

Fiscal Year 2024

# Annual REPORT

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

# A Message from the Mayor

I'm incredibly excited to present the Town's 2024
Annual Report. As I look back over the last fiscal year, I am extremely pleased to see all of the Town Council's accomplishments. These accomplishments would not be possible without the hard work of our Town staff, and Leesburg is fortunate to have some of the best municipal employees in the area.

I want to especially point out the progress we have made on the annexation of the Compass Creek development, which was identified as an economic development priority by the Council almost six years ago. This project increases our Town's revenue and further diversifies our tax base. As Leesburg has become more of a desirable location for data centers, the Town has distinguished itself. In the past year we've adopted design standards to ensure that any data centers that are in the Town have complementary design features, and we've also made data centers a special exception use in all zoning districts. These measures will ensure that any data center development is considered in a careful, measured approach. I am proud the Town is a leader on that front.



Kelly Burk Kelly Burk Mayor

This year, we have also begun construction on some major projects, including the expansion of our Police Department, the development of Veterans Park, and the Morven Park Road sidewalk improvements. We have also completed some major improvements that add to our residents' quality of life, including the Edwards Ferry Road sidewalk as well as improvements at the intersection of King and Market streets.

Our Town events continue to attract residents and tourists alike. I am especially pleased that the Flower & Garden Festival received long overdue recognition from Visit Loudoun, winning the Community Event of the Year at this year's Tourism Awards.

Over the next year I am excited to see the new opportunities abound in Leesburg, particularly in the historic downtown area where new businesses are coming to fill vacant spaces and there continues to be a strong interest in redevelopment opportunities.

It is a true honor to serve this wonderful community called Leesburg, as it has been for the entirety of my 20 years of public service to the Town. My fellow Council members, Board and Commission members, and our staff work hard every day to ensure our services and policies allow Leesburg to sustain our success and be resilient to all future challenges.



The Leesburg Town Council operates under the council-manager form of government. The Town Council sets policy and hires the Town Manager who serves as the chief executive officer of the Town government.

(Top row: Council Members Dr. Todd Cimino-Johnson, Kari Nacy, Ara Bagdasarian, Patrick Wilt Front row: Council Member Zach Cummings, Mayor Kelly Burk, Vice Mayor Neil Steinberg)

#### **LEESBURG**

### **BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

The Town is always looking for residents or business owners to fill vacancies. Interested applicants should apply at www.leesburgva.gov/government/boards-and-commissions.

#### **Adjudicatory Bodies**

- Board of Architectural Review
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Planning Commission

#### **Advisory Commissions**

- Airport
- Diversity
- Economic Development
- Enviromental Advisory
- Parks and Recreation

- Public Art
- Residential Traffic
- Technology & Communications
- Thomas Balch Library
- Tree



is dedicated to providing excellent municipal services that enhance the quality of life for our diverse community.

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# A Message from the Town Manager

On behalf of Town staff, I am pleased to present this year's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024). The Town Council's bi-annual work plan guides staff efforts to better serve our community while ensuring day to day services meet customer expectations. Key focus areas in Fiscal Year 2024 included the Arts, Land Use, Economic Development, Environmental Stewardship, Governmental Performance, and Transportation.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the organization welcomed new leaders to the community including Kate Trask as Assistant Town Manager, Owen Snyder as our new Chief Financial Officer, Laura Christiansen as Director of the Thomas Balch Library, and Police Chief Thea Pirnat. See their stories inside this report.

The Town continues to invest in our growing community by (1) Commencing development of Veterans Park at Balls Bluff which is an 86-acre site purchased by the Town in 2000 to enhance the quality of life for our residents; (2) Starting a 14,000-square-foot expansion of our police station in the Fall of 2023 to enhance public safety services; (3) Partnering with Leesburg Movement through the Virginia Main Street Program to support our historic downtown businesses; and (4) Ensuring our airport has air traffic control services while working with the Federal Aviation Agency and the Commonwealth of Virginia to construct a permanent air traffic tower.





