



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2023

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: DANA WEDELES, STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OFFICER, CMO

DOCKET TITLE:

2023 City Council Priorities Initiatives Updates.

ISSUE: Receipt of the Council Priorities Initiatives Updates and Quarterly Newsletter.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive updates on the COVID-19, Housing, Youth and Families, and Community Engagement, Economic Development, and Compensation Philosophy Business Plan Initiatives.

BACKGROUND: On January 29, 2022, the Alexandria City Council held a retreat to develop expectations and priorities for its work program. Council subsequently approved the priorities, as follows, and directed staff to develop business plans for each.

- 1. Recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic:** We will advance the policies, practices, and resources needed to ensure a healthy, resilient, and equitable recovery for all residents and businesses.
- 2. Provide Diverse Housing Opportunities:** We will reconsider our zoning model and pursue other tools to facilitate an Alexandria housing economy with the necessary range of price points, safe and sustainable housing options, and the associated services to meet the needs of a thriving city.
- 3. Define our Community Engagement Approach:** We will use both new and traditional outreach methods to ensure that engagement is efficient, effective, and accessible to all stakeholders, creating a clear connection between community input and its impact on policy decision, infrastructure needs, and financial considerations.
- 4. Support Youth and Families:** We will explore how to expand academic, social, and emotional services and physical supports to all youth during the out-of-school time hours.

5. **Foster Economic Development:** We will seek out and consider budgetary, land-use, and regulatory tools to foster sustainable and equitable development, diversify revenue, and allow greater investment in our infrastructure.
6. **Develop a Compensation Philosophy:** We will establish a new compensation philosophy to ensure we are the preferred workplace of choice and that our employees feel valued.

City Council expressed that the priorities must be consistently viewed through the lenses of equity, environmental justice, civility, transparency, respect, and service. In developing the initiatives for each goal of the plans, staff has asked:

1. **Equity:** Will these initiatives identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers in our City's systems and services?
2. **Environmental justice:** Do these initiatives provide equitable access to a healthy environment and take proactive measures to mitigate and adapt to future climate change?
3. **Civility & Respect:** How do we ensure that all interactions associated with these initiatives are done so in a way in which there is a healthy exchange of ideas and perspectives?
4. **Transparency:** Are we operating in a way that is easy for others to see and understand what is happening in these initiatives?
5. **Service:** Do these initiatives put the public's interest first and make a difference in the community?

Staff have since developed business plans for each of the priorities, which they then presented to Council throughout 2022. The business plans provide the framework for an interdepartmental approach to achieving city goals. By consolidating recommendations and planned initiatives with key indicators, the business plans describe how the City will ensure each priority area is well run and the community receives quality services.

In addition to the business plans, each quarter, staff provide an update to Council on the initiatives in the business plans. This also includes updated indicators and a newsletter that highlights specific initiatives with stories of how initiatives directly impact the community and the city's workforce. City staff provide these updates on the plans in March, June, September, and December.

DISCUSSION: This City Council Priorities Update includes three parts: 1) updated indicators, 2) a quarterly newsletter, featuring stories from the initiatives, and 3) an update from each of the initiatives.

Updated Indicators

Each of the six business plans track indicators that demonstrate how the city is, or is not, succeeding in meeting its goals. These indicators change infrequently from quarter to quarter, however, a standout to highlight this quarter is that transient lodging gross sales for FY 2022 (in 2018 dollars) are back over FY 2020 gross sales and each month of FY 2023 has seen higher gross sales than the same month in FY 2022.



It is also worth noting, that many of the indicators highlight data obtained from the Resident Survey. This survey has not been issued since 2020, however, the Office of Performance Analytics is in the early

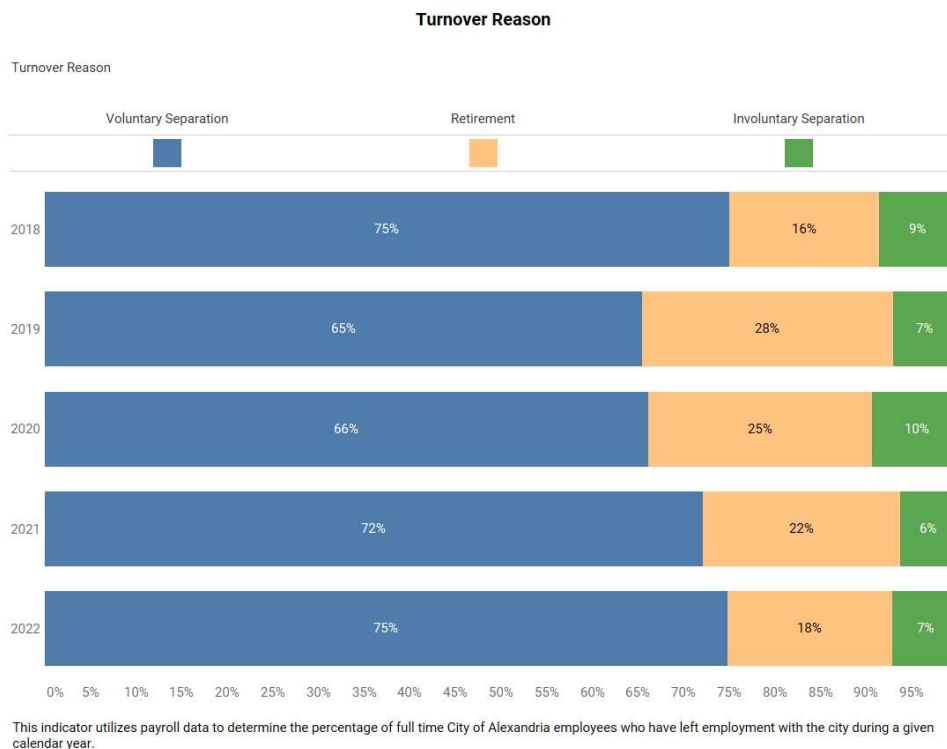
development of a new survey, which is aiming to be sent to residents in the latter part of CY 2023. At Council's request from the Legislative Session held on January 10, the new survey will revisit questions around "quality of economic development."

