



## 2014 Alexandria's Top Ten Environmental Accomplishments

The following is a list of environmental highlights that were submitted by City Departments and City-based organizations. The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, Infrastructure & Environmental Division compiled this list which includes initiatives on transportation, solid waste, stormwater and wastewater management, City parkland and natural areas, green building and energy conservation.

**Alexandria Introduced New Metroway Premium Bus Service on the Crystal City - Potomac Yard Transitway** – The Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway opened in August with the introduction of WMATA's Metroway service. The bright blue buses will provide more reliable service along the congested Route 1 corridor between the Braddock Road and Crystal City Metrorail Stations, with stops in Potomac Yard. Amenities will include a branded bus fleet, high-visibility crosswalks, and near-level boarding at stations. The Metroway service will be paid for entirely by the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, with a portion of the cost offset by passenger revenue. This project is the Washington metropolitan area's first right-of-way dedicated to premium bus operations, designed to encourage transit use along the heavily traveled Route 1 corridor. Increased use of public transportation yields significant environmental benefits and is a key lever for the City's Energy and Climate Change Action Plan.

**Highlights on Solid Waste Management** - The City's solid waste recycling rate for 2013 increased slightly to 48.8 %, a new record level. In 2014, new programs and enhancements to existing programs were introduced that moved Alexandria to the forefront of Northern Virginia's recycling efforts, and the City is aiming for 65% recycling rate by 2020.

- Yard waste is now collected separately and composted at a regional facility. Since July, 270 tons of yard waste have been composted.
- Food waste recovery stations have been opened at the four City Farmers' Markets. Residents have dropped off a total of 35 tons of food waste to be composted.
- One-hundred households are testing the practicality of using a smaller 32-gallon trash can. The program participants, called Waste Watchers, are showing that by recycling as much as they can, they barely have any trash left over. In the future, smaller trash cans may be offered as a choice for residents.
- The number of public recycling containers has been doubled from 80 to 160. These containers are located in areas of the City with many pedestrians such as parks and popular shopping areas.
- T.C. Williams High School received trash and recycling compactors which reduced trash truck visits to the high school from five a week to one. Fewer truck visits equals reductions in global warming emissions and contributes to less traffic congestion.

**Capital Bikeshare Expansion** - In August, the Capital Bikeshare system in Alexandria doubled in size with the addition of eight new stations in Carlyle and Del Ray areas. By September,

ridership had more than doubled from the same month in 2013. According to the 2013 member survey, over half of Bikeshare members used Bikeshare to access transit stops. Members also reported using Bikeshare equally for both work and non-work trips, thereby reducing the number vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in automobiles with 11% reporting they reduced annual miles driven by at least 1,000 miles. Half of the survey respondents reported driving a car less often, and sixty percent said they use a taxi less often now that they have joined Capital Bikeshare. Regionally, Capital Bikeshare members reduce about 2.1 million commute driving miles annually, reducing traffic during the peak commuting periods. It is estimated that annual commute VMT are reduced by 265 miles per member.

**City Received \$1.75 Million Under Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Grant** - The City of Alexandria received \$1.75 million financial assistance from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality through the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund Grant. This grant will be used to help fund the \$3.5 million stormwater retrofit project to enhance the treatment efficiency of stormwater and improve aquatic habitat of the Ben Brenman Pond as part of the City's stormwater regulatory requirements.

**City's Initiative on Removing Invasive Plants in 2014** - The City, with the invaluable participation of hundreds of volunteers, had a landmark year in reclaiming and restoring many acres of City natural areas and parkland through the removal of decades-old, pervasive non-native invasive plants like Callery Pear, Siberian Elm, White Mulberry, English Ivy, and others. Standout sites include the 3.5 acres of managed native meadow at the Telegraph Road and Duke Street interchange (T & D Meadow), INOVA Alexandria Hospital Scenic Easement, Rynex Natural Area, Fort Williams Park, and others. As a result, this year's work restored nearly 40 acres of City natural areas to pre-disturbance conditions, thus preserving their ecological sustainability and aesthetic beauty, and allowing Alexandria's diverse, native biodiversity to flourish. Ecological restoration and natural lands management is ongoing, with many new City sites prioritized annually for restoration and restored sites maintained in their appropriate, natural condition.

