



Dear City Manager Parajon and City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on budget priorities for the City of Alexandria in FY 2026.

This year, the Environmental Policy Commission has zoomed out for an Eco-City view of climate action for Alexandria, as opposed to focusing on specific budget numbers for a single department. Overall, the EPC supports City climate action that advances decarbonization of buildings & transportation, improves climate resilience & adaptation, and focuses on environmental justice.

As such, the EPC FY26 budget letter identifies overarching City-Wide budget priorities to ensure the City is taking measurable action to meet climate goals and KPIs identified in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) 2040 and the Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (ECCAP).

To reinforce the importance of Eco-City Alexandria, the EPC also identifies example inter-departmental budget recommendations that are critical in helping meet climate targets. We have organized them in line with key Council priorities: *economic strength, community connection, eliminate community disparities, and housing opportunities*.

EPC City-Wide budget priorities:

1. **“Eco-City Approach” to Planning and Budgeting:** Establish a framework that applies a holistic climate lens to planning and budgeting, to include the CIP and Operating Budget, to ensure City investments and program execution help advance, and not hinder, climate goals
2. **Carbon Budget:** Explore the feasibility of a carbon budget for the City to better understand emissions reduction requirements to meet net zero. Proactive climate actions increase resilience from climate-related hazards and reduces future costs of climate change.
3. **Eco-City Internal Revolving Fund:** Establish an Eco-City Internal Revolving Fund that captures savings from climate action projects to fund future climate action projects
4. **Eco-City Coordinating Group:** Support through funding and staff time for the cross-department Eco-City Coordinating Group to ensure the City takes a coordinated approach to climate action

EPC Inter-departmental Eco-City budget recommendations:

Economic strength



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- Prioritize multi-hazard mitigation projects. According to the National Institute for building Sciences, every 1\$ invested in mitigation saves 13\$ in future costs. The more money spent on addressing climate disasters the more it will cost the City, thus increasing debt. Therefore, the faster we address climate impacts the more we will lower debt for the City in the future.
- Fully fund City building reinvestment and maintenance using the Capital Facilities Maintenance Program priorities as a guide, reducing future higher costs related to deferred maintenance.
- Provide the City Hall Market Square project with sufficient budget to achieve Eco-City leadership and net zero environmental goals, which long-term reduce operating and maintenance expenses.
- Increase the number of tree pruning crews contracted to prune additional trees for improved maintenance and increased lifespan of City trees.

Community Connection

- Fully fund staff the FY26 Environmental Action Plan (EAP) Update, which will reestablish the Alexandria's community-wide climate goals and reduce future climate-related costs
- Continue innovating on programs that encourage voluntary building and transportation decarbonization for residents and businesses
- Encourage more face-to-face contact (i.e. community meetings) as the big Flood Action projects get to the 90% design milestone
- Stand up a program that incentivizes the swap-out of gas leaf blowers for all-electric equipment, which will improve community air quality and reduce noise pollution

Eliminate Community Disparities

- Fund the Healthy Housing Initiative with a focus on systems change improvements to address key environmental health and housing conditions, such as indoor air quality.
- Conduct targeted data-driven hyper-local interventions to support key neighborhoods disproportionately affected by extreme heat, such as bus shelters to provide shade, refillable water bottle stations, increase the tree canopy, or add shades/cool pavement to open playgrounds.
- Keep the 10-year stormwater Capital Improvement Plan funded at \$260M level, ensuring investment in critical stormwater infrastructure at a time where systems are strained by weather events that result in higher flood volumes in shorter time-frame.
- Prioritize equitable transportation investments that increases multi-modal transit access and safe bike/pedestrian infrastructure for all Alexandrians.
- Continue exploring grants opportunities that facilitates the expansion of multi-modal options, such as recent grants to fund DASH lines 35/36.



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- Continue to establish and meet targets for EV sale, expand rapid charging access city-wide, and explore affordability options for charging stations. Fund City cost share for proposed E-Bike Program.
- Prioritize budget decisions that results in dedicated bus lanes, protected bikes lines, and safe pedestrian infrastructure, for Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School.
- Support investment in protected and connected bike lanes and the multi-use trail system to enhance public safety

Housing Opportunities

- Support funding for ARHA/Housing Alexandria to decarbonize existing and new buildings.
- Provide sufficient budget for the Long-Range Planning Work Program to incorporate Eco-City goals and decisions.
- Provide sufficient budget to support inclusion of sustainability and climate justice in the Housing Master Plan

Thank you, and please reach back with any questions or comments.

Best,
Marta Schantz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marta Schantz", written in a cursive style.

Chair, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

CC: Melissa Atwood, Ryan Freed, Jeremy McPike, Adriana Castañeda, Eric Keeler, Karl Mortiz, Dr. David Rose, Environmental Policy Commission members