



City of Alexandria

City Council Chambers at
Del Pepper Community
Resource Center
4850 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22311

Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 4, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: HELEN MCILVAINE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOUSING

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Applications for Community Impact Grant Funding from Virginia Housing to Enhance Culturally Competent Outreach and Engagement and Conduct Policy Analyses as part of the Housing Master Plan Update process.

ISSUE: Grant funding of up to \$85,000 from Virginia Housing (VH) to support the City's community engagement and planning efforts and policy analyses related to the Housing Master Plan Update ("Update").

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Approve the City's applications to Virginia Housing for Community Impact Grant Funding of up to \$85,000; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the grant applications and such documents as may be necessary in support of the City's Community Impact Grant applications to Virginia Housing for the Housing Master Plan Update process.

BACKGROUND: Housing staff are in the internal planning stage of the Housing Master Plan Update (Update) process with an anticipated public launch in late September 2024.

To ensure that the City has resources to amplify its engagement and outreach efforts and conduct necessary analyses to inform potential affordable housing contribution policy updates, Housing staff proposes to submit grant applications to Virginia Housing. The applications will help support outreach and education, meetings/listening sessions, as well as the ability to provide stipends to reimburse community partners operating in the city to assist staff with outreach efforts, including sponsoring meetings in the plan area at sites convenient to residents. This model was used successfully during the Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan and Alexandria

West small area plans. The City has also asked for grant funds to help provide interpretation at meetings and events and for translation of written materials and potential project videos. The languages services would include Dari and Pashto-primary spoken languages for many new city residents-American Sign Language, as well as other languages that may be identified during the Update process. Costs for interpretation and translation into English, Amharic, Spanish and Arabic are already anticipated within the Housing Master Plan Update budget.

In addition, the grant funding would support the completion of analyses to inform updates to the City's Affordable Housing Contribution Policies and Procedures. The first analysis will help establish one or more methodologies to determine when an alternative form of an affordable housing contribution is of equivalent value to the original contribution, for example, when more deeply affordable units are requested (than 60% AMI) or when preservation of existing housing is offered in lieu of the provision of new units. The second related analysis will help the City review and update, as needed, the model it uses to determine the value of affordable set-aside rental and for-sale units in market-rate developments. This model is important, for example, when the City wants to convert a monetary affordable housing contribution into on-site units.

DISCUSSION: Virginia Housing has indicated support for the City's request (\$15,000 for translation/interpretation; \$20,000 for policy analyses; and up to \$50,000 for community engagement) citing the City's track record in implementing prior grants (Beauregard Plan, South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy, Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan and Alexandria West Plan) and its leadership in developing new models of culturally competent outreach and engagement.

Virginia Housing has confirmed that the City support already identified to conduct the Update, including the staffing effort of an interdepartmental team, as well as City budget resources dedicated for the Update meet its requirement for local matching funds. Housing will lead, coordinate, and manage the grant within existing staffing resources.

FISCAL IMPACT: None beyond the dedication of City staffing and financial resources already committed for the Update process.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Helen S. McIlvaine, Director, Housing
Eric Keeler, Deputy Director, Housing
Tamara Jovovic, Housing Program Manager, Housing