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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2, 2015
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER/s/

DOCKET TITLE:
Consideration of the Proposed Process for Updating the City Strategic Plan.

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a proposed process for updating the City's Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council authorizes staff to proceed with the City Strategic Plan update process outlined in this memorandum.

BACKGROUND: The Alexandria City Strategic Plan was adopted in September 2004 and updated in January 2006 and June 2010. The 2010 updated City Strategic Plan was intended to be in effect until 2015. Following the General Election to be held in November 2015, a new City Council will be sworn in January 2016. The City Strategic Plan 2016 update is an opportunity for the next City Council to work with members of the community to establish the City's strategic direction and priorities for the coming years.

This memorandum outlines staff's recommendations regarding the process for updating the Strategic Plan, including content, development, community engagement, and timeframe.

City Strategic Plan Content:

For the 2010 update, the City Strategic Plan was expanded into five different categories of information: vision, goals, objectives, initiatives, and headline indicators. Since that time, the City government has restructured its internal plan to provide and evaluate services, primarily through the creation and expansion of the City's performance management system, Results Alexandria. Results Alexandria has helped staff align citywide goals with department work and identify opportunities for service efficiencies and other improvements. In light of this, staff recommends that the next City Strategic Plan be restructured from the 2010 version to closely follow the Results Alexandria framework. This entails inclusion of focus areas and measurable outcomes with targets. This revised framework would still include vision and goal sections, as well as inventory of relevant related plans, such as City Council adopted master plans. This refined framework enables the document to align to the City's Results Alexandria performance management system, reflect the vision and goals that the community values, and provide measurable outcomes with targets that can help us track our progress, share our successes, and identify and solve problems.

Community Engagement and Development Process:

Staff recommends a robust community process to actively engage both the public at-large and members of City Council-appointed Boards and Commissions. The first phase in engagement will be to collect and report performance data on the delivery of City services. In order to accomplish this, the City will highlight key performance data that has been collected to-date as well as conduct a community survey (using a statistically valid random sample). The second phase is a series of visioning meetings to share results of performance indicator data (including results of the community survey) and allow the public to review and refine the vision and goal statements for each focus area. During those meetings, members of Boards and Commissions will be invited to present language from their master and strategic plans that they would like to have considered in the final City Strategic Plan. The third phase is a series of community workshops to engage the public in setting priorities. In setting priorities, the public will be asked to consider which measurable outcomes to "improve" or "maintain". Data on how well the City is meeting its current outcomes will provide helpful background information as the public makes these choices. Throughout the community engagement process, the public will be encouraged to participate in-person as well as on-line via AlexEngage, the City's on-line civic engagement tool.

Timeframe:

Staff is proposing a timeframe for the plan development that occurs from November 2015 - September 2016. In the second half of November 2015, after the General Election, the community survey will be undertaken. Community engagement meetings will occur in February (prior to budget season) and in June (after the budget is adopted). The resulting draft City Strategic Plan would go to public hearing in September 2016 in time to inform the FY 2018 budget cycle. Please note, although this will overlap with the FY 2017 budget process it is not intended to inform or conflict with the FY 2017 budget process.

Lastly, staff recommends that the City Strategic Plan update be in effect for six years (FY 2017-FY 2022) as this allows time for the City to strive towards achieving performance targets defined in our plan. The six-year timeframe will include a check-in after three years to allow the City Council seated in 2019 to review the effectiveness of the Plan and potentially refine it for its remaining three years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

All costs for this project have been included in the FY 2016 budget and the Strategic Plan Update is on the Council-approved Long Range Planning Work Program for FY 2016. Staff time comprises the balance of the resources necessary to complete this update.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Staff presentation

Attachment 2: Alexandria City Strategic Plan as Revised June 2010

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