

City's Top Storyteller, Susan Gray, Retires from Historic Resources





Susan Inskeep Gray (above, right), who retired June 1 after a 25-year career with the Office of Historic Resources, is seen here enjoying HisTREE Day with Andrea Loewenwarter. At left, she is holding the city's Historic Preservation Month Proclamation, along with Mayor Catherine S. Read and Matthew West, president, Historic Fairfax, Inc.

Susan Inskeep Gray was drawn to Fairfax City in 1998 by the opportunity to help tell its rich, complex story. She learned the city's history as she helped bring it to life through exhibits, events, community presentations, and activities. She retired June 1 after a 25-year career with the Office of Historic Resources.

"When I arrived, our first exhibit covered our history from Native Americans through the Civil War. But that's only one segment of Fairfax history," said the former historic resources director. "Lord Fairfax is important. What happened here during the Civil War is important. But there is so much more."

During her tenure, Historic Resources has explored what makes Fairfax City unique. She was particularly drawn to the postCivil War and post-World War II eras, where, she said, "the city was a setting for all of those issues and national events."

Historic Resources brought local historic figures to life, presenting the public and personal stories of Richard Farr, Antonia Ford, Kate Waller Barrett, and Kitty Pozer. But, she said, everyone makes history every day.

"You are a part of this story," she told visitors, especially youngsters. "If you've been here a week, if your family is from Bangladesh, you're part of the Fairfax story now, and you're just as important as someone who came in 1780."

The main exhibition at the museum is called "The Fairfax Story" because, she said, "History is the story of us."

She commended Historic Fairfax City, Inc., for supporting the establishment of the historic resources office and for continued support. "HFCI understood the importance of historic facilities and their management," she said, citing their guidance on research and restoration of numerous city historic buildings.

She is grateful for relationships with the City of Fairfax Regional Library, the Virginia Room, the Library of Virginia, and George Mason University, where she earned her graduate degree in 1996.

She praised her staff and the city departments and was thankful for myriad volunteers.

All of these partnerships have allowed historic resources to celebrate the city's diverse culture, from the spacesuit worn by a Fairfax City native to the costumes of Bolivian dancers in the city's annual Independence Day parade. She said, "There are so many stories yet to tell."

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CITY NEWS

Holiday Closure and Service Information

Tuesday, Nov. 4, Election Day

- Open: City government offices
- Closed: DMV Select Services. General District Court

Tuesday, Nov. 11, Veterans Day

- Closed: City government offices, DMV Select Services, General District Court
- Open: Historic Blenheim
- CUE Bus: modified weekday service

Wednesday, Nov. 27,

Thanksgiving Holiday

- Open: City government offices
- Closed at noon: DMV Select Services, General District Court

Thursday, Nov. 28, Thanksgiving

- Closed: City government offices, DMV Select Services, General District Court, Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, Historic Blenheim
- CUE Bus: no service

Friday, Nov. 29,

Day After Thanksgiving

- Closed: City government offices, DMV Select Services, General District Court, Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, Historic Blenheim
- CUE Bus: modified weekday service

Holiday Refuse & Recycling Collection Schedule

Nov. 11: No service; Nov. 12: Monday and Tuesday routes collected; Nov. 27: no service; Nov. 28: Thursday and Friday routes collected. There may be delays in yard debris collection during the weeks of the holidays. Please leave items at the curb until they are collected. Info: fairfaxva.gov (search "Refuse Holiday"), 703-385-7837

Don't Waste It: **Composting Center Open 24/7**

Don't let your spoiled food go to waste; dispose of it at the Fairfax City Composting Center. City residents have 24-hour access to the site, adjacent to City Hall, to drop off spoiled food, pizza (and oily pizza boxes), and more. Info: fairfaxva.gov/ composting

NOVEMBER 4 **GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION**

NOW: Early voting in the Office of Elections, open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and Nov. 1, in the City Hall Annex. Please bring your ID.

NOV. 1, SATURDAY: In-person early voting from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the City Hall Annex. Eligible voters in line by 5 p.m. will be allowed to cast a ballot.

NOV. 4: Election Day — polls open 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eligible voters in line by 7 p.m. will be allowed to cast a ballot.

