

# Legislative Director

Sarah Taylor

Assistant City Manager & Legislative Director



# Who is the Legislative Director?

In 2001, joined the City of Alexandria as public information specialist for the Office of Historic Alexandria, later serving as the public affairs officer in the Office of the City Manager

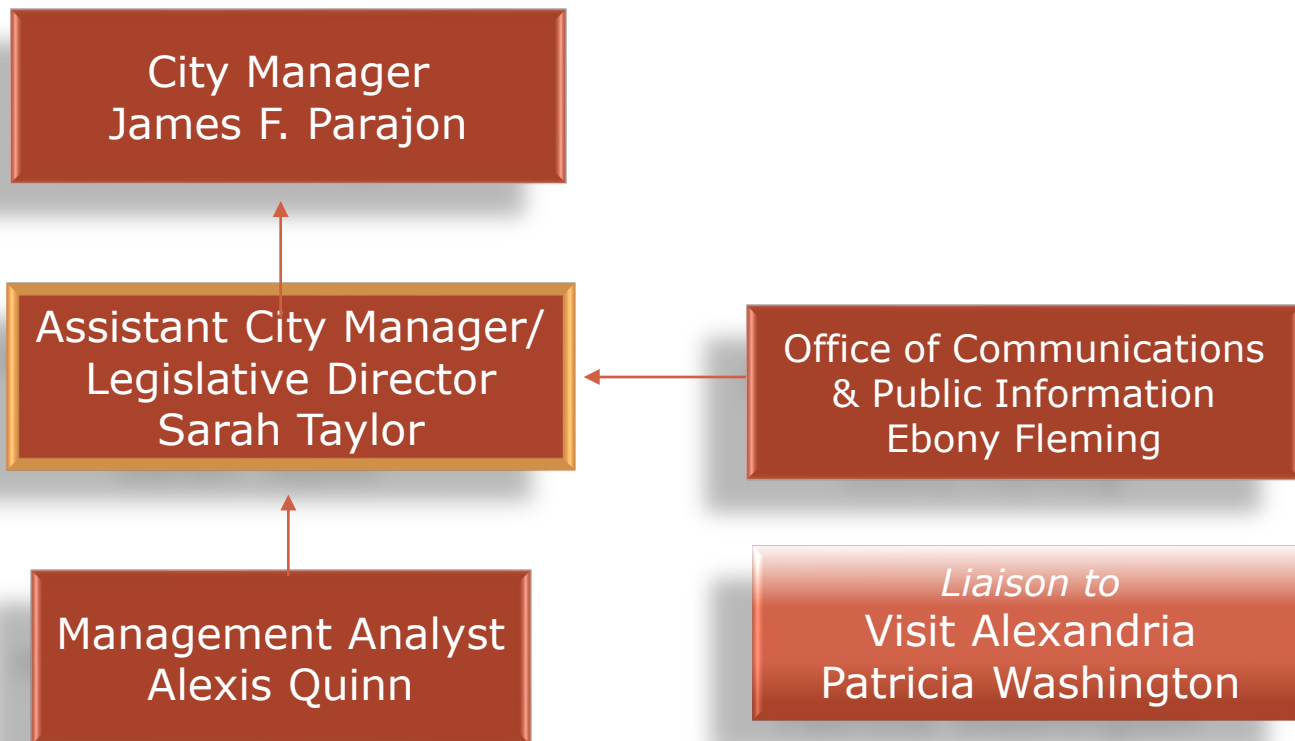
20-year career in legislative affairs, policy development, political strategy, public affairs and strategic communications

Served as Chief of Staff to the Democratic Caucus in the Oklahoma State Senate, appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore at the advice of the Minority Leader

Served in legislative, public engagement positions with Henrico County, VA, and the cities of Bristol and New Haven, CT, and as a consultant for San Francisco County and the City of Richmond, CA

Re-hired in January 2018 as the City's Legislative Director. Promoted to Assistant City Manager in March 2021.

# Legislative Director Office Organization & Assistant City Manager Reporting Structure



# What is a Legislative Director?



**What my friends  
think I do.**



**What my parents  
think I do.**



**What politicians think I do**



**What society thinks  
I do.**



**What I think I  
do.**



**What I actually do.**



# No Really...What is a Legislative Director?



- Represents City Council's legislative agenda before the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. Congress;



- Serves as the City's primary liaison to the executive branches of state and federal government;



- Coordinates, executes City efforts to influence state and federal legislation, appropriations and regulations.

