

Amy Jackson
Alexandria City Council Candidate Survey
May 2021

1. **INTRODUCTION:** I am Amy Jackson. I am a Hometown Girl – growing up in Foxchase Apartments in the West End and I am a product of ACPS. I am also a Mom, Wife, Daughter, and an Educator. Currently, my family and I live in the Seminary Hill section of Alexandria, where my children are virtually attending ACPS elementary school this year. As a City Councilwoman, I am currently serving in my first term on the Alexandria City Council, and I am hoping to be reelected to my second term in the June 8th Primary (and then again in November), so I humbly ask for your vote.

I am running to improve our infrastructure, implement our digital broadband, and preserve and promote our Eco-City, its resilience and stamina in the face of this current health crisis, which has led us into our economic crisis and education – childcare - crisis. I will always support our people and our programs: Allocating funds to our schools, increasing wages for our educators and public safety professionals, and continuing to implement creative ways to bring affordable housing opportunities to our City, so our youth can come back and live here where they grew up. I have worked to expand early childhood education opportunities and will continue to work toward increasing our pre-k programming, childcare supports and services to assist our families and get them back on track to a successful future. I'm running to ensure our Alexandria continues its strength as we've known it, as we re-imagine and rebuild our City post-Covid - Carlyle, Old Town, Del Ray, the Waterfront to the West End - continuing to re-open to visitors while supporting our small businesses and restaurants with federal and grant dollars to preserve and strengthen our economy while expanding it – but doing this in a way that also allows for our continued safety and success overcoming our Covid-19 cases and ensuring we are keeping our eye on the prize of mitigating the coronavirus with masks, social distancing, and providing accessible, equitable vaccine distributions. Being inoculated will help our City's economy open-up safely and efficiently faster, and our schools are following our lead.

I have been involved in our community for many years, working tirelessly to make it a better place to live, work, and play. Serving is my calling and serving the city as a member of City Council is another way I can give back to a city that has given so much to me. With my vast experience and knowledge of the workings of Alexandria, I am looking forward to carrying on this work as one of your Alexandria City Council members next year. Please visit my website at www.AmyJacksonVA.com for more information.

2. **COVID-19 RECOVERY:** We are coming out of a pandemic, and I continue to advocate for equitable access to and distribution of our vaccinations, ensuring a healthy citizenry as we move forward in an unsure economy. What we have learned is that telecommuting became a solution to what would have been more devastating costs to our economy, and the internet helped keep us unified through social media and meeting platforms like Zoom, Teams, and Google Hangouts. This pandemic re-created a storyline where commercial properties are diminishing and commercial properties want to be re-imagined as residential properties in order to be a successful investment but may also help as a toolbox solution to affordable housing needs. This pandemic taught us that anything goes, and that thinking outside the

box for solutions may be the avenues that end up more successful. Our city is looking to terminate DASH bus fares in order to incentivize job creation and re-opening our economy. Our Potomac Yard/Virginia Tech Metro Station should open in Spring 2022 and our railways have announced an added scope to ridership as they seek to expand. All of these do assist in the re-opening of our economy. Our restaurants are vital and the gateway to re-opening our economy. We need to work on building up our workforce again and marketing our vibrant Alexandria as multi-modal transportation brings them to our multi-faceted city!

