



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Greenlaw and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: February 4, 2014
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

Fall Hill Avenue to Close February 12 for Bridge Replacement - The date for the closure of Fall Hill Avenue at the site of the bridge over the Rappahannock Canal is rapidly approaching. Signs advising motorists of the pending closure are in place, as are the detour signs that will be uncovered the morning of the closure. There will be significant additional public outreach in the last few days before the closure occurs. The closure will begin on **Wednesday, February 12 at 9 a.m.**

Neighborhood Capital Improvements Program - A meeting was held last week to discuss the status of efforts to utilize funds appropriated by City Council in the FY14 budget for the Neighborhood Capital Improvements Program, also known as the "SSL" program for "Sidewalks, Safety and Lighting". This meeting was attended by Councilors Howe and Paolucci, Public Works Director Doug Fawcett, three residents of the Twin Lakes neighborhood, and Carl and Anne Little of Tree Fredericksburg.

The group conducted a review of projects that have been submitted for funding consideration through the program and decided that the installation of curb, gutter and sidewalks along Twin Lakes Drive and installation of street lights on the currently unlit section of Cowan Boulevard should be considered priority projects for additional review in the near term. Mr. Fawcett agreed to obtain a concept plan and preliminary cost estimates for the Twin Lakes Drive sidewalks in the next sixty days, and Mr. Howe offered to work with city staff to review and possibly refine the plan and costs for installation of street lights along Cowan Boulevard.

Second Annual United Way Benefit Golf Tournament - Planning has begun for the city's second annual golf tournament to benefit the [Rappahannock United Way](#). This year's tournament will be held Monday, June 9 at 9 a.m. at Lee's Hill Golf Club. Through the support and generosity of sponsors and the golfers who participated in the inaugural tournament last October, the city was able to send a check to the United Way for \$7,000. The goal is set even higher this year. Please mark your calendars now to participate in this year's event.

Fredericksburg Featured at the I-95 Welcome Center - The Fredericksburg Visitor Center coordinated a tourism blitz at the State Welcome Center on I-95 for the months of January and February 2014. The Welcome Center is host to thousands of travelers annually and the flexibility of the blitz platform allows for a fresh and creative approach to reaching those visitors. City tourism staff strategically placed banners, displays, promotional products, and extra brochures to highlight attractions in the city, increase awareness of what the city has to offer, and generate return visitation. New to this year's tourism blitz was an effort to draw attention to local art by featuring the works of local artist Casey Shaw, of Art First Gallery on Caroline Street. Shaw generously allowed for two of his paintings to be featured in the display pictured below. For more information on Shaw visit www.CaseyShaw.com.



Rain Gardens at Alum Spring Park - The Parks and Recreation Department will be working with Friends of the Rappahannock to create two rain gardens in Alum Spring Park. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows the absorption of rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas. This reduces the damaging impact from rain runoff by allowing storm water to soak into the ground instead of flowing into storm drains and surface waters, such as Hazel Run. The project will be funded by a grant received by the Friends of the Rappahannock and is expected to be complete by the spring. One example of a rain garden can be seen at Maury Playground.

Eagle Scout Projects - Jonathan Herman has completed his Eagle Scout Project on the Rappahannock River Heritage Trail. Mr. Herman stained and sealed all of the new posts, over 200 in total, along the trail.

Two more Eagle Scouts are working on creating a new nature play area at Motts Run Reservoir. The play area will feature a play cooking area, a hide skinning station, a grinding station, some vertical balancing logs, a paddle your own canoe area, and a build your own stick lean-to shelter area. The 1,100 square foot area will be surrounded by a new split rail fence, and benches will be added for the parents. The project has received a \$1,100 grant from the Ann Page Garden Club, and it is hoped that the project will be completed by the 10th anniversary of the Nature Center on April 22, 2014.

Finally, another Eagle Scout is working with Parks and Recreation to refurbish the steps at the end of the parking lot at Alum Spring Park. The project involves the removal and replacement of old railroad ties, inserting new security beams to keep the steps stable, and backfilling the platforms between the steps. Additional railroad ties will be inserted along the parking lot to divert the water to the planned runoff channels that will lead to the rain gardens mentioned in the previous item.

