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**From:** Todd O'Leary <toleary@visitalexva.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 5, 2025 5:34 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Marian Marquez <marquez@alexandriaecon.org>; Stephanie Landrum <landrum@alexandriaecon.org>; Ellis, Kate <kate.ellis@ihg.com>; Mary Rinaldo <mrinaldo@visitalexva.com>; Claire Mouledoux <CMouledoux@visitalexva.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Letter of Support: ALX Forward

You don't often get email from [toleary@visitalexva.com](mailto:toleary@visitalexva.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Gaskins and Members of City Council,

I am writing to express support for ALX Forward, the City's Strategic Framework for Economic Growth. As one of the City's key partners in economic development, leading our \$1 billion+ visitor industry, Visit Alexandria is excited to see that our industry is heavily considered throughout the plan.

The recommendations in the plan for place-based developments including tourism and entertainment amenities dovetails beautifully with our own proposed tourism master plan for Alexandria. This alignment would create a unified strategy that drives sustainable growth, ensuring stakeholder engagement, and community buy-in, ensuring that tourism continues to be a catalyst for comprehensive community advancement. One of the things we were particularly pleased to see in the framework is alignment around the need for more meetings space and sports venues in the city, as this represents a massive, missed opportunity for tourism-related economic impact and a competitive disadvantage for Alexandria. Our estimates on lost business, due to not having enough meeting space, sports competition venues and sleeping rooms, numbers well into the tens of millions of dollars over the last five years alone.

The team at Visit Alexandria looks forward to collaborating with the City, AEDP, and other partners, to implement the catalytic initiatives and generate economic growth in Alexandria.

Sincerely,  
Todd O'Leary

**Todd O'Leary, CDME, CTIS**  
President & CEO  
Visit Alexandria

277 S. Washington Street, Suite 210 | Alexandria, VA 22314  
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ALEXANDRIA/ARLINGTON  
REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL

December 8, 2025

Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Subject: Support for ALX Forward – Advancing Alexandria’s Economic Growth

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council:

I am writing to express my strong support for ALX Forward, the City of Alexandria’s Strategic Framework for Economic Growth. This initiative represents an important step toward fostering a vibrant, resilient economy, and I am particularly encouraged by its emphasis on workforce development within the Business Retention & Recruitment and Entrepreneurship & Innovation goal areas.

As workforce development is a critical driver of economic success, I believe these priorities will help ensure that the City of Alexandria remains competitive and inclusive in the years ahead. The Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council stands ready to collaborate with this initiative’s partners to advance the catalytic projects outlined in the Framework and to help generate sustainable economic growth for our community.

Thank you for your leadership in shaping this vision for the City of Alexandria’s future. Please note, the views presented here are my own and should not be interpreted as representing the positions of our region’s elected officials.

Sincerely,

*Stacey Butler*  
Stacey Butler (Dec 8, 2025 16:30:48 EST)  
Stacey Butler  
Chair



December 8, 2025  
Honorable Alyia Gaskins, Mayor  
Members of the City Council  
City of Alexandria  
301 King St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mayor Gaskins and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Old Town North Alliance, we write to express our strong support for *ALX Forward*, the City's Strategic Framework for Economic Growth. We commend AEDP and the City for proposing such a thoughtful, forward-looking strategy — one that embraces inclusive and citywide economic growth benefiting all Alexandrians.

We were especially heartened to see the plan's focus on arts and culture as a key economic driver in the Place-Based Development goal area. In Old Town North, we share the conviction that investment in arts, culture, and creative sectors does much more than enrich our quality of life: it builds foot traffic, supports small businesses, draws visitors, grows the tax base, and forges a unique identity that strengthens the city's character and economy alike.

That said, we respectfully urge that the City concentrate its arts and cultural investments — rather than broadly dispersing them across every neighborhood. While *ALX Forward* is specific in identifying areas of the city where business development should be aggressively pursued (Potomac Yard, Old Town North, West End, Carlyle, and Eisenhower East), it lacks specificity in its discussion of a plan for arts and cultural investments. Other U.S. cities that have been successful in deploying the arts as an economic development strategy have done so by concentrating investment in a single location. Old Town North has already been designated as the city's Arts & Cultural District, and we believe we are ideally situated to serve as the focal point — or “destination park,” so to speak — for cultural activity in Alexandria.

To borrow a metaphor: an amusement park doesn't scatter its rides randomly across a city; it concentrates them in one place so that each ride, show, and attraction benefits from the presence of the others. It creates synergy, density, and a draw that reverberates beyond its gates. In the same way, a thriving Arts & Cultural District depends on concentration — clustering venues, galleries, studios, performance spaces, and complementary businesses in proximity so that they reinforce one another, attract foot traffic, and generate broader economic impact.

Old Town North already possesses many of the building blocks — designation, zoning, community support, and momentum. We believe concentrating major arts and cultural investments here will maximize return, not only for our neighborhood but for the city at large.

We offer this perspective in the spirit of partnership and shared optimism. The Old Town North Alliance remains committed to working closely with the City, AEDP, and fellow community stakeholders to bring the vision of *ALX Forward* to life in a manner that celebrates arts and culture, stimulates economic growth, and benefits all of Alexandria.

Thank you for your leadership, your openness to community input, and your dedication to Alexandria's future.

