cityscene
NOVEMBER 2026

VOTE NOV 3 DETAILS PAGE 2

Garden Clubs Have Deep Roots in Fairfax



On June 30, 1926, a group of women met at Katherine Richardson's home in the Town of Fairfax to discuss beautifying their community. A century later, their influence extends across Virginia. For 100 years, the Garden Club of Fairfax has weathered world wars, social change, public health crises, and the city's growth while advancing conservation, beautification, education, horticulture, and historic preservation.

GCF President Robin Walker, a member since 2022, said, "I joined the GCF because I love flowers, floral design, gardening, and the friendships that come from sharing those interests. I discovered the club is about much more than flowers. It has an extraordinary history of conservation, education, historic preservation, community service, and philanthropy."

Early in its history, the club stewarded Willard Hall (now

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The Garden Club of Fairfax celebrated its centennial June 6 with an etiquette presentation, high tea, and a touching slideshow of archival photos that sparked stories, laughter, and cherished memories.

CITY OF FAIRFAX TURKEY TROT, NOV. 26

Lace up your running shoes and run for fun to support the City of Fairfax Fire Department Benevolent Fund in a 5K run on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. The race starts at 9 a.m. near Fire Station 3. Online registration remains open through race day. Register early: the first 2,000 registrants will receive a special 15th-anniversary giveaway.
Info: runsignup.com/Race/VA/Fairfax/CityOfFairfaxTurkeyTrot

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CITY NEWS

Holiday Closures and Services Information

Tuesday, Nov. 3, *Election Day*
- Open: City government offices
- Closed: DMV Select Services, General District Court

Wednesday, Nov. 11, *Veterans Day*
- Closed: City government offices, Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, DMV Select Services, General District Court
- CUE Bus: Modified weekday service

Wednesday, Nov. 25, *Thanksgiving Holiday*
- Open: City government offices
- Closes at noon: DMV Select Services, General District Court

Thursday, Nov. 26, *Thanksgiving*
- Closed: City government offices, Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, DMV Select Services, General District Court
- CUE Bus: No service

Friday, Nov. 27, *Day After Thanksgiving*
- Closed: City government offices, Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, DMV Select Services, General District Court
- CUE Bus: Modified weekday service

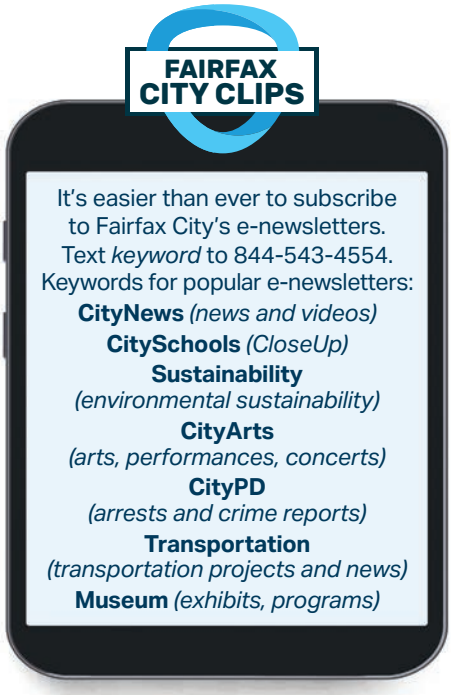
Holiday Refuse & Recycling Collection Schedule

- Nov. 11: No service
- Nov. 12: Wednesday and Thursday routes collected
- Nov. 26: No service
- Nov. 27: Thursday and Friday routes collected

Yard debris collection may be delayed citywide. Please leave items at the curb. *Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Refuse Holiday"), 703-385-7837*

Life-Saving Classes, Nov. 7

Learn life-saving skills at free public safety training offered at 9 and 11 a.m. on Nov. 7, at Fire Station 3, taught by members of the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department. Register at *fairfaxva.gov/lifesaving*



Don't Bag It! Curbside Leaf Collection, Nov. 2–Dec. 31

Curbside vacuum-leaf collection runs Nov. 2-Dec. 31 in neighborhoods that receive city refuse collection service. Please rake leaves loose to the curb — bagged leaves are not collected during this time. Grass clippings and weeds – yes. Stones, branches, and other objects that may damage equipment – no. Leaf collection may create dust. *Info: 703-385-LEAF*

