

Goal 10: Sustainability

SUPPORT efficiency improvements and weatherization and **ADVANCE** green building practices to lower energy costs, make homes healthier, and build resilience to extreme temperatures and weather.

Green Building Plan

Approved by City Council on January 24, 2026, the Green Building Plan will govern developments requiring Development Site Plans (DSP) or Development Special Use Permits (DSUP), which covers new housing developments.

The Plan moves away from third-party certifications and sets standards for Energy Use Intensification (EUI), electrification, and renewable energy.

Environmental Action Plan 2040 (EAP)

Adopted by City Council in July 2019, the EAP is a road map to fulfilling Alexandria's commitment to lead by example as a thriving, sustainable community. The plan sets climate goals citywide, including a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 80-100% reduction by 2050. The plan also sets goals for energy, land use and open space, transportation, waste, water use, and air quality.

Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (ECCAP)

The ECCAP was updated in May 2023 to support the implementation of EAP 2040 and identify additional actions the City can take to meet EAP 2040 goals.

Key actions include: decarbonizing existing buildings, decarbonizing new buildings, carbon-free electricity generation, electrification of transportation, and landfill waste diversion.

Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)

The EPC advises and makes recommendation to City Council on matters related to the climate crisis, clean air, land use, noise pollution, and other environmental issues. A subcommittee of the EPC provided input to inform the sustainability recommendations.

How does housing sustainability impact Alexandrians?

| Environmental Issue | Impact | Sustainable housing |
|---|--|---|
|  <p>Increase in extreme heat: The number of days over 90 degrees is projected to triple by 2050</p> | <p>Risk to health from heat stroke and dehydration Increased cooling costs</p> | <p>Provides necessary cooling and shelter while also keeping utility costs down</p> |
|  <p>Poor indoor air quality, including exposure to toxins</p> | <p>Can trigger asthma and respiratory illnesses</p> | <p>Sustainable HVAC systems better filter out toxins out of the air</p> |
|  <p>Utility prices are expected to rise significantly in the region</p> | <p>Residents will pay more in utilities, which makes housing less affordable</p> | <p>Energy efficient systems, appliances, and materials can lower energy usage and</p> |

Recommendation #1

Support energy efficiency and weatherization retrofits for existing housing

Strategy: Use energy benchmarking, such as ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, in collaboration with the Office of Climate Action, to measure and track energy performance in existing multi-unit residential buildings against similar residential properties, to identify underperforming buildings for investment.

Strategy: In collaboration with partners, provide multi-unit residential property owners with technical assistance and financing resources and options, such as C-PACE, to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality.

Strategy: Support and promote programs that help condominium and other common interest communities to reduce energy costs and meet City climate goals through building upgrades, including higher-performing HVAC systems, improved insulation, and EV charging infrastructure.

Strategy: Provide support, through technical assistance or purchasing incentives, for the installation of solar and battery backup when feasible to provide backup power in times of power outages.

Strategy: Continue partnerships with organizations that provide rehabilitation and environmental education services, including energy efficiency and weatherization retrofits, that complement City programs and educational efforts.

Strategy: Continue to promote and improve access to existing energy efficiency and weatherization resources to individual homeowners by coordinating outreach, education, and assistance across City departments.

Recommendation #2

Advance green building practices in new residential development.

Strategy: Support the implementation and evolution of the Green Building Plan.

- Provide technical assistance to affordable housing partners to explore cost-effective best practices to incorporate green building and sustainability into their projects.
- Encourage early planning for systems, such as geothermal HVAC systems, that have a long life and significantly contribute to lower energy bills and improved comfort.
- Partner with the Commonwealth, Community Development Financial Institutions, and others financing entities to explore funding for designs that prioritize extremely high-performance designs, such as Passive House.

Strategy: Explore and promote innovative housing models and emerging materials and technologies that improve energy efficiency and reduce resource use, including manufactured, prefabricated, and modular housing construction.

Share your feedback with us here!

