



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 20, 2019

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Resolution Affirming City Council's Commitment to Regionalism. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Adoption of Regionalism as a City policy principle.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the proposed Resolution affirming the Council's commitment to Regionalism.

BACKGROUND: During the City Council retreat on January 26, 2019, the Alexandria City Council directed staff to include a policy initiative on regional bodies in the development of the 2019 Work Program. City Council expressed a desire to have conversations with neighboring jurisdictions and regional bodies around topics of regional impact. Following the retreat, staff worked to refine and further develop the Work Program, based on City Council's discussion and prioritization results. The City Council 2019 Work Program, approved on February 26, 2019, identifies a variety of policies and initiatives of expressed interest by the City Council, categorized by policy work sessions; joint work sessions with boards and commissions; department strategic reviews; master plan amendments and major policy initiatives; and recurrent budget and fiscal obligations.

DISCUSSION: Among the priorities that City Council identified in its retreat was that of Regionalism. Regionalism is a broad term that can refer to two or more neighboring jurisdictions working collaboratively for the common good. It may also apply to localities working together with the state and/or the federal government on issues of regional significance. Unlike a specific policy initiative, Regionalism is more of a principal and not a stand-alone program or policy. Regionalism is the lens or attitude that local government elected officials and staff should exhibit when identifying solutions to public policy problems regarding local issues such as transportation, homeland security, the environment, public safety, housing and land-use planning, and other topics. Regionalism means considering and adopting the best policies for the region, and not just those policies that may be best for one's own locality.

To be effective regional advocates, elected officials and governmental staff need to not only be actively involved in regional issues, but also need to actively exercise leadership when working at the regional level. This includes but is not limited to active participation and leadership on regional issues with other jurisdictions, as well as when participating in the work of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and other regional bodies.

Alexandria is a part of the National Capital Region, which is comprised of more than a dozen cities, eight counties, and many towns in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Successful regional efforts have included regional infrastructure like the Metrorail system and VRE, coordinated homeland security planning and resourcing, public safety aid agreements, and cleaner rivers and improved air quality. A more recent example of successful Regionalism includes the interjurisdictional economic development, transportation and housing collaboration leading up to the announcement that Amazon will locate new headquarters in Arlington and Virginia Tech will build a new Innovation Campus in Alexandria.

Since Regionalism is more a concept than a formal program, City Council can address the subject by affirming Regionalism as a guiding principle for City Council and staff work through adopting the proposed Resolution (attached).

Staff has checked with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments staff and it appears that such a resolution in support of Regionalism would be a unique statement by a local governing body in the National Capital Region.

ATTACHMENT: Proposed Regionalism resolution

STAFF: Richard Lawrence, AICP, Special Assistant to the City Manager