Stormwater Utility Credit Application Deadline, Dec. 4

Property owners who are assessed a stormwater utility fee may apply for stormwater utility credits to reduce their fees. Credit opportunities include structural and non-structural activity-based options. The deadline to submit is Dec. 4. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/stormwaterutility*

Interest-Free Loans Available for Tax Payments

City residents may apply for interest-free loans to pay real estate taxes and personal property taxes through the Taxpayer Assistance Program (TAP). Borrow $250 to $15,000 and repay monthly for six to 10 months. Apply in person at the Treasurer's Office in Fairfax City Hall. There is a 7.5% application fee. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/tap, 703-385-7900*



ELECTION DAY, NOV. 3

On Election Day, Nov. 3, polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters must vote in their designated polling locations. Voters in line by 7 p.m. can cast their votes. *Bring your ID.*

By-mail ballots must be returned by 7 p.m. in person by the voter or to the ballot drop box available at every Fairfax City polling location. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked by Nov. 3 and received by noon Nov. 6 to be counted. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/vote, 703-385-7890*

What's on the Ballot?

- U.S. Senate
- U.S. House of Representatives (11th District)
- Local Offices (Mayor, City Council, and City School Board)
- Proposed Constitutional Amendments 1–3
- Retail Sales Tax Referendum

Real Estate Tax Payments, Dec. 7

Real estate tax payments are due by Monday, Dec. 7. Late payments will incur a 10% penalty, plus interest.

Payment options:
- **Secure drop box** outside City Hall (circular drive on Armstrong Street).
- **Mail** checks only (and mail early).
- **Online:**
  - ***First time?*** Visit *fairfaxva.gov/howtovideo* or *fairfaxva.gov/howto.*
  - ***Existing account?*** Visit *fairfaxva.gov/mytaxes.*
- **In person:** Fairfax City Hall, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

Confirm tax payments online via *fairfaxva.gov/mytaxes*. To request a copy of your bill, call 703-385-7900 (then press 1). To make changes to your bill, call 703-385-7885.

COUNCIL REPORTER

PLEASE NOTE
Summaries have been edited. To read the full Council Reporter, visit *fairfaxva.gov* and click on "City Meetings" or scan the QR code at left.

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF SEPT. 8, 2026

- Mayor Catherine Read presented proclamations acknowledging Sept. 17-23 as Constitution Week, Sept. 22 as Car Free Day, and Sept. 14-18 as Disability Voting Rights Week in the City of Fairfax.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Adopted a resolution to cancel the installation of a traffic signal at University Drive and Layton Hall Drive. The University Drive Bike Lanes project originally included a new traffic signal, but the project team concluded that a signal is not needed now or under future projected conditions. Therefore, the city is asking VDOT to cancel the Revenue Sharing–funded traffic signal component of the project.
- Adopted a resolution to reappropriate unspent FY 2026 general/operating, capital, and enterprise funds to FY 2027. This annual reappropriation resolution is a routine administrative action presented to the council to address year-end budget adjustments and finalize audit-related updates.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing the city manager to sign the FY 2027 agreement between the city and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for CUE operating and capital assistance. DRPT provides WMATA capital and operating subsidy assistance through its contract with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, and the city must execute grant agreements to receive the state funding.
- The council appointed the following individuals to city boards, commissions, and advisory committees: Heather Waye and Riddhi Sanghvi, Board of Architectural Review; Trish Bailey and Anisha Singh, Commission for Women; Thomas Williamson, Environmental Sustainability Committee; Diane Monnit, Fairfax Area Disability Services Board; Ayse Alexander, Grievance Panel Board; J. Samaine Lockwood, Historic Fairfax City, Inc.; and Sarah Ross, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Approved Naila Ayoub's request for a special-use permit to establish a family daycare for up to 12 children at 10230 Antietam Ave.