Warm regards,

*Ryan Whitaker*

*Maria Elizabeth*

*Tommy Volk*

*Agnès Artemel*

Ryan Whitaker

Maria Elizabeth

Tommy Volk

Agnès Artemel

President

Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

Board Member/Past President



December 8, 2025

Mayor Alyia Gaskins and Members of the Alexandria City Council  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Gaskins and Members of City Council,

I am writing to express strong support for the newly released ALX Forward economic development strategy. As one of the City's key partners in economic development we want to highlight the important role that Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA) can play in helping the City achieve the plan's vision for a thriving, inclusive, and resilient Alexandria.

For decades, ASA has served as one of Alexandria's most accessible, community-anchored organizations. With programs reaching tens of thousands of residents each year—across age, income, language, and ability—ASA exemplifies the kind of quality-of-life asset that ALX Forward recognizes as essential to retaining talent, attracting new families, and supporting a modern economy. ASA's commitment to affordability, equity, and holistic youth development has made it a nationally respected model for community-based recreation and education.

ALX Forward emphasizes the need to diversify the City's economic base, expand access to amenities, and strengthen the places and partnerships that make Alexandria competitive in the region. ASA's work directly aligns with these goals. Through year-round programming, tournaments, volunteer engagement, and workforce development pathways, ASA contributes to:

- A **stronger local economy**, with participants and visitors supporting small businesses, hospitality providers, and neighborhood commercial districts.
- A **healthier and more resilient community**, offering safe spaces for physical activity, social connection, and mentorship for thousands of young people.
- A **more equitable Alexandria**, where cost is not a barrier to participating in high-quality sports, education, and leadership development.
- A **sense of identity and civic pride**, reinforced through programs that unite long-time residents, new arrivals, families, and young professionals.

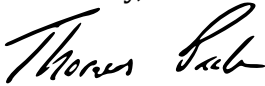
As the City implements the ALX Forward plan, Alexandria will need reliable partners who can activate spaces, engage residents, and ensure that economic development is paired with community benefit. ASA is uniquely positioned to help meet these goals. Its long history of service, proven operational capacity, and inclusive model

demonstrate how a mission-driven community organization can expand economic opportunity while simultaneously elevating quality of life for all Alexandrians.

I encourage the City Council to view organizations like Alexandria Soccer as essential partners in realizing the ambition of ALX Forward. Our impact extends well beyond sports—helping to build healthier neighborhoods, support working families, strengthen workforce pipelines, and contribute to the vibrant, dynamic city that ALX Forward envisions.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to investing in Alexandria's future. I am confident that, by working together, we can ensure that this plan delivers meaningful benefits for residents today and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Park". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" being more prominent than the last name "Park".

Thomas Park  
Alexandria Soccer Association  
Executive Director



333 N. Fairfax Street  
Suite 302  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703.549.1000

The Honorable Alyia Gaskins  
Mayor, City of Alexandria  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King St  
Alexandria, VA 22314

January 6, 2026

Dear Mayor Gaskins and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 900 businesses, we write to express our support for ALX Forward, the City of Alexandria's Strategic Framework for Economic Growth. The City's business community is critical to the ongoing and future success of Alexandria as it relates to jobs, revenue generation, education funding, housing, and workforce development. Economic development is the at the heart of our City's livability and attraction.

As one of the City's key partners in advancing economic development, we appreciate the plan's streamlined, actionable strategies that make it easier for businesses to locate, expand, and thrive in Alexandria. The plan aligns closely with the priorities outlined in our 2026 Legislative Agenda—as well as in past agendas—which emphasize the importance of strong partnerships between City government and the business community to foster economic growth.

Each goal area includes specific actions the Chamber supports and has a keen interest in advancing in partnership with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) and City government. A plan with this breadth of recommendations will require ongoing communication and collaboration to ensure its success. In particular, the strategies and actions section will demand leadership and commitment from all parties to bring them to fruition.

The Chamber continues to urge Council to look for ways to expedite approvals to achieve economic wins. We look forward to working collaboratively with the City, AEDP, and fellow stakeholders to implement the framework's catalytic initiatives and drive meaningful, sustainable economic growth throughout Alexandria.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joe Haggerty". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the word "Sincerely,".

Joe Haggerty  
President & CEO  
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce



January 8, 2026

RE: ALX Forward: A Strategic Framework for Economic Growth

Delivered via email: [CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov](mailto:CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov)

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council-

We write to express our support for ALX Forward, the City's Strategic Framework for Economic Growth. As one of the City's key partners in economic development, we are excited to see the plan's recommendations include reference to the City of Alexandria Industrial Development Authority.

For the past five years, we have worked to put the Authority in a position to use the full complement of tools, resources, and currently untapped powers granted by the Commonwealth to further economic development in the City. The ALX Forward framework includes many of these, and we stand ready to be a key implementation partner.

We are particularly excited about the significant role the Authority can play in accelerating catalyst site development on both private sites and City-owned assets- one of the core Catalytic Initiatives identified in the plan. We believe the Authority can be a powerful catalytic force, meeting the challenges of the moment and providing creative solutions that benefit the entire City.

We encourage you to adopt the ALX Forward framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jennifer Atkins'.