A major priority of the Town is our financial sustainability and accountability. As such, the Town has worked hard to retain the highest credit rating possible which is AAA by all three major credit rating agencies. The Town was also awarded the coveted Triple Crown for excellence in our financial reporting that ensures transparency and public confidence.

In closing, I encourage you to contact the Leesburg Town Council and Town staff to share your observations, comments, and concerns to help us better serve our community in the next fiscal year. Customer service remains a top priority in the Town, and I welcome your input and involvement. Thank you for your continued support of our Town employees in their efforts to serve and protect your neighborhoods, schools, and businesses each and every day. Feel free to contact me at <a href="kdentler@leesburgva.gov">kdentler@leesburgva.gov</a> or 703-771-2700 as your input is always welcome.

### ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER KATE TRASK

Kate Trask, a longtime employee of the Town's Parks & Recreation Department, was promoted to Assistant Town Manager in August 2023.

A Leesburg native, Trask has been a Town employee since March 2004 when she started as Recreation and Events Manager, before serving as the Assistant Director of Recreation from 2008 to 2010. She went on to serve as Deputy Director of that department beginning in 2010.

As Assistant Town Manager, Trask reports directly to the Town Manager to help provide management oversight of the Town's 14 departments while focusing on enhancing the Town's community engagement efforts and providing centralized coordination between Town departments and organizers of the community events held in Town.

Since 2018, Trask has also been serving as a Certified ADA Coordinator for the Town ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



#### MAKING LEESBURG MORE ACCESSIBLE



#### **Accessing A.V. Symington**

The Ida Lee pool trail project was completed in September 2023, making the trail more accessible from the Ida Lee Parks Recreation Center to the outdoor pool. This included improving the slope, handrails, repaving, and curb ramps. The project not only increased accessibility but also improved safety. Since the completion of the project, residents have expressed that they have a much easier time travelling between and enjoying the benefits of both facilities.



#### **Freedom Park**

Improvements to the Freedom Memorial at Freedom Park were completed in August 2023, which make the monument ADA accessible. Additionally, companion seating was added to allow for mobility devices to be positioned next to benches. An interpretive sign was also added to explain 14 dates in history that stand for freedom and their significance to the memorial. The sign has been erected at a height that allows for accessibility by all community members.



#### **King and Market Street Intersection**

The improvements to pedestrian areas of the intersection of King and Market streets were also key projects completed in Fiscal Year 2024. The Town upgraded the highly trafficked intersection's infrastructure and, in doing so, significantly improved its accessibility. The curb cuts were redesigned so that the bases were level with the roads and the increase in elevation occured off the street, closer to the sidewalk area, making the transition safer and easier. Additionally, the crosswalk signals were enhanced to include audio signals for the visually impaired.

# PARKS AND RECREATION

#### **VETERANS PARK**

A vision long in the making became closer to reality this year as construction began on Veterans Park. The Town and Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (now Nova Parks) acquired the 141 acres of land adjacent to Ball's Bluff Regional Park almost 25 years ago, with the Town retaining 86 acres.

The acquisition for the Town presented Leesburg with its first direct means of public access to the Potomac River, and it became the Town's second-largest park. A master plan was developed for future enhancements which began moving dirt this year.

The first phase of this project includes parking facilities, an accessible boat ramp, and other related improvements that are scheduled to be completed by spring 2025. The second phase, to be completed in Fall 2029, will include roadway upgrades, additional parking, a picnic pavilion, upgrade to the existing silos, and trail improvements. Town staff anticipates the park will be open to the public in spring 2025.





#### **Leesburg Dog Park**



In March, the Town's dog park, located within Old Izaak Walton Park, had a new wooden fence installed. This was the first time the fence had been replaced since the dog park first opened in May 2009.

The fence measures 175 linear feet of four board fencing with seven gates with an emphasis on sturdier gates, latches, and heavy-duty wire mesh. The overall goal was to provide a functional and aesthetically pleasing product for public use.

