

Town of Vienna 2022 Legislative Agenda

On _____, 2021, the Citizens of the Town of Vienna, through its duly elected Town Council, adopted the following Legislative Agenda at a public hearing and respectfully proposes to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia the following:

2022 Legislative Agenda Items:

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS – TOP PRIORITY

1. The Town of Vienna strongly opposes ending qualified immunity or making changes to sovereign immunity.

Under current law immunity is not guaranteed or absolute, it must be earned. The Town has concerns regarding the chilling affect this would have on retaining current officers and recruiting future officers. Officers are asked to make split second decision and this immunity is necessary for their protection. Recently, the Town investigated completely false allegations that were made against officers in two separate incidents. Although the Town ascertained these allegations to be intentionally falsely made, lawsuits could have still be filed.

2. The Town of Vienna opposes legislation that reduces the current local government authority to review and approve applications for the use of the public right-of-way, including such use by wireless telecommunication providers, but does not oppose legislation consistent with the Virginia Constitution's requirement for transparency and local legislative approval.

Virginia Constitution - Section 9. Sale of property and granting of franchises by cities and towns. — No rights of a city or town in and to its waterfront, wharf property, public landings, wharves, docks, streets, avenues, parks, bridges, or other public places, or its gas, water, or electric works shall be sold except by an ordinance or resolution passed by a recorded affirmative vote of three fourths of all members elected to the governing body.

No franchise, lease, or right of any kind to use any such public property or any other public property or easement of any description in a manner not permitted to the general public shall be granted for a longer period than forty years, except for air rights together with easements for columns of support, which may be granted for a period not exceeding sixty years. Before granting any such franchise or privilege for a term in excess of five years, except for a trunk railway, the city or **town shall, after due advertisement, publicly receive bids** therefor. Such grant, and any contract in pursuance thereof, may provide that upon the termination of the grant, the plant as well as the property, if any, of the grantee in the streets, avenues, and other public places shall thereupon, without compensation to the grantee, or upon the payment of a fair valuation therefor, become the property of the said city or town; but the grantee shall be entitled to no payment by reason of the value of the franchise. Any such plant or property acquired by a city or town may be sold or leased or, unless prohibited by general law, maintained,

controlled, and operated by such city or town. Every such grant shall specify the mode of determining any valuation therein provided for and shall make adequate provisions by way of forfeiture of the grant, or otherwise, to secure efficiency of public service at reasonable rates and the maintenance of the property in good order throughout the term of the grant.

(Virginia Constitution Article 7 § 9 (1971))

3. The Town of Vienna opposes any bill that reduces or eliminates local land use authority.
4. The Town of Vienna supports a change to the VDOT local road maintenance funding formula from lane mileage to lane volume: or, in the alternative, request changes that provide additional funding to localities that maintain their roads and have roads that exceed the statewide average traffic volumes for such types of roads by more than 20%. In addition, the Town of Vienna supports a change to the composition to the Commonwealth Transportation Board to have greater representation to the urban/dense suburban areas of the Commonwealth.

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS – SECONDARY PRIORITY

5. **Body worn cameras**
The Town of Vienna supports the orderly implementation of body worn cameras and the General Assembly should assist with the appropriate funding for such a program, including data retention, access to data, standardization of systems, and funding for the personnel needed to screen the data for FOIA and law enforcement review.
6. The Town has had a very successful working relationship Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Authority (NVTA) and continues to coordinate with the NVTA on funding for eligible transportation projects that benefit the Town of Vienna and the region. However, given the unique nature of towns that build and maintain their roadway systems, the Town of Vienna believes the Northern Virginia Towns should have one vote as a standing member of the Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Authority. Virginia Code Sections 33.2-2501 *et seq.* should be amended accordingly.
7. The Town of Vienna supports an amendment to Virginia State Code Section 15.2-107.1 relating to newspaper legal advertisement requirements. Current requirements add expense and are considered not generally viewed by the public.

Proposed amendment as follows:

15.2-107.1 Advertisement of legal notices on web sites

In addition to any requirements that a locality advertise legal notices in a newspaper having a general circulation in the locality, such notices may also be published on the locality's website.

However, notwithstanding any other provision of law, general or special, in any town within the counties of Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William legal notices may be published on the locality's website instead of in a newspaper having general circulation in the locality.

8. The Town of Vienna requests the General Assembly to adopt a requirement for electrical and telecommunication above ground utilities to be undergrounded in urban/suburban areas within a defined timeframe. The cost of such undergrounding would be required to be part of the utilities statewide rate structure.
9. The Town of Vienna supports revenue sharing mechanisms between localities and the state.

