

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 8, 2022

Question: What does the budget include to address the Climate Emergency declared by City Council in October 2019 including the recommendations of the Alexandria Planning Commission, Alexandria Transportation Commission, and Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission?

Response:

In their February 2, 2022 letter to City Council, the Alexandria Planning Commission, Alexandria Transportation Commission, and Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission recommended actions to address the 2019 Climate Emergency declaration, including: supporting sustainable development; new high-performance buildings and renewable energy; sustainable building renovations; sustainable transportation, land use, and housing; and prioritizing administration.

Sustainable Transportation, Land-Use and Housing:

The FY 2023 proposed budget includes implementing the Alexandria Mobility Plan, with investments in the 10-year CIP such as \$151 million for high-capacity transit, \$52 million for non-motorized transportation, and \$21 million in Smart Mobility. In addition, the City plans to spend \$45 million in City funding sources, along with seeking state and federal grants of \$60 million, for a total of \$105 million over 10-years to support converting DASH to an all-electric fleet by 2037. The City also recently approved (as part of FY 2021 Approved Operating Budget) a new over-hire, electric vehicle navigator position in the Department of General Services to serve as the City's point person on electric vehicle charging strategies. The City Manager proposed alternate budget options to support Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) outreach and marketing, feasibility study and evaluation for green building renovation incentive programs. Programs would include green bank and community choice aggregation program options, electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy implementation, accelerating electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and replacement of gas-powered small equipment.

Supporting Sustainable Development & Building Renovations:

The City continues advancing sustainable development efforts through existing policies and programs. This includes requiring environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality plans for the North Potomac Yard development, while the Landmark development requires an environmental sustainability plan, and the former Potomac River Generating Station's development site requires a carbon neutrality plan.

The Environmental Action Plan 2040's (EAP) Green Building chapter implements over time a specific list of 17 short-, medium- and long-term actions which included the 2019 Green

Building Policy update, which reflected the support of a broad set of stakeholders and was informed by expert technical analysis. The Green Building Policy's (GBP) inclusion within the broader EAP framework ensured that "new development" was not discussed in a vacuum, but in the context of all the initiatives that are necessary to achieve the EAP's goals. If the EAP's goals are to be revisited, the process should follow a similar path: with the full context, in partnership with stakeholders, and informed by experts. Moreover, if the GBP's approach is to be replaced, the new requirements should be those that maximize progress toward the EAP's greenhouse gases emission goals and should be structured so they do not need to be revisited on an ad-hoc basis.

The City continues to invest in stormwater quality improvement and flood-mitigation infrastructure (\$288 million over 10-years).

Prioritize Administration:

City staff is continually working to update and improve City policies (like the EAP) and programs. The City is hiring a Green Building Policy Program Manager (which is currently vacant although the City has been actively recruiting). The City continually makes various energy and climate change information available on its website.

In the Proposed FY 2023 – FY 2032 CIP the City has included a new project, Citywide Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In part, this project aims to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is available to support implementation of the City's fleet alternative fuel policy. Project funding, over the 10-year planning period, totals \$9.5 million.

New High-Performance Buildings and Renewable Energy:

The proposed Capital Improvement Program budget continues to include investment in City building energy efficiency projects. Specifically, the City plans to invest \$9.2 million, over the next 10-years, in Energy Management program projects and staffing to support energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and City-wide energy management efforts. This is a continuation of the City's sustained investment in Energy Management initiatives; funding totaling \$6.1 million has been previously appropriated by City Council to support this program. Additionally, the proposed CIP contemplates \$203.3 million in capital facility maintenance programs, which will support repairs or replacements of existing building systems and improve building performance.

Since 2015, the City has promoted SolarizeAlexandria to expand solar energy opportunities for Alexandria residents and businesses. The next SolarizeAlexandria campaign will be launched on April 1, 2022. The City also continues to offer the Solar Energy Equipment Tax Exemption for those installing solar energy systems on their building. The City's website makes available information on state and federal utility incentives, rebates, and other programs.

Additionally, the City is working with Dominion Energy to complete prior-year (\$1.75 million in FY 20-21) budget investments in LED streetlighting conversions.