



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 6, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR WILSON AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Discussion of The FY 2022 Proposed Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

ISSUE: What planning work priorities should be established for FY 2022 and beyond?

RECOMMENDATION: That Council receive this report and provide guidance to staff on the Draft FY 2022 Long-Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program.

BACKGROUND: Each year, City departments that conduct long-range planning and plan 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, 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:

This section provides highlights of new and ongoing projects in the proposed FY 2022 work program, which can generally be categorized into the following themes:

- Continuing pandemic recovery work;

- Addressing stormwater capacity and flood mitigation;
- Ongoing mobility initiatives focused on transitway implementation;
- Planning for and implementation of major redevelopment sites;
- Housing Affordability;
- Parks and Cultural Resources; and
- Updates and information on other projects.

Additional detail on all of the projects in the draft work program can be found in Attachment 2, Project Descriptions.

Continued Pandemic Recovery Work

Citywide Economic Post COVID-19 Recovery

This project is developing and implementing a series of relief measures to help Alexandria businesses and commercial property owners recover from the loss of revenue and instability created by COVID-19, prioritizing the rescue and stabilization of small businesses throughout the City. Tactics may include developing strategies to get vacant restaurants and retail space leased, delayed taxes, grants to businesses, and changes to regulatory policies to ease and encourage business retention in the City, all deployed as quickly as possible while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Coordinated Community Post-COVID-19 Recovery

This effort will focus on interdepartmental planning for, and implementation of, initiatives to address the post-pandemic economic and social recovery needs of Alexandria's most vulnerable populations, including workforce development, digital equity, affordable housing and other human services needs.

Community Engagement Review and Update

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly shifted most engagement to online formats requiring immediate development of guidelines and protocols for this new territory. While the shift has expanded the City's capabilities and reached new stakeholders, there are important elements of community engagement that cannot be duplicated online, and not all members of the community have equitable access to digital forums. The second phase of this work will focus on equity in engagement as the city emerges toward a new normal, updating engagement protocols that consider both gained efficiencies and necessary changes for in-person and online engagement and how the City will ensure that these efforts result in equitable outcomes.

Stormwater and Flooding

Storm Sewer Flooding and Capacity Project - Prioritization and Implementation Plan

This planning effort will accelerate and prioritize an implementation plan for capital projects and maintenance projects that provide flood mitigation in response to more frequent and intense rainfall events attributable to climate change causing multiple flash flooding events over the last 18 months. An Interdepartmental Flooding Management Team is developing funding strategies and priorities based on feedback from residents, findings from onsite investigations.

FEMA Floodplain Remapping

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is performing a Flood Insurance Study to update the City's current floodplain maps, last updated in 2011. Updates are conducted periodically by FEMA to set minimum floodplain standards to help communities across the nation build safely and resiliently. Changes will impact some residential and commercial property owners, who may need to obtain coverage under a new flood insurance policy or amend the existing policies. The City is a partner in this process, but FEMA develops the new maps and sets the process timeline. Preliminary Maps and a new Preliminary Flood Insurance Study were published by FEMA in September 2020. Before the new FEMA maps take effect in Fall 2022, residents will be invited to participate in a review and appeals process.

Mobility Initiatives - Transitway Expansion

Duke Street Transitway

The Duke Street Transitway project received \$12 million of NVTAR Regional funds toward environmental planning and design to implement the transitway envisioned in the Alexandria Mobility Plan and the Alexandria Transit Vision. The project will kick off in Spring of 2021 with a visioning and planning phase to create the concept for the transportation elements of the corridor, focusing on transit and access to the transit system. This effort is intended to be coordinated with the future Duke Street Area Plan Update.

Route 1 Metroway Extension

The City received \$5 million through a combination of State Capital Assistance funds and CMAQ funds toward the environmental, design and construction of the transitway extension on Route 1 from E. Glebe Road to Evans Lane. A future segment, to be completed by developers will bring the transitway to Potomac Avenue. Environmental documentation is anticipated to be complete in early 2021, followed by the complete design of the Route 1 dedicated lanes in 2021. Final design would be completed in early 2022. With final implementation, the transitway will connect with the dedicated lanes in Arlington County.

Planning and implementation of major redevelopment sites

Landmark Mall Master Plan Amendment and CDD

In December, a development team which includes the current property owner of the Mall site submitted an application for a rezoning and a Coordinated Development District (CDD) with a Master Plan Amendment in late 2021 as the first step in working towards implementing the Plan concepts and priorities developed through the 2018 to 2019 community process. The anchor of this project will be a new Inova Alexandria Hospital, cancer center and medical office building. The City's goal is to enable redevelopment in a timely manner to implement the community's vision for the site. The City can accomplish this goal through a \$76 million City investment in Landmark infrastructure and a \$54 million City investment to acquire 10 acres of land at Landmark to lease to Inova. The Eisenhower West Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group will serve as the venue for community engagement to begin in early 2021.

Old Town North Power Plant CDD

Hilco Redevelopment Partners, the new owner of the former Pepco/Mirant/NRG coal fired power plant site in Old Town North, has indicated that it intends to begin the process for redeveloping this important Old Town North site in 2021 with the intent of implementing the adopted Old Town North SAP. Approvals that will be required are a CDD concept plan followed by Development Special Use Permits.

Housing

Zoning for Housing

This effort will support Alexandria's ability to achieve its Housing Master Plan goals and housing production and affordability target goals pursuant to the 2019 COG regional housing initiative endorsed by City Council in March 2020. The City will continue to examine opportunities to increase the amount, types, and locations where housing may be built, with a continuous focus on affordability goals. Potential examples include changes to existing zones, creation of new zones, and expanding where the City would consider rezoning to higher densities without a small area plan study. The study will take into account implications for infrastructure and public facilities as well as proximity to transportation corridors and neighborhood services and amenities. Opportunities for public discussion and consideration will be provided throughout the process.