By-mail ballots may be returned by 7 p.m. Nov. 4 in person by the voter, to the ballot drop box located at every Fairfax City polling location, or to the ballot drop box located at the City Hall Atrium east entrance (facing George Mason Boulevard). Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked by Nov. 4 and received by noon on Nov. 7 in order to be counted.

Info: fairvaxva.gov/vote, 703-385-7890

Public Safety Class, Nov. 1

Free public safety classes from the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department and Fairfax City Fire Department are offered at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nov. 1. at Fire Station 3. Register at fairfaxva. gov (search "public safety class")

Library Book Sales. Nov. 1-2, Nov. 6-9

The Friends of the City of Fairfax Regional Library will hold a Children's Book Sale Nov. 1-2 and the Fall Book Sale Nov. 7-9 (preview Nov. 6). Friends of the Virginia Room Book Sale will be Nov. 7-9. Info: 703-293-6227, fairfaxcountv.gov/ library (click on "events")

Don't Bag It! **Curbside Leaf Collection, Nov. 3**

Curbside leaf collection starts on Nov. 3 in neighborhoods that receive city refuse collection service. Rake leaves loose to the curb. Bagged leaves are not collected during this time. Curbside leaf collection continues through Dec. 31. Info: fairfaxva. gov/Services/Trash-Recycling-and-Composting, 703-385-LEAF

Veterans Day Ceremony, Nov. 11

The American Legion Fairfax Post 177 and VFW Post 8469 invite the public to a ceremony to honor the nation's veterans at 10:30 a.m. Nov. 11 at American Legion Post 177. The event is open to all.

Friday Morning Speaker Series, **Nov. 14**

Fairfax Village in the City and AARP will present "Preparing for a Health Crisis" at 9:45 a.m. Nov. 14 at the Sherwood Center. The featured speaker is Heather Suri, founder and CEO of Pathways in Aging. Arrive at 9:30 a.m. for coffee. Info: 703-385-5738, village@fairfaxva.gov

City of Fairfax Turkey Trot, Nov. 27

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. 27. The race steps off at 9 a.m. near Fire Station 3. Online registration remains open through race day. Register early. If you register after Nov. 14, you are not guaranteed a race T-shirt. Info: runsignup.com/Race/ VA/Fairfax/CityOfFairfaxTurkeyTrot

Fall Tree Giveaway, Nov. 30

This fall, plant a free native tree provided by the city. To reserve your tree, visit arborday.org/cityoffairfax through Nov. 30 (while supplies last). Trees are available to all city residential addresses; limit one tree per household per giveaway season.

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. 9, 2025

PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Approved, unanimously, the adoption of the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approved, unanimously, consideration of the minutes of special meetings for July 22, Aug. 12, and 26, 2025; and minutes of regular meeting for July 22, 2025.
- Approved, unanimously, the appointment of city residents James Hickman and Nicholas Prosinin to the Fairfax City Parks Foundation Board, and Susan Wiczalkowski to the Retirement Plan Administrative Committee.
- Approved, unanimously, award of professional service contracts for architectural design, engineering, and construction management services to Architecture, Inc. and Moseley, Inc. for renovations and additions to Providence and Daniels Run Elementary Schools. Combined expenses for both projects in FY 2026 will not exceed \$3M. Future funding is contingent upon city council approval of appropriated funding.
- Approved, unanimously, award of construction contract in the estimated amount of \$1,727,333.60 to Virginia Paving Company for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the east and westbound roadway of Fairfax Boulevard between Draper Drive and Fairfax Circle.
- Approved, unanimously, to adopt an updated resolution to endorse applications for FY 2029-30 Revenue Sharing Funding for 1st/2nd Street Sidewalks, Dwight Avenue Pedestrian Improvements, and Northfax East-West Roadway.
- Approved, unanimously, resolutions: (1) accepting the Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy Plan and approving of the city's participation in the proposed settlement of opioid-related claims against the Sackler family; and (2) approving the city's participation in the proposed settlements of opioid-related claims against Alvogen, Amneal, Apotex, Hikma, Indivior, Mylan, Sun, and Zydus, and their related corporate entities and, in each case, directing the execution of any documentation necessary to effectuate the city's participation in the settlements.

