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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2023
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/
FROM: KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & ZONING

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the FY 2024 DRAFT Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

ISSUE: What planning work priorities should be established for FY 2024 and beyond?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council review and provide guidance to staff on the DRAFT FY 2024 Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

BACKGROUND: Each year, City departments involved in long-range planning and implementation jointly prepare a Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program for the upcoming fiscal year and beyond. The work program includes the completion of plans and studies underway, new plans scheduled to begin, and implementation of previously approved plans.

The draft Work Program Bar Chart, provided as Attachment 1, is presented for Planning Commission and City Council feedback and guidance early each calendar year to help inform development of the City Manager's Proposed Operating Budget as well as development of a final Work Program docketed for City Council approval in May. This annual review ensures coordination of work, staffing and financial resources, and the opportunity for Planning Commission and City Council to ensure alignment of proposed planning work across departments with the City's Strategic Plan.

DISCUSSION: The sections below highlight departments' major projects, new proposed projects, or updates to projects. For a complete listing, see the Work Program Bar Chart in Attachment 1. Descriptions of all projects proposed in the work program will be provided with the Final FY 2024 Work Program in May/June.

Department of Planning and Zoning

In FY 2024, the following major planning processes and zoning initiatives will be prioritized.

Alexandria West Plan: Launched in Fall 2022, this effort will engage the community to create a shared vision for the future of Alexandria West, addressing topics such as equity, housing, mobility, land use, parks, infrastructure and safety. Creating an updated community vision for the future allows us to proactively plan for change and prepare for challenges and opportunities in the years to come. This 18-month planning process will update and combine the 1992 Alexandria West Small Area Plan (SAP) and the 2008 Beauregard Plan.

Zoning for Housing/Housing for All: In November 2022, the City Council endorsed a recommendation to move forward with a comprehensive package that will be launched as an interdepartmental effort in winter/spring 2023 with the goal of completion at the end of 2023. The Zoning for Housing list of projects and additional background information is available as Attachment 2.

Vision Plan/Land Use Master Plan: This process will engage the community in documenting and updating City policy established through the City's Small Area Plans since 1992 and the policy that will inform the City's future growth and challenges. This process is slated to begin in summer 2023 if the necessary staffing and resources are in place. The May review of the final FY 2024 work program will serve as an opportunity to check-in on timing.

Duke Street Plan Update: This land use update will follow completion of the corridor's transportation planning currently underway. The intent is to apply for federal grant funding to support the planning effort.

Eisenhower East Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs): In coordination with CDD #2 and #11 property owners, staff will complete work on updates to the CDD zoning, concept plans and guidelines so the zones implement the recommendations outlined in the 2020 Eisenhower East SAP and the newly developed CDD best practices.

Eisenhower West CDDs: Multiple CDDs have been approved in Eisenhower West since approval of the 2015 SAP to guide redevelopment and coordinate improvements. CDDs approved to date are #17 Landmark Gateway, #17a Cameron Park, #26 Public Storage/Boat US, #27 Greenhill/West Alexandria Properties, and #28 Greenhill South. CDD#26 Public Storage/Boat US at 80 acres, is the largest of the neighborhoods. Staff will work with property owners in CDD#26 to update the CDD to achieve the uses, density, and infrastructure improvements identified by the SAP.

Arlandria-Chirilagua Zoning Implementation: The Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan recommends a new zone or modifications to an existing zone to implement the housing affordability incentives established by the Plan. Staff will review and analyze options, and if a new zone is deemed necessary, conduct a public process and City Council review. The Plan also recommends an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow small-scale street vendors. The City will engage stakeholders in developing the parameters of a street vendor program. Potentially, a pilot program may be considered to provide an opportunity to experience the potential benefits and test the viability of such a program.

Zoning Text Amendments: Twice annually, staff processes Minor Text Amendments which typically correct scrivener errors or make the zoning ordinance more readable and user friendly. Occasionally, staff will propose non-controversial amendments to modernize the zoning ordinance such as how to accommodate electric vehicle charging or digital signage.

Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (TES)

Pending grant funding, in FY 2024 TES will initiate a new I-395 Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge at West End Feasibility Study. The City has requested funding from the USDOT through the Reconnecting Communities Program for a planning grant to complete a feasibility study and community engagement for a bicycle and pedestrian bridge across Interstate 395 (I-395) that would provide access between the future redeveloped Landmark Mall site (West End Alexandria) and communities to the West. This facility was recommended in the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan and a tentative location was shown in the West End Alexandria Coordinated Development District plans. If the funding is awarded, the City anticipates study efforts will begin in October 2023.

Office of Housing

In FY 2023, Housing will lead a WMATA Affordable Housing Feasibility Study. This internal study involving an interdepartmental team (RASE, PZ, TES, Housing, others) as well as a nonprofit developer and design and economic consultants will assess the feasibility of developing affordable housing (including mixed-use, mixed income models) at or near the Van Dorn and Eisenhower East Metro stations. The study is funded through an Amazon grant administered by COG; the upcoming studies will be undertaken January through June 2023 and will be similar to an internal study conducted in Fall 2021 regarding the Braddock Metro station. The findings of the study will inform whether a future public planning process should be undertaken, assuming a non-City funding source is available to subsidize the project.

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Resources

In FY 2024, RPCA will begin planning for the Eisenhower East Park under the Metro Tracks. Pending completion of the Eisenhower East CDD update, this process will engage the community in park planning to create the future design of community park that will convert the parking lot in Eisenhower East under the WMATA Metrorail Tracks.

In FY 2025, RPCA will begin a Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan Update. The Neighborhood Parks improvement plan was created in 2015 with the intent that it would be updated every ten years to reflect changing community and infrastructure needs. The next update will occur in 2025.

Also, in FY 2025, RPCA will initiate Old Town North Linear Park Planning. Pending completion of due diligence and acquisition of the Norfolk Southern rail corridor in FY 2024, this process will engage the community in park planning to create the future design of the Old Town North Linear Park recommended by

the 2017 Old Town North Small Area Plan to convert the former Norfolk Southern rail corridor into a new public park.

Department of Project Implementation (DPI)

DPI continues work on [Waterfront Implementation](https://www.alexandriava.gov/waterfront/program/waterfront-implementation-project) <<https://www.alexandriava.gov/waterfront/program/waterfront-implementation-project>> to upgrade the waterfront core area (Duke Street to Queen Street), in line with the vision of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. The improvements will prioritize necessary flood mitigation and infrastructure improvements, while also enhancing the public access and space-making opportunities in the area. DPI is conducting a Progressive Design-Build procurement process to hire the team that designs and constructs these improvements.

NEXT STEPS: Staff will incorporate guidance provided by Planning Commission and City Council at their January 2023 meetings, as well as coordinate among departments to further refine project scopes and timing and solicit input from community stakeholders and City Boards and Commissions. Feedback on the draft work program will inform the FY 2024 budget process, as well as the final work program to be considered for approval by City Council in May 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT: Many work program items proposed for FY 2024 already have City or grant funding identified and/or will be completed within existing resources, or will need to compete for funding (in a very fiscally challenging budget environment) as part of the FY 2024 budget process.

PLANNING COMMISSION: The Planning Commission received a briefing and discussed the draft work program on January 5. Members of the Commission expressed general support for the draft work program as proposed. They also expressed a desire for additional resources to support a work program item to implement changes to the entitlement process for new development to address climate change. The Planning Commission and Environmental Policy Commission have established a joint subcommittee to identify recommended elements of this proposed addition to the work program. There is a joint work session of both commissions scheduled for January 30 to finalize their recommendation to the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft FY 2024 Interdepartmental Long-Range Planning Work Program (“Bar Chart”)
2. November 2022 Staff Memo regarding Zoning for Housing/Housing for All
3. Presentation

STAFF:

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