PUBLIC HEARINGS NOT REQUIRED

- Adopted the City Council Code of Ethics, which also applies to council-appointed boards, commissions, and committees. It generally addresses issues of stewardship, public conduct and behavior, transparency, maintaining and ensuring public confidence, avoiding conflicts of interest, ensuring proper use of public resources, maintaining integrity, and confidentiality where appropriate, and loyalty to the locality and its mission.
- Awarded a contract for $725,551 to Arthur Construction Co., Inc. for construction of the University Drive Bike Lanes project, contingent upon VDOT's approval. The project will add bicycle facilities along University Drive and pedestrian improvements at the University Drive–Layton Hall Drive intersection. Work includes resurfacing and restriping to create bike lanes between Layton Hall Drive and North Street and sharrows from North Street to South Street. At the intersection, the right-turn slip lane will be removed and ADA-compliant curb ramps, curb modifications, and a new pedestrian crossing on the south leg of University Drive will be installed.

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF SEPT. 22, 2026

PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

- Mayor Catherine Read presented proclamations acknowledging Sept.15-Oct.15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month, October as Pedestrian Safety Month, and Oct. 4-10 as Fire Prevention Week in the City of Fairfax. She also presented a proclamation acknowledging the 70th anniversary of the Country Hills Garden Club.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Adopted the Housing Trust Fund guidelines and application process to establish a transparent and competitive framework for allocating Housing Trust Fund resources for affordable housing development and preservation.
- Awarded a $1.7M construction contract to Martins Construction Corp. for the Blenheim Bridge Deck Rehabilitation project.
- Appointed the following individuals to boards, commissions, and advisory committees: Andrew Fernandes, Board of Zoning Appeals; Amber Adaiar, Commission for Women; Christian Manansala, George Mason University Fairfax Campus Advisory Board; Kimberly Jackson Davidson, Grievance Panel Board; Daniel Drummond, Planning Commission.
- Appointed the following individuals to the Housing and Healthy Communities Advisory Board: Emily Ihara, George Mason University, College of Public Health; Susan Lacroix, at-large, city resident member; Gabriel Derosier, lending institution representative; Dominic Bonaiuto, INOVA Health System representative; and Jenna Krall, at-large city resident member.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Approved RJL Associates, Inc. proposal to replace 21,566 square feet of office space with 14 townhomes (Highlands at Mantua) at 9495 Silver King

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INTRODUCING NEW CITY EMPLOYEES



TERRA MCRAE joined the city in August as the HR manager for recruitment and benefits. She previously served as a hiring and recruitment specialist at Fairfax County Park Authority, supporting an agency of more than 3,500 positions. Terra brings extensive experience partnering with hiring managers to develop and execute effective recruitment strategies, and she is highly proficient in NEOGOV, the city's HR software platform, from requisition to close-out. A George Mason University graduate with a degree in computer science and database management, she earned her SHRM-CP certification last year.

LINDSAY BURNESON joined the city in August as the new performance and innovation manager. She brings 16 years of public-sector leadership and operations experience, including 13 years with the City of Alexandria, where she led strategic planning, organizational performance, executive decision support, and operational improvement for a large municipal service division. In this role, she will advance performance management, process improvement, organizational effectiveness, and innovation. Lindsay holds a master's degree in organizational leadership from the University of Colorado and is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.





SHERMAN LAMBERT JR. joined the city in August as the real estate assessment director, bringing more than 20 years of assessment and appraisal experience. Most recently, he served as a supervisory appraiser with the D.C. Office of Tax & Revenue, directing real property litigation defense and managing complex assessment matters. He previously spent nine years with Prince William County's Department of Real Estate Assessments, gaining deep expertise in the regional market. Sherman holds a master's degree in real estate from Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Virginia Union University.



VANESSA LAUMBACH joined the Police Department as the new community safety analyst. She has

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COUNCIL REPORTER

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Court. (Councilmembers Hall and McQuillen opposed.)

