



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 8, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Approval of the Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program.

ISSUE: Establishing the planning work priorities for FY 2017.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the proposed Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program for FY 2017.

BACKGROUND: The Planning Commission and the City Council (in January and February 2016) provided preliminary input on the Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program to help inform both the FY 2017 budget process and the final work program. Based on Council and Commission input, as well as decisions made through the FY 2017 budget approval, staff has prepared a revised work program for approval. The key changes to the work program are listed below and are the focus of the discussion section of this memo:

- Add Eisenhower East Plan Update as a new initiative beginning in FY 2017
- Delay by five months the start of the Strategic Update to the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan and Arlandria Action Plan
- Remove the Del Ray Retail Strategy as a separate work item; incorporate relevant elements into the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan update
- Begin work on the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) in FY 2017, six months earlier than originally proposed, due to staff resources added by Council to the FY 2017 budget

- Add two new parking initiatives, due to staff added as part of the adopted FY 2017 budget

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 1 and 2 respectively. While the City Council is requested to approve a work program for FY 2017 only, 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 2016.

Eisenhower East Plan Update

The Eisenhower East Plan, adopted by City Council in 2003, established a vision for a "...vibrant, new, urban, mixed-use community centered on the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station. This new transit-focused neighborhood was envisioned to include a variety of natural and urban open spaces and parks, a balance of jobs and housing, and a retail/entertainment center...." Since the Plan was approved in 2003, much has been accomplished to build out the vision, including its selection for the headquarters of the National Science Foundation (NSF), future home to 2,100 NSF employees in 2017.

The National Science Foundation has already acted as the expected catalyst for new development in the area, anticipated to induce significant residential, hotel and retail demand and some added office demand. In the last several months, a number of major property owners within the Plan area have approached the City with a desire to redevelop in the near term. Each have indicated that they would like to request Plan amendments related to land use, reflecting the significant market and land use changes since the Plan was approved 13 years ago. While the Plan has been amended in the past, staff believes that the potential amendments are of a larger scope and relate to an overarching theme that may best be addressed with an overall Plan update process. Significant changes in the design of retail, the office market demand and occupancy of office buildings over the past decade warrant a review of the Plan's proposed land uses in order to ensure that the Eisenhower East area can remain competitive in the coming years.

Recognizing the changing needs of office and retail and associated amenities, the purpose of the Plan update process will be to determine what revisions and reductions in office space are appropriate and to ensure that there is a successful strategy for retail, given the City's unchanged goal for Eisenhower East to remain one of the City's key economic development engines.

Staff is proposing that work on the Plan update begin in July 2016 in coordination with property owners and relevant City Departments to conduct all necessary studies such as traffic and infrastructure analysis in order to evaluate potential amendments to the Plan. This analysis would be followed in January 2017 with a community process to review potential amendments, concluding with public hearings in June 2017. The proposed timing for this plan update is contingent upon outside funding for the cost of associated with technical studies and necessary resources for the potential plan amendments.

Strategic Update to the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Plan and Arlandria Action Plan

Staff is proposing that, in order to accommodate the additional work effort and completion of the Eisenhower

East Plan Update and associated regulatory approvals, the Mount Vernon Corridor Plan update start five months later than originally proposed, and begin in the late fall rather than summer of 2017. In addition, staff is proposing that the relevant components of a retail study, formerly proposed as a separate work item, be incorporated into the Mount Vernon Avenue Corridor Plan.

Environmental Action Plan and Associated Environmental Initiatives

The approved FY 2017 budget includes funding for a new City Sustainability Coordinator, who will focus on a number of environmental initiatives, including the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) update. As a result of additional staff resources, the revised draft work plan has scheduled the EAP update to begin six months earlier than originally envisioned, in January 2017, rather than July 2017.

In addition to the EAP update, staff will be working on multiple environmental planning and policy efforts over the next few fiscal years. Already underway is the Old Town North Small Area Plan, which represents a significant opportunity to make progress towards sustainability by enhancing the City's Green Building policies as well as establishing the first Eco-District concept. Stormwater and sanitary sewer planning will continue to further progress on sustainability. Staff is also working on land use policy initiatives that will lead into the work to be undertaken in the Environmental Action Plan update and subsequent Green Building Policy update. In addition to those listed below, Staff and the community will be working on Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan implementation, which will entail a number of significant environmental studies including an Air Quality Modeling Analysis, Combined Energy and Reclaimed Water Feasibility Study, and the Backlick Run Restoration Master Plan.

Parking work program

The recently approved FY 2017 Budget provides added funding for one new parking planner, in addition to the City's existing parking planner. With these additional staff resources, two new parking initiatives have been added to the FY 2017 work program. These are in addition to multiple other parking studies in the work program, summarized in Attachment 4, the City's parking work program (Attachment 4).

The first of the additional parking initiatives, scheduled to begin in July 2016, will review the policy related to residential parking permits for new development. Recent developments in Old Town and Old Town North have included conditions restricting future residents of the building from obtaining district parking permits. A number of concerns have been raised about this policy, and in the summer of 2016, staff will review this practice and develop potential recommendations for Council to consider on this topic.

The second additional initiative is to review the process for amending residential parking permit districts, scheduled to begin in March 2017. Currently, the City Code does not allow for a staff initiated or proactive process for creating a new residential parking permit district or updating the restrictions within existing districts. There are certain situations where a comprehensive, staff-led approach to creating residential parking restrictions would be appropriate, such as creating a district around a new Metro Station or retail area. Starting in Spring 2017, staff will review the current process and propose options for a staff initiated process, with the goal of a public hearing for a change to the City Code in Fall 2017.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed FY 2017 work program takes into account the resources allocated to the recommended planning initiatives in the adopted FY 2017 Council approved budget.

The proposed timing for the Eisenhower East plan update is contingent upon outside funding for the cost of

associated technical studies and necessary resources for the potential plan amendments. If outside funding is provided, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will clearly establish parameters of agreement and a firewall so that the funding provided has no bearing on the outcomes of the planning process. Such MOUs and their implementation have been successfully implemented in previous planning processes.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. February 17, 2016 Docket Memo on Consideration of the Draft FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program
2. Descriptions of the FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program Projects
3. Revised FY 2017 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program (Bar Chart)
4. Transportation and Environmental Services Citywide Parking Work Plan
5. Powerpoint Presentation

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Karl Moritz, Director, Planning and Zoning
Yon Lambert, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services
Gregg Fields, Director, Department of Code Administration
Helen McIlvaine, Director, Office of Housing
Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria
Stephanie Landrum, President/CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
Patricia Washington, President/CEO, Visit Alexandria
Jeffrey Farner, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning
Carrie Beach, Division Chief, Planning and Zoning