Commented [BS1]: Suggested to move up in priority

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS – OTHER

10. Proposed amendment to Virginia Code to expedite approval of local license plates:

Commented [BS2]: Suggested by one TC Member to move down in priority

§ 46.2-749.4. Special license plates bearing the seal, symbol, emblem, or logotype of counties, cities, and towns.

A. On receipt of a minimum of 350 paid applications and a design therefor, the Commissioner may develop and issue special license plates whose design incorporates the seal, symbol, emblem, or logotype of any county, city or town. *However, in lieu of the minimum paid applications, a locality or localities may elect to pay the initial issuance fee costs to the Commissioner and the Commissioner may develop and issue such special license plates immediately.* If all affected localities agree as to its design, the Commissioner may develop and issue special license plates jointly for more than one locality. Each local governing body of the counties, cities, or towns involved in the design of the license plates shall agree as to the issuance fee, and shall indicate to the Commissioner in writing, whether the license plates issued shall be revenue sharing or nonrevenue sharing license plates.

B. The annual fee for plates issued pursuant to this section that are nonrevenue sharing license plates shall be \$10 plus the prescribed fee for state license plates.

C. The annual fee for plates issued pursuant to this section that are revenue sharing license plates shall be \$25 plus the prescribed fee for state license plates. For each such \$25 fee collected in excess of 1,000 registrations pursuant to this section, \$15 shall be paid to the locality whose seal, symbol, emblem, or logotype appears on the plate. These funds shall be paid to the affected localities annually and may be used as provided by the local governing body. For license plates issued jointly for more than one locality, these funds shall be apportioned among the affected localities as agreed to with the Commissioner prior to issue.

The provisions of subdivision B 1 of § 46.2-725 shall not apply to license plates issued under this section.

1993, c. 560; 1995, c. 747; 1996, c. 1026; 1999, cc. 883, 907; 2003, c. 925; 2004, c. 747; 2005, c. 273.

11. The Town of Vienna requests language added to the state code to specifically include “new sidewalk projects” as eligible for HB 2313 funding. An expanded sidewalk network provides transportation options and reduces motorized vehicle use and congestion. Revised transportation funding ranking criteria language under HB 2313, HB 2, HB 599 regarding “congestion mitigation” and “additional capacity” should specifically include sidewalk funding in dense urban areas where providing alternative means of transportation reduces single-occupancy auto use.

12. The Town of Vienna supports restoration of full 599 funding to localities.

13. Proposed amendments to FOIA open meeting provisions to accommodate virtual/remote participation at public hearings and participation by members of the public body in times other than declared emergencies, including the use of virtual/remote participation of members of the public body for conference and work sessions where no formal vote is taken.

Commented [BS3]: A number of TC Members suggested making this a very high priority.

14. Virginia Code §2.2-4304 (cooperative procurement) should be amended to permit localities to use cooperative procurement for competitively bid construction contracts for certain projects **not exceeding \$200,000**.

The Town of Vienna has been impacted financially by the amendment to Virginia Code §2.2-4304. In the past, the Town has seen demonstrable savings from using cooperative procurement for small construction projects. The estimated additional cost to the Town in the first year following Code amendments is estimated to be \$73,884.50. In 2018, the Town of Vienna paid almost \$500,000 for construction contracts under \$200,000. Based on a survey of another local jurisdiction's costs for similar projects in 2018, the Town paid an average of 30% (approximately \$150,000) more than it would have if it could have used cooperative procurement.

15. The Town of Vienna requests an amendment to Va. Code Section 15.2-961.1 "Conservation of trees during land development process in localities in Planning District 8"; and/or Va. Code Section 15.2-961 "Replacement of trees during development process in certain localities" (the general code provision). Specifically, the Town requests local zoning authority to provide tree canopy credits for development that preserves medium and large trees on lots under development and/or the authority to require developers to ensure 20% tree canopy coverage in 10 years rather than 20 years and improve storm water management efforts and water quality. Currently only the City of Williamsburg and jurisdictions with such a provision prior to 1990.

Commented [BS4]: A number of TC Members suggested making this a higher priority.

16. The Town of Vienna respectfully requests the General Assembly to consider changes to the application of the Dillion Rule to local government public bodies to enable more local input and decision making in traditionally local government matters.

Approved this ____ day of _____ 2021.

Linda J. Colbert, Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk