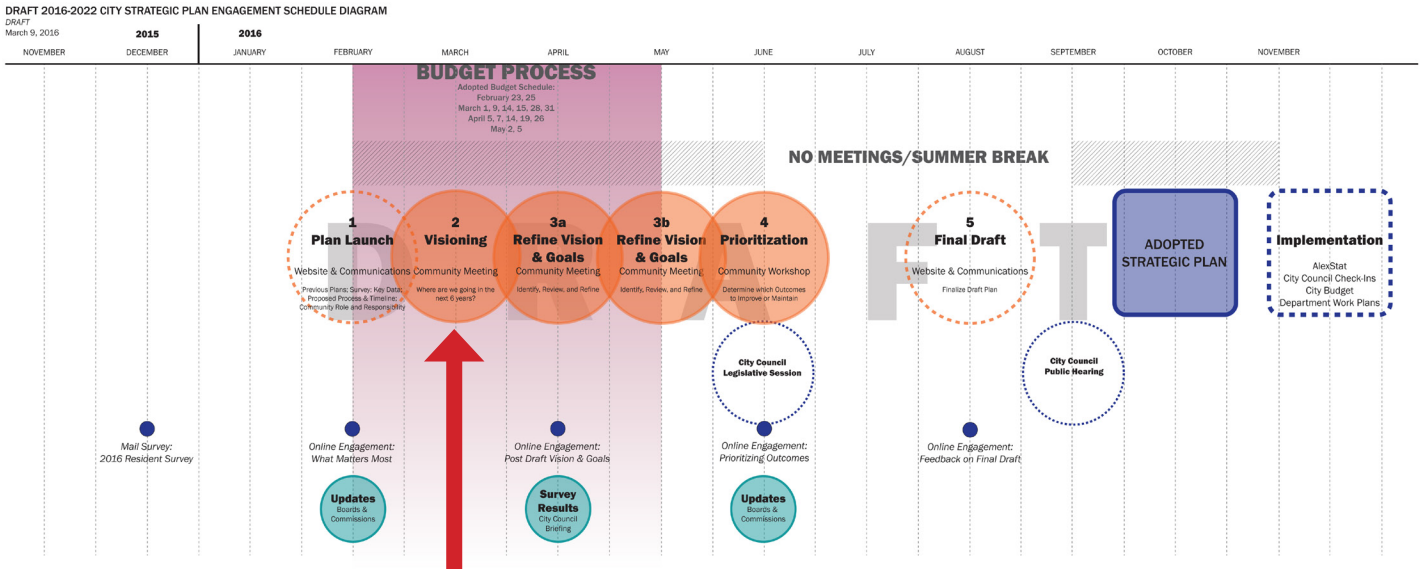
City Strategic Plan
Alexandria 2022

Community Visioning Meeting and AlexEngage Summary
March 2016

In the fall of 2015, City Council approved the general outline for a proposed spring 2016 process to draft an updated City Strategic Plan. The current Alexandria City Strategic Plan was intended to be in effect until 2015. The new Plan will use community input as the foundation to define the results of community values; communicate a clear direction to the public and City; include measures and targets to more easily track progress, share success, and identify and solve problems; set a six-year plan from FY 2017-2022 with a mid-point check-in/refinement in FY 2019; and align with the City's performance management system, Results Alexandria. The draft City Strategic Plan will be considered for adoption by City Council in the fall of 2016.

This report summarizes feedback received during the first community meeting as well as from the March online engagement opportunity.

Community Engagement Schedule



On March 14th, community members took part in small and large group activities focusing on issues and concerns about Alexandria over the last 5 years and how they would like the city to look in the next 5 years.

1. Small Group Activity: Alexandria today and over the last 5 years

Each table had a large easel-size sheet with questions about what community members value and issues that concern them about Alexandria today and over the past 5 years. The facilitator walked the group through each question and recorded responses.

Worksheet images from each small group follow on the succeeding pages:

City Strategic Plan Alexandria 2022

Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016

What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?

- Great walking community; convenient
- Bike-friendly
- affordable housing/mixed income communities
- responsive govt. services
- historic character
- close to City/urban - also diversity of activities for range of ppl.

What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?

- Metro reliability - access to work/weekend service
- traffic congestion - limited alternative routes when there are accidents - concerned about more growth = more traffic
- lack of broadband
- lack of bike connectivity - central traffic
- lack of affordable housing - workforce housing.
- lack of diverse/mid level job opportunities
- office/residential balance of uses

What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

- Braddock community - vibrant neighborhood/community strength/vitality. Neighbors helping each other.
- alternate transportation - More bike lanes
- up until 2016, there was solid political discussion + movement forward.