PUBLIC HEARING

Approved, unanimously, a request from Chick-fil-A for a special use permit, special exceptions, and certificate of appropriateness, for modifications to the existing drive-through and building at 9509 Fairfax Blvd.

COUNCIL ACTIONS OF SEPT. 30, 2025

PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Catherine Read presented proclamations acknowledging Sept. 15- Oct. 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month, and October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Pedestrian Safety Month in the City of Fairfax.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Approved, unanimously, adoption of the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approved, unanimously, consideration of the minutes of special meetings for Aug. 29, 2025; and Sept. 2, 12, 16, and 22, 2025; and the minutes of the regular meeting on Sept. 9, 2025.
- Approved, unanimously, a resolution to reappropriate general/operating, capital, and enterprise funds that were appropriated in FY 2025 and have not yet been spent or committed as of June 30, 2025, to carry over to FY 2026.
- Approved, unanimously, an ordinance amending provisions in the city personnel ordinance relating to the treatment of accumulated contributions for non-vested participants.

APPPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- Approved, unanimously, to endorse the appointment of Emilio Alonso as a director for the Fairfax City Parks Foundation, Inc.
- Approved, unanimously, appointments of the following: Michael Breslin, Board of Zoning Appeals; Michelle Nguyen, Economic Development Authority; Derek Fuzzell, Northern Virginia Community College Board; Tassos McCarthy, Planning Commission; and Nelson Steward, public safety employee representative, Retirement Plan Administrative Committee.
- Approved, unanimously, reappointment of the following: Robert Beaty, Board of Architectural Review; and Jamil Ahmed, Retirement Plan Administrative Committee.

FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Approved, unanimously, to defer until Oct. 14, 2025, the public hearing on an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 54, pertaining to the prohibition on the possession, carrying, or transportation of firearms, ammunition, or components or combination thereof, in city buildings or facilities, on public property, or at permitted public events.



BONITA LESTINA OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

Free, Friday night concerts held at the Sherwood Center. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

8 p.m. Nov. 7:

"The Jack Hinshelwood Trio" (folk, traditional acoustic, Americana)

8 p.m. Nov. 21:

Halley Shoenberg (New Orleans-style hot jazz, swing)

ARTSCREEN: "BIG EYES"

7 p.m. Nov. 14. Free. Sherwood Center. Popcorn and refreshments served. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

ARTIST-IN-CONVERSATION: LA SANTA CECILIA

7 p.m. Nov. 13. Free. Sherwood Center. Reservation required at cfa.gmu.edu. This special Mason Artist-in-Residence event features the Grammy-winning and Latin Grammy-nominated band "La Santa Cecilia." Additionally, enjoy their full performance at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 15, at George Mason University Center for the Arts.

FUNDAY MONDAY

Free programs geared toward preschoolers 10:30-11:15 a.m. at the Sherwood Center. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

Nov. 17: My Gym Nov. 24:

Children's Music with Mr. Gabe

ROTARY GALLERY EXHIBIT: "COLORBURST"

On display through Dec. 19 at the Sherwood Center. This carefully curated exhibition features powerful interpretations of color, realized through a diverse array of materials such as paints, pastels, colored pencils, and found objects. A pair of EnChroma eyewear will be available to enhance the viewing experience for gallery guests with anomalous trichromacy (a common form of color blindness).





George Mason University Business Directory

George Mason University alumni business owners are invited to register with the George Mason Alumni-Owned Business Directory. Connect with members of the George Mason community who want to support alumniowned businesses. Register at alumni.gmu.edu

Nonprofit Grant Applications Due Dec. 1

The City of Fairfax offers onetime grants to human services nonprofit organizations that provide safety net services to city residents. Organizations may choose to apply for either a mini-grant (\$5,000-\$10,000) or a standard grant (\$10,001-\$40,000), both distributed through a competitive process. Applications accepted through 4 p.m. Dec.1. Info: fairfaxva.gov/ nonprofitarants



Through Her Tearful Eyes by Mirette Bedrous

FAIRFAX ART LEAGUE EXHIBIT AND SALE

8:30-5 p.m. Monday - Friday. except holidays, through December at City Hall.

