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I would like to call the councils attention to three issues (in order of importance from least to most important) related to the proposed ordinance repealing the law against panhandling in Alexandria as follows:

1. The issue was brought before the council on the recommendation of the city attorney who has indicated that because of current "free speech" case law, the ordinance against panhandling exposes the city to legal action. I believe that the cities exposure on this basis is weak because:
  - the police officer in attendance at the council meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October said that in nineteen years on the police force he has never issued a citation for panhandling,
  - If there is no citation how can there be exposure?
2. The city attorney has indicated that the law against panhandling is not necessary as there is redundancy because the behaviors are prohibited by other laws. Her office has supplied a comparison chart in support of this. I suggest that this is only partially correct as follows:
  - based on the discussion that took place among the council members in attendance, it appeared that they are unclear about both the definition of panhandling and the areas of redundancy,
  - as am I upon reading the chart.
3. As should have been anticipated by the council, this issue has attracted a lot of public attention. I suggest that the council has not considered the very real consequences that almost certainly will be a result of the proposed action:
  - Considering the level of support provided by Social Services, Alive, and many other community and religious organizations in Alexandria, need based panhandling is probably zero in Alexandria.
  - Further, the police in Alexandria are experts at diffusing any difficult situations.
  - Unfortunately, our vulnerability appears to be a result of the times we live in, as panhandling may have become a career choice for some.
  - It is also possible that organized panhandling may be engaged in by nonresident opportunists.
  - I suggest that repealing Alexandria's ordinance against panhandling will immediately become public and newsworthy, thereby making the city a target especially considering the economic situation of most residents and also the level of tourism that takes place in and is promoted by the city.
  - On this basis I submit that the very likely negative consequences of allowing panhandling in the city far out way any potential legal exposure due to a mostly unenforced ordinance.