# What Does the Legislative Director Do?

**The Legislative Director serves as an effective advocate for Alexandria's community needs in Richmond and Washington by:**

- Identifying and advancing legislative and budget proposals which support the City's delivery of efficient and effective services to the community and are in line with the City's strategic plan as well as its mission, vision and values;
- Identifying and working to influence and/or defeat legislative and budget proposals which have a negative impact to the City's strategic plan;
- Engaging City Council, City staff, Boards and Commissions, and the public as subject matter experts and advocates of City legislative and budget priorities.

# What Does the Legislative Director ACTUALLY Do?

Provides legislative guidance

Reviews all legislation in the General Assembly

Develops Council's annual legislative package

Tracks and reports on legislation

Coordinates with other local government legislative liaisons and associations statewide

Attends interim public hearings, meetings

Coordinates, facilitates implementation of new legislation

Represents the City with Congressional delegation



# Why Does the City Need a Legislative Director?

**Localities in Virginia request legislation every year to grant them enabling authority they do not already have.**



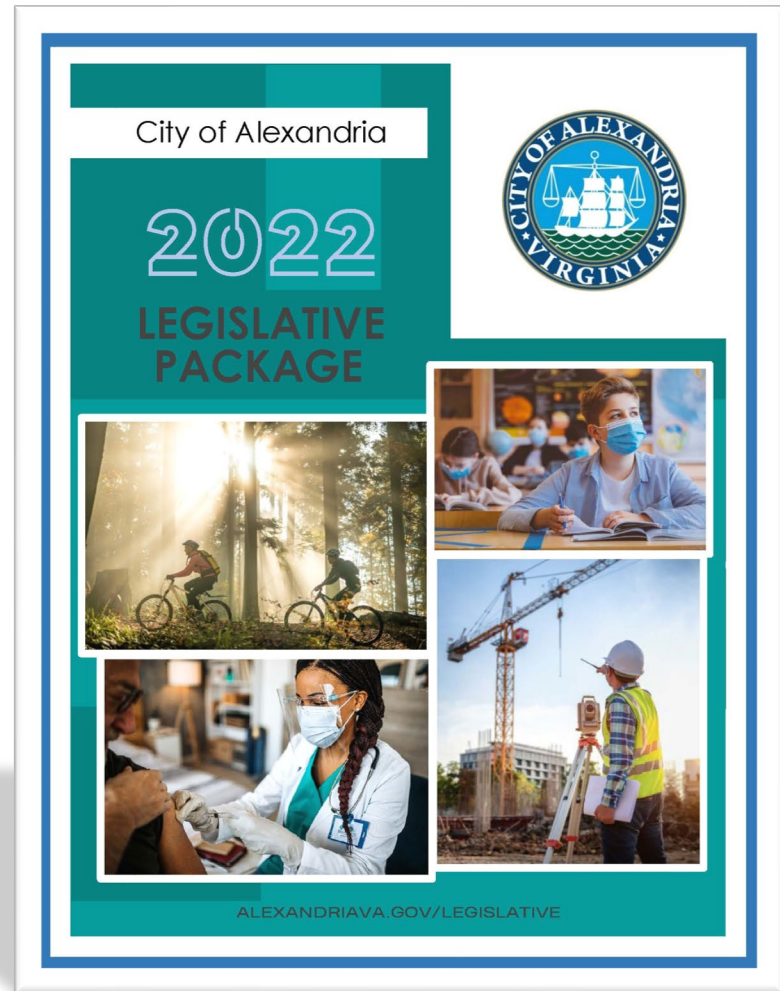
**Virginia is a Dillon Rule state**



# What is the City's Legislative Package?

Communicates the City's legislative and budget priorities to legislators, executive branch, and stakeholders

Created annually



# Identifying City Legislative Issues

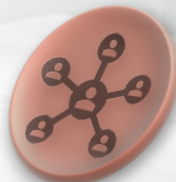
**Proposals are requested  
from City agencies.**



City Council




City Boards &  
Commissions



City  
Departments

# Questions to Build an Action Plan

- 
- A vertical pencil graphic is positioned in the center of the slide, behind the list of questions. The pencil is light-colored with a pink eraser at the top and a sharp lead tip at the bottom.
- ☐ What is the problem or issue that you want the General Assembly to address?
  - ☐ What is your proposed solution to this problem or issue?
  - ☐ Who is likely to be affected by or interested in this proposal?
  - ☐ Are others in Virginia likely to be affected by or interested in the proposal? Have you asked them to comment or concur on it?
  - ☐ What information do you have relating to this issue? How will you gather additional data and analyze information?
  - ☐ What statutes currently exist (if any) relevant to this issue?
  - ☐ Has legislation on this issue been proposed in the past?
  - ☐ Have any non-legislative actions been taken to address this issue?
  - ☐ Is anyone else taking action on this issue?
  - ☐ Who are your allies? Can you get them engaged?
  - ☐ Do you anticipate opposition to your proposed solution?
  - ☐ Does your proposal have a fiscal impact? If so, on whom?