#### **Installation of Interpretive Signs**



The Parks and Recreation Commission and Parks and Recreation Department worked together to install interpretive signs at six Town parks. Each one provides the history behind the name of each individual park. The highlighted locations include Robinson, Olde Izaak Walton, Mervin Jackson, Georgetown, Raflo, and Rotary parks.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) was adopted in March 2024. It totals \$159.8 million, which includes the General, Capital Projects, and Utilities funds. The General Fund is up 5.3% from Fiscal Year 2024.

### **GENERAL FUND - \$82.5 MILLION**

The General Fund's primary source of revenues is in the form of taxes – including property and non-property taxes. Local Tax Funding represents 70% of the General Fund revenue. The other 30% is generated by departmental activities.

### **UTILITIES FUND - \$45.7 MILLION**

The Utilities Fund is an enterprise fund, which means it must be self-supporting, i.e., revenues must cover all expenses. The operating component represents 68% of the FY 2024 Utilities Fund budget, with capital projects representing the other 32%.



#### YOUR TAX DOLLARS

The budget maintains a real property tax rate of 17.74 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the same tax rate as the prior year. With 2024 assessments on existing residential properties in Leesburg up from 2023, the average homeowner's real property tax bill will increase \$3.43 per month, or \$41 annually. Here's a look at where each dollar goes:

- Public Safety 26 cents
- Public Works 22.5 cents
- Capital Projects 18 cents
- Finance, IT, and HR 11 cents
- Parks & Recreation 6 cents
- Admin, Legal, and Boards & Commissions 7 cents
- Community Development 7 cents
- Economic Development 1.5 cents
- Thomas Balch Library 1 cent

### **OWEN SNYDER**

In March, the Town announced the hiring of Owen Snyder, the new Assistant Town Manager for Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology.

Snyder comes to Leesburg with more than 20 years of senior management experience, including 15 years in local government. He most recently served as the Assistant Borough Manager for Carlisle, PA, where he worked with the Borough Manager and department leaders on special projects. He previously served as the Borough's Finance Director and Treasurer.

Snyder now serves as the Town's Chief Financial Officer, which includes performing the role of Finance Director.

In addition, he provides management oversight of the Human Resources and Information Technology departments, along with assisting the Town Manager with special projects.

"The opportunity to work for a premier community was extremely exciting to me, and Leesburg has proven to be exactly that," Snyder said. "Leesburg is financially healthy and has a strong and stable leadership team. I look forward to working alongside the team and community to keep Leesburg fiscally sound and prepared for the future."

Snyder succeeds Clark Case, who served as the Town's Director of Finance and Administrative Services since 2014. Case officially retired in March.



### **GFOA TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS**



The Finance Department won the Triple Crown for excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers
Association (GFOA) for the Town's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Budget and Capital Improvements Program, and the Popular Annual Financial Report.

Leesburg has been receiving the PAFR award since Fiscal Year 2020 and is one of 16 local governments to receive all three awards in Virginia. For the year ending 2022, 356 localities received the Triple-Crown from GFOA.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Department continued to reach significant milestones in their commitment to leveraging technology to enhance operations and safeguard the organization's information assets. They successfully implemented major enterprise systems and bolstered cybersecurity measures.



Developing Relationships

Developed a robust relationship with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency/CISA including an intial comprehensive security assessment, cybersecurity prevention best practices, and ongoing support.



Implementation of CrowdStrike

CrowdStrike's Active Directory ID Protection module provides state-of-the-art monitoring of every individual user account that the Town manages. It provides real-time monitoring and expert analysis of our identity security environment.



Certified Chief
Information Security

The Town established a certified Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) function within the Director of Information Technology position, a recommendation by our cybersecurity insurance for several years.





Training was provided to over 650 staff attendees on a wide range of topical subjects via monthly Teams meetings. Subjects included new Teams phones, the new Freshservice service desk system, the Town's new GIS online platform, document retention, searching techniques, and more.



