

# 4<sup>th</sup> District Update

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## September 2011

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you had a good summer and survived the heat well.

We are looking at a busy time in Richmond and in the Fourth District. We're looking at improvements to Forest Hill Avenue, some drainage improvements (long-delayed) in Staffordshire, improved stormwater drainage in Willow Oaks and along Hathaway Road. In addition, traffic engineers are working with the Forest Hill neighborhood to consider some traffic calming requested by the neighbors. We are also working to replace the old and decrepit guard rails along Riverside Drive in Forest Hills and Westover Hills.

I want to remind residents that there are several tax relief measures available, in some circumstances. This year city council approved my request to create a real estate tax relief for military veterans who are disabled as the result of line of duty injuries. There are no age or income limitations.

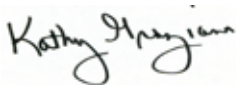
In addition, the tax relief for elderly and disabled remains on the books, and applications made be submitted shortly after the first of the year.

Real estate tax bills for the first half of 2012 will be mailed about the end of the year and will be due in January. There will be no change if homeowners pay taxes through a mortgage. If however you pay your bill directly, it will be due in two increments, January and June.

You may also be due some relief from your stormwater management fee if you take certain steps to reduce your runoff.

By the time you read this, we will have completed much of the work on the redistricting of city districts required every ten years. While the plan is complicated, it involves very few changes in the Fourth District.

Finally, on a personal note, I want to thank all the people of the district and across the city who have been so supportive in a difficult time. I can't acknowledge each of you, but your thoughts and prayers have been very valuable to me.



Councilwoman Graziano

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Oct. 12** Fourth District meeting, 7 pm
  - Oct. 13** Westover Hills Neighborhood Association Meeting, 7pm
  - Oct. 13** Forest Hill Neighborhood Association, 7pm
  - Oct. 18** Southampton Citizen Association, 7:15 pm
  - Nov. 10** Westover Hills Neighborhood Association Meeting, 7pm
  - Nov. 10** Forest Hill Neighborhood Association, 7pm
  - Nov. 15** Southampton Citizen Association, 7:15 pm
- Music In The Park Series - Forest Hill Park**
- Sept. 11** Circuit Riders (Americana alt-rock) 5pm - 7pm
  - Oct. 9th** Faculty Lounge Lizards (old school r-n-b) 5pm - 7pm

**Call 311** For all requests for city services such as yard debris, leaf and solid waste pickup, and questions about real estate, personal property taxes and other city services.

**Call 911** For police, fire or emergency/medical needs and speak to an emergency dispatcher



## Farmers' Market to Continue

The 2011 South of the James Market will continue through the end of November, 2011.

The market is located at Forest Hill Park, 42nd and New Kent Road, and runs from 8-noon, every Saturday morning. There are more than 90 vendors at the market, making it the largest Farmers' Market in Central Virginia.

For information on the market, go to [SOJMarket.com](http://SOJMarket.com). The market is sponsored by Councilmember Kathy Graziano and operated by The Market Umbrella.

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## “That’s Too Loud!”

Richmond City Council this summer passed an amended noise ordinance aimed at improving civility and the quality of life in our residential neighborhoods.

The ordinance does several things; it applies only in residential or multifamily neighborhoods; it sets specific hours for noise control; and, it defines excessive noise.

For the Fourth District, one important part of the ordinance deals with noisy animals and birds. No person shall allow any animal or bird to make a noise at least once a minute for ten consecutive minutes that is audible at least 50 feet from the animal, or audible within the confines of another person’s house or apartment. A violation is enforced by the police department, and is considered a Class Four misdemeanor.

The specific definition of “Excessive noise” is sound that exceeds 55 decibels during nighttime hours, or sound that exceeds 65 decibels during extended daytime hours, which are 7 am to 11 pm. The measurement is taken inside the home of the complaining party. In addition, sound taken outside the structure must be below 75 decibels.

So, in short, in residential or multifamily neighborhoods, noise must be below 55 decibels from 11 pm to 7 am. That includes live or recorded music.

If you feel you have a problem, it is always best to talk with your neighbor first. If that doesn’t work, call the police environmental officer, Ward Kuper at 646-1940 and ask his advice. Remember, if you call the police department at midnight, you are running into their busiest time.

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## Tax Abatement Update

As a result of the damage suffered by many residences in the wake of hurricane Irene, the City Assessor has announced that storm damage and repairs will be covered by the city’s rehabilitation tax abatement program. If residents suffer damage of more than 20% of the value of the house, the value of the repairs can be abated from real estate taxes for a number of years. Information is available at 646-7500.