Jennifer Atkins, Chair

Thomas Hyde, Vice Chair

Eric Strickland, Secretary-Treasurer

Dwight Dunton

Lisa Edouard

Dak Hardwick

Amaia Stecker

## Website Feedback Form

Name:	What is your comment or question?
Liana Rodriguez	Support of the "place-based development" goal, especially strategy 1.3 to streamline development, and using "cost of housing" and "number of new residential units" as key indicators.
Ryan McAuliffe	I hope cost of housing is used as a key indicator of success, as housing is already very expensive in this area. I also think most people would agree supporting dense housing near metro stops is a good goal since it would minimize traffic and maximize convenience (and it's good for the environment).
Sydney Watson	<p>December 5, 2025 To: Alexandria Economic Development Partnership From: Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alx Forward Strategic Framework draft. The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO) is the largest performing arts organization in the city, with a budget of \$1.1 million, three full-time employees, several part-time support staff, and 65 to 70 professional musicians who work on a per service basis. The ASO is currently presenting its 82nd concert season and also underwrites in full a music education program that serves 100 students at John Adams Elementary School and Hammond Middle School before and after school. The performing arts are a critical part of the experience economy, bringing valuable tax revenue to the City and contributing to Alexandria's special sense of place. Alexandria must care for and invest in the performing arts as an asset, including creating and optimizing use of performance spaces and dedicating marketing resources to driving engagement. Below are some comments (in italics) on specific items in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 11: "Invest in place-based initiatives-- such as arts and cultural districts or creative hubs...." Placemaking is often associated with public art installations which are valuable but do not provide ongoing employment to musicians or performers or generate ticket revenue to an arts organization. In addition to creating new arts districts or creative hubs, consider adding amenities to existing locations for performing arts and live music entertainment, such as the Schlesinger Concert Hall on the West End and the Birchmere in Arlandria, for example.</li> <li>• Page 17: "Ensure Alexandria continues to be a premier destination for regional and national visitors...." Marketing and promoting arts-related events as prominently and effectively as Visit Alexandria does for hotels, restaurants, shopping, festivals, etc. would help accomplish this objective.</li> <li>• Page 20: "...Continue expanding the City's arts and culture infrastructure by building on existing efforts from the City of Alexandria's Office of the Arts." This is an essential component for building a more robust experience economy, and arts organizations such as the ASO welcome the opportunity to partner with the City in these efforts. The ASO urges the City to adopt a broad definition of infrastructure that includes more than just public art installations and the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Other arts and culture activities are needed to support fully the experience economy that generates tax revenue. (The ASO would also note here that the City has historically over-invested in visual arts relative to performing arts.)</li> <li>• Page 21: Under the "Focus on the experience economy" heading, The ASO suggests that you add "live music" to 1.4.1 and 1.4.2.C. Under 1.4.3.B, an example of this is an outdoor amphitheater or concert shell for summer concerts and performances, ideally in Old Town, near the waterfront but not directly on the waterfront (because of noise from the airport). The new Market Square would have been ideal.</li> <li>• Page 23: Data on number of visitors to performance events and venues could be collected through the annual arts grants process.</li> <li>• Page 25: To the list of Entertainment and Tourism assets, The ASO suggests that you add the Schlesinger Concert Hall, which is not currently utilized to its potential.</li> <li>• Page 39: Regarding the post-pandemic job market, The ASO is curious to know what constitutes the performing arts cluster and how this was measured.</li> <li>• Page 48: Regarding the underrepresentation of performing arts destinations, See comments above regarding the lack of an outdoor amphitheater or concert shell and the underutilization of Schlesinger Concert Hall. For further information, please contact Sydney Watson, ASO Director of Development and Community Partnerships, at <a href="mailto:swatson@alexsym.org">swatson@alexsym.org</a>.</li> </ul>