Inclusionary Zoning Policy Feasibility Analysis

This ongoing analysis begun in 2020 is evaluating the feasibility and desirability of an Inclusionary Zoning policy for the City that would require developers to set aside a certain percentage of housing units in new or rehabilitated projects for low- and moderate-income residents. Economic analysis was undertaken in mid-2020 to compare how this approach compares to the City's current approach to securing affordable housing through redevelopment. Findings will be shared with the community for their feedback in early 2021 and will be reported to AHAAC, Planning Commission and City Council later in the Spring, with potential recommendations regarding a new policy brought forward in the Fall.

ARHA Master Plan - Redevelopment Site 1

ARHA has completed its RFQ process to select potential development partners for redevelopment of multiple sites it owns and anticipates identification of a first redevelopment site and development partner by the end of FY 2021. Internal staff work will proceed through early FY 2022, when a development concept is expected to be submitted, followed by community engagement concurrent with development review and approval processes.

Parks and Cultural Resources

Public Open Space Policy Plan (RPCA; TES; P&Z; DPI)

This project, which kicked off in 2020, will implement the Environmental Action Plan and Open Space Master Plan goal to increase the publicly accessible open space quantity and improve its environmental quality, management, and social benefits. Action items include re-assessment of the methodology, policies, and tools for evaluating future publicly accessible open space sites, whether through acquisition, easements, or development.

Action Plan for Vibrancy & Sustainability at Torpedo Factory Art Center:

Based on the recommendations of prior studies and the current Art Center management, this proposed Action Plan is designed to achieve priority results and outcomes to establish a foundation for a renewed Torpedo Factory Art Center. The goal is to improve the efficiency of operations and sustainability of the Art Center while also broadening and deepening its connections to the community and re-configuring the first-floor spaces to create a more dynamic public experience.

Other Projects

Freedom House Museum Planning

The restoration and interpretation of the City's newly acquired Freedom House Museum will require planning,

fundraising, community engagement, and project implementation. Over the next five years, the City will conduct a Historic Structures Report, Exterior Restoration (includes architectural study, design), Master Plan, Interpretive Plan and Exhibition (research, design, fabrication). The Commonwealth of Virginia will be providing \$2.4 million toward this project.

Hospital Site Rezoning

Inova has indicated its intent to request a rezoning of its Hospital property on Seminary Road for residential use. A community process will be initiated to solicit community feedback with the process anticipated to begin in early 2021 with a January 6 public meeting.

City Strategic Plan Update

The City's Strategic Plan was adopted by City Council in 2017. As the Plan's current timeframe ends in FY 2022, the Plan is proposed to be evaluated and updated through a community process in FY 2022 to guide the next six-year period. Executing this community process will require funding in FY 2022.

Alexandria West Plan Update:

Staff is proposing a strategic review and update to the Beauregard Small Area Plan in FY 2023, approximately 10 years after the Plan was originally approved. Topics for the update may include consideration of adjacent development sites outside the original plan boundary in Alexandria West, such as Newport Village, that have a close correlation to the West End Transitway, market changes and potential land use and design flexibility, and implementation and funding strategies.

Updates to Current Projects

The following projects previously on the FY 2021 Work Program have been updated as described below:

Mount Vernon Avenue - Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan Update

External work on this Plan was suspended for some time in 2020 until safe in-person engagement could be conducted outside over the summer and fall. Draft recommendations on the first topic, housing affordability, will be shared with the community and stakeholders in early 2021, so that expectations to guide future development can be established early. Staff anticipates bringing a draft housing strategy and recommendations to Planning Commission and City Council for their consideration in the second quarter of 2021 and completing the remainder of the plan for review in early fall 2021.

Mount Vernon Avenue - Del Ray Plan Update

The Del Ray Plan update was shifted to FY 2023 as a result of pandemic related impacts and in order to prioritize time sensitive planning issues in the Arlandria neighborhood, namely affordable housing. Staff also proposed splitting the two planning efforts to more effectively engage with the two different communities. Using feedback provided during the listening sessions in late 2019 and early 2020 as a starting point, potential Plan topics are anticipated to include the Del Ray Business District, update to guidelines for redevelopment sites, pedestrian safety and accessibility, the open space network, and historic preservation.

Duke Street Vision Plan

The Small Area Plans guiding the Duke Street corridor west of Old Town to Landmark Mall were last approved in 1992. This process will engage the community in developing a long-term land use vision for the corridor once progress has been made on the transportation planning initiatives that are already underway for Duke Street as well as the City's Campus Master Plan. The planning process scheduled for FY 2023 will provide

updated guidance for redevelopment sites and ensure that infrastructure and amenities are planned to meet the needs of existing and future redevelopment. An updated small area plan will address community needs, infrastructure needs, affordable housing, open space, and economic development.

NEXT STEPS: Staff will incorporate guidance provided by Planning Commission and City Council at their January 2020 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 2022 budget process, as well as the final work program to be considered for approval by City Council in May 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT: Many work program items proposed for FY 2022 already have City or grant funding identified and/or will be completed within existing resources. Those noted as funding dependent will need to compete for funding (in a very fiscally challenging budget environment) as part of the FY 2022 budget preparation process now underway, as well as during the community and City Council consideration process after the City Manager proposes the FY 2022 operating budget and FY 2022 to FY 2031 Capital Improvement Program in February.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft FY 2022 Interdepartmental Long-Range Planning Work Program (“Bar Chart”)
2. Draft FY 2022 Project Descriptions
3. Presentation

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