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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 15, 2022

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

**FROM:** DANA WEDELES, AICP, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER  
PAMELA DUDOFF, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CONSULTANT,  
OFFICE OF ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE  
GREG USEEM, OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE ANALYTICS, DIRECTOR

**DOCKET TITLE:**  
2022 City Council Priorities.

**ISSUE:** Consideration of Fiscal Year 2023 - Calendar Year 2022 City Council Priorities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Discuss and consider the proposed City Council Priorities, as developed during the January 29, 2022, City Council Retreat and as discussed at the March 8, 2022 legislative meeting; and

- (2) Direct the City Manager to develop business plans for each priority and provide regularly scheduled progress reports on the priorities during the upcoming year.

**BACKGROUND:** On January 29, 2022, the Alexandria City Council held a retreat with the goal of discussing City Council expectations and developing the priorities to form the City's work program. In advance of the retreat, Council Members provided their individual list of priorities and staff prepared a consolidated list in order of the number of Council Members interested in the topic. During the meeting, Staff presented the consolidated list and Council Members held a discussion on their top priorities. For each priority topic, Council members came to a consensus on the desired result they hope to achieve and the policy question to be explored in the upcoming year.

The priorities, as identified during the retreat, include:

- **Covid-19 Recovery**  
*Desired Result:* Fill gaps in our existing response, build our resiliency, and deepen our understanding of what other jurisdictions are doing - define our approach to navigating the future.
- **Infrastructure Resiliency**  
*Desired Result:* Improve and efficiently invest in public infrastructure developed and maintained at a state of good repair, and build trust and communication.
- **Housing**  
*Desired Result:* Develop an Alexandria housing economy that provides the necessary range of price points and styles of housing to meet the needs of a thriving city.
- **Community Engagement**  
*Desired Result:* Ensure that engagement is accessible and happening efficiently and effectively and all stakeholders understand how their input impacted policy decision.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Justice**  
*Desired Result:* Engage community, private entities and government in achieving the required GHG reductions contained in Environmental Action Plan.
- **Out of School Time**  
*Desired Result:* Support universal, high-quality out of school services for youth.
- **Economic Development**  
*Desired Result:* Diversify medium- and long-term revenues to support the services expected and required by all stakeholders.
- **Compensation Philosophy**  
*Desired Result:* Create a new compensation philosophy for our workforce to be preferred and for employees to feel valued.

City Council expressed that the priorities will be consistently viewed through the lens of equity, civility,

transparency, respect, and service. While equity was initially discussed as a priority unto itself, it could not be separated from any other priority, and therefore is applicable to all policies set forth throughout them all. It should also be noted that while these are the current priorities for the upcoming year, in no way do these priorities diminish or change the City's on-going commitment to its on-going services and accountability to ensure that it continues to support a safe, vibrant, and livable community.

**DISCUSSION:** In order to look more holistically and practically at these priorities, staff recommended consolidating the topics from eight areas to six. Council discussed the proposed changes at the March 8, 2022 Legislative Meeting and asked for revisions that included: 1) re-instating a priority regarding community engagement, 2) removing climate change as a priority and, instead, making it a principle that applies to all of the priorities, and 3) reverting back to a priority focused solely on economic development rather than infrastructure. By focusing more specifically on economic development, staff added an emphasis on addressing infrastructure within the community engagement ("infrastructure needs"), housing ("associated services"), youth and families ("physical supports") and, economic development ("investment in our infrastructure"). The revised priorities are as follows and in Attachment #1:

1. **Recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic:** We will advance the policies, practices, and resources needed to ensure a healthy, resilient, and equitable recovery for all residents and businesses.
2. **Define our Community Engagement Approach:** We will use both new and traditional outreach methods to ensure that engagement is efficient, effective, and accessible to all stakeholders, creating a clear connection between community input and its impact on policy decision, infrastructure needs, and financial considerations.
3. **Develop a Compensation Philosophy:** We will establish a new compensation philosophy to ensure we are the preferred workplace of choice and that our employees feel valued.
4. **Provide Diverse Housing Opportunities:** We will reconsider our zoning model and pursue other tools to facilitate an Alexandria housing economy with the necessary range of price points, safe and sustainable housing options, and the associated services to meet the needs of a thriving city.
5. **Foster Economic Development:** We will seek out and consider budgetary, land-use, regulatory tools and other economic development tools to foster sustainable and equitable development, recruit and retain quality businesses, diversify revenue, and allow greater investment in our infrastructure.
6. **Support Youth and Families:** We will explore how to expand academic, social, and emotional services and physical supports to all youth during the out-of-school time hours.

Upon approval, the proposed priorities will serve as a roadmap to guide Council and staff work and be a "living document" subject to periodic amendment. To ensure that each priority is acted upon and measured, staff will be organizing the Council priorities around a business plan for each priority. The plans will be updated throughout the year as a tool to communicate progress and highlight the impact the City is having on the community in these priority areas.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** N/A

**ATTACHMENT:** Draft Council Priorities

**STAFF:**

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