

David Cheney

I've lived 22 years on the corner of Ft Williams and Duke Street, backing up to Strawberry Run. We raised our children there as I served 22 years as a naval flight officer, and currently serve in the Pentagon.

The beauty and enjoyment of having Strawberry Run alongside our home is a highlight of living there, and that and the wonderful flowering trees on Fort Williams were some the reasons my wife first purchased the home 25 years ago.

We've enjoyed the stream through each of the four seasons, having played with our kids and strolled along it hundreds of times. We watched the City do a stream restoration in 2010. It was beautiful upon completion with built up slopes covered with grass and trees planted. Unfortunately, torrents in the next 2 to 3 years eroded it back to its previous state with large boulders strewn about the stream, beginning with Hurricane Lee in 2011, followed by others. If you have never seen the creek at full capacity and volume after a storm you would understand the damage it can do.

I am a member of the Seminary Ridge and Seminary Hills Civic Associations of some 400 households. I agree with the Seminary Ridge Association as someone who watched the stream restoration be quickly destroyed: find out why and how the Natural Channel Design failed before you do it again in Strawberry Run. Reading the Association's monthly newsletters and now zooming into its Board meetings, I've kept apprised of its persistent efforts to ask for City documents and assessments to help them and you do so.

I know the city initially responded there was not a stream restoration done in Strawberry in 2010. Then, that the damage was minor. Then, that the failure occurred in 2020 with flash floods; and now, in a City Manager memorandum to you that the waterfall in it occurred after 2018.

I can tell you that waterfall has been there as long as I can remember, and was enhanced by the 2010 restoration with silt built up in front of it, but becoming as it looks today because of storms years before 2018.

With the responsibility of your leadership positions and authority goes accountability. If you all know that a previous decision turned out poorly, even if it was not ill-intentioned, making the same choice again makes no sense. People will not long trust leaders who seem to willingly choose to make the same poor choices over again. We have time to make a different choice, and call on your leadership and accountability to take the time to make a wise decision.

I know you won't lose the grant if you support a year's delay that will allow for a transparent review of what restoration option is really in the stream's best interest, particularly in view of the Natural Channel Design option having failed there before. Let's not make the same mistake twice now that we know it doesn't work. No accountable leader would do that. A new plan is needed.

April 12, 2021

Mayor Justin Wilson

Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Councilmember Canek Aguirre

Councilmember John Taylor Chapman

Councilmember Amy Jackson

Councilmember Del Pepper

Councilmember Mo Seifeldein

Dear Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker and Councilmembers Aguirre, Chapman, Jackson, Pepper, and Seifeldein:

This responds to recent statements by the City in the press and in an April 2 budget memo, claiming that there are no feasible alternatives to the proposed Taylor Run stream reconstruction project to allow the City to achieve its mandated Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals. While it shouldn't be the responsibility of Alexandria's citizens to find alternatives to a flawed and deeply unpopular proposal, we have prepared a list of real, workable alternatives which in combination will allow the City to meet its goals for no additional cost.<sup>1</sup>

### Background

The Taylor Run project would require clearcutting an area 80 feet wide by 1900 feet long, running the length of Chinquapin Park and through much of the First Baptist woodlands. The stream bed would be raised three to eight feet (by adding sediment fill) to change the flow pattern of the stream and to allow the stream to overflow its banks during heavy rains.

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<sup>1</sup> Responses to specific claims made in the April 2 Budget Memo are included in the Appendix to this letter.

There is broad and deep citizen opposition to the City's proposal. Dozens of citizens have filed comments questioning the project, as have the Environmental Council of Alexandria, the local chapter of the Sierra Club, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Potowmack Chapter, and several civic associations. The City's own Environmental Policy Commission has also decided unanimously that the City should not pursue the project and should "explore multiple promising alternative[s]" to satisfy the City's Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction obligations.

Most of the concerns that have been raised remain unresolved.

First among these is whether the project will actually reduce pollution to the extent claimed by the City. Soil samples taken from the stream banks show that the banks contain less than one quarter of the amount of phosphorus that the City claims exists.