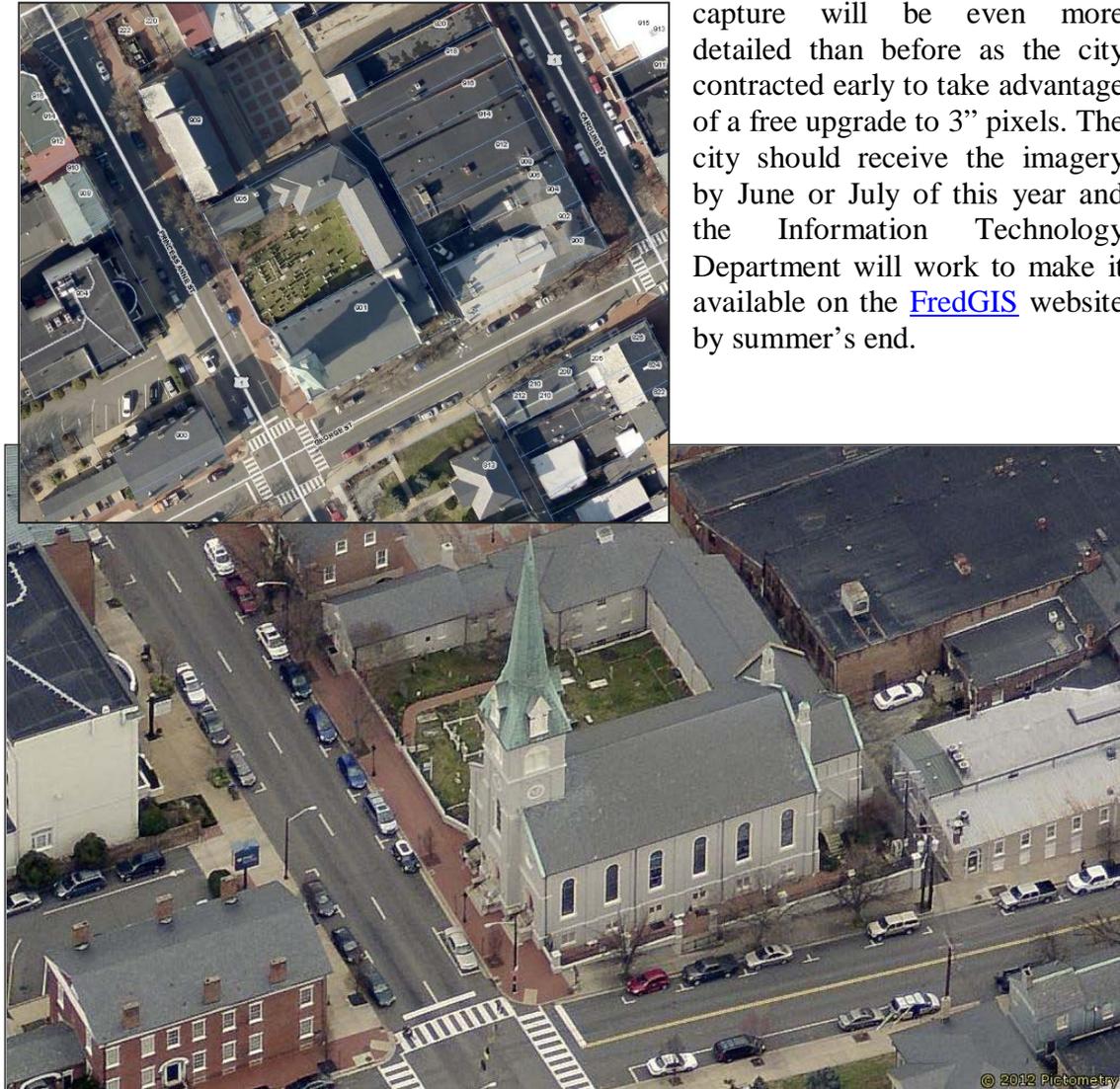
Human Resources Implementing Changes - The Human Resources Department is implementing two major changes in the city's fringe benefit packages effective January 1, 2014. The first is the adoption of the requirement that all new non-public safety employees must join the Hybrid Plan in the Virginia Retirement System. The Hybrid Plan is a combination of the traditional defined-benefit program and a defined contribution plan. Employees must contribute at least five percent of their salary to the cost of the plan, and may elect to contribute up to nine percent of their salary. In addition, employees enrolled in this plan are eligible for short and long-term disability insurance, but are not eligible for traditional disability retirement. The new VRS Hybrid Plan program is statewide and mandated by the General Assembly for all member jurisdictions in VRS.

The second change is that all city employees hired after January 1, 2014 will be enrolled in the Consumer-Driven Health Plan, which is a health insurance program introduced to employees in 2013. The city's Consumer-Driven Health Plan features a deductible of \$2,000 for single employees and \$4,000 for employees covering dependents. The city provides half of these amounts in a Health Savings Account which the employee is allowed to maintain and carry forward if the balance is not exhausted during the fiscal year. Employees may also contribute to the HSA through payroll deductions. The structure of the plan encourages employees to actively contain the costs of their medical care, thereby lowering claims costs over time. These changes should slow the growth of fringe benefit costs, although it may take several years to begin to realize savings from these new programs.

Online Training Now Available to Police - In 2013, the Police Department contracted with PoliceOne.com Academy to provide employees with the opportunity to obtain high quality web-based training on a large number of topics specific to law enforcement. In January, the Rappahannock Regional Criminal Justice Academy approved more than twenty of the online classes as eligible to satisfy in-service credit requirements. To maintain certification with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, officers must get forty hours of in-service training every two years. The online classes from

PoliceOne.com will facilitate this requirement by allowing for variations in around-the-clock patrol scheduling.

Pictometry® to Capture Aerial Imagery of Fredericksburg - There will be some low flying planes over the City of Fredericksburg in the coming weeks as [Pictometry®](#) captures the next round of [Oblique](#) and [Orthophotography](#) images. The new image capture will be even more detailed than before as the city contracted early to take advantage of a free upgrade to 3" pixels. The city should receive the imagery by June or July of this year and the Information Technology Department will work to make it available on the [FredGIS](#) website by summer's end.



United Way Campaign - The city had another successful year with the Local Government United Way Campaign, thanks to the generous efforts of the city employees. This year we added the City of Fredericksburg United Way Benefit Golf Tournament. Twenty-one teams of golfers participated in this October tournament. Thanks to the generous sponsors and golfers, \$7,000 was raised from the tournament. With the golf tournament, donations from employees and other fund raising events, the city contributed \$36,965 to the [Rappahannock United Way](#). Once again the city has increase the amount

it has given United Way, this year by more than \$3,500. The Central Rappahannock Regional Library also participates in the city's campaign and added \$13,856 to the total amount given to the United Way.

As part of the United Way Campaign, the city participates in the [United Way Day of Caring](#). This year's event was held on September 27, 2013 and the city had 11 employees participate. With rakes, shovels and hammers in hand, these employees worked at the [Rappahannock Emergency Medical Services Council](#) on Hunter Street. Destruction, construction and beautification projects were performed in and around the building.

The Rappahannock United Way is dedicated to helping citizens throughout the Fredericksburg area. The employees once again this year showed their dedication to the United Way with their time, contributions and efforts.