## Website Feedback Form

Name:	What is your comment or question?
Tricia Allen	<p>I write as an advocate for community-led economic development and as someone deeply committed to ensuring that growth in Alexandria benefits long-time residents, low-income individuals, and micro-entrepreneurs, not just large developers or outside investors. I support the vision of ALX Forward, but believe the draft plan underemphasizes the critical role of community participation, and risks replicating traditional economic-development models that marginalize resident voices. Below are my key concerns and recommendations. Key Concerns: Where ALX Forward Risks Marginalizing Community Voice 1. Risk of “Top-Down” Implementation Without True Community Participation • While ALX Forward reports over 800 community “touchpoints,” there is little clarity about who sits on the working groups that will guide implementation. The plan offers no guarantee that participants will include residents from low-income neighborhoods, small-business owners, or community-based organizations. Without such representation, decisions about “catalyst sites,” “place-based development,” and incentive allocation may reflect only corporate or developer interests. • The absence of a structured role for residents and small-business operators in decision-making perpetuates a traditional model of economic development, one that prizes capital investment over community well-being. This contradicts the principles of genuine community economic development (CED), which emphasize local control, shared benefit, and inclusive participation. 2. Place-Based “Catalyst Site” Strategy Risks Displacement Without Community Safeguards • The plan’s emphasis on “catalyst site development” and redevelopment of underutilized assets may bring new investment, but without robust community participation, neighborhood-defining decisions (zoning, land use, design) risk ignoring existing residents’ needs. That can lead to displacement, rising rents, loss of small local businesses, and erosion of community identity, all harms often visited upon long-standing, lower-income residents. • Place-based economic development should allow residents to help shape the future of their community (not simply serve as spectators). Without explicit mechanisms to ensure resident voice, the plan undermines the value of place-based strategies for equitable growth. Participatory planning and community benefits agreements, tools already used in many cities, are absent from the draft. 3. Small Business &amp; Entrepreneurship Strategy Lacks Emphasis on Micro-Entrepreneurship &amp; Local Wealth Building • The plan’s discussion of “Entrepreneurship and Innovation” and small-business support is welcome, but it largely focuses on “business retention and recruitment” potentially favoring existing mid-size firms or new businesses that meet conventional standards. • Traditional small-business support often fails to reach micro-entrepreneurs, especially residents with low income, limited capital, or minimal formal business experience. Yet micro-enterprise (solo or very small ventures) is a proven path for community-based economic empowerment, local wealth building, and economic resilience. • Without dedicated resources for micro-enterprise (seed grants, flexible permitting, culturally competent technical assistance, accessible training, and mentorship networks), ALX Forward risks reinforcing economic inequality rather than dismantling it. Recommendations for Strengthening the Plan: Center Community in Implementation To align ALX Forward with principles of equitable, community-led development, and to ensure the people who live and work in Alexandria have a real stake, I urge the following amendments: A. Establish Resident-Led, Place-Based Advisory Bodies for Each Catalyst Area • For every major redevelopment or “catalyst site,” convene advisory bodies made up of local residents, neighborhood leaders, small-business owners, and micro-entrepreneurs. These bodies should have decision-making power or strong veto authority (not just consultation). • Adopt a commitment to community benefits agreements whenever public land, subsidies, tax abatements, or other public incentives are used, ensuring that development delivers affordable housing, living-wage jobs, small-business space, and supports for local entrepreneurs. B. Prioritize Micro-Enterprise &amp; Community Entrepreneurship in Business Support Strategy • Expand the “Entrepreneurship and Innovation” pillar to explicitly recognize micro-entrepreneurs as a priority constituency. • Dedicate resources and supports, such as micro-grants, flexible loan programs, technical assistance, mentoring, business</p>

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Name:	What is your comment or question?
	<p>incubators, and regulatory navigation, to help low-income residents and residents of color launch and sustain small, community-rooted businesses. This strengthens local wealth, retains value within neighborhoods, and advances economic equity. • Create networking and peer-learning opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs to build social capital, address isolation, and foster community-based entrepreneurship ecosystems. C. Embed Ongoing Participatory Planning and Evaluation Processes • Use participatory planning methods not just in initial design, but throughout implementation, including evaluation of outcomes, community impact, displacement risk, and equity indicators. This ensures the plan remains responsive and accountable to residents. • Ensure transparency: publicly share all plans, drafts, decision-making processes, and criteria for incentives or public investment. Provide accessible channels (e.g., community meetings, multilingual materials, digital and in-person access) for broad resident input and feedback. D. Center CED (Community Economic Development) Principles, Not Just Traditional Economic Development Metrics • Shift from a narrow focus on tax base growth, large-scale investment, and business attraction, toward a community-centered economic model that values local wealth building, resident well-being, inclusion, sustainable livelihoods, and long-term community resilience. • Recognize that true prosperity is not measured only in new office towers or retail chains, but in people’s ability to shape their neighborhoods, build small businesses, create meaningful livelihoods, and retain local wealth.</p> <p>Closing Thoughts The draft ALX Forward plan reflects many promising ambitions. But unless the City embeds robust mechanisms for resident and community participation, especially around land use, incentives, and entrepreneurial support, it risks repeating the mistakes of traditional, top-down economic development. That path often leads to displacement, inequality, and lost opportunity for long-time residents and low-income entrepreneurs. I urge the City to go beyond “stakeholder engagement” and toward community leadership in shaping Alexandria’s economic future. Only through genuine community economic development can Alexandria become a city where “opportunity is accessible to all,” as the plan’s vision states, not only to large corporations, developers, and well-capitalized businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your work toward a more inclusive, equitable, and community-led economy for Alexandria. – Tricia L. Allen</p>
Charlotte Spinner	<p>The short-form Vision Statement completely ignores Alexandria's historic qualities, which is what really sets us apart from other cities or communities. I respectfully suggest that it be amended as follows: Alexandria is a resilient, competitive, future-ready yet also singularly historic city where innovation thrives, opportunity is accessible to all, and economic growth enhances quality of life. Thank you!</p>
Josh Heit	<p>The Alexandria Arts Alliance appreciates the focus of the ALX Forward report on creative placemaking as crucial to Alexandria's economic development and for livability for the citizens of Alexandria. The Alexandria Arts Alliance and its diverse membership look forward to working with the city and its implementation partners to make these plans a reality. We hope that following the framework will create opportunities for transformative investments in the arts in Alexandria, in collaboration with the artists and arts organizations who make Alexandria home and invest in its future every day.</p>
Dena G. Stoner	<p>I have read the document and it shows a lot of thought. There is one glaring weakness in execution in it. Investment in the arts and cultural space really has two distinct, although related, scopes of work. Both are important. The plan confuses them. One is to recognize the arts and culture activities as an economic focus. It requires the same focus on a select area of the city as does the plan to focus on business development at Potomac Yard, Old Town North, West End, Carlyle and Eisenhower East. There needs to be a business plan to bring in “creatives” broadly defined to include design businesses of all sorts. Just as the businesses being sought for the named business creation areas of the city in the report, the city has named an Arts and Culture district in Old Town North. It should be part of this economic development strategy that focuses on creative businesses. There needs to be a focus on</p>

