

FLOODACTION

ALEXANDRIA

MAY 2021 E-NEWSLETTER • ISSUE 1

In response to more frequent, intense climate-change-induced storm events, the City of Alexandria launched [Flood Action Alexandria](#), a multipronged program to help address flooding issues in our community. The City is committed to working with residents and businesses to mitigate the impacts of flooding and build community resiliency.

As part of this program, this e-newsletter will be released periodically to provide updates on flood mitigation efforts in Alexandria. Log in to [Alexandria eNews](#) and opt-in to "Flood Action Alexandria" to subscribe to this e-newsletter.

KEY UPDATES



Community Maintenance Work

The City performed maintenance work on existing stormwater structures to prevent flooding. Here's what was done between January and April 2021:

- 1,450 storm inlets inspected and cleaned
- 34,000 linear feet of storm pipe inspected and cleaned
- 65 storm structures repaired

- Alley closure on S. Pitt Street to mitigate alleyway flooding
- 2 damaged pipes repaired at S. Jordan Street and E. Randolph Avenue
- Over 400 tons of material removed from Hooff's Run culvert
- Street sweeping activities resumed in March with a total of 889 miles of sweeping completed

Sanitary Sewer Asset Renewal Program

The City is implementing the Sanitary Sewer Asset Renewal Program, which includes inspection and rehabilitation of City-owned sanitary sewers, lateral sewers, and manholes. You may have seen our trucks out in Del Ray and Arlandria recently. What this work can do is help to mitigate infiltration and inflow of stormwater into the sanitary sewer system during flash flood events. In short, this can reduce basement backups.

Starting in May, the City will be performing inspections to the sanitary system between Commonwealth Avenue and Richmond Highway. These inspections will continue over the next several months, with sewer rehabilitation work to follow in 2022. Other "sewer sheds" are scheduled for future months as the City looks to update the entire system. For more information, visit the City's [Sanitary Infrastructure webpage](#).

Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group

On April 6, City Council appointed nine members to the new Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group. This group will:

- Review and advise on flood mitigation activities;
- Monitor and measure progress of the City's proposed flood mitigation efforts;
- Serve as a central body for receipt and dissemination of information for the City's flood mitigation efforts; and
- Review and provide recommendations on proposed Stormwater Utility operating and capital budgets.

The Advisory Group will meet on an ad hoc basis for an initial duration of one year, with the first meeting expected to take place on [June 10, 2021](#). One position on the Advisory Group still needs to be filled: a member with interest or expertise in diversity, race, and social and inclusivity issues. Those who are interested may apply on the [Alexandria Boards and Commissions webpage](#).

Capacity and Spot Improvement Projects

City staff and consultants are currently undertaking follow up investigations in response to Neighborhood Engagement and Alex311 service requests to determine the Spot Improvement Projects in neighborhoods affected by flooding. Staff are also working on feedback received through the City's neighborhood engagement efforts and informed by

[Alex311](#) customer service requests and the [2016 City of Alexandria Storm Sewer Capacity Analysis \(CASSCA\) report](#) have been critical to this process.

The City's annual budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) was adopted by City Council [May 5, 2021](#) that includes the Stormwater Management Utility 10-Year Plan for operating and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding of \$170 million for 11 priority large-scale stormwater infrastructure capacity projects which aim to increase capacity and help mitigate flooding. The budget includes \$2.4 million annually starting FY 2022 to accelerate Spot Improvement Projects from 3-5 annual projects to 8-11 annual projects. For additional information and draft timeline, visit the [Flooding and Drainage webpage](#).

ADDITIONAL UPDATES



American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

The [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) (ARPA) was signed into law on March 11, by President Biden and includes \$1.9 trillion in funds to support community-based pandemic recovery assistance. A portion of the funds will be directed to the City of Alexandria in 2021 and 2022 and must be fully expended by December 31, 2024. This one-time boost of federal funds may be used to support costs incurred in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as, "necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure." In addition to the funds to be used on COVID-19 pandemic relief, the City will consider using a portion to further increase efforts relating to flooding and drainage spot improvement project and sewer maintenance. Community feedback in May will help guide the use of these funds as part of a future spending plan and City Council is scheduled to vote on the final spending plan July 6, 2021.

Report Flooding Concerns via Alex311

One thing we heard from you is that it is difficult to report flooding concerns via Alex311. To address this issue, the City has created a new 311 service request category called "[Flooding Concerns and Inquiries](#)". By making it easier for residents to report flooding concerns, the City can also better understand the extent and nature of flooding in Alexandria. Please refer to the [frequently asked questions sheet](#) to help guide you in determining when to use the Alex311 "Flooding Concerns and Inquiries" service request category.

Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program

To support residents and businesses who have experienced flood damage, the City is currently developing a Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program. Staff is recommending that this program provide a 50% reimbursement (up to \$5,000) for flood mitigation measures performed on private property. The program will be similar to the City Assistance Program for Sewer Backflow Prevention. More information on the Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program will be available this summer.

Legislative Achievements

The City has worked with State Senator Adam Ebbin's office on ushering changes to the Code of Virginia to allow localities to create floodproofing grant programs, effective July 1, 2021. This legislative change at the State level enables the City to move forward with developing the Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program (see above for additional details about this Program).

The City has also worked with U.S. Representative Don Beyer's office to request over \$400,000 in federal funding for Clifford Avenue, Fulton Street, and Manning Street Storm Sewer Improvements.

Should You Get Flood Insurance? FEMA is Updating its Floodplain Maps

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is updating its [floodplain maps](#) for Alexandria. These changes impact residential and commercial property owners who own property in the mapped floodplain as flood insurance is federally mandated. However, you do not need to live in a floodplain to obtain flood insurance in the City of Alexandria. The City will hold a series of [virtual meetings](#) in May and June for residents and businesses located within the new floodplain. These meetings will serve as a follow up to the [Open House event](#) that took place March 1. The City will also mail letters to individual property owners of affected properties in the coming weeks. Please refer to the [frequently asked questions sheet](#) to learn more about FEMA's updates to the City's current floodplain maps.

Stormwater Utility Fee Updates and Information

The City's [Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2022](#) includes an increase to the Stormwater Utility (SWU) fee to support the acceleration of flood mitigation efforts, including Spot and Capacity projects discussed above. It also includes increased funding for enhanced maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, stream and channel maintenance, and "State of Good Repair" by over \$2 million, annually. Billing of the SWU fee is included as a line item on the City's Real Estate Tax bill. To learn more about the fee and how to obtain fee credits, visit the City's [Stormwater Utility Fee webpage](#).

Four Mile Run Sediment Removal Project

The City, in partnership with Arlington County, is required to periodically dredge accumulated sediment in Four Mile Run to maintain the channel's conveyance capacity and minimize flooding. In 2018, an evaluation was completed to identify areas of Four Mile Run that require dredging. This year, the City will start the Four Mile Run Sediment Removal Project to restore the conveyance capacity set by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A community open house event is planned prior to the start of the project. Learn more about this project by visiting the City's [Stream & Channel Maintenance webpage](#).

STAY CONNECTED

To subscribe to this e-newsletter, log in to [Alexandria eNews](#) and opt-in to "Flood Action Alexandria". Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) to get additional updates on flooding and stormwater management from the City's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.