including a map of existing and proposed drop off locations and photos of the potential locations at https://alx-glass.github.io</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Robert Letzler</p>
Thursday, December 5, 2024	<p>This is an opportunity to review the city's expenditures closely. With "After seeing the healthiest growth in our real estate tax base in over 15 years, the last two years have shown slowing. For 2025, we are expecting a continuation of that trend" becoming the trend, it should not be assumed that we can continue to spend as we have in the past. The city's property tax revenue may be projected to grow at 1.5%, but many residents will see a substantially larger amount on next year's real estate tax bill, as we always do. That's the reality of living in the city. If the city's expenditures are projected to exceed the inflation rate, looking for new revenue sources to cover the delta should not be the first thing done to fix the problem. A careful and possibly painful scrub of where the money should go should be first. When the "good times" return, returning some excess funds to the taxpayers should also be part of the process. You should also consider incentivizing your department heads to accomplish the year's objectives without using all the funds available. I realize that zeroing out the budget is a government mantra; maybe Alexandria can become a trendsetter in how local governments can run more efficiently. All homeowners in the city have seen their tax bills rise more than the inflation rate over the last fifteen years. As you look at the budget, remember that the tax rate is not the focus of your constituents. The focus is on how much the check is written for, and the tax rate should be set to keep the property tax bill as close to the inflation rate as possible.</p> <p>Rene Rodriguez</p>