#### **Credit Card Processing**

The Parks and Recreation Department changed their credit card processor to PayTrac, which is directly integrated with the Parks & Recreation software. Among other benefits, this change will enable on-premise customers to use Apple or Google Pay from their phones for the first time. It also streamlines the checkout process online.



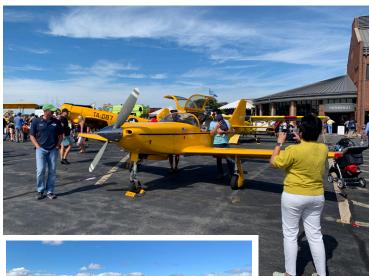
The Town continued its work to enhance and streamline our municipal services, digitizing over a dozen business processes within the last year alone, and building digital integrations for actions such as payments, document signatures, and public input.

# LEESBURG EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

#### **AIRSHOW**

Last fall, the airport hosted its annual air show with a record 13,000 attendees. Historic aircraft, aerobatic flight performances, helicopters, and aviation vendors were part of the show. Families learned about the many aspects of aviation, history, and activities of their local airport.

The airport's North Hangars A, B, C, and D Ramps were completely reconstructed with funding assistance from a Virginia Department of Aviation grant. This project replaced the original pavement that was over 23 years old.







In July 2023, the new north end development opened. This project, funded in part by state and federal grants, preserves airport capacity as old hangars will soon be demolished. Twenty-six new T-Hangars and 11 new tie-down parking spaces were constructed. Additionally, the project created a new commercial pad site. Kuhn Aviation, the airport's fixed-based operator, is constructing a 18,000-square-foot hangar for commercial use, bringing new jobs to the Town.



The airport transitioned from the Remote Tower Pilot Program and was formally admitted into the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Federal Contract Tower Program, ensuring the continuation of air traffic control services at Leesburg.

A new temporary Control Tower was installed at the airport while the Town embarks on construction of a permanent facility.

### **CHANGING OF THE GUARD**



Following 20+ years as Library Director for the Thomas Balch Library, Alexandra Gressitt retired on Friday, June 21.

"It has been an honor to have served as Library Director of Thomas Balch Library," Gressitt said in her final week. "I am filled with gratitude for the many years of shared experiences and achievements. The hallmark of our success has been unending community support."

Her successor, Laura Christiansen, began her new role on Monday, June 24.

Christiansen has served as the Library's Curator of Manuscripts and Archives for the past 10 years. During that time, she has overseen the acquisitions, processing, and preservation of the library's special collections including manuscripts, archives, rare books, and other unique materials.

Christiansen also coordinated outreach programming for the library including in-person and virtual educational programs, exhibits, and most recently led the development of a new exhibit and processing space at the Donaldson Log Cabin including monthly pop-up exhibits for Leesburg's First Friday events.

"The future holds promise under the leadership of Laura Christiansen," Gressitt said, adding the support of the Town, along with the community, will allow the library to continue being a place for all to enjoy while understanding the past and charting the future.



### Library Pop-Ups at the Log Cabin

In 2023, Thomas Balch Library developed a new venue for sharing local history at the Donaldson Log Cabin, an 18th century structure located at 14 Loudoun St. SW.

Between May 2023 and March 2024, library staff and volunteers worked on multiple processing projects in the space and hosted nine pop-up exhibits during Leesburg's popular First Friday events.

Each exhibit was developed to identify themes or materials, within the library's collections, that would be of broad interest. Some of the themes included the history of dogs in Leesburg, the establishment and evolution of utilities in the Town, and how to decipher historic handwriting.

The monthly event allowed visitors a chance to not only view archival materials in a unique setting, but also featured hands-on activities and the chance to engage with staff and volunteers.



#### Building Relationships

Library staff increased outreach to Loudoun educators, working with K-12 teachers and students, as well as undergraduate and graduate students, to teach them about the library and the services available for research and projects.