Real Estate Tax and Stormwater Utility Fee. Due Dec. 5

City of Fairfax real estate tax bills, which include the stormwater utility fee, will be mailed by early November and are due Dec. 5. If you pay real estate taxes directly and do not receive a tax bill, call 703-385-7900. If you receive a real estate tax bill but your mortgage company escrows the payment, please immediately forward the bill to your mortgage company.

Real Estate Taxes: Payment Options

View Fairfax City real estate and personal property tax information and e-payment options in the city's tax portal at fairfaxva.gov/mytaxes. Payment may be made by credit card or PayPal (which will include a convenience fee charged by the provider) or e-check (free). Info: 703-385-7900

If you prefer, mail your payment, or drop off your payment to City Hall — there's a secure drop box on the circular driveway on Armstrong Street, next to the flagpoles, accessible 24/7.

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. Borrow \$250 - \$15,000 and repay monthly for six to 10 months. Apply in person with the Treasurer's Office in Fairfax City Hall. There is a 7.5% application fee payable to the partner bank, Main Street Bank. Info: fairfaxva.gov/tap, 703-385-7900

Tax Relief Available

Fairfax City provides real estate tax relief options to qualified senior citizens and homeowners with disabilities. Additionally, disabled veterans (or their surviving spouses) may be eligible for real estate tax exemptions on their principal residences. Applications are due April 15, 2026. Info: fairfaxva.gov/government/ finance, 703-359-2486

City Thanks Edwin Gonzalez for His Service

After 34 years, Edwin Gonzalez, refuse and recycling supervisor, retired from the City of Fairfax Nov. 1. He spent his entire career with the Public Works Department, starting in 1991 as a temporary leaf collector, then as a temporary refuse worker the following year, before being hired as a permanent employee in 1993.

After earning his commercial driver's license, he took every opportunity to learn new skills and advance his career: truck driver, equipment operator, assistant supervisor, and ultimately supervisor of the city's refuse and recycling division. "I was the first Hispanic person to work at the Property Yard in 1991," he said. "I've seen a lot of changes since then."

He has seen how recycling has changed the landscape, literally, as fewer materials are sent to the landfills. He has seen technology improve service and working conditions, from



Edwin Gonzalez

cameras that help staff avoid accidents to hydraulic lifts that prevent worker injuries. He saw his department continue operations during all weather conditions, season after

season, and even through a global pandemic. He has seen the city grow and change in 34 years, and he still knows every street, every block, every address on every route.

He understood the assignment he was given decades ago: provide excellent service, no matter the conditions. "I like to serve the residents of Fairfax," he said. "I'll do anything to help them — and I've tried to pass that on to my coworkers: to do their best for the residents. They deserve the very best service."

And he remembers his customers. A young boy on his route decades ago was so impressed with the brush collection truck, he pointed at Gonzalez and said, "I want to be him when I grow up." Years later, he saw the young man, now a college student, who still remembered that day.

"[Former Public Works Director] Glen Shelton told me, 'This is a good place to stay.' And he was right," said Gonzalez.









"Founding Frenemies," through Dec. 8

In this traveling exhibit, explore how Alexander Hamilton's relationships with Virginians helped shape the character of the United States, its founding institutions, and patterns of civil discourse still felt today. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Free. Info: fairfaxva.gov, search "Frenemies"

Art on the Lawn, Nov. 1

Bring your painting and drawing materials (along with a blanket and chair) to join the Fairfax Art League from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Historic Blenheim. Paint pumpkins and make leaf rubbings. Limited art supplies available. Free. Rain date: Nov. 2. Info: fairfaxva.gov, search "art on the lawn"

Kids and Crafts: Hamilton, Nov. 3

Come to the "room where it happens" for fun activities and crafts revolving around Alexander Hamilton. 10 a.m. to noon. Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Free. Info: fairfaxva.gov, search "Hamilton"

Civil War Survival Skills, Nov. 8 Youths ages 9-13 can practice skills soldiers used to survive long marches over rough terrain in different climates. Pitch a tent. do laundry, and drill like a soldier. Participants must be accompanied by an adult. 10-11:30 a.m. Historic Blenheim. Free. Registration, info: fairfaxva.gov, search "survival"

Historic Blenheim Guided Tours. Tuesday-Saturday Tours are conducted at 1 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Free.

