



Willie Bailey
2015 City Council Candidate Survey

1. Introduction – Please introduce yourself and describe why are you seeking a seat on the Alexandria City Council.

My name is Willie Bailey, Sr. and I have lived in Alexandria for almost 50 years. I am a graduate of T.C. Williams High School. I am a retired veteran of the U.S. Army and an active firefighter with over 24 years of service. I started a nonprofit called Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue that serves thousands of children in Northern Virginia every year with backpacks, school supplies, new coats, new sneakers, and gifts during the holiday. I serve on the board of the following nonprofit organizations; Volunteer Alexandria, Good Shepherd Housing, Coats for Kids, and First Night Alexandria. I am seeking a seat on Alexandria City Council because I promised myself as a single parent once my youngest child finished college that I would run for City Council and give back to the city that has done so much for me. As a retired veteran and active firefighter, I know what it means to serve. It is through these jobs, as well as running a nonprofit that I have exemplified leadership, loyalty, and passion. I will continue to maintain those traits if I am elected to city council.

2. Budget – How would you strengthen the City’s business environment through sound budgetary management and fiscal policy?

In order to strengthen the City’s business environment through sound budgetary management and fiscal policy, Alexandria City should not put itself in a position to be so heavily dependent on the federal government to sustain our economic well-being. Anytime there is a threat of closing the government, sequestration, or deep budget cuts, we will feel the effects and it will negatively impact our ability to adequately provide for our residents. Alexandria City needs to find and maintain a balance between spending and raising revenue. Each year an analysis should be done to determine if the spending represents what the voters are demanding. Development and growth are vital to the success of any metropolitan city, which Alexandria is. In order to sustain a steady, profitable business environment everyone must be involved. I would recommend strengthening the business environment by listening to people from all areas in Alexandria. The city belongs to everyone that resides in it, which means everyone should be at the table to help make decisions on spending. A complete understanding of the fiscal climate is imperative in order for there to be sound budgetary management and strong fiscal policy. Sound budgetary management does not come from only listening to the upper class, likewise it will not come from only listening to those in a lower economic status. Although the upper class may make up a large percentage of the tax base, the middle and lower class residents have a lot to offer.

3. Land Use – Regarding land use and development policy, how would you maintain and enhance Alexandria’s position as a “complete community,” meaning an appropriate mix of residential, office, retail, and light industrial uses?

I would strive for a balance between the residential and the commercial tax base. Projects such as the Waterfront Small Area Plan will help to bring more tourists into Alexandria, therefore pumping more money into the local economy. Also, in order to strike a balance between residential and commercial in an effort to make a “complete community” land use and development policies must completely represent the community. The City Council is here for the people, and that is inclusive of all of the people in Alexandria regardless of what street one resides. The people of Alexandria City should always be at the forefront of every decision made. That does not mean just the people of Old Town, but include the people on the western end of the city as well. It does not escape me that in order for a city to grow, businesses must exist and be prosperous. As I stated before the “complete community” has to be representative of the entire community. It is great to see businesses going up in Alexandria, but we have to make sure all areas of Alexandria are receiving equal opportunities for development. If elected to City Council I will do my best to ensure that all residents are taken into consideration when reviewing development proposals and ideas. I also believe smart growth which encourages high density around metro stations is the best way to both maintain residential neighborhoods while encouraging growth. The higher density should be in exchange for critical public needs including affordable housing.

4. Small Business – How would you support small business in Alexandria?

First of all I would recommend establishing a tax rate that would encourage new businesses to select Alexandria City. Currently the process for a business to become licensed is too bureaucratic and requires too much red tape. In 2015, we should be offering streamlined, more efficient methods for businesses to become licensed. Also, we all know parking can be an issue in Alexandria. If businesses are in areas with limited parking, then the attraction for moving to our great city is reduced. I would like to evaluate current businesses and commercial zones to look at the current parking situation. We could encourage the use of bicycles, which would also make our city healthier. Also, encourage the use of reliable public transportation and which will reduce the number of vehicles on the road. In some of the areas where development may not be as robust as others, parking may not be a big issue. This could very well be a big draw for businesses that need parking.

5. Taxes and Taxation – How would you ensure that the City of Alexandria adopts tax policies and initiatives that encourage businesses to remain in the City?

I would recommend establishing a tax rate, or giving tax breaks, that encourages new businesses to move to the City of Alexandria. In order for businesses to be encouraged to remain in the City, the City needs to show it is invested in its people. Also, part of my platform is youth and making sure the youth are developing properly and have the necessary tools and resources for city living. What better way to teach youth responsibility than to get a part-time job during the summer or after school. For businesses that focus on giving youth a chance and teaching them responsibility, there could potentially be tax breaks for them also. It would also be beneficial to work with businesses who work closely with nonprofit organizations and want to give back to the community. As stated earlier, I firmly believe when businesses see we are serious about taking care of our residents, they will be serious about investing in this great city.

6. Transportation – How would you encourage the City of Alexandria to develop a safe, effective and efficient multi-modal transportation systems that moves people throughout Alexandria and this region?

Developing the Potomac Yard Metro Station (PYMS) must be a transportation priority in the next term. It is no secret we live in a highly congested area. Just recently WTOP reported the Washington, DC is the most congested city in the country, with 82 hours of delay per commuter. With Alexandria being a very close suburb of DC, a lot of that traffic congestion affects us daily. The main way to ease traffic congestion is to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Not only does it reduce the number of vehicles on the road but it may make residents more active as they are walking from one metro stop to another, or one bus stop to another. The West End of Alexandria cannot continue to be underserved by the city's transportation options. I would work to provide more transit options to that part of the city. This is a political and economic priority for me. I would look at innovative cities like Portland and even nearby Arlington and see how we can make Alexandria easier to get around in.