Second, there is a question about the effect of the project on the rare seepage swamp wetland and the many Alexandria-rare plant species near the stream. Raising the stream bed significantly will cause the stream to flow over the wetland during heavy rains. The City botanist says this will be harmful to the wetland and plants. The City's outside consultants say that the overflows would be beneficial to the wetlands and the plants. A group of civic associations has been asking for months that the City get its botanist and consultants together with a "neutral" expert to assess these completely opposing views, but that meeting has not happened yet.

Third, there is a question about whether the so-called "natural channel design" technique the City plans to use is an effective reconstruction method. The one place in the City where this technique was used in the City – Strawberry Run in 2010 – seems to have been a failure.

There is also strong empirical evidence that Taylor Run cannot be “fixed” more than temporarily unless the City addresses the stormwater runoff caused by the extensive impervious surfaces in the stream’s watershed.

The City’s request for alternative projects available to the City to achieve its pollution reduction goal

In response to these concerns City Manager Mark Jinks is reported by the *Alexandria Times* to “have insisted that the city has yet to hear \* \* \* ‘alternative, feasible project[s] that will \* \* \* meet the state’s 2028 mandate that we be at 100% of our state-set pollution reduction goals.’”

Alternative, feasible projects are available to the City to achieve its pollution reduction goals

As the Environmental Policy Commission suggested, there are several ways of reducing water pollution that, in combination, should allow the City to meet its state-mandated goals. We will identify a few here.

It’s important to remember at the outset that *the City has already achieved approximately 70 percent of its total reduction obligations* for the three pollutants in question (phosphorus, nitrogen and suspended sediments). See Alexandria Phase 2 Chesapeake Bay Action Plan for 40% Compliance, page 3, Table E3.

The City’s remaining obligations to be achieved are: phosphorus at 287 lbs./yr.; nitrogen at 2,374 lbs./yr.; and suspended sediments at 280,879 lbs./yr. Id.

Stream Restoration of Lucky Run

If the City undertakes the proposed Lucky Run stream project, the City *by its own numbers* will achieve the following pollutant reductions:

phosphorus at 257 lbs./yr.; nitrogen at 658 lbs./yr.; suspended sediments at 489,818 lbs./yr. (See Action Plan, page 24, Table 11.) In other words, the Lucky Run project alone will get the City 174 percent of its remaining 2028 suspended sediments requirement and 90 percent of its remaining phosphorus requirement.

#### Credits from AlexRenew

According to a March 5 email to EPC Chair Kathie Hoekstra from Sheeva Noshirvan, Outreach Program Manager of RiverRenew, once the City's combined sewer outfall (CSO) project is completed in 2025, there are expected to be, on an average basis, pollution reduction credits that "the City can use to assist them in meeting their Bay TMDL stormwater goals." The "expected available CSO nutrient credits" are: phosphorus – 500 lbs./yr.; nitrogen - 1,500 lbs./yr.; and suspended sediments – 30,000 lbs./yr. Added to the Lucky Run pollution reduction credits, the AlexRenew credits would get the City 280 percent of its remaining 2028 requirement for phosphorus, 185 percent of its remaining suspended sediments requirement, and 90 percent of its remaining nitrogen requirement.

#### Tree Planting Project

If the City undertook the tree planting project that has been proposed by a group of citizens, we believe that for \$2 million – less than the \$2.25 the City has budgeted for Taylor Run - it could achieve an annual phosphorus reduction of 45.6 lbs./yr. and a nitrogen reduction of 185 lbs./yr. Those numbers are based on the pollution credit guidelines of Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and research showing that \$2 million can buy 10,000 high quality native trees that can be planted in forest-like density. Under the DEQ pollution credit guidelines for reductions by planting trees, that could achieve 33 acres worth of credits – the numbers stated above. Tree planting is a

recognized way to achieve credits, and City Council should request the City Arborist to work with DEQ to develop the strongest possible plan that can be achieved. While the tree planting does not generate the same pollution reductions per dollar as Lucky Run, coupled with Lucky Run and Alex Renew, it would bring the City's nitrogen reduction level to 2,343 lbs./yr. – 99 percent of the City's remaining 2028 requirements – and help meet several of Council's Eco-City goals.