# How Does the City Decide on the Items in the Legislative Package?

May-September

Proposals submitted to  
Legislative Director

September-October

Proposals are vetted by staff, SME,  
Legislative Subcommittee

November-December

Council reviews proposals  
with the Delegation

December

Package is considered by Council  
and at a Public Hearing

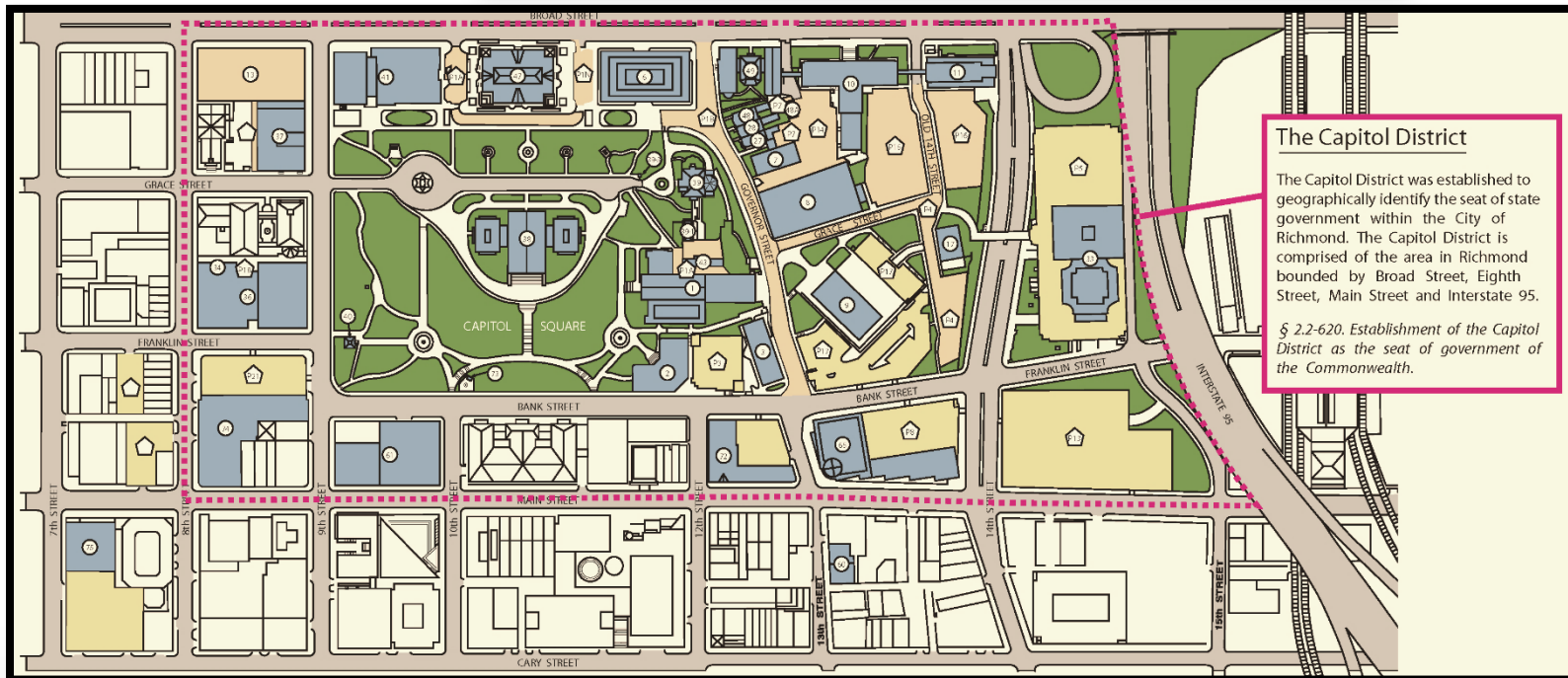
Package is approved by Council



# So, the City has Identified Its Legislative Priorities.

Now What?

The Legislative Package serves as the “**marching orders**” for the Legislative Director during session.