- Adopted a resolution recommending amending the city's comprehensive plan from Commercial Corridor Place Type to Townhouse/Single-Family Attached Neighborhood Place Type on the future land use map property identified as City of Fairfax Tax Map Parcel 58-2-10-0001-A-1.
- Approved rezoning 9495 Silver King Court to PDR - Planned Development District, to allow the development of the subject property in compliance with the master development plan and commitments. Approved the application of RJL Associates, Inc., by Bean, Kinney & Korman, Attorney, for a general development plan amendment. (Councilmembers Hall and McQuillen opposed.)
- Approved the request of RJL Associates, Inc., by Bean, Kinney & Korman, Attorney, for a Certificate of Appropriateness, in accordance with the city code, at 9495 Silver King Court. (Councilmembers Hall and McQuillen opposed.)

New City Employees

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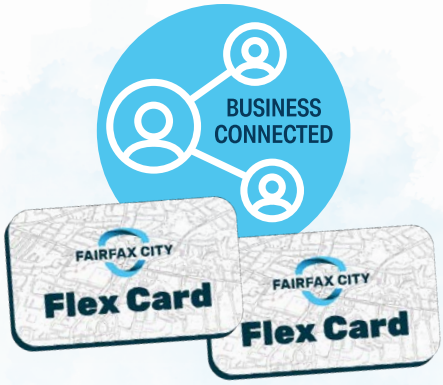
served as an intern with the department since November 2025. In her new role, Laumbach is assigned to the Criminal Investigations Section, where she supports investigations and operations while expanding her work across a broader range of community safety initiatives. Her role includes analyzing crime, traffic, behavioral health, and other operational data; identifying trends and emerging issues; and developing reports, dashboards, and other analytical products to assist with operational and strategic decision-making.



Holiday Shopping & BOGO Flex Card

GET READY TO SHOP LOCAL!
The Fairfax City Flex Card BOGO returns on Black Friday.
Buy a Flex Card, get an additional 40% bonus (while supplies last).
This holiday season, take advantage of seasonal promotions from Nov. 27-Dec. 24.
Info: gofairfaxcity.com/small-business-month

HELPING HANDS

THE CITY NEEDS PEOPLE LIKE YOU

SERVE ON A CITY BOARD OR COMMISSION

Board of Architectural Review (one vacancy for city resident with experience in historic preservation, architecture, and planning); **Board of Building Code Appeals** (four vacancies: one mechanical or plumbing vacancy, one architect vacancy, one fire protection vacancy, and one for city resident); **Board of Zoning Appeals** (two vacancies for city residents); **Commission on the Arts** (two vacancies for city residents); **Commission for Women** (two vacancies for city residents); **Housing and Healthy Communities Advisory Board** (12 vacancies for various openings); **Grievance Panel Board** (two vacancies for city residents); **Human Services Committee** (one vacancy for city resident); **Planning Commission** (two vacancies for city residents).

To apply, visit fairfaxva.gov and search "boards and commissions," or call 703-385-7935.

MAKING History

Museum Explorers, *Nov. 5, 19*
Children ages 2 to 4, with an adult, can explore a historical object, then enjoy an activity, game, or song connected to the object. 10:45 a.m. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Free. Registration required. Info: fairfaxva.gov/visitors

A History Mystery, Nov. 7
Kids ages 10 to 14, with an adult, search for clues, solve puzzles, and explore Historic Blenheim to unravel a mystery while discovering the spy craft, intelligence techniques, and secrets of Fairfax's past. 10 a.m. Historic Blenheim. Free. Registration required. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/visitors*

The Civil War, *Nov. 11-Dec. 4*
This traveling banner exhibition distills the American Civil War's sweeping impact, revealing how national fracture, battlefield devastation, and emancipation reshaped the United States while highlighting the human stories of suffering, resilience, and renewal. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Monday, closed Tuesday. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Free. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/visitors*

Civil War Survival Skills, *Nov. 14*
Kids ages 9 to 14, with an adult, step into the shoes of a Civil War soldier and learn the skills needed to survive life on campaign. 10 a.m. Historic Blenheim. Free. Registration required. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/visitors*

Cooking Through History: A Taste of Sri Lanka, *Nov. 21*
Participants will learn traditional techniques for preparing fresh coconut, discover its cultural significance, and work together to create and sample a classic Sri Lankan dish. For ages 8 and older. 10 a.m. Historic Blenheim. Free. Registration required. *Info: fairfaxva.gov/visitors*

5 MINUTES WITH...

CHARLES CRABTREE

SUPERVISOR, RIGHT-OF-WAYS



Although my city career officially began in 2006, Fairfax City has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. My dad started his 31-year career here in 1979, and my uncles Dave Ray and Chris Ray also spent many years serving the city. I grew up at special events, getting to know the staff and regularly crossing paths with public servants. Though I live outside the city, my family has also remained deeply connected to Fairfax and its people.

