



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Final Approval of the Proposed Alexandria Legislative Package for the 2022 General Assembly.

ISSUE: Final Approval of the proposed Alexandria Legislative Package for the 2022 General Assembly Session.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the Proposed 2022 General Assembly Legislative Package which is comprised of Legislative Package Principles (Attachment 1) and Priorities (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND: Each year, the City of Alexandria produces its General Assembly Legislative Package. The goal of the package is to organize, prioritize, and communicate the City's legislative and budget priorities to the community, stakeholders, and legislators. In addition, because Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, localities only have the authority expressly granted to them by the legislature by state statute or in their charter. Localities in Virginia, including Alexandria, therefore often request legislation to grant them enabling authority for specific powers they do not already have, which are included in the Legislative Package.

The requests in the draft Legislative Package generally originate from City Council members, City staff, and boards and commissions, with additional input coming from the public through the public hearing process. For the past several months, staff has been working with Council members, City departments, and boards and commissions to develop legislative and funding proposals for the City's 2022 Legislative Package.

City Council held a Work Session with the City's General Assembly delegation immediately preceding its November 13, 2021 public hearing, which helped advise the Legislative Package. This was an opportunity for Council to get input on their priorities for the 2022 session, the impact of the November 2, 2021 election, the practicalities of how the 2022 Session will function in the current COVID-19 environment, as well as receive feedback from the Delegation on the draft Legislative Package.

In addition, Council held a Public Hearing on the draft Legislative Package on November 13, 2021; however, no members of the public provided feedback, comments or recommendations through that forum.

DISCUSSION: The draft 2022 Legislative Package, as presented today, has proposals organized into two sections - Legislative Principles and Legislative Priorities.

The section of Legislative Principles is structured around the City's Strategic Plan and creates a clear nexus between the City's goals and the legislative and funding measures necessary for us to achieve these goals. This year staff included the actionable portion of the ALL Alexandria resolution in the Legislative Principles as well, in order to reflect the City's goals in the area of race and social equity in the Legislative Package. The Legislative Principles are, generally, broadly crafted and focus on comprehensive legislative strategies rather than specific legislative tactics.

The Legislative Priorities are, generally, specific revenue and legislative proposals that the City has identified as the issues of greatest impact to the City. These are the issues the City intends to continue expending significant political capital on and the issues that we intend to ask our General Assembly delegation to engage in on behalf of the City.

The draft Package received input from the Delegation at the Work Session held during the November 13 Public Hearing, which was also an opportunity for input from the community and other outside stakeholders.

Feedback from the Delegation as well as the community resulted in four recommendations for Council consideration as it finalizes the Legislative Package. Those four changes are reflected in red in Attachments 1 and 2:

- Removing the item requesting local authority to regulate commercial gas-powered leaf blowers;
- Removing the item requesting legislation to mandate healthier comprehensive options for both food and drinks on children's menus in Virginia;
- Adding language expressing our support for efforts to protect the Clean Economy Act and other legislation which has made advances in the areas of combatting climate change, promoting energy efficiency and encouraging clean energy investment;
- Adding language expressing our support for legislation to increase the Virginia Clean Energy Act's Renewable Portfolio Standard targets to 60% by 2030, and 100% carbon-free electricity (renewables and nuclear) by 2035.

As City looks toward the 2022 General Assembly session, staff has worked with members of the General Assembly to pre-file several of the City's priority bills. In addition, staff has engaged with the Governor's Office and members of the Administration to communicate budget priorities for the Governor's outgoing biennial budget. On December 16, 2021, Governor Northam will present his outgoing biennial budget as well as any amendments to the current State budget. Staff will report to Council on the Governor's recommendations shortly after they are released.

The City Council Legislative Subcommittee will begin reviewing pre-filed bills in early December; these meetings will become weekly meetings starting on January 7, 2022 and will continue until the Friday after the final day for bill introduction. These meetings allow the Legislative Subcommittee to review legislation that

may have an impact on the City with the input of City staff subject matter experts and recommend positions on this legislation. These positions are subsequently reviewed by the full Council and communicated to the Alexandria delegation in the General Assembly for their consideration.

The 2022 General Assembly Session will be a “long” 60-day Session, beginning January 12, 2022. The City’s Legislative Director, Sarah Taylor, continues to represent the City with, and at, the General Assembly. She will report to Council regularly on the status of the City’s legislative priorities as well as other legislative and budget issues of impact to the City that are sure to arise during the 2022 General Assembly Session.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed City Legislative Principles for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly Session
2. Proposed City Legislative Priorities for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly Session

STAFF:

Laura Triggs, Deputy City Manager

Sarah Graham Taylor, Assistant City Manager, Legislative Director