## Enhancing Online Access

The library continues to add to its ever-growing Centennial Catalog. As of this spring, 5,186 new items have been added with more being input daily.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### IT TAKES A TEAM

The Departmet of Economic Development had a busy fiscal year. A new events calendar was launched in June, new businesses were welcomed and anniversaries celebrated throughout the year, a strategic plan was developed to help guide the Town's economic development efforts, and the Main Street Program continued to grow.



#### PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT



In October 2023, Better City published the Town's Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan. Through broad community interviews and focus groups, reviews of past studies, extensive analysis of economic, demographic, and business data, and original research, a number of strategies were identified to guide the Town's economic development efforts.

The Department of Economic Development is excited to integrate this plan into their collective vision, working closely with other departments to utilize its recommendations.

View the Leesburg Economic Development Strategic Plan at bit.ly/EcoDevStrategicPlan.

#### MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Over the past 12 months, the movement has grown from an idea to a true action item. Currently, a board of nine members, including four officers, represents the Leesburg Movement. Their mission is, "A thriving business community working together to ensure the quality and vitality of historic downtown Leesburg through advocacy and outreach."

The Town held 39 ribbon cuttings from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 for new and/or expanding businesses.

In the last year, the Movement has initiated several projects, including the Leesburg Listening Room, the Neighborhood Discount program, and Faces of Leesburg. They have also developed an aggressive social media presence.

In June 2024, the Movement received a \$15,000 Community Vitality Grant, through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, which will go towards funding the planned Lassiter Way Beautification project, anticipated to begin in August 2024. The Leesburg Movement and Town Attorney's Office are also working on developing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will allow the Movement to receive \$30,000 in funding. Additionally, the Movement has drafted a job description for a part-time staff position.

# WATER QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

#### SERVICE LINE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Town has been testing for lead in accordance with the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) since 1992. However, following revisions that were made in 2001, to strengthen the existing regulations, improve public health, and comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's Lead and Copper Rule revisions, the Utilities Department launched a Service Line Compliance Campaign, in early spring. The primary goal of the campaign was to complete a service line material inventory for the Town's water system.



This inventory would then be displayed on a geospatial map that is accessible from the Self-Reporting Survey. Postcards, like the one you see to the right, were sent to homes built prior to 1979. They provided detailed instructions on how to verify service line material and record the information by taking a short, online survey. As of June, there have been just over 600 responses.

#### A SUSTAINABLE GOVERNMENT

The first annual Sustainability Report was presented to Council in October of 2023. It is intended to summarize activities that the Town of Leesburg has taken to create more sustainable government operations and identify opportunities for enhancements. As the sustainability program grows, the report will include status updates on communitywide sustainable actions in addition to government operations. Annual reports will be shared in January and represent updates from the previous calendar year.

In addition, the Leesburg Town Council adopted an Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy with the goal of reducing energy consumption in government operations. The strategy allows the Town to take advantage of grant funding that will help achieve the goals outlined in the strategy.





#### IT'S ELECTRIC!

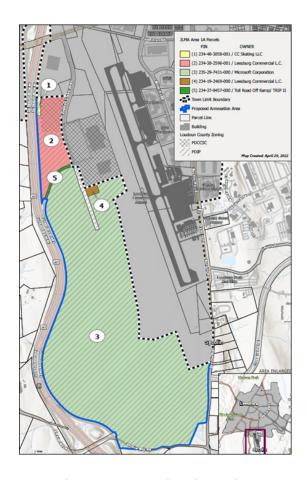
In August 2023, the Town welcomed its first electric vehicle to its fleet. Since then, two more have been added. The vehicles are utilized by the Utilities, Public Works and Capital Projects, and Parks and Recreation departments. Funding from Virginia Clean Cities and the Inflation Reduction Act allowed the Town to purchase EVs for less than the cost of a comparable internal combustion engine.

# CREATING SPACE

#### **COMPASS CREEK ANNEXATION**

One of the Town Council's top economic development priorities moved closer to reality this year, as both the Town Council and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors signed off on a voluntary settlement agreement related to the annexation of the Compass Creek development.