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Name:	What is your comment or question?
	<p>these kinds of businesses. In addition, the area needs to focus on what activities bring in people - tourism and arts patrons that bring revenue to the kinds of additional businesses that cater to them: restaurants, galleries and so forth. There is a serious gap in this plan about what to do about two of our most vulnerable arts enterprises that anchor the arts and culture district. One is the Art League which has only a 10 year lease on their current facility which requires planning to be started now so the city does not lose it. The other is the southern end of the arts and culture district Torpedo Factory. The fact that this need so known to be pressing is not mentioned as critical to the success of the arts and culture district is a miss in the plan. Just as the economic benefits of the stated business districts will benefit and uplift many other areas of the city, so will the concentrated economic development focus on an Arts and Culture district spread out into other areas of the city. Much of the responsibility is being handed off for the place making and arts/cultural investment to the Arts office at the city. This office has not been an effective force for seeing the arts and culture sector as an economic development initiative, It does not have the business background to accomplish it as demonstrated by its inability to manage the small business artist producers at the Torpedo Factory and its tangled regulatory processes. The concept of the arts and culture sector as an economic development initiative needs to be put into the plan. One of the things the plan needs is a one-stop shop where creative people who want to plan festivals, and other activities within the city as well as those who are building creative businesses within the arts and cultural district can go to get everything they need - The plan does recognize the importance of place making and arts which is good. These kinds of activities help build community - but are different from the business focus of creating an arts and cultural area. Overall the plan, while dense is helpful. I simply caution that plans with all kinds of paperwork reporting can use up staff time and slow things down. Everything possible should be done to focus the staff on real work making things happen rather than on reporting to the extent possible. I compliment the city for going through this process. Hopefully, it will keep Alexandria the unique place it has been over the years.</p>
Margaret Townsend	<p>I am pleased to see a section of the Draft focuses on the potential economic benefit of targeted place making efforts. I believe this type of focused effort will increase income to the City through increased tourist revenue and buy in from residents, small businesses, investors and developers.</p>
John Yuda	<p>I love the place-based development concept. Overall, I think the plan is good. But there are two areas where I think it could be better: 1. we should explicitly be developing more densely around metro stations and along major bus routes (especially BRT) 2. we should be enabling more small neighborhood businesses, including in neighborhoods that have not traditionally had them. Bring back the corner store of the neighborhood deli / cafe.</p>
Ken Notis	<p>Strategy 1.3. Use number of new units and cost as metrics. Add housing supply, especially near transit and other amenities.</p>
Peter D Carlson	<p>Support the "place-based development" goal, especially strategy 1.3 to streamline development, and using "cost of housing" and "number of new residential units" as key indicators. The plan should more clearly address the cost of housing by recommending increased housing supply, particularly near transit, as a strategy.</p>
Yasir Nagi	<p>I think the plan should more clearly address the cost of housing by recommending increased housing supply, particularly near transit, as a strategy.</p>
	<p>I support strategy 1.3. It should use housing cost and the number of new units as indicators. Recommendations should include more supply, especially near transit.</p>

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Name:	What is your comment or question?
Dianne Harris	We need more housing density with commercial uses intermixed into neighborhoods. Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods with good infrastructure for both. We need to deprioritize cars and parking. In summary listen to whatever Alex Goyette says and do it, yesterday.
Peter Sutherland	I Support the "place-based development" goal, especially strategy 1.3 to streamline development, and using "cost of housing" and "number of new residential units" as key indicators
Conner Foote	Love to see some of the housing related stuff on page 19-22 but I think there should be more ambition there. Companies know that they will have to pay more to their workers locally if the cost of housing is too high. The city should take a more direct step in trying to bring down market rate housing, preferably with other municipalities in the region. This should be housing throughout the city not just Potomac Yard or Landmark. To reduce the long term maintenance and make transit more feasible(better transit=more economic development) it should be walkable and denser if possible.
Edward Olivares	I appreciate the goals of streamlining permitting and new mixed-use development, but it strikes me that targeting growth at a handful of oddly placed 'catalyst sites' is quite inefficient. Market prices show that people and businesses would like to locate in centrally located, walkable neighborhoods like Old Town and Del Ray - is it really the best economic development strategy to keep these successful places stagnant and ever-more expensive by immunizing them from new development? There really is no substitute for city-wide upzoning and by-right mixed use, which would be amazing for housing affordability, economic growth, and quality of life.
Mark Streich	You mention "convention space" only 5 times in this 63-page document. That should be a priority, as it leans into our tourism base, with hotels, restaurants, and shops. It brings people who will stay for multiple days, not single few-hour events. And it does not involve tearing down neighborhoods. Make sure plentiful parking is available beneath the convention space, and have it large enough to attract real conventions.
Dale Medearis	"Goal 2: Business Retention and Recruitment" May I suggest that the City of Alexandria development a global engagement strategy that comprehensively ties together and purposefully serves the City's economic, environmental and social goals? Problem-focused, data-driven, goal-oriented global engagement strategy for the City could help: 1) lure foreign investment via strategic recruitment of foreign investors; 2) promote sustainability by transferring and applying policy and technology innovations related to renewable energy, climate resiliency, sustainable housing etc.; and, 3) enhance our communities by adopting innovative workforce development, affordable housing and social inclusion best practices.
Mark Williams	Why is AEDP so singularly focused on preventing people from commuting to work? I drive. I will NOT use barely-functional, unreliable, unsafe public transit. Does AEDP want me to move? Will AEDP pay me to do so?
Phoebe Coy	I'm excited to see process improvements to help build more housing as one of the focuses of the plan. Building more homes to decrease the cost of housing is critical to the economic success of our region. - It's great to see the strategies on page 20-21 to implement process improvements to streamline development, including office-to-residential conversions. - On page 22, it's fantastic to see the cost of housing and the number of new homes as measures for the success of the plan. - Also on page 22, the socio-economic measures of success proposed, such as median income and share of population in poverty, are well-intentioned but are actually counterproductive to what we should be aiming for as a city. We need to build more homes so that people of all income levels can live in Alexandria. As long as poverty is a reality in our region, it's much better for low-income people to be able to afford to live in Alexandria than to have to move further out to places with longer commutes and less access to resources.

