

**Kendra Jacobs**

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**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: [EXTERNAL]City Hall plans

-----Original Message-----

From: Martha Harris <[harris61325@comcast.net](mailto:harris61325@comcast.net)>

Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 2:12 PM

To: William Conkey <[william.conkey@alexandriava.gov](mailto:william.conkey@alexandriava.gov)>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]City Hall plans

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Hi, Bill:

I want to share a few thoughts about the plans. I have attended a number of meetings and most recently the OTCA discussion last week. There are many attractive aspects to the designs, including accessibility and first floor civic spaces, as well as attentiveness to historic architecture.

I do have a few comments that I want to share before the meeting next week of the Planning Commission.

1. I agree with Alison Silberberg that the fountain needs to be reconsidered. I favor a larger central space for the fountain with seating adjacent. The current plan seems to shrink the fountain space and make the market configuration awkward. I would move the fountain closer to the door of the building, freeing up some central space for events and the market. Can seating be provided nearby that is permanent and invites stopping and reflecting?
2. The first floor layout of the interior does not seem to have a welcome area or desk with security, information on events, etc. I can agree to the Council Chambers moving to the first floor, but visitors will need more of a welcome orientation. I think this should be worked out sooner rather than later.
3. Green roofs are a good idea and open space in general is a plus. However, the plans to water trees by hand on N Fairfax during their establishment seem to invite problems. Also, the arrangement of the open space on the plaza appears to restrict the market and other activities, although I understand the effort to have more small area seating. However, the plans for these "rooms" seem to take precedence over the need for open public areas for the market and for meetings and events. I am having trouble understanding how the event stages/spaces will work (tiered seating on N. Fairfax side..).
4. The 2026 construction beginning anticipated should be carefully considered along with other major projects nearby such as the pump station. If everything is happening at the same time, we will lose some visitors, commercial activity and overall ambiance of Old Town.

With good wishes for a fine result,

Martha Harris

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