Additionally, Council asked that staff re-evaluate indicators focused on Economic Development in order to demonstrate the City's efficiency and effectiveness in project delivery. These new indicators include:

Status	Indicators	Current	Trend & Target
●	Value Added by New Development Projects This indicator measures the value added to the tax base by new development projects and is provided by the Department of Planning & Zoning. The target is to exceed the 3-year average of \$504M. The increase in FY22 is in part due to the Landmark Redevelopment Project.	\$857M	<p>Target: \$504M</p> <p>FY20 FY21 FY22</p>
●	Commercial Vacancy Rate This indicator measures the percentage of commercial space in the City of Alexandria that is vacant. The City's target is to strive to see this an annual decrease in this percentage. This indicator is from the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.	16.2%	<p>CY19 CY20 CY21</p>
●	Jobs in Alexandria The number of private jobs in Alexandria is an indicator of economic vitality. The City's target is to see positive growth citywide. This indicator is from the Department of Planning and Zoning from US Census QWI data.	65,611	<p>2018 2019 2020 2021 2022</p>
●	Quality of Economic Development This indicator from the resident survey measures resident perception of the quality of the City of Alexandria's economic development services. The City's target is to strive to see annual improvement.	45%	<p>2016 2017 2018 2019 2020</p>
●	Days to Issue Permit This indicator measures the average number of days for a permit to be issued. The City's target is to stay below an average of 7 days after an application is submitted to issue a permit. This indicator is from the Department of Code Administration.	6	<p>Target: 7</p> <p>FY20 FY21 FY22</p>
●	Flood Action Alexandria Projects This indicator measures the percentage of annually planned Spot Improvement Capital Projects completed under Flood Action Alexandria. The City's target is to complete all planned projects each year. This indicator is from the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.	75%	<p>Target: 100%</p> <p>FY20 FY21 FY22</p>
●	Development Applications Submitted This indicator measures the number of new applications received for development site plans and development special use permits. The City's target is to have 31 new applications submitted each year. This indicator is from the Department of Planning & Zoning.	44	<p>Target: 31</p> <p>FY20 FY21 FY22</p>

The Department of Project Implementation is leading a team working on a Project Management Information System, which will more accurately and concisely communicate whether capital projects are on time and on track. The public-facing data and Council progress reports associated with this project are expected in the latter part of 2023.

In the Compensation Philosophy Plan, Staff have added additional detail to the turnover rate indicator, identifying reasons for staff turnover, per City Council’s discussion on January 10, 2023:



In the future, staff aim to add indicators on Work n’ Well data and speed of recruitment, however, additional data collection is needed to report on these topics.

Tracking of all indicators from the six business plans can be found on the City’s website here:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/performance-analytics/city-managers-business-plan-indicator-dashboard>

Newsletter

Each quarter, the Office of Communication and Public Information (OCPI) develops a newsletter highlighting a story about an initiative in each of the six business plans (Attachment 1). This quarter, the newsletter and accompanying social media communications includes the following stories:

- **Community Engagement**
Highlighted Initiative: Oral History (Goal 1c)

- **Compensation Philosophy**

Highlighted Initiative: Work n' Well (Goal 1e)

- **Economic Development**

Highlighted Initiative: Climate Action (Goal 2g)

- **Youth and Families**

Highlighted Initiative: Mentoring Partnership (Goal 3b)

- **COVID-19 Recovery**

Highlighted Initiative: Move to the Mark Center (Goal 3c)

- **Housing Opportunities**

Highlighted Initiative: Healthy Homes Initiative (Goal 2f)

Initiatives Updates

Attachment 2 provides an update on each of the initiatives listed in the six business plans. This update is also available on the City's website, with a real-time display of the database, here:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/city-council/city-council-2022-priorities>

Also, per the Council Discussion on January 10, 2023, Staff have added an additional initiative to the Economic Development plan that states, "Implement prevailing wage provisions to the Alexandria City Code for construction maintenance contracts larger than \$250,000." Progress on this initiative will also now be tracked quarterly, with the most recent update stating: "Prevailing wage provisions have been added to the City Code for construction and construction maintenance contracts larger than \$250,000 on or after July 1, 2023. A letter will be sent in early April to all businesses registered to work in the City of Alexandria who could be impacted by this change. Additional information will be included in upcoming solicitation packages. In addition to these direct mailings, information will be added to the Purchasing webpage and shared with partners that work directly with the business community (e.g., AEDP, SBDC, Business Associations, Chambers of Commerce)."

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

- (1) Newsletter
- (2) Initiatives Updates
- (3) Presentation

STAFF:

Josh Ferguson, Analyst, Office of Performance Analytics

Jacqueline Woodbridge, Editorial and Media Relations Manager, Office of Communications and Public Information

Justin Thompson, Creative Communications Manager, Office of Communications and Public Information