#### Purchasing nutrient credits

Any small nitrogen shortfall left by either a combination of Lucky Run and Alex Renew (216 lbs.), or Lucky Run, Alex Renew and the tree planting (31 lbs.), could be made up by purchasing nitrogen credits on the nutrient trading market. While the exact cost of purchasing permanent nitrogen credits is generally confidential, based on our research we are confident that the cost of the needed credits would not result in any additional expense beyond that currently budgeted by the City. We believe the City already knows that purchased nutrient credits can be a cost-efficient part of a pollution reduction package, but we would be happy to work with the City to identify such purchase options.

The following chart summarizes how pollution reduction credits could be achieved by the proposed alternatives to the Taylor Run reconstruction project.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE NUTRIENT REDUCTION PROJECTS									
		col A	col. B	col. C	col. D	col. E	col. F	col. G	col. H
		Remaining Required Reductions by 2028 (lbs./yr.)	Reductions from Lucky Run Stream Project (lbs./yr.)	Remaining Required Reductions (lbs./yr.)	Expected Annual Nutrient Credits from River Renew (lbs./yr.)	Remaining Required Reductions (lbs./yr.)	Expected Credits from Tree Planting (lbs./yr.)	Remaining Required Reductions (lbs./yr.)	% of Required Reductions Achieved
Row 1	Suspended Sediments			surplus - 208,939	(30,000)	surplus - 238,939	NA	surplus -238,939	185%
Row 2	Phosphorus					surplus - 470	(46)	surplus - 516	280%
Row 3	Nitrogen								99%

Note: Only 31 Nitrogen credits would be need to be purchased with tree planting or 216 Nitrogen credits without tree planting

## Conclusion

In sum, the City does not need to reconstruct Taylor Run (or Strawberry Run) to meet its Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction obligations. Moreover, *the City will not need to spend more money than is currently budgeted to fulfill those obligations.*

We therefore ask the Council to direct that the Taylor Run reconstruction project not proceed, and that \$2 million of the funds budgeted for the project be reallocated to a tree planting program to be developed by the City arborist, and that the remainder be reallocated for nutrient credit purchases and/or stormwater or Taylor Run maintenance projects.

Sincerely,

Russell Bailey  
Jeremy Flachs

Carter Flemming  
Rawles Jones

cc: Mark Jenks      Jesse Maines      Kathie Hoekstra  
Yon Lambert      Bob Williams      Kathryn Chiasson  
Bill Skrabak      John Marlin

## Appendix

On April 2, 2021, the City issued a set of “Budget Questions and Answers” on alternatives to the proposed Taylor Run stream reconstruction. The City generally asserts that alternatives are too expensive or too uncertain to be viable. The City also asserts that the alternatives do not account for maintenance of the sanitary sewer line that runs along Taylor Run and would require diversion of City Funds from stormwater projects or increases in the stormwater fee. As discussed below, each of these assertions is demonstrably wrong. They are incorrect primarily (though not exclusively) because they are based on two erroneous assumptions: 1) that each alternative must independently achieve the full amount of pollution reduction that the Taylor Run project is assumed to achieve,<sup>2</sup> and 2) that the City can do no stream reconstruction project to help the City meet its objectives. By starting from these false premises, the City arrives at grossly inflated costs of what are in fact, quite viable alternatives to Taylor Run.

The City’s contentions are addressed below in the order they appear in the budget memo. Each contention and response should be examined remembering that (a) several efforts can be combined to achieve the needed credits and (b) the planned Lucky Run project will go a long way toward accomplishing that goal.

### 1. Green infrastructure and other best management practices (BMPs)

City Claim: BMPs to substitute for Taylor Run would cost between \$26 million and \$66 million and would add between \$41 and \$89 to the annual stormwater fee for the majority of homeowners in the City.

