

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 12, 2024

TO: Mayor Justin Wilson
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. It presents an analysis of Alexandria’s proposed investment in stormwater flood mitigation as contained in the City’s proposed budget for FY 2025. 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 2025 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 2025 and proposed for future years will adequately support the project plans of the Flood Action Program. The report acknowledges the orderly progress the City has made to-date in its stormwater flood mitigation efforts.

Nonetheless, the Committee recognizes that the Flood Action Program is at a critical juncture in the way that it engages Alexandria residents. Over the past two years, the orderly completion of the smaller “spot improvement” projects gave residents tangible evidence of progress. However, we are now entering a period where progress will be less visible, as the design of large capacity-building projects takes years. Actual construction for the first large project will not begin until April 2026 – a full two years from now. And, unlike the smaller spot improvements, the large projects bring with them traffic disruption and noise.

The Committee strongly urges the City to incorporate a comprehensive public outreach program with the large capacity-building projects. Such an outreach program would engage the public in the design of stormwater solutions so residents better understand the reasons for, and impact of, the large projects that will disrupt their neighborhoods. In addition, the City should establish an easy-to-follow method of reporting progress so that public support does not wane in the long periods between the start of design and project completion.

Thank you for the opportunity to support Alexandria’s Flood Action Program. The Committee stands ready to assist the City in designing an outreach program and engaging the residents in the neighborhoods most impacted by the construction of the large capacity-building projects.