**Alexandria Participated in DOE Weatherization Innovation Pilot Program** - Brent Place Apartments, a 207-unit building which serves lower income Alexandrians, was selected to participate in an energy and water conservation demonstration program under the Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Innovation Pilot Program. Under this program, an energy service company performs an investment grade audit to identify energy savings opportunities at this property and recommends a bundle of energy efficiency improvements which are expected to be sufficient to pay for the installation costs of the measures. The City supported Brent Place's participation in this program by agreeing to subordinate payment on an existing City loan for a period of 10 years. It is anticipated that the energy efficiency measures to be undertaken will result in 10-year savings of \$226,060.

**Green Building and Energy Conservation Initiatives** - These included (i) the substantially completed construction of the Eisenhower Fire Station 210 which is expected to be certified for LEED Gold in 2015; (ii) more than 19% of the City government's electricity use was offset or generated by renewable energy in 2014; (iii) the City carried out LED lighting retrofits at the Beatley Library, Duncan Library, Burke Library, Chinquapin Recreation Center, Ramsay House,

Black History Museum, and the Lyceum; and (iv) the 2014 Alexandria Earth Day was very well attended and featured free bus ride to the event along Duke Street provided by the Alexandria Transit Company.

**ARenew Continued Tradition of Sustainable Environmental Stewardship** – Of the 13.2 billion gallons of wastewater treated at its facility in 2014, ARenew used about 10% this treated wastewater for non-potable purposes within its operations in place of potable water. This water conservation measure yielded environmental benefits and saved its customers \$2.8 million. It also used 145 million cubic feet of the methane gas generated in its digesters to replace natural gas, the amount of which was enough to heat over 1,000 homes for a year. For its environmental stewardship, ARenew received the National Association of Clean Water Agencies Platinum Peak Performance Award for 100% compliance with NPDES permits over a consecutive nine-year period.

**Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) Replacing Its Fleet with Hybrid Electric Buses** – ATC operates quality award winning transit services in the City of Alexandria utilizing a fleet of 79 transit buses. Of these 79 buses, 32 are energy efficient and environmentally friendly hybrid electric buses, comprising 40% of its fleet. The new hybrid electric clean diesel buses have served to reduce ATC's overall carbon footprint by reducing fuel consumption and emission levels. In 2014 alone, it is estimated that ATC's hybrid electric buses have reduced diesel fuel consumption by 38,000 gallons and carbon dioxide emissions by 836,000 lbs. In July, ATC started the new AT9 crosstown route using quiet, environmentally-friendly hybrid buses that helped alleviate public concerns about noise and air pollution associated with this new service. In 2015, ATC will be taking delivery of 14 additional hybrid-electric buses which will bring its fleet of hybrid-electric buses to over 50% of total bus fleet.

**City Recognized for Its Environmental Efforts** - In October, the City was recognized for the seventh consecutive year by the Virginia Municipal League (VML) as a platinum-level "Green Government". This platinum-level certification, VML's highest for local governments, is awarded to those scoring more than 175 out of 200 possible points. The program encourages local governments to implement specific environmental policies and actions that reduce carbon emissions generated by both the local government and the broader community. In May, the City was ranked number one of the 10 "greenest" mid-sized cities in the nation. The study, conducted by My Life.com, a social aggregation site, ranked 189 cities using the following criteria: 1) number of public parks; 2) number of recycling centers; 3) environmentally conscious commuters; and 4) a walk score. Alexandria was the only city to rank in the top 20 of in all four categories, and was noted for its implementation of climate change initiatives.