Our response: BMPs are not included in our proposed package of alternatives, so their costs and benefits need not be debated here. We would note, however, that we strongly support credible, well-designed BMPs and that such BMPs will be put in place over the next several years, the cost of which will be included in various re-development projects such as Landmark, Minnie Howard and Upper King Street. These projects will each result in pollution reductions over and above the reductions proposed here. The City will not incur additional stormwater costs and stormwater fees will not be increased as a result of these BMPs being constructed.

### 2. Tree planting

City claim: The City would need to plant between 421,000 and 687,000 trees at a cost of \$84 million to \$206 million. This would add between \$113 and \$287 per year to the stormwater utility fee for the majority of homeowners in the City.

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<sup>2</sup> As stated above in our letter, the City’s pollution reduction assumptions for Taylor Run appear to be 400% too high.



Our response: Even after the parameters of the tree planting proposal were twice explained in writing, the City insists on assuming, incorrectly, that the proposal is to have a planting replace all the pollution reduction credits that would be lost if Taylor Run does not go forward. In fact, the tree planting would be part of a package of alternatives that would achieve 100 percent of the City's pollution reduction goals. The City also makes what we believe to be erroneous claims about the cost of trees (too high), the numbers that would have to be planted to be a meaningful part of a package of reductions (way high), and the pollution reduction value that can be achieved by a planting that aims to maximize that value (way low). We are not impressed by the mathematical slight-of-hand that converts a proposal to spend no more than \$2 million into a program that could cost forty to one hundred times that much. Given that the tree planting that is proposed as part of the package would cost less than is budgeted for Taylor Run, it could not, and would not, result in raising the stormwater fee.

### 3. Purchase of pollution reduction credits

City claim: The market rate for phosphorus credits is \$35,000/lb. Purchasing the 295 pounds of phosphorus credits that would be lost if the Taylor Run project is not done would cost \$10.3 million ( $\$35,000 \times 295$  lbs. of phosphorus). This would add \$14 a year to the average homeowner's stormwater utility bill.

Our response: Implementing our package of alternatives would put the City well over its final phosphorus reduction goals. In other words, *the City would not need to purchase any phosphorus credits on the nutrient market to reach its goal.* What the City may need to acquire is a small number of nitrogen credits (between 31 and 216 pounds, depending on whether the tree planting is done or not). The cost of nitrogen credits is much less expensive than the cost of phosphorus credits, and there are many ways nitrogen credits can be acquired. If the tree planting takes up \$2 million of the \$2.25 the City has budgeted for Taylor Run, that will leave \$250,000 available to buy the 31 pounds needed. We have talked to a number of individuals involved in the nutrient credit market. While they do not want to be quoted publicly on price of nutrients, we are assured that \$250,000 will do the trick with money left over for other projects. If the City does not do the tree planting it will then have, of course, the \$2.25 million freed up by Taylor Run to purchase nitrogen credits and to do other projects. We would be happy to work with the City to find nutrient credit sellers if you wish. Purchasing sufficient credits to meet the City's stormwater goals will not require the stormwater fee to be raised.

### 4. Receiving nutrient credits from Alexandria Renew

City claim: Trading credits with Alex Renew following completion of the combined stormwater outfall (CSO) remediation project may be an option, if allowed by DEQ. There are considerable risks to meeting the state 100% pollution reduction mandate associated with this approach. The nature of wastewater is such that the capture and treatment of the CSO flows does not generate many total suspended solids or sediment credits, leaving the City well below its mandated reduction. It would cost around \$10 million to purchase sediment credits.

Our response: Alex Renew has given the Environmental Policy Commission a written estimate of how many nutrient credits are likely to be available to the City to use to meet its pollution reduction goals once the CSO comes online and those credits are generated. We understand that DEQ has no objection to Alexandria taking advantage of those credits, and that DEQ, in fact, expects that the City will do so. Indeed, the City already plans to use these credits! See the City's Phase 2 Chesapeake Bay Action Plan (at p. 26). As discussed elsewhere, under our package proposal more than 100% of Alexandria's sediment reduction mandate will be achieved by projects other than Alex Renew, so there will be no "sediment shortfall" and no sediment credit purchases necessary.

