



2024 Alexandria City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Please share any responses by Friday, May 31st to
Donna Gold (djaygold@comcast.net) and Scott Barstow (shbarstow@gmail.com)

CANDIDATE NAME: John Taylor Chapman

1. In 2019, in response to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate, our city made a *Declaration of Climate Emergency*, and created its *2040 Environmental Action Plan* and *Green Building Policy* (GBP). A key goal of that EAP was to achieve a 50% reduction from 2005 levels of greenhouse gas pollution emitted by Alexandria by 2030. In the last election campaign, most if not all candidates identified climate change as among their top five priorities.
 - a. **Do you agree that Alexandria is in a climate emergency, and if so, where do you rank the climate emergency among your priorities?**
Yes, I believe Alexandria and the region is experiencing a climate emergency and addressing it ranks fairly high on my priority list.
 - b. **Are you committed to achieving the goal of 50% GHG reduction in our community-wide emissions by 2030, or do you see this as aspirational?**
YES
2. To its credit, the present Mayor and Council have established and begun funding a City Office of Climate Action.
 - a. **How will you evaluate our progress on achieving the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets included in the City's Environmental Action Plan?**
Annual conversations with staff about achievement on targets.
 - b. **How will you hold the City Manager accountable for achieving the reductions necessary to meet these targets?**
We should have an annual conversation, separate from our budget sessions, about how we are meeting our targets.
3. The Office of Climate Action is developing an update of our Green Building Policy to limit the increase in emissions from new buildings. Similarly, our neighbors in Arlington, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia, among others in the region, have been strengthening their green building policies. Developers have raised concerns about this and are asking candidates to oppose or dilute this policy.
 - a. **How do you respond to the developers' threats that they will go to other jurisdictions if we upgrade energy efficiency requirements in new buildings approved under the DSUP process?**
That is their choice. Every jurisdiction develops their own policies and landowners and developers will make their own decisions.
 - b. **Will you support a Green Building Policy that requires levels of energy efficiency in new buildings, such as reaching net-zero energy use, that are in line with our 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction goals?**

YES

- c. **How should Alexandria estimate and plan for the multi-generational social costs to our community if developers continue to put up buildings that waste energy and burn methane?**

We should look at policy that disincentivizes wasteful development.

4. Buildings are responsible for about 60% of our community's greenhouse gas pollution, and existing buildings are responsible for about 95% of those emissions. Sharply reducing energy use in existing buildings is critical for reaching our 2030 climate goals, will save residents and businesses money over the long-term, and make buildings more comfortable and healthy. As Virginia is a Dillon Rule state and cannot mandate energy reductions of private property, the City is currently limited to incentives such as financial subsidies, tax relief, public recognition, technical assistance, revamping the City's PACE program, and taking advantage of existing federal, state and utility weatherization programs. The City can also expand the reach of Alexandria's Green Building Policy to include all renovated buildings that are subject to City land use approval.
- a. **What level of priority should be given to reducing building energy use and methane emissions in existing buildings, and how would you propose financing and supporting such efforts?**
Medium priority level, unless there is financial support from state or federal agencies.
- b. **Which of the abovementioned ideas would you support, and what other ideas can you offer for reducing the energy use of our existing buildings by 50% by 2030?**
Public recognition, technical assistance, the CPACE program and taking advantage of existing programs.
5. Climate change is steadily increasing flooding and extreme precipitation risks. Alexandria has already made substantial investments in flood control, both in our stormwater infrastructure and along the Old Town waterfront. At the same time, some Alexandria neighborhoods are considerably hotter than others, due to historic redlining, the urban heat island effect, and a lack of tree coverage and green space.
- a. **How should projected changes in flooding and extreme weather events over the coming years be accounted for in our City's infrastructure investments?**
They need to be FULLY accounted for in our short-term and long-term planning and financial modeling.
- b. **Will you support providing funding to increase planting and maintenance of trees with a priority in our hottest neighborhoods, adequately connecting residents to cooling centers if they cannot afford air conditioning, and other needed actions?**
YES, we currently do some of this and need to expand these opportunities.
6. Use of public transportation, bicycling and walking should become default modes of transportation in order to increase the safety and livability of our communities, provide mobility for those who cannot drive, and reduce energy use and air pollution.
- a. **Do you support continuing free DASH service, and investments in bus rapid transit (BRT) routes and bus stop infrastructure? YES**

b. Do support establishing protected bike lanes along key routes to connect all Alexandrians? **YES**