Right-of-Ways is the city's Swiss Army knife: we do a bit of everything and make the most of every resource. Our team services more than 7,000 homes, maintains more than 50 miles of local roads and sidewalks, and cares for more than 40 acres of turf in right-of-way and public grounds. We also operate and maintain the City of Fairfax Cemetery, manage more than 35 landscaped beds, oversee more than 5,000 street trees, and handle snow removal for most city sidewalks, parking lots, and public buildings.

Our mission is to deliver essential services to residents, support policy and procedural improvements, and keep our urban canopy and green spaces vibrant and beautiful.

The Blenheim Boulevard redesign is shaping up to be one of the largest initiatives of my career, and I am eager to see how we can transform the corridor and elevate the city's streetscape with thoughtful new landscaping and trees.

Having grown up around the city, I still treasure relationships with people I've known for decades, even as many of them have retired. Professionally, I love helping residents resolve complex issues that feel overwhelming, and creating public spaces the community can be proud of. The work is physically demanding, but our guiding philosophy remains simple: leave every place better than we found it.

ENGAGE FAIRFAX: SHAPING THE FY 2028 BUDGET PRIORITIES, NOV. 5

Fairfax City seeks public input as planning begins for the FY 2028 budget. Residents are invited to join a multiplatform community meeting at 6 p.m. Nov. 5. "Engage Fairfax: Shaping the FY 2028 Budget Priorities" will be offered in person at City Hall, online via Zoom, livestreamed on the city website, and cablecast live on Channel 12. Feedback collected during the event will be presented to the mayor and city council during their annual budget work session on Nov. 7. Information on the current FY 2027 budget and previous budgets is available on the city website at *fairfaxva.gov/budget.*

FROM HERE TO THERE

Public Hearings for Sidewalk Projects, Nov. 10

The city is seeking feedback on the design for several approved and funded transportation projects including First and Second Street Sidewalks, Oak Street Sidewalk, Dwight Avenue Pedestrian Improvements, and the Chain Bridge Road Shared-Use Path. View designs and comment at *engage.fairfaxva.gov* until Nov. 20. Drop by City Hall on Nov. 10 from 6–7 p.m. for an open house to talk with staff about the projects. The city council is holding a hearing during their regular meeting at 7 p.m. Project designs will be finalized after the comment period closes on Nov. 20.

AMAZING EXPERIENCES

A FRESH LOOK



Fairfax City's parks are getting a delightful style upgrade—and visitors are already taking notice. After years of service, the city is replacing the familiar wooden signs with a new generation of park signage that's as smart as it is charming.

The updated signs feature friendly, easy-to-understand symbols designed to welcome our wonderfully diverse community of parkgoers. Whether someone speaks English, Spanish, or simply the universal language of *Where's the playground?*, these icons make navigating the parks easier for everyone.

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Garden Clubs Have Deep Roots in Fairfax

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Old Town Hall), hosting its first flower show in 1927 and raising funds for long-needed improvements. The building also served as the town library, where volunteer librarian Kitty Pozer helped advocate for creating the Fairfax County Public Library system.

After joining the Garden Club of Virginia in 1935, GCF expanded its work, opposing highway billboards, improving roadside plantings, and supporting projects led by member Elizabeth Chilcott, the first woman appointed to the Fairfax County Planning Commission in 1938. As both a local club and part of a statewide network, members participate in conservation, artistic design, education, flower shows, Historic Garden Week, and more.

Despite its broader reach, the club remained committed to Fairfax. Members created plantings and gardens at Old Town Hall, the Fairfax Museum, historic cemeteries, Truro Church, Historic Blenheim, and the Fairfax County Courthouse, and marked the Garden Club of Virginia's centennial with a copper beech tree at Historic Blenheim.