City claim: If the Taylor Run reconstruction is not done the sanitary sewer stabilization will still need to be done. Early estimates are that this would cost \$400,000 to \$600,000.

Our response: DEQ grants for stream restoration are to help achieve Chesapeake Bay pollution reductions, not to support sewer maintenance. Sewer maintenance was not a stated purpose of the Taylor Run reconstruction in either the grant application to DEQ or in the memo asking for Council approval of that application. Necessary sewer maintenance will be done whether or not the Taylor Run reconstruction project proceeds and should be funded out of the regular budget sources for the sanitary sewer system.

Taaj Browne

Dear Esteemed Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members,

My name is Taaj Browne, and I am a school social worker at T.C. Williams High School. I have had the honor of working with ACPs families for over 5 years now. Through my role as a social worker, I have been exposed to a lot of crises and turmoil. Especially with the outbreak of Covid, there was just so many needs within the community and not enough resources to help support our families. That is why it pained me to learn that one of our most instrumental assets, the School Resource Officers (SROs), may be stripped away from ACPs. Officer Gary Argueta and Officer Johnny Larios are crucial fixtures within the T.C. Williams community. The partnership that I have had with our SROs has been fundamental in my role of serving students and their families. The SROs have assisted with various circumstances regarding student safety and overall wellness. They have been influential in situations such as student mental health crises, educating students and staff on public safety matters, assisting with truancy and runaway concerns, and responding to students' feuds with various de-escalation tactics. Most importantly they are wonderful mentors to all of our students.

The SROs usually have to shoo kids away from their office because the students want to spend too much time with them. A lot of our kids report things to the SROs that they would not feel comfortable telling other staff members. For example, two years ago, I had a student who sought out Officer Argueta to inform him of her attempts to end her life. It was because she felt opened to disclose this information to Officer Argueta, that the school team was able to intervene and assist the student with accessing emergency mental health treatment. The SROs are very much adored by a lot of our students at TC Williams High School. However, I do not want to minimize the fact that some students may not feel the same way about the police presence in our school.

As a Black woman from Boston, MA, I have always had a strained perception of the police. Growing up, I witnessed many negative police interactions. I have had friends and family who had wrongfully lost their lives at the hands of the police. Needless to say, I have always been untrusting of police officers. I know some of our students feel the same way. However, when I look at Officers Argueta and Officer Larios interacting with our students, I am always so astonished by their gentleness and compassion; the ease in which they build rapport with students (even in situations where the students are facing legal trouble) is unlike anything I ever experienced throughout my entire life. That is why it is important to continue the SRO program so that students can learn that there are police officers that are caring and understanding. Our school's SROs have positively impacted the lives of so many students and their families. It would be devastating to have them removed from our school system.

Specifically, with T.C. Williams being the largest high school in VA, it would be detrimental to not have police officers on site. God forbid, if a dangerous situation were to occur at our school, it would be best for officers who know our students and the culture of our school to be the first to respond.

I understand why people would be apprehensive about having police in our schools, especially with the abundance of Black people being gunned down by police on regular basis. However, to remove the SRO program would be counteractive. If you want to prepare children for the real world they need to have exposure to police and doing so in a controlled, safe environment like TCW would be most beneficial. If you want to improve the relationship between the community and police, it should start with reform.

Officers should be trained on cultural competency and how to best interact with ALL civilians especially the youth.

I am so grateful to be able to work with Officer Larios and Officer Argueta. They are always willing to collaborate with the school social workers. They go above and beyond in protecting and serving our students. Please consider to include the SRO program in the budget. They are very much needed and appreciated at T.C. Williams High School.

Thank you so much for allowing to me voice my opinion on this matter.

Respectfully,

Taaj Browne, MSW

Statement for City Council Legislative Meeting, April 27, 2021. Docket Item 11 – Taylor Run

Taylor Run “reconstruction” was brought to Council in 2019 solely as a project to obtain Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction credits – nothing more – with no discussion of its harmful side effects. The City’s Environmental Policy Commission and many Alexandrians oppose the project because it will in fact do more harm than good and because it is unnecessary since the needed credits can be easily obtained in other ways without spending any more money than already budgeted.