What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

- acrimony @ City Council (loss of respectful discourse)
- congestion (traffic) - Need infrastructure to keep pace
- Invest in Infrastructure - sewer, stormwater, broadband.

City Strategic Plan Alexandria 2022

Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016

What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?

Diversity (Age, ethnic/cultural)
"Right Size" - large enough for resources, small enough to be able to focus all funds
Values Civic Engagement
Livability Factors (vision, walkability)
Breadth of City Services
Citizenry Are Engaged (Grass Roots etc)

What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?

Density
Workforce Cannot Afford to Live in City "Disconnect"
Affordable Housing
Traffic (Recklessness/Cut-Thru)
Crime

What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

Value/Data-Driven Mindset (City Leadership)
Greater Alignment (Schools/City usave (Public Youth Families))
Libraries (Outreach)

What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

Misuse of Data
Landmark Mall
Traffic, Traffic, Traffic
Loss of Small Businesses
Parking
Reckless Driving
Cut-Thru/Commuters

City Strategic Plan Alexandria 2022

Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016

What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?

- Sense of community
- people care about what's going on
- historic nature
- walkable
- balance of uses (like not love)
- new metro station
- "small town"
- good school admin/teachers
- private schools

What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?

- equal distribution of resources between neighborhoods
- balance of uses (ie: business, redev., Landmark Mall)
- lack of positive change - example
- lack of investment in Parks + rec
- walking/walkability
- lack of lights on xwalks/pedestrian safety
- see business transformation happen faster (restaurants, convenience) mixed use
- Cost of doing business
- Be More business-friendly
- ↓ trend of office space
- school test scores

What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

- bike lanes
- bikeshare
- school facilities, TC Williams ~~Friendly~~ elementary schools have good rep.
- permit process (ie: building permits)
- More dog-friendly

What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

- traffic
- taxes ↑ allocation
- ↓ in parking in Old Town
- ↓ in affordable housing / ↑ in housing costs

City Strategic Plan Alexandria 2022

Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016

What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?

Location
History
Size (small)
Identity
Art/Culture
Easy travel
DASH Bus
Wildlife
Green Space

What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?

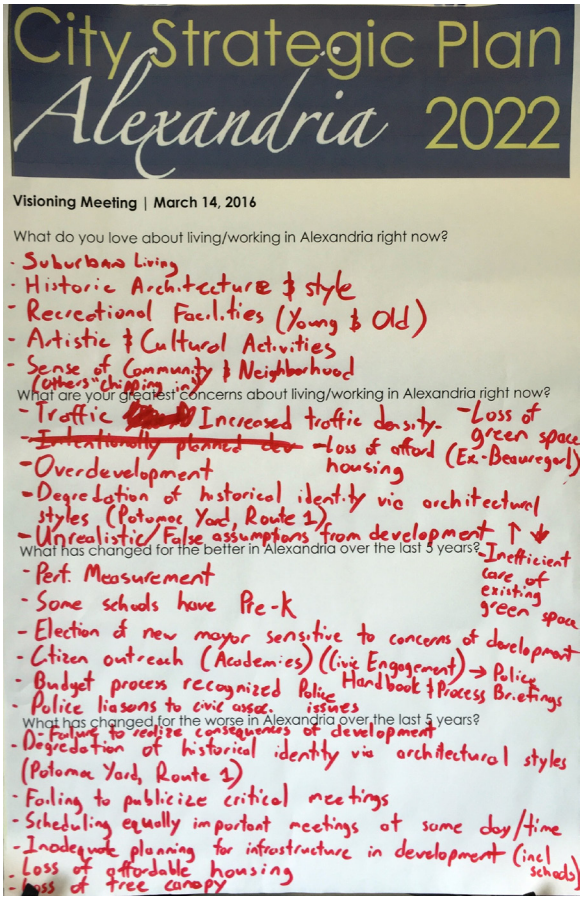
Traffic Management
Public transportation Planning
Density
Cultural Divide
Quality of life
Crime in Old Town
Historic Revision

