

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2019
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR & MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: MARK JINKS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: PROPOSED CITY COUNCIL WORK PROGRAM FOR 2019

ISSUE: City Council Work Program for 2019

RECOMMENDATION:

That City Council:

- (1) Adopt the proposed 2019 Work Program as detailed on Attachments 3 and 4;
- (2) Direct the City Manager to docket these items generally within the timeframes noted, acknowledging that some scheduling changes may occur throughout the course of 2019; and
- (3) Direct the City Manager to docket as soon as practical a Resolution for Council consideration affirming the Council's endorsement of Regionalism as a City policy principle.

BACKGROUND:

On January 26, 2019, The Alexandria City Council held a retreat with the goal of discussing and developing the components of an annual City Council Work Program (Work Program) for 2019. The retreat was professionally facilitated by EJP Consulting Group, LLC and included a staff presentation on the City's multi-department long range planning work program and a series of exercises to identify goals and priorities and assist Council in prioritizing initiatives.

During the retreat the City Council identified policy work sessions, collaboration with City Boards & Commissions, strategic reviews of City Departments, as well as individual member priorities. These exercises culminated in a prioritization based on weighted averages among the members around the various topics. The prioritization results of the retreat Work Program are shown in Attachment #1. During the retreat, Council also individually documented priorities and areas of interest. These were collected and grouped by common themes as shown in Attachment #2.

DISCUSSION:

The City Council 2019 Work Program (Attachment #3) identifies the policies and initiatives of expressed interest by the Council during the retreat and includes the following elements:

- I. Schedule and receipt of Master Plan updates and major policy studies and initiatives (as proposed by the Multi-Departmental Long-Range Work Plan (LRWP));
- II. Schedule of recurrent Council obligations;
- III. Identification and schedule for joint work sessions;
- IV. Identification and schedule for policy work session; and
- V. Identification and schedule for department strategic reviews.

Following the retreat, staff has worked to refine and further develop the Work Program based on the discussion and prioritization results produced during the retreat. The proposed Work Program was developed with staff guidance to ensure the Council priorities were scheduled and distributed within the calendar year in a manner that is manageable for both the Council as well as staff. Sections III to V of the Work Program identify the joint work sessions, policy work sessions, and department strategic reviews that would occur during City Council Legislative Meetings. As no Legislative Meetings are scheduled during July and August, these months are blacked out on the calendar. A monthly calendar of the Work Program is also provided to depict the distribution of items throughout the year (Attachment #4).

During the process of developing the Work Program, two changes are recommended as shown:

- Consolidation and removal of the potential Department Strategic Review of the Alexandria Fire Department; and
- Removal of Department Strategic Review of Transportation & Environmental Services (TES) related to the 90-day Metro Shutdown.

Staff recommends the changes for the following reasons:

- Both department strategic reviews did not rank high on the Council prioritization results;
- An overview of the Fire Department can be included in the public safety department review which includes select Police, Fire, and Emergency Management issues; and
- In lieu of a department review designated in a single month, TES staff will provide updates to Council leading up to and monthly through the 90-day summer shutdown.

Upon approval, the proposed Work Program will serve as a roadmap to guide Council and staff work and be a “living document” subject to periodic amendment.

Timing of Work Program Topics: The proposed Work Program has been assembled melding a combination of Council priorities with the timing of when particular topics could be ready to schedule for Council discussion driving the proposed calendar

(Attachments 3 and 4). Since the timing of the Council docket topics is sometimes driven by outside forces, or issues unforeseen at the time of the Work Program's development, there may be at times a need to shift the timing of when some of these topics are docketed.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Work Sessions: When the Joint City Schools Facilities Task Force reported to Council in early 2018, they indicated that it was their judgment that the CIP (now totaling \$1.6 billion for its 10-year lifespan) did not get adequate attention because Council had to consider it at the same time as the annual operating budget. As a result, scheduling fall work sessions on the CIP when it is in the drafting stage is an issue to be scheduled for consideration by Council in the coming months. If Council decides to hold fall work sessions on CIP topics, they will need to be worked into the Council Work Program, albeit likely scheduled as standalone meetings and not as part of a Council meeting.

Regionalism: One of the priorities that Council identified in its retreat was that of "Regionalism". Regionalism is a broad term and can refer to two, or a few, neighboring jurisdictions working together or many jurisdictions working collaboratively for the common good. It also applies to localities working together with the state at a statewide level. The benefits of Regionalism are immense in that they have produced over time regional infrastructure such as the Metrorail system and VRE, coordinated homeland security planning and resourcing, public safety mutual aid agreements, as well as cleaner rivers and air. Regionalism and inter-jurisdictional collaboration were instrumental in bringing Amazon HQ2 to Northern Virginia. Unlike the other priorities, Regionalism is more of a principal and not something that a work program item or work session can easily be developed for. Regionalism is more a view, a lens or attitude that local governmental elected officials and staff can have when dealing with public policy problem solving on local issues such as transportation, the environment, public safety, housing and land use planning. Regionalism means considering and adopting the best policies for the region and not just those parochial ones that may be best for one's locality. Since Regionalism is more a principal, one way of addressing it would be for Council to adopt Regionalism as a guiding principle for Council and staff work. That could be accomplished through a Council adopted Resolution that staff could draft and bring forward for Council consideration. Staff has checked with COG staff and it appears that such a resolution in support of Regionalism would be a unique statement by a local governing body in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City Council Work Program Prioritization Results
2. City Council Retreat Council Priorities by Theme
3. Alexandria City Council 2019 Work Program Draft 2.14.2019
4. Alexandria City Council 2019 Work Program Draft 2.14.2019 (By Month)
5. Proposed Multi-departmental Planning Work Program

Staff: Richard Lawrence, AICP, Special Assistant to the City Manager