For the reasons set out below, the undersigned urge you to vote to implement Option C in Slide 32 of the staff presentation on ways for the City to achieve Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction credits. The Council should amend Option C, however, to state that the proposed Taylor Run stream reconstruction project will not be done.

Discussion

A. The Council should amend - and choose as amended - Option C.

Several of us were signatories on the attached April 12, 2021 letter setting out a series of actions that would meet the City’s pollution reduction obligations without doing the Taylor Run project and cost no more than the City has budgeted for that purpose (“Alternatives Letter”). The important continuing concerns about the Taylor Run project were also identified in that letter.

City staff have offered the Council four options for proceeding with its Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction program. We believe that Option C, amended to say the City will not proceed with the Taylor Run project, is clearly the one the Council should select. That option would bring the flawed and environmentally damaging Taylor Run project to an end and would pause the Strawberry Run project, while the City proceeds with the Lucky Run reconstruction and works with the Environmental Policy Commission and interested environmental groups and citizens on a systematic assessment of other pollution reduction options available to the City.

The City appears to recognize that doing the Lucky Run restoration and receiving Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction credits from Alexandria Renew gets the City well over the phosphorus and suspended sediments reduction obligations it needs. (See City staff slides 13 and 30 and Alternatives Letter pages 3, 4 and 6.) The City also recognizes that a tree planting program could play a meaningful role in achieving additional phosphorus credits and bring the City near its nitrogen reduction goal. (Staff slide 28). We appreciate this recognition after seeing the City's earlier egregiously high estimates of the cost of a tree planting program. (See April 2 Budget Q & A's, page 2; Alternatives Letter pages 4-5 and 7-8.)

Even now the City continues to overestimate the cost of tree planting, claiming a cost of \$550 per tree. (Staff slide 28.) Further review of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's new guidelines for tree planting shows that trees that qualify under the guidelines can be purchased not for the \$200 we had earlier estimated (or for the \$550 that the City estimates), but for approximately \$100 per tree. Thus, around 20,000 trees can be purchased for \$2 million, as opposed to the 3,366 shown on staff slide 28. City staff is aware of this and perhaps will amend their calculations during their presentation but, at the moment, the erroneous number, and the dramatic undervaluing of a tree planting program, remain. We are not saying that a specific number of trees must be planted but just that the City should look seriously at what number can be planted within the caps of \$2 million and the space available for planting.

As shown in the Alternatives Letter, any temporary shortfall of nitrogen credits after the credits generated by Lucky Run, AlexRenew and a tree planting are accounted for, can be made up by either long-term or short-term purchases on the nutrient credit trading market for a relatively small amount of money. That amount will be much less than the \$640,000 estimated by the City (Staff slide 28), which is based on the cost of high-priced phosphorus credits, rather than much lower cost nitrogen credits. (See Alternatives Letter pages 5 and 8.)

Thus, Option C would allow the City to bring the potentially environmentally disastrous Taylor Run project to an end *while meeting and exceeding all its Chesapeake Bay reduction obligations for no more than currently budgeted* and allowing a collective review of other alternatives that could be pursued if necessary.

B. Options A, B, and D should be rejected.

Option A - do all three stream restorations. This would mean proceeding with the Taylor Run and Strawberry Run projects even though neither of those projects is necessary to achieve the City's pollution reduction goals. In addition, there are still major unanswered questions about the effect of the Taylor Run project on the rare seepage wetland adjacent to the stream and the associated Alexandria-rare vegetation and groves of large trees. (See Alternatives Letter at 2.) The staff slide presentation misleadingly states that the wetland is outside the project footprint and the project is designed not to affect the wetlands. Attachment 2, page 2, to City presentation. The City's own consultants have repeatedly stated that the project would result in the stream overflowing the wetland during high rains. Moreover, there are, in fact, diametrically opposed opinions about the effect of these overflows on the wetland and the City has failed to take the long-requested steps to resolve those differences. (Alternatives Letter page 2.)

