



November 3, 2022

City Manager Jim Parajon
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Environmental Policy Commission recommendations for FY2024 budget

Dear Mr. Parajon:

On behalf of the Environmental Policy Commission, I am writing to share our recommendations regarding priorities for the City's fiscal year 2024 budget with a focus on items that will help Alexandria become a more equitable, sustainable city, thus protecting it for present and future generations.

On September 28, 2022, the City took a serious step to address the climate crisis and respond to its Climate Emergency Declaration made in 2019 by creating the Office of Climate Action. As the Mayor indicated in his remarks concerning the creation of the Office and its funding stream, we must focus on projects and programs that "move the needle" and not be distracted by "bright shiny objects" that do not. In line with this sentiment, we recommend the following:

1. Fully fund all the recurring actions identified in our June 27, 2022 letter to you detailing how to spend the \$1.85 MM set aside to address the crisis and as outlined as reoccurring charges during the City's presentation at the September Council hearing. The ***immediate need*** is to focus on how the City and community can take advantage of the federal funds and programs emanating from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.
2. We strongly urge the City to review Virginia Code Section 58.1-3221.2 *Classification of certain energy-efficient buildings for tax purposes* to determine how the City could use tax incentives to encourage more energy efficient new and highly retrofit buildings in the City. Moving toward net zero energy for both new and upgraded, rehabbed buildings have been identified by multiple existing regional climate plans as a "must have" to meet our 2030 GHG reduction target including our own in its just released Working Draft report. For the past 3-4 years, the EPC has consistently urged, even begged developers to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of their buildings and add renewable energy. To date we have received no commitments, only vague promises to consider our requests. Until the City has the authority to mandate such actions ("sticks"), we must look to "carrots" to encourage change. As the federal government demonstrated in the Inflation Reduction Act, the best and sometimes only incentive the government can offer to encourage change is money.

In closing, the EPC appreciates your consideration of our input and your on-going support for Eco-City Alexandria. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you for your attention.

Kathie Hoekstra

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Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

Cc: Julian Gonsalves, Assistant City Manager

Karl Moritz, Director of Planning and Zoning

Jeremy McPike, Director of General Services

Yon Lambert, Director of Environment and Transportation Services