Town of Herndon, VA
Youth Engagement Policy
_____, 2025

Purpose:
Herndon's youth today will be leading change in our community for decades to come. This framework establishes a structured approach for engaging youth in grades 7–12 during the academic year and ensures student perspectives inform Town decisions while maintaining compliance with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) policies.

This policy updates the formal Herndon Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) structure, drawing on the spirit of prior engagement while streamlining participation and aligning with school-based protocols.

Engagement Pathways:
A. Herndon Middle, Herndon High, Private, and Alternative Schools:

1. Town staff to coordinate with principals and designated teachers/administrators to schedule sessions at the schools during the school day.

2. Engagement occurs in group settings, with a teacher or school staff member present.

3. Engagement efforts will be accessible, age-appropriate, and inclusive, with translation options when possible.

4. Students provide input on issues identified by Town staff or Town Council to be relevant to the Town of Herndon.

Objectives:

- Provide input on community needs to make Herndon a place where youth can thrive.

- Share youth perspectives on identified Town topics to the Herndon Town Council, other elected officials, and community leaders.

- Offer recommendations on Town decision-making processes on issues that impact youth.

- Build youth understanding about local government through participation in focus groups and other information-gathering activities.

- Maintain an understanding of community needs.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. A member of the Herndon Town Council will serve as a liaison to observe and serve as a link to the Town Council.

2. Town staff will assist in coordinating, leading, and facilitating sessions. The staff will also assist in collecting and summarizing student input for the Town Council.

3. School administrators/teachers will provide a venue for the discussions, facilitate student participation, and supervise the students. School staff will also ensure participation aligns with school policies and schedules.

4. Students will participate in discussions, provide feedback, and ask questions relevant to Town-related issues.

Session Frequency:

1. Herndon Middle and High Schools: facilitate at least two sessions per academic year at each school.

2. Private/alternative schools: at least one session per academic year, if the school chooses to participate.

3. Additional sessions may be scheduled if specific issues warrant additional feedback.

Continuity and Reporting:

1. Staff will summarize feedback to share with the Town Council at appropriately defined intervals.