



What's Next Alexandria: What/Why?

A **community conversation** about civic engagement and how Alexandrians can best **participate in the public decisions** that shape their City.

Goals:

- **Expand** participation
- Make public participation **easier**
- Clarify the City's and community's **shared expectations for the public involvement process.**



Steps in the WNA Process

September 2012 - June 2013

- Series of 4 community dialogues where participants worked together in small groups; offered “virtual tables” –opportunity to participate in real time online video engagement during the dialogues
- 5 opportunities for online engagement, including online polls and online comment boards



Community Shaped Process

Early feedback:

- Use small groups to discuss/raise issues with report outs, rather than town halls where few get to speak
- Minimize staff presentation time
- Solicit input before issues framed/decisions made
- Post verbatim feedback/summaries on website
- Offer online opportunities to participate
- Use members of the community as facilitators
- Simplify language
- Offer Spanish interpretation, childcare
- Provide advance notice of meetings



Completed Sept-June:

1. Civic Engagement Principles: Standards that *all will follow*. These serve as the FOUNDATION of the City's Civic Engagement policy
2. Civic engagement framework: A standard baseline process for all major projects.
3. Communication and Engagement Tools: Working to expand the number of people who participate, and improve the participatory experience.
4. Guidelines for successful implementation and evaluation: How will we make this work, and how will we measure success?



Civic Engagement Principles

- + **Respect** – *civility and open-mindedness*
- + **Easy Participation** - *flexibility to participate in many ways*
- + **Early Involvement** - *frame issues before conclusions drawn*
- + **Inclusiveness and Equity** - *all are informed, empowered*
- + **Meaningful Engagement** – *open and unbiased process to solicit and incorporate community input*
- + **Mutual Accountability** – *community and government share in responsibility to inform/engage according to Principles*
- + **Transparency** – *open process, timely access to full info*
- + **Evaluation** - *assessment of performance and Principles*
- + **Sustained Collaboration** – *long term partnership*



Public Review Schedule

- **Sept. 6 – Oct. 11:** Draft Handbook public review period; online comment board
- **Sept. 3 – Dec. 30:** Briefings
- **Dec. 17:** Revised Final Draft & Implementation Action Plan posted for review in advance of CC
- **Jan. 14:** City Council Legislative Meeting
- **Jan. 25:** City Council Public Hearing
- Implementation through future processes



Implementation

- **Civic Engagement Principles** serve as the **foundation** that establishes policies and procedures for consistent implementation
- **Consistent application** across departments, across boards and commissions, on council, and across the community.
- **Hybrid structure:** Some tasks centralized, managed by **City Managers Office**, others managed by **Departments**



Civic Engagement Policy

Establish as City policy the Civic Engagement Principles and concepts in the Handbook in order to more meaningfully engage the public in development of City policy, plans, projects:

- Public participation shall be welcomed and encouraged; all have an opportunity to express views on matters of public policy; and views are given fair and respectful consideration
- Ensure that prior to adoption of policies that significantly impact quality of life (1) the nature of the proposed policy or action is disclosed, (2) public has reasonable opportunity to be informed, consulted, involved, or to collaborate, and (3) decision-making body has had sufficient opportunity to consider and reflect before acting.