

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
 FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
 Budget Questions & Answers**

March 25, 2026

Question:

What capacity is needed for staff positions and costs to update the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan?

Response:

Updating the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan would require significant resources, including consultant costs and commitment of staff time. Based on a review of recent Comprehensive Plan updates in comparable jurisdictions (see Table 1 below), a full update typically:

- Takes approximately 2–4 years to complete;
- Requires approximately \$2.0 million in consultant funding; and
- Requires internal staff resources across multiple departments, including planning transportation, housing, and economic development.

In addition to the direct and indirect costs of undertaking these comprehensive updates, communities often pause other Planning efforts while comprehensive updates are underway. The next two-year work plan is scheduled for Council consideration in early 2027. That update will provide a venue to scope and schedule this effort in consideration of other priority efforts, such as follow ups to the Duke Street Land Use Plan, strategic zoning ordinance modernization, and other Council objectives.

Alexandria’s Master Plan is composed of Small Area Plans and Citywide Topical Chapters (see Table 2 in the Appendix). Fifteen of the chapters were adopted in 1992. Eleven of the chapters have been adopted in the last 10 years, including 7 small area plans and 4 topical chapters. The sections of the Master Plan that would most benefit from a comprehensive update include:

- An overall city map that shows how the small area plans connect;
- The older sections of the Citywide chapters, particularly Goals and Objectives, Demographics and Statistics, Land Use, and Urban Design; and
- Continuing our ongoing efforts to revise the zoning system to facilitate quicker review of development projects.

Table 1.

Comparable Urban Master Plans	Duration	Consultant Cost
Austin, TX	4 years	\$2.0 million
Boulder, CO	3 years	\$1.8 million
Charleston City, SC	6 years	\$3.0 million
Durham, NC	2 years	\$1.5 million
Portland, OR	3 years	\$2.5 million

APPENDIX

Table 2.

Masterplan Sections	Date Adopted
Small Area Plans	
Plans Adopted after 1992	
AlexWest	2024
Arlandria-Chirilagua	2022
Braddock East	2008
Braddock Road Metro Station	2008
Eisenhower East	2020
Eisenhower West	2015
Four Mile Restoration	2006
Hunting Creek Area	2005
Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan	2009
Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area	2005
North Potomac Yard	2017
Oakville Triangle/Route 1	2017
Old Town North	2017
South Patrick Street Affordability Strategy	2018
Waterfront Plan	2012
Plans Adopted in 1992	
Fairlington/Bradlee	1992
King Street Metro/Eisenhower Avenue	1992
Northeast	1992
Northridge/Rosemont	1992
Old Town	1992
Potomac West	1992
Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens	1992
Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill	1992
Southwest Quadrant	1992
Taylor Run/Duke Street	1992
Citywide Topical Chapters	
Plans Adopted after 1992	
Alexandria Mobility Plan	2021
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Plan	2022
Green Building Plan	2026
Housing Master Plan	2013 (update in progress)
Open Space	2002
Sanitary Sewer	2021
Strategic Master Plan for Recreation, Parks and Cultural Amenities	2002
Urban Forestry	2009
Plans Adopted in 1992	
Demographics and Statistics	1992
Goals and Objectives	1992
Historic Preservation	1992

Land Use	1992
Urban Design	1992