Longtime member Claudia Lewis, who joined in 1989, said the club embodies its motto of friendship, flowers, and philanthropy. She recalls members wearing white gloves and hats — and working hard in them. At Jermantown Cemetery, she remembers member Snip Peters arriving in a twinset, wool skirt, and pumps, then jumping right in: "She got in there, and boy, could that woman dig!"

Community service has always been central. During World War II, members raised funds for the Red Cross and soldiers at Fort Belvoir. Their advocacy has preserved key historical resources, including helping keep the Wills of George and Martha Washington at the Historic Fairfax County Courthouse and protecting George Washington's River Farm from development.

Youth engagement also has deep roots. Early members encouraged children to tend garden plots and enter flower show arrangements with support from volunteers, donated materials, and school partnerships. Today, GCF continues that tradition by supporting Nature Camp, 4-H programs at Frying Pan Park and South Run Rec Center, the Junior Ranger Program at Mason Neck State Park, Camp Grow, and the Children's Garden at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens.

The club remains intentionally small, with up to 50 active members. It currently includes 38 active members, 24 sustaining members, and six honorary members. The longest-serving active member joined in 1978, and many longtime members remain fully engaged.

Walker added, "I want GCF to preserve our tradition and history, share knowledge passed down through generations of members, welcome new ideas and members, and continue finding meaningful ways to serve the community."

A Fresh Look

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Beyond their cheerful design, the new signs are built with sustainability in mind. Crafted from durable acrylic and a specially treated metal, they're intended to naturally develop a dark brown patina over time. While the early stages of this transformation might surprise some visitors, it's all part of a thoughtful plan. These materials won't need paint touch-ups or regular replacements, reducing maintenance and environmental impact.



EARLY CHILDHOOD ARTS CITY OF FAIRFAX PROGRAM

10:30-11:15 a.m. Monday. Sherwood Center. This program for children ages 2-5 is sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Register at *fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.*
November 16: Mr. Lilo Music
November 30: Drew Blue Shoes Magic

BONITA LESTINA OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

Old Town Hall. Free. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.
8 p.m. Nov. 6: iMusical/ Comedic-Musical Improv
8 p.m. Nov. 20: Bokor, Snedecor, Hill/Classical Trio

ARTSCREEN FILM SERIES: THE CONDUCTOR (MARIN ALSOP)

7 p.m. Nov. 13: Sherwood Center. Free popcorn, candy, and refreshments. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

VIRGINIA OPERA: ARIAS & DUETS

7 p.m. Nov. 18. Sherwood Center. Free.

FAIRFAX ART LEAGUE RECEPTION

6-8 p.m. Nov. 6. City Hall. Free.

FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS PYRAMID CONCERT

7 p.m. Nov. 7. FHS auditorium. Free.

FX PLAYERS: WENDY & PETER PAN

7 p.m. Nov. 12-14; 2 p.m. Nov. 14. Tickets: *fxplayers.org*.

FAIRFAX ACADEMY: MUSICAL THEATRE AND ACTORS STUDIO

7 p.m. Nov. 18. FHS auditorium. Free. Donations accepted. *Info: mtasacademy.org.*

cityscene

City Hall • 10455 Armstrong St. • Fairfax, VA 22030

The city's communications and marketing office produces the *Cityscene* every month.

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Mayor Catherine S. Read

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- Billy M. Bates
- Stacy R. Hall
- Stacey D. Hardy-Chandler
- Rachel M. McQuillen
- Thomas D. Peterson

School Board *(schoolboard@fairfaxva.gov)*

- Carolyn S. Pitches, Chair
- Amit S. Hickman, Vice Chair
- Lauren A. Bartelme, Member
- Kristina M. Cecere, Member
- Sarah M. Kelsey, Member

Cityscene includes news about upcoming events and performances, city projects and initiatives, and city council actions. Information is subject to change after publication.

Report problems and request services at *fairfaxva.gov/resolve*.

To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-385-7800 (TTY: 711).

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Follow us: @CityofFairfaxVA