Option B - test the nutrient levels at all three stream sites. There would be no need to test Taylor Run if the project is not going to be done. Whether tests should be done at other streams could be decided as part of the framework for discussing alternatives proposed in Option C. We note there is no challenge to the amounts of nutrient reduction that would be realized from reconstructing Lucky Run, so testing of that stream appears to be an unnecessary expense at this point.

Option D - do no streams. Lucky Run would make a significant contribution to achieving phosphorus, nitrogen, and especially suspended sediment credits for much less than the cost of Taylor Run or Strawberry Run. It could be an important part of a package of options that would allow the City to easily exceed its Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals.

C. The City staff presentation's bias toward Option A is accompanied by a variety of inaccurate and misleading statements.

The staff presentation contains a remarkable number of erroneous and misleading statements that lend an unwarranted bias toward Option A - the least acceptable and least responsible of the four presented options. Five examples are listed here.

1. Assertion: The Taylor Run project is designed not to impact the key wetlands. As discussed above in Section B., the City's own design consultants have repeatedly said that the project would raise the stream bed so that the stream would overflow the wetland during heavy rains. There is no question that the wetlands will be impacted, it is only a question of degree.
2. Assertion: Trees for a planting program will cost \$550 and \$2 million would therefore buy 3,366 trees. We expect that the staff will amend its cost estimate to approximately \$100 per tree and the number of trees that can be purchased for \$2 million to around 20,000. (See Discussion, Part A. above.)
3. Assertion: AlexRenew credits were "identified early" in City's Chesapeake Bay strategy and "City and AlexRenew agree: CSO credits will contribute." (Staff slide 30.) These statements go squarely under the "chutzpah" banner. While receiving credits from AlexRenew was listed as an option in the City's 2018 Stage 2 Plan, the City has insisted that stream restorations were the only viable way for the City to meet its regulatory commitments until residents uncovered the option of using Alexandria Renew credits. Even after a March 5 email from AlexRenew to the Environmental Policy Committee providing estimates of the credits likely to be available, City staff questioned the viability of these credits and the exorbitant costs estimates for BMPs, tree planting and nutrient purchases in the staff's April 2 Q&A memo are predicated on not taking advantage of these credits. Only after the availability of these credits was explained in the Alternatives Letter did City staff acknowledge that the AlexRenew credits can serve as a major component of a pollution reduction credit package.
4. Assertions about nitrogen credit purchase or BMP costs if the City does Lucky Run plus AlexRenew or Lucky Run plus tree planting. (Staff slides 28 and 30.) The City's costs are based on a misreading of what we propose: Lucky Run *plus* AlexRenew *plus* tree planting *plus*, if necessary, a small nitrogen credit purchase. (See Alternatives Letter at pages 3-5.) This



proposal does not require the construction of any BMPs and a nitrogen credit purchase, if any, would be nominal.

5. Assertion: Not doing Taylor Run would leave the sewer line maintenance undone. (Staff slides 28, 29, 30.) DEQ grants for stream reconstructions are to help achieve Chesapeake Bay pollution reductions, not to support local sewer line maintenance. Sewer maintenance was not a stated purpose of the Taylor Run reconstruction in either the grant application to DEQ or in the memo asking for Council approval of that application. Necessary sewer maintenance will be done whether the Taylor Run reconstruction project proceeds or not, with only limited impact on the park, and should be funded from the regular budget for the sanitary sewer system.

## CONCLUSION

In 2019 City staff offered you, with little discussion and no public input, a seemingly easy way to get needed credits with no obvious downside. Even after the downside was revealed, including damage to the park, lack of real pollution reduction, and likelihood of project failure, staff continued to downplay the viability of readily available alternatives that have no downsides and no additional costs.

The Alternatives Letter demonstrates the adequacy and budget neutrality of those alternatives. Earlier submissions demonstrate the magnitude of the proposed project's defects.

These are not arguments – they are facts. In the face of these facts the responsible action for Council is to amend staff's Option C to state that the City will not proceed with the Taylor Run project and adopt it as amended. That will solve real problems without creating any new ones. That is our request.

## Signatories

Russell Bailey

Carter Flemming

Rawles Jones

Jeremy Flachs

Bill Gillespie