## Website Feedback Form

Name:	What is your comment or question?
Nate Hurto	<p>The ALX Forward Strategic Framework relies on a fundamental misdiagnosis of Alexandria’s needs, proposing solutions that contradict the lived experience of its residents. The plan cites Grand Prairie’s EpicCentral (an entertainment district) and Dayton’s Arcade (a tech hub) as models for our future. Yet, the 2024 Resident Survey explicitly ranks "Ability to attract visitors" as a bottom-tier priority, selected by only 5% of residents. Residents are not asking for waterparks or e-sports arenas; they are asking for Stormwater Management (a top priority for 44%) and K-12 Education repair. This disconnect suggests a planning process driven by developer priorities rather than resident needs, and the cost is a measurable erosion of public trust. Since 2020, resident satisfaction with the "Value of services for taxes paid" has dropped 13 points to just 43%, and satisfaction with "Welcoming citizen involvement" has fallen 10 points to 45%. Residents do not feel heard. The strategy’s focus on "Catalytic" real estate projects ignores the fact that satisfaction with "New Development" has plummeted from 64% in 2020 to 39% in 2024. We are doubling down on a growth strategy that is actively alienating the community. Furthermore, the plan’s enthusiasm for "office-to-lab" conversions threatens to worsen our light industrial shortage. With industrial rents already at a premium (\$15.75/sq ft vs. the regional average of \$13.14), converting functional space into speculative "wet labs" will only increase costs for the essential local services (mechanics, trades) that residents rely on daily. Finally, the "Fed2Founder" initiative is a solution in search of a problem. Assuming federal workers will transition into high-risk quantum computing startups is a strategic gamble that ignores our workforce’s actual composition. We cannot build a "Tech Hub" on a crumbling foundation. Confidence in the City’s "Efforts to manage and plan for growth" are at a dismal 29%. The City must prioritize fixing our schools and streets over chasing "innovation district" status. We need a plan for Livability, not just Liquidity.</p>
Ivy Whitlatch	<p>Ivy Whitlatch Comments re ALX Forward Draft November 30, 2025 As I read the ALX Forward draft report, and as a “champion” of historic preservation in Alexandria, I am struck that capitalizing on Alexandria’s unique (and arguably one of the country’s best) historic resources and ambiance are not highlighted or considered assets to be preserved in the future vision of Alexandria. For all intents and purposes, history is Alexandria’s brand identity. While there is brief recognition about “maintaining the City’s historic charm”, the vision statement completely bypasses this key defining characteristic of Alexandria. Which begs the question, to someone such as myself and many others, how do we continue to respect and preserve “historic charm” without recognizing it’s role for the future? And the opportunities it offers. And, I ask, if preserving the historic nature of Alexandria is not an element in the criteria going forward, how do we protect the City’s historic and archaeological resources? Granted, the vast majority of the economic focus and effort described in this report (which, admittedly I have not studied in depth) is outside of what would be considered the geographic boundaries of the “old and historic” section of Alexandria, Old Town. But why would a city “focus on the experience economy”, no matter where in the City and bypass the one element that so clearly defines Alexandria? As noted in the draft, almost one in five of the respondents who completed the survey for this assessment strongly associate “historic” with the City and have a concern about losing this association. And yet, only a few examples and references to historic resources or activities are sprinkled throughout the document. Finding a way(s) to keep historic assets as a dominant, cohesive driver in the path going forward, where appropriate, should be included. For example, the city has perhaps few greater opportunities for an “experience economy” than the return of the conserved ship full found at the Hotel Indigo and the maritime and land use history it could tell but I cannot find an opportunity in this document where it would be evaluated. While OHA (Office of Historic Alexandria) and the Commissions that support that office, do an excellent job at maintaining and promoting the City’s historic past, my concern is that this report places that work in jeopardy for future generations. I would pose that without prominent recognition for</p>

