



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 20, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Discussion of the Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program.

ISSUE: What planning work priorities should be established for FY2017?

RECOMMENDATION: (1) Indicate concurrence with staff listed planning priorities for FY 2017, or (2) Indicate where changes to staff recommended planning priorities should be considered.

BACKGROUND: Each year, the Planning Commission and City Council are asked to provide preliminary input on a Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program. The input from the Planning Commission and City Council will help inform development of the FY2017 City Manager's Proposed Operating Budget, scheduled to be released in late February 2016. A final Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program will be docketed for City Council approval in May 2016, after adoption of the FY 2017 Budget.

As in previous years, the City departments and agencies that are engaged in long range planning and plan implementation have jointly prepared a draft work program for the upcoming fiscal year (see Attachment 1). The draft work program includes new plans scheduled to begin in FY 2017, the completion of plans and studies now underway, and implementation of previously approved plans.

The Planning Commission considered this item on January 7, 2016 and was in general agreement with the proposed draft work program. The Planning Commission noted that North Potomac Yard remains a high priority for the City and should proceed in a timely manner. In addition, the Planning Commission noted the importance of parking management being addressed on a citywide basis in a future work plan, with attention to the process for establishment of residential parking districts.

DISCUSSION: The work program coordinates the planning work programs of the Department of Planning and Zoning; the Department of Project Implementation; the Office of Housing; the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; the Office of Historic Alexandria; and the Department of General Services, as well as the ongoing redevelopment activities of the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA). Work program elements were evaluated by the above departments with the City Manager's Office, the Department of Code Administration, Alexandria City Public Schools, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and Visit Alexandria.

The proposed work program reflects the City Council's Strategic Plan, the interdepartmental nature of the planning program, and the resources needed to complete each project at the recommended level of effort on each project. As is usually the case, there is greater demand for work to be undertaken and completed than there are staff and technical resources to devote to it. The work program endeavors to balance demand for interdepartmental planning and development review with staff, community and City Council decision making capacity to do so, while also taking advantage of market opportunity and enabling future real estate tax base growth and developer contributions toward public benefits.

Evaluating Potential Planning Projects for FY 2017

The basic approach to developing the proposed work program involves some constants from year to year: projects that have been started should be completed, adopted small area plans are generally followed by plan implementation, and there will be projects led by one department that will require contributions by other departments.

Important guidance in terms of prioritizing interdepartmental planning is described by a set of desired long term outcomes. The long term outcomes most relevant to the Long Range Planning Work Program include:

- Achieve results that the community values
- Ensure City government is accountable to the community
- Ensure the fiscal strength of the City Government
- Improve the quality of residents' leisure time
- Promote neighborhoods that are amenity-rich
- Promote neighborhoods that are inclusive and diverse
- Promote an attractive urban environment that reflects our history and provides well-functioning infrastructure
- Improve the City's air quality
- Improve the health of City waterways
- Sustain the natural quality of land within the City
- Increase the value of the City's real estate tax base
- Increase the economic benefits of tourism to the City
- Ensure Alexandria supports, retains, and attracts businesses
- Increase transportation system mobility, connectivity, and accessibility that supports the City's economy

Establishment of priorities among these long term outcomes is an important element of the budget process and the process for selecting the components of the Long Range Planning Work Program. In consultation with the community through a variety of civic engagement platforms, for FY 2017 the budget process has prioritized long term outcomes that support:

- Housing Affordability

- Parking Management and Traffic Management
- Generating new General Fund revenues
- Investment in Information Technology
- Pre-Kindergarten and/or Childcare Programs

Alexandria's Strategic Plan for 2004-2015 was adopted by City Council in 2004, amended in 2006, and replaced with an updated Strategic Plan that was approved in June 2010. It focuses on seven strategic planning goals:

- Goal 1: Alexandria has quality development and redevelopment, support for local businesses and a strong, diverse and growing local economy.
- Goal 2: Alexandria respects, protects and enhances the health of its citizens and the quality of its natural environment.
- Goal 3: A multimodal transportation network that supports sustainable land use and provides internal mobility and regional connectivity for Alexandrians.
- Goal 4: Alexandria is a community that supports and enhances the well-being, success and achievement of children, youth and families.
- Goal 5: Alexandria is financially sustainable, efficient, community oriented and values its employees.
- Goal 6: The City protects the safety and security of its residents, businesses, employees and visitors.
- Goal 7: Alexandria is a caring and inclusive community that values its rich diversity, history and culture, and promotes affordability.

The City's performance management system keys off of the City's Strategic Plan, which is one of many reasons why keeping the City's Strategic Plan up-to-date is important. The Strategic Plan is also an opportunity for Council members to articulate their priorities for action. As directed by Council in the approved FY 2016 Work Program, an update to the Strategic Plan will begin early in 2016, with completion anticipated for early fall of 2016.

Capacity for Long Range Planning

Long range planning capacity (and the ability to engage in multiple large planning efforts at a time) is constrained by a variety of factors, chief among them staff capacity across multiple departments and budget resources for technical analysis. However, bandwidth for planning projects is also limited by decision-making capacity (senior City staff, Commissions, and City Council), as well as the community's capacity to engage in multiple planning processes.

For FY 2017 and beyond, staff evaluates the priority of potential projects based on community interests and objectives, timing opportunities and constraints, potential dollar value to the City, whether the project can wait or if it cannot, and the extent to which the project supports the City's strategic goals and objectives. Ultimately, developing the FY 2017 work plan requires some of the following tradeoffs for addressing the imbalance between demand for planning and capacity to do so, including:

- Prioritizing certain types of projects over others;
- Delaying some projects until others can be completed;
- Reducing the scope of work of a project;
- Achieving significant developer contributions for both staff and outside technical assistance for their projects; and/or
- Authorizing additional staff resources.

Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Work Program Items

In May 2016, the Long Range Planning Work Program will be docketed for City Council approval. The Council's action will be for the FY 2017 work program only; however, the accompanying bar chart/timeline and project descriptions (Attachments 1 and 2) covers the period from mid-FY 2016 to the end of FY 2019 to give a broader picture of the proposed schedule of major planning projects, and the potential projects that will be considered in future years. In addition, the chart shows work associated with plan implementation, which continues to occur after each plan is adopted.

The draft work program for FY 2017 represents a continuation and completion of projects begun in FY 2016 plus the addition of new projects. Major planning projects include continuation and completion of the Old Town North SAP Update and planning for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, as well as initiation of an update of the North Potomac Yard Plan. An update to the North Potomac Yard Plan has been requested by the property owner, and will be dependent on funding provided by the property owner to complete the update.

Attachment 1, the interdepartmental work program bar charts, shows 2 major work program items finishing in the remainder of FY 2016, 15 major work program items either continuing into FY 2017 or starting in FY 2017, and 19 ongoing implementation efforts of previously approved plans and 7 special projects. New to the bar chart this year is a section on land use policy initiatives, prioritizing 11 requested land use and zoning studies. The projects and proposed timing for the major work program are listed below and described in detail in Attachment 2 (*some projects are funding dependent*).

Projects Underway, Finishing in FY 2016

- West End Transitway
- Ped Bike Master Plan and Complete Streets Manual

Projects Underway/Starting in FY 2016, Finishing in FY 2017

- Pocket Park Plan (now underway)
- Motorcoach Study
- Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Planning (now underway)
- Old Town North Small Area Plan Update (now underway)
- New City Strategic Plan
- Del Ray Parking Study Implementation
- Office Competitiveness and Conversion
- Long Range Educational Facilities Plan Phase 2 (collaboration with ACPS)
- Del Ray Retail Strategy
- North Potomac Yard Plan Update

Projects Starting and Finishing in FY 2017

- Daingerfield Island Master Plan (by the National Park Service)
- Review of 72 Hour Parking Limitation Ordinance

Projects Starting in FY 2017 and Finishing in FY 2018

- Parking Standards for New Commercial Development
- Citywide Design Principles/Architecture Forum Phase 2
- Parker Gray Zoning Analysis

Potential Projects Starting in FY 2018

- Strategic Update to Mount Vernon Ave. Business Plan and Arlandria Action Plan
- Environmental Action Plan Update
- Greenbuilding Policy Update
- Census 2020 Community Outreach
- Transportation Master Plan Update
- Route 1 South Corridor Study

Long Term Projects (ongoing)

- New Permitting System Configuration & Implementation
- Stormwater/MS4 Compliance Plan
- ARHA Redevelopment

Typically the Long Range Planning Work Program does not highlight anticipated development cases, but the planned redevelopment of multiple ARHA public housing sites is sufficient in magnitude to warrant inclusion. ARHA's current schedule anticipates selection of private sector development partners by the end of the current fiscal year. Other anticipated major development projects are also included in Attachment 2.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed work program has implications for the FY 2017 General Fund Operating Budget and FY 2017 to FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program. This proposed work program can only be accomplished with adequate resources provided by the City funding for FY 2017, as well as by private contributions where noted.

Additional outside funding is being sought from landowners associated with the North Potomac Yard Update. In addition, discussions have been held with ARHA about they or their developers funding City staff resources in order to assist with the expediting of the ARHA reviews. If these projects are to proceed, contributions to assist in funding them is imperative. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for each of these proposed agreements will need to clearly establish a firewall so that the funding provided has no bearing on the outcomes of the planning processes. Such MOUs and their implementation have been previously successfully implemented.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Bar Chart: Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program
2. DRAFT FY 2017 Project Descriptions
3. Powerpoint Presentation

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