BEHIND

Chief Raul Pedroso believes that connections between the police department and the community it serves are

key to keeping the City of Fairfax safe. He believes enhancing public safety is a collective effort between residents, business owners, and the police department. Since being hired, Chief Pedroso has met with numerous community groups and attended meetings with business owners and residents to discuss public safety concerns.

Chief Pedroso invites any commu-

nity groups (neighborhood associations, religious groups, business owners) to email policechief@fairfaxva.gov if they are interested in meeting with him to discuss any public safety questions or concerns.



HELPING HANDS

THE CITY NEEDS **PEOPLE LIKE YOU**

SERVE ON CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

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 (one vacancy for city residents); Commission on the Arts (two vacancies for city residents); Continuum of Care Board (one vacancy for city resident); Environmental Sustainability Committee (two vacancies for city residents); Fairfax Alcohol Safety Action Program Policy Board (one vacancy for city resident); Fairfax County History Commission (one vacancy for city resident); Grievance Panel Board (five vacancies for city residents); Historic Fairfax City, Inc. (two vacancies for city residents); Human Services Committee (one vacancy for city resident); NOVA Parks (two vacancies for city residents); Planning Commission (one vacancy for city resident).

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





Sherwood Center

Fairfax City Parks and Recreation is partnering with Fairfax City Public Schools to support families in need this holiday season. This is a wonderful opportunity to give back and make the season brighter. Commit to sponsoring a family by Nov. 14. Donations (gift cards, money, wrapping supplies) accepted through Dec. 12. Info: fairfaxva.gov/givingtree



Jazz4Justice "The Latin Tinge" Fri., Nov. 14 • 8 p.m. M GEORGE MASON LSNV MASONARTS



REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENTS APPRAISER



The Real Estate Assessments Office has five staff members who are responsible for valuing all residential and commercial property in the city - about 9,685 properties in total.

I am a residential appraiser, and I have been with the city for eight years. What goes into an assessment is a lot more complex than most people realize. I didn't fully understand the complexity until I joined the assessment team. We do everything possible to make sure our assessments are accurate and equitable.

We are here to help residents if they have questions about their assessment. There is an appeal process first at the administrative level. which allows us to look more closely at their parcel. The second level of appeal is to the Board of Equalization, which is a panel of volunteer city property owners with financial, real estate professional, or construction backgrounds.

I am currently studying for my assessment administration specialist master exam, which recognizes professionalism and competency in the administration of a variety of functions for property tax purposes. Continuing education is important in our industry.

The city is full of wonderful people; it's a privilege to be a part of the City of Fairfax.



Ceremony Marks Completion of City Hall Landscaping Project



Pictured from left to right, front row: Councilmember Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Councilmember Rachel McQuillen, Mayor Catherine Read, Councilmember Stacy Hall, and Faiza Alam, Environmental Sustainability Committee. Back row: Satoshi Eto, Public Works programs manager; Dave Summers, Public Works director; Melanie Zipp, assistant city manager; Rusty Thomas, former right-of-way supervisor; and Anna Safford, urban forester. This caption has been corrected. In the October CityScene, Councilmembers Hardy-Chandler and Hall were misidentified. Cityscene deeply regrets the error.



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

City Council

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Anthony T. Amos

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

Kristina M. Cecere, Vice Chair

Lauren A. Bartelme, Member

Amit S. Hickman, 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).



Escanea el código para leer Cityscene en español.

Follow us: @CityofFairfaxVA













Dec. 5-7 & Dec. 12-14

Enjoy this festive, German Market-inspired event featuring a variety of craft and gourmet food vendors, live entertainment, and more!

The market is open 5-8 p.m. Fridays; noon-6 p.m. Saturdays; and noon-5 p.m. Sundays in Old Town Square.

Receive a free tote bag from our sponsor, Pollo Campero, while supplies last.



