

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 4, 2025

**TO:** CHAIR NATHAN MACEK  
AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** KARL W. MORTIZ, DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

**SUBJECT:** FY 2026-27 DRAFT Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

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**ISSUE:** What long range planning work priorities should be established for FY 2026-27 and beyond?

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Planning Commission review and provide guidance to staff on the DRAFT FY 2026-27 Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

**BACKGROUND:** Every other year, City departments involved in long-range planning and implementation jointly prepare a two-year Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program for the upcoming fiscal year and beyond. The work program includes the completion of plans and studies underway, new plans scheduled to begin, and implementation of previously approved plans.

On a biannual basis, the draft Work Program Bar Chart, provided as Attachment 1, is presented for Planning Commission and City Council feedback and guidance early in the calendar year to help inform development of the City Manager's Proposed Operating Budget as well as development of a final Work Program docketed for City Council approval in May/June. This annual review ensures coordination of work, staffing, and financial resources, and the opportunity for Planning Commission and City Council to ensure alignment of proposed planning work across departments with the City's Strategic Plan.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The sections below highlight departments' major projects, new proposed projects, or updates to projects. For a complete listing, see the Work Program Bar Chart in Attachment 1. Descriptions of all projects proposed in the work program will be provided with the Final FY 2026-7 Work Program in May/June.

### **Department of Planning and Zoning**

In FY 2026-7, the following major planning processes and zoning initiatives will be prioritized.

Short Term Residential Rentals Study: City Council will consider the recommendations resulting from this Study in February. Subsequent to approvals, there will be a significant amount of implementation work, including administrative and organizational updates around permitting, fees, staffing, and Alex311, in order to begin the new permitting in September.

Duke Street Plan Update: The FY 2024-2025 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program includes the 2025 launch of a community planning process to update the comprehensive land use plan for the Duke Street Corridor, recognizing that the land use concept for this area was last comprehensively updated in 1992. The planning process will explore topics such as land use, environment and climate, equity, mobility and connectivity, pedestrian safety and accessibility, parks and open space, and housing affordability. In early 2025, staff is connecting with stakeholders to get input on the engagement process, which is scheduled to officially launch in Spring-Summer 2025.

CDD Updates for Potomac Yard, Eisenhower West, and AlexWest/Beauregard: Each of these plan areas either has a new plan or new development interest/applications which necessitate updates to the Coordinated Development District (CDD) zoning to achieve the uses, density, and infrastructure improvements identified by the SAP. It is anticipated that multiple CDDs will be updated or created over the next two fiscal years to facilitate development and implementation of the Master Plan.

### **Zoning Text Amendments:**

- **Substandard Lots:** Staff will study process improvements and potential zoning text amendments to expedite the review of redevelopment on substandard lots.
- **Subdivisions:** Staff will study the potential to expedite certain subdivision requests through an administrative approval process and make recommendations for zoning text amendments and City Charter updates.
- **Small Business:** In an effort to support and enhance small business generation, staff will study existing special use permit requirements with the potential to transition certain special uses to by right uses. In addition, staff also plan to update and simplify standard conditions for a variety of special use permit types.

## **Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (TES)**

**Duke Street Transitway Phase 1 Design & Phase II Planning:** The Duke Street Transitway is one of the City's three proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors. Concept plans for the project were approved by City Council in 2023 and 2024. Design work for Phase I is scheduled for 2025 and 2026, proceeding in collaboration with the Duke Street Small Area Plan update, soon to be underway. This transitway vision includes continuous pedestrian and bicycle facilities and dedicated bus lanes, ensuring seamless transit connectivity between the King Street Metro station and West End Alexandria.

**Smart Mobility Implementation: Digital City Initiatives:** The City is advancing several projects to establish a robust digital foundation for smarter traffic and travel management. In partnership with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, the City is developing a digital model of the North Potomac Yard area to improve data management from sensors and traffic signals. Another initiative focuses on curb digitization, making it easier for drivers to find parking while providing staff with valuable insights into curb space utilization. Additionally, the City is piloting technology to scan roadways, delivering real-time information on the condition of streets, pavement, markings, and signs. These initiatives are creating a solid foundation for improved asset and data management, enabling better scenario planning, optimized maintenance scheduling, and real-time decision-making.

**Landmark Mall Redevelopment Transportation Access Initiatives:** In conjunction with the redevelopment of the Landmark Mall site and to support transportation access to the new INOVA hospital, the City's Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) Department is leading several initiatives to enhance safety and accessibility for all travel modes.

- **Access to Landmark Sidewalk Project:** This initiative will improve pedestrian connectivity, making it easier and safer for people to walk to and from the site.
- **Landmark Transit Hub:** A new multimodal transfer point will provide seamless connections for bus riders and travelers switching between transportation modes.
- **On-Route Charging Pilot:** Supporting the DASH electric bus fleet, this pilot will introduce on-route charging infrastructure to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of transit services.
- **Landmark Mall Ramp from I-395:** This project will improve safety and traffic flow for drivers accessing the hospital directly from I-395.

Together, these projects will ensure convenient, multimodal access to this transformative development.

**Flood Resilience Plan:** As part of the City's Flood Action Alexandria initiative and broader climate change impacts beyond extreme weather events, resiliency planning will look holistically at the stresses the City faces and create a plan to implement creative solutions that will allow the community to adapt and thrive, even under challenging conditions. The Plan will outline the City's approach to managing the risk from these extreme rain events and the worsening of average conditions, will identify at risk infrastructure, identify hazards, lay out a plan for the future, and will consider revisions to existing ordinances, policies, and procedures to create a more resilient Alexandria.

