



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
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City Manager

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September 14, 2023

Dear City Board, Committee, and Commission Chairs,

I would like to thank you for bringing your passion, expertise and leadership to one of our City boards, committees and commissions. Your dedicated service helps represent the voices of our community throughout the budget process. Your experience and knowledge are an integral part of the policy development process in our city. As a part of an advisory body, your research and recommendations respond to changing conditions in the City as we continue to grow and strive to meet the expectations of the residents we serve.

The FY 2024 budget and CIP adopted in May provided funding for initiatives that build on Alexandria's accomplishments; addressing current and developing matters; making city services more accessible to those who need help the most; and promoting equity through programs aimed at maximizing Alexandria's affordability and accessibility. It also meets goals that maintain and strengthen current infrastructure and continue the City's investment in school facilities.

These targeted investments represent important and emerging issues identified by City Council, many of the boards, committees and commissions, department staff, and our residents. Examples of the FY 2024 budget's investments in these key areas include:

- **Public Safety:** Investing in our public safety areas to maintain a safe and secure community with the addition of staff for the Commonwealth Attorney, for Body Worn Cameras, increased fire department staffing and other funding to support our police and sheriff departments.
- **Affordable Housing:** Providing Diverse Housing Opportunities through funding for eviction prevention, affordable housing construction and a Housing Analyst position to assist residents with housing instability and landlord tenant activities.
- **Multi-lingual Community Engagement:** Allocating funding for community engagement opportunities with Community Cooks-out, City Council town halls, staffing for hybrid public meetings and multi-lingual accessibility. This funding builds upon the Council's efforts last year to revamp the City's community engagement strategy.
- **Our Youth and Families:** Supporting Youth and Families by expanding Parks and Recreation classes and camps; Expanding staffing for early childhood programs; including, a Senior Therapist for the Parent and Infant Education (PIE) program; and providing administrative support for the Health Department Teen Wellness Center.

- **Economic Development Growth:** Fostering Economic Development through continued diverse small business support and continued support for the catalyst Landmark Mall Redevelopment.
- **Staff Retention and Recruitment:** Ensuring the City is the “Employer of Choice” by committing funding for collective bargaining agreements with PBA and IAFF, continuing to focus on compensation adjustments, and support for targeted staffing studies.
- **Climate Action:** Responding to our climate crisis by fully funding the new Office of Climate Action, investing in upgrading facilities, and an additional Urban Forester position to support the augmentation of our tree canopy.

FY 2025 looks to be an ambitious fiscal year as we (1) continue to navigate the financial sustainability of the Capital Improvement Program, (2) address issues through investments in employment compensation, race and equity social initiatives, public safety programming and investing in education (3) maintain and stabilize affordable housing and (4) address the need to reduce required borrowing and associated debt service due to recent and planned investments in School and City projects.

Your valuable knowledge and expertise are essential as we prepare for the challenges ahead. I would appreciate input on the priorities of your board, committee, or commission to help inform my budget priorities and decision making. Specifically, it would be helpful to know the policy and programmatic areas under your respective purview that are the highest priorities. As was the case in FY 2024, beyond the debt service pressure, I see ongoing budget focus on recovery, investing in our students and school facilities, housing, behavioral health support, ensuring a transparent and open government, and community engagement in FY 2025, as well as focusing on improving the City’s competitive position in attracting and retaining employees. Your feedback will assist City staff in developing budget proposals that support the priorities of our community at large.

Please provide feedback to me, coordinated through your staff liaison, by **Friday, November 3, 2023**. There will be additional opportunities to provide input in the budget process through the department for which you provide advice and counsel and at the budget public hearing in March. Thank you in advance for thoughts on your board, committee, or commission’s priorities as the City begins the development of the FY 2025 budget.

Sincerely,



James F. Parajon
City Manager

cc: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
Morgan Routh, Director, Office of Management & Budget
Department Heads
Staff Liaisons to Boards, Committees and Commissions