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	the heritage of Alexandria and ALL it's historic neighborhoods and traditions, at the very least, in the Vision Statement, Alexandria will turn into any city.
Arthur Impastato	Are we planning for more infrastructure and schools and not just for more unplanned for apartment buildings?
Wasim Kabir	<p>I think a good exercise would be to explore why other jurisdictions have been more successful in expanding their commercial base and diversify businesses. Reston, Tysons, Loudon probably have some learnings. Is our BID not as effective, are they more aggressive? Are the developers of our large parcels smaller and less able to commit to build large scale buildings? Are they less focused on public sector use cases? I find it surprising that Reston has so many blue chip technology companies when Alexandria is (personally) an equally or more desirable place to set up shop. I also think that a big qualifier for business relocations are school quality. ACPS consistently underperforms FCPS and APS. We have a larger portion of disadvantaged students, and I can personally say I had a good experience as an ACPS student growing up in Alexandria as a first gen student. That said, WakeField, and West Springfield, and other schools in the area with FARM rates closer to us still outperform. There are structural issues at ACPS that need to be addressed. A stronger school system is likely to attract more executive level individuals to live in Alexandria than NW Fairfax. This would in turn keep Alexandria as top of mind for regional relocations. Potentially looking for additional sites for schools that are not directly w/in the metro station catchment area to free up the most land for our commercial base growth is something to consider. I am not convinced the 2 campus ACHS is the best approach. Ideally, we'd have 3 high schools and another middle school. If we can reduce the gap / improve the ratings for our school system, I think it will help make our city more competitive. I'd also love to see a study on adding a metro station between Van Dorn and King. From what I have gathered, there is already an existing platform, so it is a matter of extending it to fit the trains and doing some work around traffic flow. The station was part of the original WMATA map for the Blue line extension if I read the documents correctly. It might provide an opportunity to connect Duke and Eisenhower. The city could upzone city zoned land and purchase the area across from Restaurant Depot with the proceeds from selling the land that is adjacent to the new metro station. That land can be used for the civic industrial uses that are currently handled across from Alexandria Commons. This would provide several million new square feet of metro accessible land with easy beltway access, and create a larger contigion of downtown-level development (at the Alexandria scale) on Eisenhower. This is likely a 2050 plan, but it is important to see / establish the thresholds for when another infill station is a good idea. I recognize municipal finances are stretched with all the money spent on fixing our water system, building Potomac yard, and the Landmark Mall financing.</p>
Hannah LeComte	My spouse and I are young professionals living in the Carlyle neighborhood, and we have called Alexandria home for 2.5 years now. We love Alexandria, but we are concerned about the rising rents in this area. We have seen our rent raised 10% each year we have lived here. Despite having good-paying jobs, we are worried about getting priced out of this city. How will this plan specifically protect renters? If the majority of residents rent homes, as the report states (p. 17), I would love to know how the city plans to protect renters in this volatile economy.

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	<p>Goals 1.3., 1.3.2, and 1.3.4 are great. More specific recommendations could include legalizing parking flexibility, consolidating the zoning code into a fewer simpler &amp; more flexible zones. The plan should explicitly recommend increased housing supply, even if this isn't universally sought by residents. If we want to improve the local economy we need to deal with the reality of the housing shortage that drives our affordability crisis. All of the maps in this plan's data portal show the least productive parts of our city are those with the most restrictive, low-density residential zoning. We can't continue allowing the small, disproportionately wealthy minority of residents in central alexandria weighing down the entire city's economy to protect the "character" of their neighborhoods, when that character is basically just unaffordability, traffic generating car-dependence, and a lack of any real economic productivity. Using "homeownership rates" and things like "median household income" or "share of population in poverty" could be counterproductive. We need a lot more housing to address our cost of living crisis, and much of this will be rental housing. That's OK. And if we see poverty rates fall and median incomes rise because people are continuing to get priced out of the city, that's BAD not good. Our median income is lower than Arlington's, for example, specifically because we're more affordable.</p>
Lisa Barnes	<p>What are you doing about the traffic in Old Town along with Parking? All you do is build and build. Where do you think these people are coming from. How unfair for anyone who lives in the community already. You can't keep taxing the residents to death because you continue to have apartments and affordable housing. They don't pay into the bottom line who own and live here in Old Town. The Old Town North isn't quaint anymore with these large apartment buildings going up. It seems the small housing footprint plan has been thrown out the window. Taxes should be heavy on the Commercial Apartment buildings then the individual taxpayer.</p>
Bridget Gaddis	<p>If encouraging small business and entrepreneurship is a serious goal, I suggest reinstating the Alexandria SBDC. This is a sorely missed organization which contributed much to the Alexandria small business sector in the past. The current city efforts in this area are a fail in my estimation.</p>
Valerio	<p>Alexandria's strength are many, including: beautiful location along the Potomac river, historic Old Town, and strategic location with easy access to both 495 and Washington DC. All these should be leveraged (much has been done recently, more can be done): . Grow as a "destination" by opening more open air restaurants (w/outdoor space) not only around King st but also on the north end, . Clean up and reinvent the north end especially around the river bank, making it a destination . Sailing events leveraging water front and sailing communities in the area . Open incubators in former Govt office space, tap into local community for business advisors and mentors (I'd do it) . Make the areas outside of Old Town livable and enjoyable by fostering neighborhood businesses, restaurants, cafes. Make people want to go and stay, rather than be transient places (go to watch a movie, get out) . Art festivals and art galleries. Many artists in the region need a space to go and showcase their work. Visitors would enjoy additional attractions throughout the city. ..parking. make it easy to park and visit. Either to come to work during the day (eg entrepreneurs working at a cafe or incubator can't park in a 2 hour parking spot) and in the evening (restaurant customers, tourists). Multi level parking garages underground, in other locations other than King St, with free parking space or some financial deal that incentivizes people to come and to spend longer hours in the city (so they spend money elsewhere, eg at a shared office space or at a cafe). This is currently a big barrier for any non-resident to come to the city to work during the day.</p>