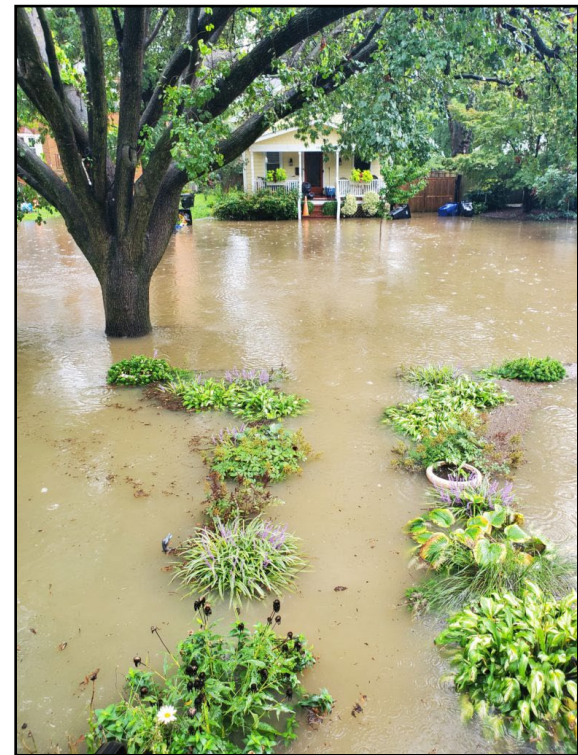




# Case Study: Flood Mitigation Grants

**The City supports authority and funding to support localities dealing with the impacts of inland and urban flooding, especially in low-income neighborhoods and impacting vulnerable communities.**

*Proposal: The City supports...legislation evolving the **existing authority** granted to localities to establish a local Stormwater Management Fund, consisting of **funds appropriated by the City**, to include the authority to use the grant funds **on private property** for **flood mitigation and protection measures** with a clear public benefit, such as floodproofing and flood protection products, and grading.*





# Case Study: Flood Mitigation Grants

SB 1309 Local stormwater assistance; flood mitigation and protection.

Introduced by: Adam P. Ebbin

## SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:

Local stormwater assistance; flood mitigation and protection. Authorizes grants from a local Stormwater Management Fund to be used for measures that are part of a comprehensive flood mitigation and protection plan adopted by the locality, including floodproofing, flood protection products, and grading. Current law allows such funds to be used only for the construction, improvement, or repair of a stormwater management facility or for erosion and sediment control.

**“as part of a comprehensive flood mitigation program...”**

**“including floodproofing, flood protection products, and grading.”**

# Case Study: Flood Mitigation Grants

## "Nature-based practices"





# Case Study: Flood Mitigation Grants

## Alexandria's Goals:

- Grant localities the authority to use local Stormwater Management Fund monies for grants to private property owners for flood mitigation and protection projects
- Ensure flexibility with regard to the kinds of projects eligible for grants



### **SUMMARY AS PASSED SENATE:** (all summaries)

Local stormwater assistance; flood mitigation and protection. Authorizes grants from a local Stormwater Management Fund to be used for flood mitigation and protection measures that are part of a comprehensive flood mitigation and protection plan adopted by the locality, and requires such grants, where practicable, to prioritize projects that include nature-based practices. Current law allows such funds to be used only for the construction, improvement, or repair of a stormwater management facility or for erosion and sediment control.

# Case Study: Flood Mitigation Grants

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia. . .*

1. That § [15.2-2114.01](#) of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ [15.2-2114.01](#). Local Stormwater Management Fund; grant moneys.

Any locality may by ordinance create a local Stormwater Management Fund consisting of appropriated local moneys for the purpose of granting funds to an owner of private property or a common interest community for stormwater management and erosion prevention on previously developed lands. Grants from such fund shall be used only for *(i) the construction, improvement, or repair of a stormwater management facility ~~or for~~; (ii) erosion and sediment control; or (iii) flood mitigation and protection measures that are part of a comprehensive flood mitigation and protection plan adopted by the locality. Grants made pursuant to clause (iii) shall, where practicable, prioritize projects that include nature-based practices.*

**Alexandria's Goals:**





# How Can You Get Involved?

Participate

Associate

Educate

Advocate

# Alexandriava.gov/Legislative

Track the development of the 2023 Legislative Package

Follow the City's legislative advocacy during the 2023 General Assembly Session

Find opportunities to engage in the process



# Questions?

## **Office of the Legislative Director**

301 King Street, Suite 3500

Alexandria, VA 22314

703.746.3963

Sarah Graham Taylor

Assistant City Manager & Legislative Director

[Sarah.taylor@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Sarah.taylor@alexandriava.gov)

[www.alexandriava.gov/Legislative](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Legislative)