Town Council
Work Session
Agenda Item 2.c.

Agenda Item: **Town of Herndon Youth Engagement Policy**

Meeting Date: October 7, 2025

Category: Discussion

Prepared by: Amanda Kertz, Town Clerk

Description:
Following the Town Council's work session on September 9, 2025, interest was expressed in establishing a policy to guide consistent engagement with the youth of the Town of Herndon through the school system. The proposed policy ensures that the youth at Herndon Middle and High schools—along with participating private and alternative schools—can directly offer recommendations to the Council's decision-making process. The goal of the discussion is to solicit Council feedback and guidance on priorities, objectives, and implementation strategies before bringing a formal resolution forward for adoption.

Background:
The proposed Youth Engagement Policy builds on Herndon Youth Advisory Committee's (HYAC) foundation while providing a broader and more flexible structure for youth participation. The policy emphasizes collaboration with schools, community organizations, and Town departments, and outlines mechanisms for gathering authentic youth input through focus groups and other information-gathering activities. It is designed to provide Herndon's youth with meaningful opportunities to understand local government processes through focus groups, contribute recommendations on issues affecting them, and maintain awareness of community needs. This framework ensures accessibility and consistency, while strengthening collaboration between the Town and schools.

The proposed Youth Engagement Policy establishes a school-based model for engaging students in grades 7–12. Key elements include:

- Sessions are held during the school day, coordinated by teachers and school administrators.
- Accessibility and inclusivity are emphasized, with translation provided whenever possible.
- Town staff will facilitate the sessions with support from a designated teacher or administrator.

- A Councilmember liaison will attend to observe and maintain a connection between students and the Town Council.

- Proposed frequency: Two sessions per academic year at Herndon Middle and Herndon High; at least one session annually at private/alternative schools that choose to participate.

- Reporting: staff will summarize feedback to share with the Town Council at appropriately defined intervals.

Timing Impact:
This discussion item is continued from the August 6, August 12, and September 9 Town Council meetings. Action on this item will provide direction for youth engagement during the 2025–2026 school year.

Strategic Focus Area:
Good Governance

Fiscal Impact:
N/A

Legal Impact:
If directed by Council, staff can prepare a resolution authorizing the youth engagement policy, to be considered on an upcoming regular meeting agenda.

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:
This is a discussion item; staff has no recommendation.

Attachments:
1. Proposed Youth Policy Objectives