

Commentary: A student-led city council would focus on housing & parking

Potential student victories next November could mean significant shifts in Williamsburg's priorities

GEORGE ARBOGUST
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Stryker Center, the home of Williamsburg City Council. Students at the College of William and Mary have an opportunity to win a majority of seats on the council in elections next November. (George Arbogust, Williamsburg Independent)

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A [recent post here in the Williamsburg Independent](#) asserted that an opportunity exists for William & Mary students to win control of the Williamsburg City Council next year. Whether students will make a run at a majority and their decision's potential

outcome remain unsettled. But here's what issues might move to the forefront if students prevail.

Eliminate "3-person rule"

Williamsburg's [code](#) currently allows no more than 3 unrelated people to live in the same residence. At this time, a landlord seeking to increase the number of tenants must meet a range of requirements and the application is reviewed by the zoning administrator. *This rule has long chafed students at William & Mary and a student-led city council would likely do away with it.*

Approve more housing

Many residents, not just students, believe that the current zoning code's hurdles are too restrictive. They claim that limiting the number of tenants drives up rents and forces people to live further away from campus. *A student-led council will approve more new development, perhaps including multi-family housing, previously rejected.*

Focus on problematic landlords

Students at William & Mary have complained about the behavior of some landlords. The city is currently considering implementing a voluntary housing program called "[Rent Ready](#)". In return for meeting a variety of quality-related standards, participating landlords will be able to rent their property to 4 students. *Instead of enticing better behavior from landlords, students likely will be more interested in enforcement, using whatever tools they can.*

Eliminate parking restrictions

If housing isn't the number one issue for students, [parking is](#). A slew of different restrictions and long distances affect both students residing near the college and others who commute. Making access to the college less difficult could be a priority of students on council. *They could start by eliminating the zone/residency requirements to park near the college, for example replacing it with a time limit during prime hours.*



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