



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 7, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Spring 2024 City Council Priorities Initiatives Updates.

ISSUE: Receipt of the Council Priorities Initiatives Updates and Quarterly Newsletter

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

(1) Receive updates on the five City Council priorities.

BACKGROUND: On January 29, 2022, the Alexandria City Council held a retreat to develop expectations and priorities for the City work program. Council Members revised the priorities in November 2023, as follows, and directed staff to provide quarterly updates on initiatives that help the city achieve priority goals.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION: How do we widely connect all Alexandrians to City Government information, and that our services reflect the diverse lived experiences of our residents and businesses?

- Use engagement processes, built on trusted relationships, to empower participation in decision making, with intentional outreach to historically marginalized voices in our community.
- Be accessible to all community members and excel in customer service when addressing their concerns.
- Be proactive and creative in promoting City programs, services, initiatives, and accomplishments through multi-channel approaches that are designed to attract diverse audiences.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES: How do we increase quality housing and its availability at a range of

price points?

- Provide diverse housing options at a variety of price points to support a thriving and inclusive Alexandria including for workers essential to the local and regional economy.
- Support low- and moderate- income homeowners and renters to remain in safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and efficient homes.
- Meet Alexandria's local and regional housing goals by leveraging City investment, policy, planning, and land use tools.

EMPLOYEE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION: How do we attract and retain diverse talent in the public service sector and ensure our employees feel valued?

- Provide a total compensation and benefits package, that is competitive within the public service sector.
- Grow an organizational culture, focused on leadership practices and supervisor skills, that promotes inclusivity and engagement.
- Communicate to prospective candidates why the City of Alexandria is an employer of choice and great place to work.

ELIMINATE COMMUNITY DISPARITIES: How can we better extend support to Alexandrians, especially our youth, in our efforts to eliminate social, health, and economic disparities within our communities?

- Increase use of preventive and early treatment physical and behavioral health services and health promotion opportunities through multi-sector collaborations.
- Coordinate seamless cross-agency support services for the physical, social, and emotional well-being of youth and their families, with a specific focus on families who disproportionately experience disparate health and economic outcomes.
- Increase stability, mobility, and pathways to prosperity for Alexandrians living with low incomes.

ECONOMIC STRENGTH: How do we increase the economic strength of the city and its residents to ensure financial stability and attract quality jobs?

- Expand the local economy by generating increased business activity and providing support for new and existing small businesses.
- Diversify and increase revenue by attracting catalytic commercial and experiential projects that invest in and benefit the community and its workforce.
- Grow talent and opportunity within our community's workforce by attracting employers in various sectors.

These priorities provide the framework for an interdepartmental approach to achieving city goals. In combination with key indicators, the goals and initiatives describe how the City will ensure each priority area is

well run and the community receives quality services.

Each quarter, staff provides an update to Council Members on the initiatives. This also includes updated indicators and a newsletter that highlights specific initiatives with stories that demonstrate how initiatives directly impact the community and the city’s workforce.

City Council expressed that the priorities must be consistently viewed through the lenses of equity & environmental justice. In identifying and developing the initiatives for each goal, City staff and partners are asked to understand the historical injustices built into the problem statements and then ask,

1. **Equity:** How will this initiative identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers in our City’s systems and services?
2. **Environmental justice:** How does this initiative provide equitable access to a healthy environment and take proactive measures to mitigate and adapt to future climate change?

To ensure that these questions are being addressed, the Office of Race and Social Equity have been training staff to 1) normalize concepts and conversations around race, 2) involve the Alexandria community in the development and execution of initiatives, 3) operationalize moving from theory to action, by using local data and equity tools, and 4) assess how well conversations around race and climate action are becoming normalized, organizational capacity is being organized, and new behaviors and policies are being operationalized. Using this knowledge, staff are empowered to do better and advance our policies through operationalizing from theory to action.

DISCUSSION: This City Council Priorities Update includes three parts: 1) updated indicators, 2) a quarterly newsletter, featuring stories from the initiatives, and 3) an update from each of the initiatives.

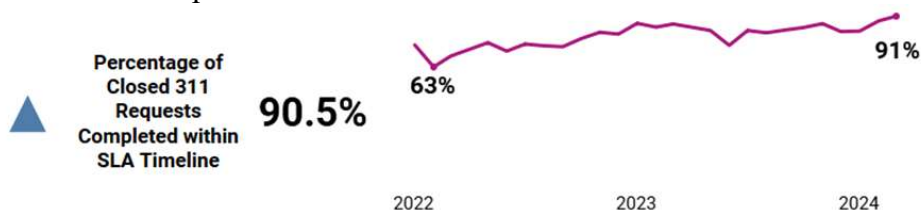
Updated Indicators

As part of the update of the five City Council priorities, the indicators associated with each priority were reviewed and several new indicators were added. Tracking of all indicators from the five City Council Priorities can be found on the City’s website here:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/performance-analytics/city-managers-business-plan-indicator-dashboard>.

These indicators change infrequently from quarter to quarter, however, this quarter there are two new indicators to specifically highlight:

In the Communication Connection Priority, the percentage of closed 311 requests that have been completed within established SLA timelines each month has shown improvement over the past two years. During this fiscal year, each month has seen 80 percent of requests closed within the set timelines, which is a threshold that had only been exceeded in 6 of the previous 18 months.



In the Eliminate Community Disparities Priority, we have seen change related to youth and families. During the

2022-2023 school year, Alexandria continued to see an increase in the share of incoming Kindergarten students who have formal Pre-K experience. This is a positive sign for the growth of access to Pre-K programs for Alexandria’s children.



Newsletter

Each quarter, the Office of Communication and Community Engagement (OCCE) develops a newsletter highlighting a story about an initiative in each priority area (Attachment #1). This quarter, the newsletter and accompanying social media communications include the following stories:

- **Community Connection**
Highlighted Initiative: Customer Service through 311
- **Employee Attraction and Retention**
Highlighted Initiative: Our Community Listens
- **Economic Strength**
Highlighted Initiative: Mobile Hair Salon
- **Eliminate Community Disparities**
Highlighted Initiative: Youth Support Network
- **Housing Opportunities**
Highlighted Initiative: Homeownership Incentive Initiatives

Initiatives Updates

Attachment #2 provides an update on each of the initiatives for each priority. This update is also available on the City’s website, with a real-time display of the database, here:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/city-council/city-council-2022-priorities>

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Newsletter
2. Initiatives Updates

STAFF:

Dana Wedeles, Strategic Initiatives Officer, City Manager’s Office
Josh Ferguson, Performance Analyst, Office of Performance Analytics
Kim Hurley, Race and Social Equity Program Manager
Ryan Freed, Climate Action Officer