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Jon Rosenbaum, PhD	Once our bond rating agencies, our ratings will be lowered. Learning about our financial situation being dir will come back to bite us.
	Whatâ€™s the next slide?
Sharada Gilkey	Recommend adding personal services businesses to your list. Do the hotels offer weekly and weekend tour and service packages? Need multiple price points. Also, you MUST invest in the low income communities. Take pride in all the neighborhoods!
Kathryn huettnr	Many of the cityâ€™s problems are of their own making. The Eisenhower Valley was to be light industrial instead they caved to residential. Iâ€™ve lived in Old Town for 50 years, same old lack of planning and resolve, always granting a variance to the benefit of the residential developers.
Gloria Black	A big issue that needs to be addressed as any new plans emerge is the issue of pleasant and affordable housing that would meet needs of young adults, families, elderly and would strive to meet needs citizens of varying economic levels so we could all live side by side, instead of increasingly having divided neighborhoods.
Rick Thomas	I wonder if this "plan" cost a million dollars. The plan is very "woke" "socialist" about equity (but never in taxes paid) and concentrating heavily on more housing for the poor who pay the least taxes of all. Section 9 housing (low wage people) has exploded--and they want more for these people who feed off of our wages and in 10, 20 or 30 years never provide a return on the investment. What is the proof of the data that Alexandria has bucked all trends and is a nosedive since 2007? In the last several years many businesses like ATEC and many other buildings were converted to condominiums, not businesses. There has been explosive growth in condos. There has not been a concentration of helping businesses with lower rent. There has been explosive growth in Potomac Yardâ€™and the graph does not account for that rise in the number of businesses.
Michael Zimmer	What is the role of integrating AI into the plan? Can the plan be integrated better into the City education processes for career and jobs development of students ? What incentives are required under this plan and how paid for?
Alex Goyette	Community input being so heavily skewed toward older Alexandrians should shade how we interpret the community's stated priorities. It would be interesting to see the input broken down by age cohort; community feedback in other fora has often differed sharply by age on a variety of issues. We can't build the future today's young people will live based primarily on the opinions of older generations.
Charles Grace	Comment: Equal Opportunity are the key words as opposed to Equity. You might want to start this with something that can survive the courts.



## CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS WEEKLY WRAP-UP

<b>Date Opened</b>	11/23/2025
<b>Case Number</b>	25-00041376
<b>Customer Name</b>	Henry Johnson
<b>Current Assignment/ Type of Request</b>	Other
<b>Description</b>	<p>Hello esteemed Mayor Gaskins and honorable City Council.</p> <p>I am writing today in response to the new long term proposed economic development plan which I read about recently. My dream ask would be to bring back Skyline Mall, but seeing as how it is in Falls Church that hope is not something you all would be able to help me with. So I will simplify and advocate simply for a movie theater on the West end. If a public solution with no money was a possibility I think a social media sharing library with large gathering rooms with old game console systems and a soda and popcorn machine with a sizeable DVD collection where young people could gather and socialize in a safe and orderly place to stay out of trouble. DC has a problem with young teenagers gathering and getting into trouble and ruining their lives. Malls used to be a safe place that was indoors for young people to socialize. The biggest obstacle was these were private places and business had financial and not social missions.</p>
<b>Current Status</b>	Closed (11/24/2025)
<b>Latest Update/Resolution</b>	The request was acknowledged and closed by Alex311.
<b>Additional Correspondence with Council</b>	



## CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS WEEKLY WRAP-UP

<b>Date Opened</b>	12/7/2025
<b>Case Number</b>	25-00042516
<b>Customer Name</b>	Henry Johnson
<b>Current Assignment/ Type of Request</b>	Other
<b>Description</b>	<p>Honorable Mayor Gaskins and esteemed members of Alexandria City Council,</p> <p>I have read the long term plan for city economic development, which out an emphasis on diversification of city funds from primarily property tax, with a focus on West end development. I am writing to advocate for lobbying to go towards long term expansion of Metrorail service to the West end. Having a line connect with the Pentagon and run under Columbia Pike in Arlington, then having a West end trolley which ran the length of Braddock rd in Alexandria would be a huge investment in adding several other shopping areas as visited as Del Rey and Old town. Busses are for necessary transportation, however to bring outside dollars I to Alexandria having the West end accessible by metro rail, and regular trolley service from NVCC to Braddock st Metro as the final touch would connect all major shopping destinations in Alexandria. Bringing in local sales tax and getting customers access to all major shopping destinations in Alexandria would allow property owners a break, and allow for other opportunities to have a source of funding for currently over budget expenditures such as growing municipal building maintenance and city beautifications. Once again, this would likely take up to 2 decades to complete. But as the old proverb goes: The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The 2nd best time is today. Thank you for your time.</p>
<b>Current Status</b>	Closed (12/8/2025)
<b>Latest Update/Resolution</b>	The request was acknowledged and closed by Alex311.
<b>Additional Correspondence with Council</b>	