



2021 Alexandria City Council Candidate Survey

The following questions are derived from the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's 2021 Legislative Agenda. Through the Legislative Agenda, the Chamber has identified its priority action items for the next year and beyond.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. We encourage you to review the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's 2021 Legislative Agenda as you prepare your answers.

Your answers will be made available to the Alexandria business community and other interested parties in whole and without edits. Please return the completed survey to Maria Ciarrocchi, mciarrocchi@thechamberalx.com by April 30, 2021.

We appreciate your cooperation.

- 1. INTRODUCTION - Please introduce yourself and describe why you are seeking a seat on the Alexandria City Council. For this question you are welcome to submit a brief video. RESPONSE:** I'm Bill Campbell and I'm honored to seek continuing my service to Alexandria on the Alexandria City Council. I'm originally from West Virginia and moved to Northern Virginia (Woodbridge) in 1987. We've lived in seven different states and we moved into Alexandria in 2005 when we returned to the east coast from the Seattle, Washington area. Ruby and I have been married for 37 years and have three adult children. We have a college graduate who is a Vice Principal at the Hopkins House Early Education Center, our oldest son just completed his junior year at Old Dominion University and our youngest boy, who we adopted when he was six years old, is now almost twenty-one, has played college basketball and is now in the workforce with United Parcel Services. I've served six years as an elected official on the Alexandria City Public School Board, and I've likewise served Alexandria on several other planning groups, committees and commissions to include the Early Childhood Commission, the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and the Commission on Aging. Ruby and I are both now retired, we've renovated our home and we've decided to remain in Alexandria. We absolutely love the city and I believe that my life experiences, experiences as an elected official and my years of service to the city will continue to serve the city and our citizens well on the Alexandria City Council.
- 2. COVID-19 RECOVERY – Please share your thoughts on what economic recovery looks like for the City, particularly its businesses. RESPONSE:** Economic recovery for Alexandria businesses would ideally look like we'd want all of Alexandria to look, both pre and post pandemic. We want thriving, unique venues to shop and dine. We'd ideally have minimal retail and business rentals available due to demand and we'd have profitable and diverse entities both in terms of products and owners. However, we know that this was not the conditions pre pandemic and so we will face real challenges to maintain current businesses and to continuing attracting new businesses to our city. We'll absolutely need to have a unified approach to our

recovery. For example, it will be critical for our schools to return to full operations and we'll also need to continue to increase the availability of quality daycare and early educational opportunities as more parents return to work. We'll need to be compliant with all state guidance and also consistent with

3. COVID-19 CHANGES – The City has relaxed a fair number of regulations to allow for businesses to operate under COVID-19 protocol. Which of these loosened restrictions would you like to see in perpetuity? Are there any you would like to roll back?

RESPONSE: We certainly should coordinate with local businesses, seek business/citizen and, to the extent practical, tourist feedback as to the value and tradeoff of maintaining the south end of King Street as a pedestrian walkway and dining promenade. We should likewise relook our current restrictions/ordinances associated with outdoor seating areas and ascertain the attractiveness and value of retaining and increasing access to these enhanced dining areas. Alexandria should also continue to explore any new ways that communications has occurred during the pandemic. Rapid ability to contact and share information has been critical and will remain so as various funding opportunities, needs to partner and other coordinating requirements present themselves. We should also take a close look at any efficiencies that have been added via the use of video meetings and other technologies. Additionally, anything done to expedite the support to landlords and tenants with regards to lease contracts and support should be explored.

4. EQUITY & INCLUSION - There is a broader conversation about equity in relation to COVID-19 as well as racial justice in response to recent events throughout the country. Alexandria demonstrated a commitment to advancing equity in its work with the addition of the Race and Social Equity Officer. As an elected leader, working in concert with the Race and Social Equity Officer, what ideas do you have to help Alexandria, particularly the business community, work towards being more inclusive?