Located within the Joint Land Management Area, the 402-acre portion of Compass Creek, off Battlefield Parkway and adjacent to Leesburg Executive Airport, the development includes more than 323 acres of land owned by Microsoft Corporation, along with current or planned retail, restaurant, office and hotel uses.



The signing of the voluntary settlement agreement ends negotiations that commenced with Loudoun County not long after the Council identified bringing all of Compass Creek into Town limits as a top priority in the fall of 2018. In 2022, the Council voted to move forward with the annexation of the land after boundary line adjustment negotiations with the County stalled. The agreement was celebrated as a positive and collaborative step forward by both Town and County leaders. Finalization of the agreement now awaits an official ruling by a three-judge panel appointed by the Virginia Supreme Court. That panel is expected to meet before the end of the calendar year.

#### **FACILITY MOVES**

The growth of Town staff and expansion of Town services necessitated the move of several key departments this year.

In September 2023, the Planning & Zoning and Plan Review departments merged into one to create the combined Community Development Department. The goal of the merger was focused on customer service, organizational efficiency, and to aid in implementing additional land development process improvements.

In April 2024, the Community Development Department moved to the Jewell Building, located at 222 Catoctin Circle, Suite 200. The department is overseen by Director James David.



In January 2024, the Town's Public Works and Capital Projects Department temporarily relocated to office space at 552 Fort Evans Road. The expansion and renovation of the Town Shop on Russell Branch Parkway will eventually allow the entire Public Works staff to be centralized to one facility. Design of that project is currently underway, with construction expected to be completed in the fall of 2027.

# LEESBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

#### **NEW CHIEF IN TOWN**

Leesburg welcomed Thea Pirnat as the Town's first female chief of police during a swearing-in ceremony on July 20, 2023. The Clerk of the Circuit Court, Gary Clemens, issued the oath of office before the Honorable Mayor Kelly Burk pinned the badge.

Chief Pirnat comes to the Leesburg Police Department following a 23-year career with the Fairfax County Police Department, where she attained the rank of Major before joining Leesburg. She succeeded Interim Chief Major Vanessa Grigsby, who led the department since the retirement of former chief Gregory Brown in December 2022.





#### POLICE DEPARTMENT EXPANSION

The expansion and renovation of the Leesburg Police Department's Public Safety Facility began in the fall of 2023. This project will provide an expansion in conjunction with current police needs, including a 14,000-square-foot addition, renovation of the existing building, HVAC improvements to the support building, the addition of EV charging stations, and expansion of the secure parking area.

The expansion has been designed to meet future growth needs, with the ability to add a 9,000-square-foot second story as the police force continues to grow. Construction crews have made significant progress on the foundation of the building addition and the expansion of the secure parking lot. The project is expected to be completed by January 2025.



Town of Leesburg 25 West Market Street Leesburg, VA 20176 www.leesburgva.gov



### **Town of Leesburg Government Offices & Contact Information**

Leesburg Town Hall 25 West Market Street www.leesburgva.gov 703-777-2420

- Town Manager's Office
- Town Attorney
- Clerk of Council
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Council Chambers
- Mayor's Office

Public Works/Capital Projects
552 Fort Evans Road, Suite 312
703-737-7069

www.leesburgva.gov/publicworks www.leesburg.gov/capitalprojects

Community Developement 222 Catoctin Circle SE, Suite 200 703-771-2765

www.leesburgva.gov/communitydevelopment

Leesburg Executive Airport 1001 Sycolin Road SE www.leesburgva.gov/airport 703-737-7125

Economic Development 15 N. King Street, Suite 201 www.chooseleesburg.com 703-771-6530 Parks & Recreation 60 Ida Lee Drive NW www.idalee.org 703-777-1368

Thomas Balch Library 208 West Market Street www.leesburgva.gov/library 703-737-7195

Utilities Department 1385 Russell Branch Parkway SE www.leesburgva.gov/utilities 703-771-2750

Police Department 65 Plaza Street NE www.leesburgva.gov/police 703-771-4500 (Non-emergency)

**Connect With Us!** 









