



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

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

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

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of Revisions to the FY 2020 Long Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

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**ISSUE:** What additional Housing and Small Business Zoning initiatives should be prioritized for FY 2020 and beyond?

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council adopt the proposed revisions to the Long Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program for FY 2020 and beyond.

**BACKGROUND:** In May 2019, City Council approved the FY 2020 Long Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program and provided direction to explore acceleration and expansion of Housing Affordability and Small Business Zoning initiatives. In addition, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) has adopted a regional housing initiative to increase the production of all housing, including affordable housing, over the next decade in response to significant forecast shortages. In a Resolution adopted unanimously by the MWCOG board on September 11, 2019, participating jurisdictions agreed to set local targets to help attain a regional goal of 75,000 additional new units of housing (above the level in MWCOG's 9.1 Cooperative Forecast) by 2030, with 75% of the new housing to be located in activity centers and near high capacity transit and 75% to be affordable to low and middle income households. Planning Commission and City Council received background information on the regional housing initiative and staff's proposed housing and small business work items at their September 3 and September 10 meetings, respectively. Staff has prepared a revised draft FY 2020 Work Program, provided as Attachment 1 ("Bar Chart"), for City Council consideration. Descriptions of the proposed new or accelerated projects for the work program can be found in Attachment 2; background materials on the regional housing initiative are provided as Attachment 3.

**DISCUSSION:** In response to City Council's direction to accelerate affordable housing in the Long Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program and respond to the regional initiatives to substantially increase the

production of all housing, including affordable housing, over the next decade, Planning and Zoning and the Office of Housing have collaborated to develop a bold work program to address the many factors that shape housing and affordable housing production in the City, as well as to address issues collateral to development and redevelopment projects to prevent and/or mitigate potential impacts on existing residents and communities, including displacement and/or relocation. Staff proposes the following housing work items and general timing:

FY 2020 (Dates in parentheses indicate anticipated Council consideration)

- Housing Contributions Review Work Group (Fall 2019)
- Housing Summit (January 2020)
- Strengthening Condominium Communities (July 2020)
- Examining Barriers to Housing Production (July 2020)
- Zoning for Housing (Spring and Fall 2020)
- Accessory Dwelling Unit Feasibility Analysis (July 2020)
- Inclusionary Zoning Policy Feasibility Analysis (July 2020, next steps TBD)

Early FY 2021

- Framework for Mixed Income Assisted Living (July 2020)
- ARHA Master Plan (TBD, preliminary work underway)
- Financial Tools Review (July 2020)
- Bonus Density Program Update (Fall 2020)
- Enhanced City Land/Facility Co-location Policy (Fall 2020)

Late FY 2021

- Co-housing Analysis (Winter 2020 to 2021)
- Enhanced Tenant Protection and Relocation Policy (Spring 2021)

## **Small Business Zoning**

Periodically, the City reviews zoning ordinance regulations that primarily impact small businesses for the purpose of determining where these regulations may be amended to better support economic vitality. Many of the regulations are for the purpose of safeguarding neighborhoods from potential off-site impacts; in recent iterations of “small business zoning” the City was able to determine that the potential for offsite impacts was either so low that a Special Use Permit (SUP) is no longer needed, or could be effectively addressed through an Administrative SUP. Staff has already developed a list of potential categories for further reform as shown below and plans discussions in the fall with the Planning Commission and City Council to ensure that the scope of this study meets expectations. Staff anticipates being able to bring recommendations to hearing next spring.

Potential Areas for Review

- Restaurants - hours and seating
- Outdoor dining - hours and seating
- Commercial Private School- number of students
- Amusement enterprises
- Outdoor food and crafts markets - number of vendors, duration
- Food and beverage production - size of facility
- Accessory uses and co-location of other uses
- Home based occupations
- Duration of special use permits before construction

**NEXT STEPS:** In addition to this update to the FY 2020 work program, later this fall staff will begin the process of drafting the work program for FY 2021. Staff will present a draft FY 2021 work program for Planning Commission and City Council discussion in January 2020. Among other projects, staff plans to include a strategic update to the Beauregard Plan and next steps in exploration of a King Street pedestrian improvements.

The **King Street Pedestrian Improvements** project is a proposed pilot program to convert the 100 block of King Street (between Lee Street & Union Street) into a pedestrian only space possible starting with programming on the weekends in 2020. The groundwork for the pedestrian improvements started as part of the Union Street Corridor Study in 2012. The circulation for a pedestrian only space was evaluated as part of the 2015 Lower King Street Multimodal Feasibility Study. The pilot project is proposed to include stakeholder discussions and a roundtable with business and community representatives this fall to get input on the project framework. The pilot would also involve interdepartmental coordination. As a result of the input, the approach for the pilot, including programming and budget, will be presented to City Council for consideration early this winter with a proposed April 2020 implementation. At the end of the proposed pilot in late 2020, a report will be provided to City Council with recommendations for a path forward.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The proposed revisions to the FY 2020 work program will require one-time additional staff resources (two FTEs) in the Department of Planning and Zoning to staff the Permit Center full-time in order to free up capacity of experienced planners (primarily Urban Planner IIs and IIIs) to work on these projects. Personnel costs associated with these positions are estimated at \$300,000, including salaries and benefits. Unspent funds from FY 2019 are proposed as the funding source. The Office of Housing has identified a potential need in the latter part of FY 2020 for \$120,000 for an additional Housing Analyst as well as funding for the initiative to Strengthen Condominium Communities in partnership with the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) and Arlington County. Funding for these potential housing resources will be considered during the FY 2021 budget development process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Revised FY 2020 Interdepartmental Long-Range Planning Work Program (Bar Chart)
2. Revised/New Project Descriptions
3. [September 10, 2019 City Council Docket materials on Regional Housing Initiatives](https://alexandria.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4124967&GUID=0335AC68-9085-4088-)  
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4. Presentation

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