RESPONSE: Communications again will be critical as the City's Race and Social Equity Officer works and makes recommendations as to ways that we can become a more equitable city. Our city will need to continue bringing our citizens along as to how equity and improved access for all will help everyone and make our city more welcoming for both businesses as well as visitors. Diversity needs to be valued everywhere most especially in the types of businesses that our city offers. In business and nearly all other areas, we've, first overtly and then via systemic and institutional bias, often inadequately communicated to minority groups. We need to continue to utilize all methods of communications and outreach to share information. It will be critical that any funding resources are sufficiently advertised and equitably apportioned. In addition to our new city equity officer, the new 2025 ACPS Strategic Plan has a strong emphasis on equity for all and there needs to be a strong link between city and schools as both move forward toward improved equity. One such link could well be business and schools' partnerships to increase intern opportunities as well as to satisfy new state requirements for community service. There also seems to be an increase in the need and desire to have a bit less focus on a "college for all" mantra and more focus on workforce readiness for those students desiring to move directly into the workforce after graduation. High need trades will certainly include communication technicians, electricians and other cooperative specialties. The schools' partnership with Northern Virginia Community College also presents solid opportunities for our schools and businesses to work together

to produce needed local talent. Lastly, opportunities and challenges will be present as Virginia Tech and Amazon begins to build and populate their facilities. Communications will be critical as we look to ensure fair and equitable opportunities while also attempting to minimize the negative impacts that their arrival might have on existing businesses and minorities.

- 5. CITY ISSUES – What do you feel are the three (3) most pressing issues facing the City of Alexandria today? RESPONSE:** 1) Communications; 2) Injecting compassion into capitalism; 3) Sustaining our attractiveness to current citizens and businesses while also continuing to attract tourist and outside interests. As more and more of our citizens talk about the value of diversity and how much it is desired, we need to make sure that those desires are reflected in our actions. As elected council people, this needs to be reflected in several ways perhaps most importantly in how we deal with our every increasing land and housing values. We need to acknowledge difficulties and also recognize that sometimes goals will conflict. Folks want more and improved city services, yet most people don't want to pay additional taxes for the desired increase in services. We need to acknowledge these continuous conflicts and press on. Update, fund and follow our various strategic and small area plans. Continue the various trade-offs and bartering that we do to get and maintain housing options, continuously seek state and federal funding that supports housing ownership. Support small and local businesses with tax, rental and all other incentives available. City government needs to continue to see itself as partners with our citizens and our business community. We need to work jointly advertising our history, our dining, our diversity. We need to minimize regulations and requirements for permits and licensing. We also need to continue to partner with our schools and bring each of our schools to achievement levels that will attract and retain families. Lastly, I think that, as council people, on every issue that we are considering, we need to continuously, early and often, over-communicate the facts and the truth. This is the primary way to overcome hyperbole and rhetoric and also to get and maintain trust. Capitalism has no compassion, and as elected officials, we need to better communicate our attempts to inject this compassion. We must over communicate that our attempts to maintain various housing options, while difficult, is required in order to maintain our valued diversity.
- 6. STATE AND REGIONAL ISSUES – What do you feel are the most pressing state and regional issues effecting Alexandria? RESPONSE:** Certainly, how the state and region continue to deal with the pandemic will remain the top issue likely over the next year. Continued distribution of vaccines will be critical especially as we begin to administer them to children. Related to that will be the need to provide necessary funding to safely and fully open schools. It is suspected that an additional outcome of the pandemic has been the hastening of retirements for teachers and other critical workers. Our city continues to face challenges attracting and retaining quality teachers and leaders due to regional employment pressures and housing challenges. We also will need to continue to advocate for funding to improve regional transportation flows and increase transportation options. Alexandria will need to continue the build of the Potomac Metro Station and also continue coordinating with WAMATA as to development plans at our other metro stops. We must also coordinate with our regional counties and states as we look to implement our Environmental Action Plan as well as any updates to our master transportation plans. Items such as potential suspension or decreasing of rider fees on city buses/routes will need to be coordinated with entities such as the Richmond Express

and other commuter buses. Lastly, as our state continues to provide guidance to our city as we begin to move out of the pandemic, we will need to remain consistent with other state and regional jurisdictions as it relates to business restrictions. Alexandria will want to ensure that we are doing all that we can to attract and retain businesses and that they are not lost to other states or jurisdictions due to unnecessary regulatory restrictions.