



# Alexandria's Principles of Civic Engagement



## **EASY PARTICIPATION**

Alexandria promotes open and readily accessible government. Communications and information are timely, easy to understand, and offered in a variety of formats, appropriate to a given process. The City will provide clarity about the public decision making process, including milestones and a defined endpoint. Participants will have the flexibility to participate in a variety of ways, including online and in person.

## **EARLY INVOLVEMENT**

Alexandria identifies and involves stakeholders early in decision-making processes. Community members are involved in framing issues before any conclusions have been drawn, requiring early and ongoing communication with participants through each phase in the process.

## **EVALUATION**

The City will work in partnership with the community to periodically assess the application of civic engagement principles. The evaluation will quantify participant feedback, document lessons learned, and identify strategies for refinement.

## **INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY**

Alexandria reaches out to and encourages the participation of all members of the community in dialogue and decision-making processes, including those who will be affected by the issue as well as those who have not historically been engaged. All members of the community are informed and empowered to participate; all views are equally heard and inform the outcome; and all impacts and benefits are fairly distributed.

## **MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT**

Alexandria provides opportunities for all community members to participate in an open and unbiased process, free of predetermined outcomes, to consider and deliberate feasible options. The City authentically solicits, acknowledges, incorporates, and responds to community input.

## **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The City and community are mutually accountable for a fair process, honest and respectful participation, informed and fact-based discussion, outcomes that reflect citizen input, and acceptance of the result. City processes will include meaningful assessments to measure progress, implementation of improvements as needed, and effective communication of both.

## **RESPECT**

Alexandria values a process of engagement where participants demonstrate respect in words and actions and approach decisions with open-mindedness so that everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinion regardless of differences.

## **SUSTAINED COLLABORATION**

Alexandria promotes a culture of community engagement that enhances public decision making processes and invests in long-term working relationships, learning opportunities and ongoing, open collaboration between community members, community groups, City leaders and staff.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

City government will act with integrity in an open process, and will provide timely access to clear, trustworthy information, presented and employed by all parties from the beginning to the end of the process, including the reasoning that leads to and supports the policy conclusions.