3. **COVID-19 CHANGES:** First, I applaud our restaurant and small business owners for their flexibility to pivot and create adaptations to their business plans in this last year. I am proud of Alexandria's resilience in these challenging times and know that many were not able to sustain their cash flow because their bottom line took the hit and succumbed to obstacles that this nearly-closed economy produced. Our AEDP has a phenomenal team, along with banks, and other industries that have provided support (whether grants, manpower, expertise, volunteerism, partnerships in some regard or another) to our businesses and restaurants. Alexandria has also assisted our economic sustainability by allowing loosened restrictions in parking enforcement and finding innovative ways to increase pedestrian flow throughout Old Town, Del Ray, West End, and Carlyle so that our restaurants could remain open, but with outside options. I would like to see that continue.
4. **EQUITY and INCLUSION:** Alexandria has always prided itself on being an inclusive city. Our unique neighborhoods throughout Alexandria still create a tight-knit, engaged community throughout, even though we are a large city on the map. However, there are several ways to improve these comforts of home, and all need to be viewed through the social and equity lens for all residents and businesses in Alexandria to be on equal, equitable and solid footing in regard to their lives and their livelihoods. We need to bring equity and equality to the table at every sitting. In order for our City to build back better, we need to focus on racial and social equity and gender and age equality in every instance. For instance: Women's Rights are Human Rights. And although women have made great strides in the last 100 years, we still have a long way to go – as all minorities do – in finding that balance with our male counterparts. This last year has been tough for everyone, but we have seen the education crisis emerge and nearly defeat our working class because it is a childcare crisis. It is because women are expected to care for their families as well as have careers - and when having to choose between their careers and their families, we have seen how difficult it is for most as they cannot care for their families if they don't have their jobs. There has been a call to action with COVID-19, as it has shined a brighter light on our community's strengths and weaknesses, and this is one that, like racial and socio-economic status divides, needs much improvement as we continue to re-imagine and re-open our economy.
5. **CITY ISSUES:** When reelected I will continue to support Alexandria's resiliency in the face of a pandemic, focusing on the recovery of our Alexandria residents and businesses from Covid-19, to include the equitable, accessible distribution of vaccinations, along with steady job creation as we continue sensible economic expansion in orchestrated balance with infrastructure (municipal fiber network/broadband, pipes, drains, sewers, and roads and bridges) demands. I will focus on re-opening our economy and schools from this economic and education crisis of Covid-19 in a safe, effective, efficient manner, so that our community

will re-open and re-build a new normal, taking into great consideration our people and our programs for our kids and our community. Our City provides outstanding services and needs to continue to do so for its people. We need to focus on our job market, ensuring that our minority and women owned businesses are continuing to be supported with marketing and grant funding. We need to create more apprenticeships for our job market, so that advancement in specific career fields has easy transition, and that pay is equitable. We need to focus on the workforce housing to allow for savings to accrue and wealth to be established. In order to do that, wages must increase equitably, and affordable housing must be secured. Alexandria wants our employees to also live and play here in our City, not just work. Coming out of this pandemic is our opportunity to see to that.

6. **STATE AND REGIONAL ISSUES:** We need to continue to lobby the General Assembly for more authority over our revenue base. I also believe that funding is needed to improve our infrastructure in the City of Alexandria, and hope the American Rescue Plan provides more relief for our CIP throughout the Commonwealth. As President Biden released in a short social media video – “Pipes are Infrastructure”. We have always had roads and buildings in our Capital Improvement Programs, but those projects should also include our pipes, sewers, and drains (and in Alexandria even bulkheads on the Potomac Waterfront!), our municipal fiber network, and much needed digital broadband capabilities that we need for our workforce and our students. Education continues to be an issue, since COVID-19 has created an unsure time for families and students being physically apart from our school buildings, which includes teachers, friends, and otherwise available education resources. Transportation options are also a necessity. Cars will be a part of our lifestyle for awhile (due to the pandemic, many feel safer in their vehicles than on mass transit), but hopefully more environmentally-correct (hybrid or electric) options will be in more high demand (and we need public private partnerships in hopes of bringing electric charging stations to our region and Commonwealth), and have the widening of roads to alleviate traffic. Alexandria City Council has signed on to provide free ridership of the DASH bus service to continue as we climb out of COVID-19 and that should assist. We also have Potomac Yard Metro coming in Spring 2022, and need to look at creating pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly accessibility options as well as the expansion of the railway line in Virginia (thanks President Biden!). Hopefully, our region and Commonwealth will work together on these issues.