



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 17, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Adoption of the FY 2018 Long Range Interdepartmental Planning Work Program.

ISSUE: What planning work priorities should be established for FY 2018?

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of a Long Range Interdepartmental Planning Work Program for FY 2018.

BACKGROUND: In January 2017, the Planning Commission and the City Council provided preliminary input on the Draft FY 2018 Long Range Interdepartmental Planning Work Program to help inform both the FY 2018 budget process and the final work program. In addition, City Council further discussed the Planning Work Program during a budget work session on April 19, 2017.

Based on Council and Commission input, staff has prepared a revised draft FY 2018 work program, provided as Attachment 1 (“Bar Chart”), for final review. The key changes to the draft work program presented in January are listed below and are the focus of the discussion section of this memo:

1. Add *Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Plan July - December 2017*
2. Add *Resolution 830 Modernization July - December 2017*
3. Add *Green Building Policy Update* to the Environmental Action Plan update

To accommodate the additions of 1 and 2 above, the following adjustments have been made:

4. Delay launch of Route 1 South Affordable Housing Strategy to April 2018 (from Feb 2018); Compress overall schedule by one month so that completion is in

March 2019 (11 months instead of 12). It should be noted that in order to meet anticipated expirations of housing affordability terms, the public hearing would be planned to occur no later than March 2019.

5. Delay Mt. Vernon Avenue Plan Update by three months overall. Now scheduled for September 2018 to December 2019.
6. Move Microunits Study to the list of Housing Master Plan implementation initiatives, with schedule to be determined. (Remove Increase of Affordable Housing Bonus Density from implementation initiatives list, as it was approved on May 13, 2017).
7. Delay Open Space in New Development by 12 months. Now scheduled for January 2018 through June 2019.

Additional background on the process for developing the overall draft work program as well as descriptions of all projects included in the work program can be found in Attachments 2 and 3 respectively. It is helpful to remember that the work program is for FY 2018 only, but the bar chart provides a longer view so that direction can be provided on future fiscal years as well.

DISCUSSION: The following sections provide information on the primary changes proposed to the draft work program presented in January 2017, as well as discussion of the potential acceleration of the Eisenhower East Phase 2 update.

Environmental Action Plan/Green Building Policy Update

In consultation with the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC), staff is proposing to amend the work program related to the Environmental Action Plan in two ways. First, the EAP process would be divided into two one-year phases with the deliverables coming to hearing for adoption at the end of each phase. Phase 1 would focus on identifying short term action items for at least half of the EAP's subject areas, or "pillars." These would come to hearing for adoption in June of 2018. The second phase would complete the identification of the short-term action items and complete the mid- and long-term action items for all pillars for adoption by June of 2019. Second, the work program would be amended to incorporate the update of the Green Building Policy within the EAP Update. Review of the Green Building Policy may require some limited supplemental funding for external consulting support. Although Alexandria regularly achieves near-total compliance with our current policy for new commercial and multi-family buildings, the current EAP identified areas for broadening and strengthening the Green Building Policy that have not yet been pursued. The Environmental Policy Commission was persuasive that it would be the most efficient use of limited staff resources to evaluate and select the next steps for the Green Building Policy during, rather than after, the EAP process. The expectation is that a new Green Building Policy would be adopted no later than the adoption of the phase 2 of the EAP in June of 2019.

Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Plan

In response to City Council's request, the proposed work plan contains a new planning effort to develop a *Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Plan* ("Joint Facilities Plan").

The Joint Facilities planning process will be spearheaded by a blue-ribbon task force authorized by City Council and appointed by the City Manager to develop a long-range joint municipal facilities Capital Improvement Plan with prioritization of City and School facilities within identified available funding. The group will also evaluate opportunities for joint facility/site/co-location opportunities for City and School programs, review and recommend municipal facility planning and civic engagement principles, standards and practices, review and recommend alternative capital project delivery methods and project management structures, establish governance of capital planning and project delivery, and review and recommend facility maintenance practices.

The timeframe for the process will be from FY 2018 budget adoption through December 2017. The group will be staffed by Planning and Zoning with participation from Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of General Services.

Resolution 830 Modernization

The Resolution 830 Modernization initiative will be a community discussion to review and potentially revise and/or expand Resolution 830. Among the goals is to develop a common interpretation of Resolution 830 and required “replacement units,” and to update the document to reflect opportunities and constraints that have emerged over time. The process will begin in Spring 2017 and will be staffed by the Office of Housing and Department of Planning and Zoning. Stakeholders will be invited to a series of meetings through the fall with community engagement planned to conclude by Winter 2017. A final report and recommendations, including a Draft Revised Resolution 830, would be anticipated for release by the end of 2017 for adoption in early 2018.

Eisenhower East Plan Update Phase 2

Phase 1 of the Eisenhower East Plan update is currently underway, with Planning Commission and City Council work sessions taking place in May 2017. The focus of Phase 1 is to review potential amendments to the Plan related to the proposed land use conversion of four blocks in the western portion of the plan area from commercial to residential, hotel, or retail. In addition, the update will potentially refine the Plan’s retail nodes and consider a modest increase in the overall amount of development to accommodate additional retail. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will conclude with public hearings in September 2017.

Phase 2 of the Plan update (to consider the addition of new density in the larger Plan area) is currently proposed to begin in January 2020. Some interest has been expressed in accelerating Phase 2 to take advantage of possible future market opportunities. Should this approach be pursued, some factors should be considered. First, it is recommended that Phase 2 start no sooner than July 2018 to allow completion of the Resolution 830 Modernization initiative and the Joint Facilities Investment Plan, and for the Route 1 Affordable Housing Strategy and Environmental Action Plan to be well underway. Unless another planning project is delayed to free up long range planning capacity, additional resources will be required from the City or from the property owners to accommodate the new project, both for outside technical assistance (\$320k) and for additional staff capacity (\$470k). If Phase 2 is proposed to replace another project, staff would delay the Mount

Vernon Avenue Plan Update to start in Fall 2019 after completion of Route 1 Affordable Housing Strategy. In that case, only resources for the outside technical assistance would be needed. Staff recommends that only two small area planning studies be scheduled at any one time.

Planning Process Review

In response to feedback from City Council, staff has reviewed recent planning efforts and begun to develop options for streamlining small area planning, with criteria for when to utilize short, medium, and long term planning process frameworks. The criteria consider constraints such as staff and overall decision making capacity, funding, and adequate time for stakeholder engagement. In addition, some time savings can be achieved through more pre-planning work prior to public outreach, shorter timeframes for plan updates as opposed to new plans, and criteria for when to use Advisory Groups. Finally, there are also goals to standardize plan documents and defer to existing citywide policies where applicable. Prior to the FY 2019 Long Range Planning discussion, staff will provide an update on the planning process review effort.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed FY 2018 work program takes into account the resources allocated to the recommended planning initiatives in the City Council's approved FY 2018 Budget, including funding necessary for the addition of the Joint City-Schools Facilities Investment Plan. The Green Building Policy Update and funding for either Mount Vernon Avenue Plan Update or Eisenhower East Phase 2 are contingent upon funding in FY 2019. In the case of Eisenhower East Phase 2 landowner funding should be a factor if Phase 2 is to be accelerated by FY 2019.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Revised FY 2018 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program (Bar Chart)
2. January 4, 2017 Memo to Planning Commission on Consideration of the Draft FY 2018 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program
3. Descriptions of the FY 2018 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program Projects
4. Presentation

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