Zoning Ordinance Updates to incorporate Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act amendments for Climate Change: The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA) has been amended to explicitly include "coastal resilience and adaptation to sea-level rise and climate change" as a key objective, allowing localities in Virginia to use the Act as a tool to implement regulations aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change on the Chesapeake Bay watershed, primarily through managing land use to protect sensitive areas and promote adaptation strategies like preserving mature trees and managing shoreline development. Article XIII of the Zoning Ordinance – the Environmental Management Ordinance – will be revised to incorporate these amendments to the CBPA effective on or before October 31, 2025.

## **Office of Housing**

Housing 2040 Master Plan Update Phase 1: The Housing Master Plan update process continues to track towards a December 2025 public hearing with community engagement planned through the Fall. Key Housing 2040 milestones include the release of draft updated housing principles and goals (Spring) and preliminary recommendations (Summer) for public review and feedback. Several topics have been prioritized in CY25 as part of Phase 1: Homeowner Resources, Tenant Resources and Protections, Housing Preservation, Affordable Housing Financial Tools, and Affordable Housing Contribution Procedure Updates. A workplan for Phase 1 recommendation implementation in CY26 + will be proposed.

City-ARHA Collaboration and Major Projects: As part of Housing 2040, staff and ARHA leadership are developing a strategy to enhance collaboration and coordination between the City and agency. ARHA's immediate development priorities are the financing and construction of Samuel Madden and Ladrey which have secured development approvals. ARHA's longer-term workplan includes the repositioning of additional communities.

Housing 2040 Master Plan Update Phase 2: A limited number of select Housing 2040 topics will continue into and/or be undertaken in CY26 due to their scale and scope. These include studying mixed-income senior housing + care models and identifying strategies to strengthen aging residential condominiums in coordination with local and regional partners and community stakeholders.

New Construction and Preservation Projects: Staff continue to coordinate closely with its development partners on the financing and construction timelines for ongoing projects (Housing Alexandria's Sanse, Naja and Seminary projects; the Pendleton Rooming House renovation; the Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative capital improvements; CHP's Witter Place project; and CLI's Elbert Avenue project) and projects in the development pipeline (examples are Parcview II, Landmark AH/Fire Station).

## **Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Resources**

Eisenhower East Park Under the Metro Tracks: The project will engage the community and WMATA to develop a plan for the park proposed under the Eisenhower Metrorail tracks as part of the Eisenhower East Small Area implementation. The planning process will begin in Winter 2026-27.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan: RPCA will update the 2002 Master Plan in order to provide a broad policy and management framework to guide decision-making for current park and recreational needs of Alexandria residents for the next 20 years. The plan will be informed by the Publicly Accessible Open Space Policy Framework, the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessments, the Resource Recovery Policies, the Department's Strategic Plan, and other relevant city plans. The recommended vision, policies, and actions are intended to further the city's comprehensive planning approach for the recreational needs for residents, the existing work force, and visitors to Alexandria.

Urban Forestry Master Plan Update: The 2009 Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) was created to prepare a comprehensive plan addressing key challenges of the urban forest, and to guide future initiatives. The UMFP is currently being reviewed to ensure that the goals around urban forest health and canopy coverage are progressing, and that additional elements, including growing the urban canopy through planting programs and citizen engagement, ensure that environmental stresses are being monitored and addressed to maintain and grow the urban forest into the future. This program is identified as an action to advance Alexandria's Environmental Action Plan 2040 goals.

Citywide Parks Improvement Plan Update: The Citywide Parks improvement plan was created in 2014 with the intent that it would be updated approximately every ten years to reflect changing community and infrastructure needs. The next update will conclude in 2027.

*Cameron Run Regional Park Feasibility Study (RPCA, PZ, TES)*

This project will implement a feasibility study of Cameron Run Regional Park in advance of the expiring lease agreement between the City of Alexandria and Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) on December 31, 2028. A community-driven public planning process will reevaluate conceptual plans developed in the 2017 Park Planning and Conceptual Design for the Cameron Run Regional Park, located at 4001 Eisenhower Ave. The 2025 plan will consider changes in the community since 2017 and potential impacts to surrounding open spaces. The project will provide updated conceptual plans, a park management plan and implementation strategies.

## **Department of Project Implementation (DPI)**

Among many other implementation projects in support of the City's Master Plan and community vision for the future, DPI continues multi-year work on [Waterfront Implementation](#) to upgrade the waterfront core area (Duke Street to Queen Street), in line with the vision of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. The improvements will prioritize necessary flood mitigation and infrastructure improvements, while also enhancing the public access and space-making opportunities in the area. Up to date project information is available to the community on the [project webpage](#).

## **Multi-Department Planning for Construction Mitigation**

In 2026 and 2027, two large, complicated construction projects will be starting in the lower King Street and Waterfront area: the renovation of City Hall, Market Square, and the Garage, as well as Waterfront Flood Mitigation. In advance of this work, multiple departments will be coordinating to plan for continuation of access for people walking, driving, and cycling, parking, and deliveries. This project will anticipate and minimize disruption from construction to residents, visitors, small businesses, and economic development.

**NEXT STEPS:** Staff will incorporate guidance provided by Planning Commission and City Council at their February 2025 meetings, as well as coordinate among departments to further refine project scopes and timing and solicit input from stakeholders. Feedback on the draft work program will inform the FY 2026 budget process, as well as the final work program to be considered for approval by City Council in May 2025.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Many work program items proposed for FY 2026-27 already have City or grant funding identified and/or will be completed within existing resources. Others will need to compete for funding (in a very fiscally challenging budget environment) as part of the budget preparation process now underway, as well as during the community and City Council consideration process after the City Manager proposes the budget in February.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft FY 2026-7 Interdepartmental Long-Range Planning Work Program ("Bar Chart")

## **STAFF:**

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