## City Redistricting Nears Conclusion

Richmond City Council is nearing the end of a year long process to redraw city council and school board districts. Council is scheduled to introduce on October 24th an ordinance setting new districts required by the 2010 census.

Richmond grew to more than \$204,000 residents in the census, and that required changes in all districts to comply with federal law.

There were a series of public discussions, proposed draft plans and public comment sessions through the spring and summer. Following the last public meeting on August 16th, council staff and consultants reviewed public comments and began drafting the final document, which will be presented on October 24th. That ordinance will then be the subject of a final public hearing. After passage, the plan must be submitted to the U. S. Justice Department for final approval.

The approved districts will be used for the first time in the council and school board elections in 2012.

## Rehabilitation Exemptions

If you are a homeowner and want to take advantage of low interest rates to do some home remodeling or rehabilitation, there's a tax program that may be of benefit.

Richmond allows partial exemption from real estate tax for some rehabilitation and replaced structures. For properties that qualify, the increase in market value caused by the rehabilitation will be credited from taxable assessment for up to ten years.

There is a \$125 application fee; the application form is available on-line at the City Assessor's website. Each application must be accompanied by an active building permit. The assessor's office advises that no work be done until the initial inspection has been done. Any work done before the inspection is considered part of the initial value and will not be part of the credit.

The work must be completed within two years, does not apply to vacant land, and all taxes must be paid on time to receive credit. The rehab credit transfers with the property title, so that a new buyer will also receive the tax credit for the remainder of the ten year period.

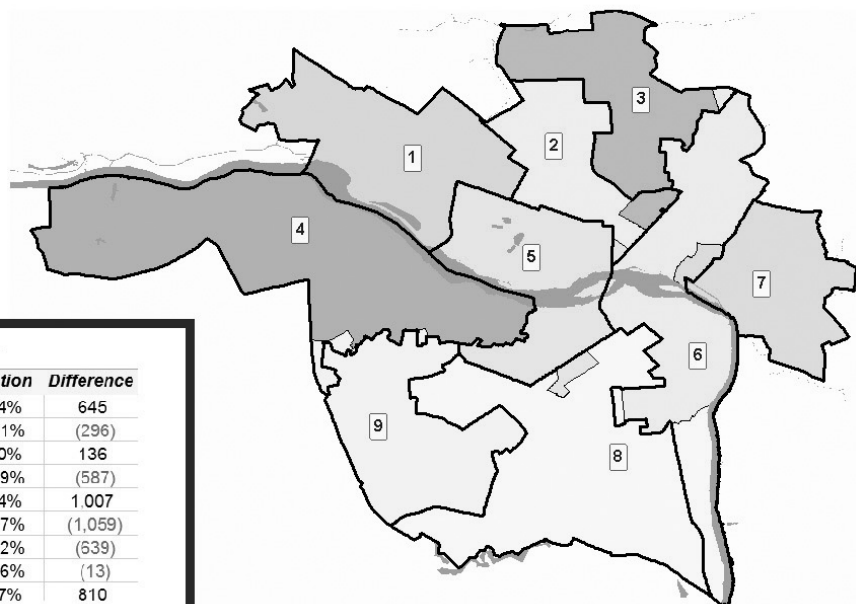
For more information, contact the City Assessor's Office on Line or at 646-5600.



### DRAFT REDISTRICTING PLAN

07-19-11

*(Existing Council district lines are black. Council district colors that extend beyond the existing boundaries are the proposed changes. Details are attached.)*



Total Deviation 9.1%				
DISTRICT	Population	Target	Deviation	Difference
1	23,335	22,690	2.84%	645
2	22,394	22,690	-1.31%	(296)
3	22,826	22,690	0.60%	136
4	22,103	22,690	-2.59%	(587)
5	23,697	22,690	4.44%	1,007
6	21,631	22,690	-4.67%	(1,059)
7	22,051	22,690	-2.82%	(639)
8	22,677	22,690	-0.06%	(13)
9	23,500	22,690	3.57%	810

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## Fourth District Meeting: October 12

District Meeting Scheduled

The Fourth District fall meeting is scheduled for October 12, 7 pm, at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 7757 Chippenham Parkway.

The agenda is not complete, but we expect reports on city projects and any new developments in the District. The primary speaker will be Del. Manoli Loupassi, who will discuss upcoming issues in the General Assembly and the City of Richmond.



New drainage systems are installed in the Cherokee Hills neighborhood, as part of the stormwater management program.