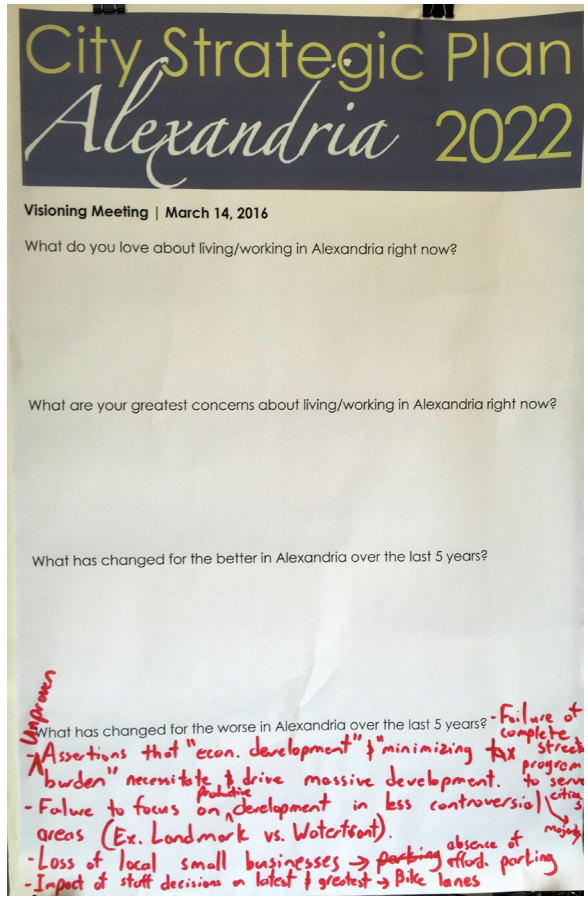
What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

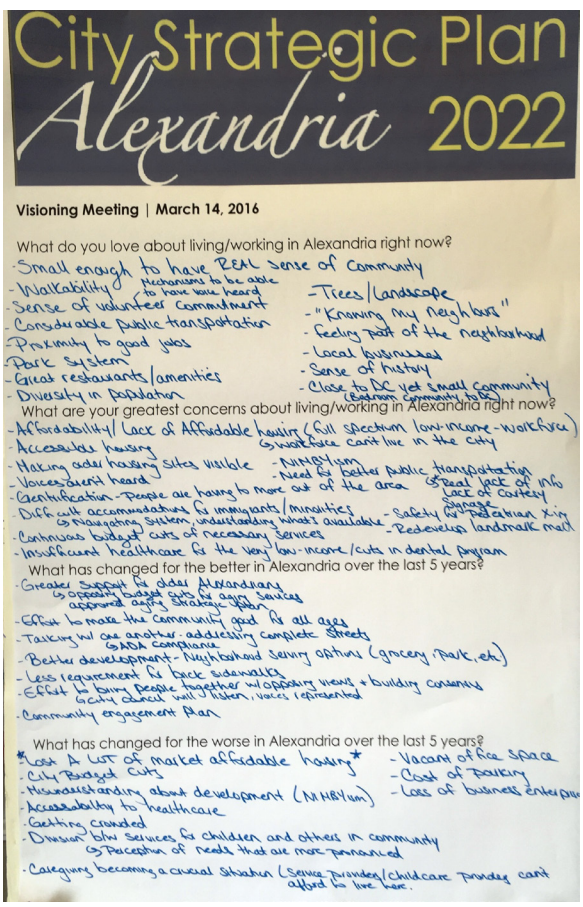
Community Engagement
Eco City Changes
Development

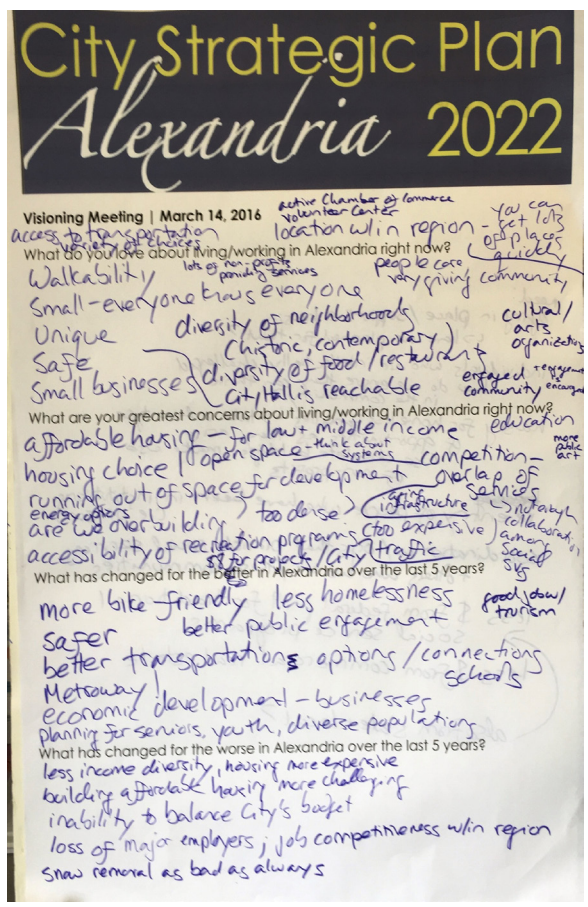
What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?

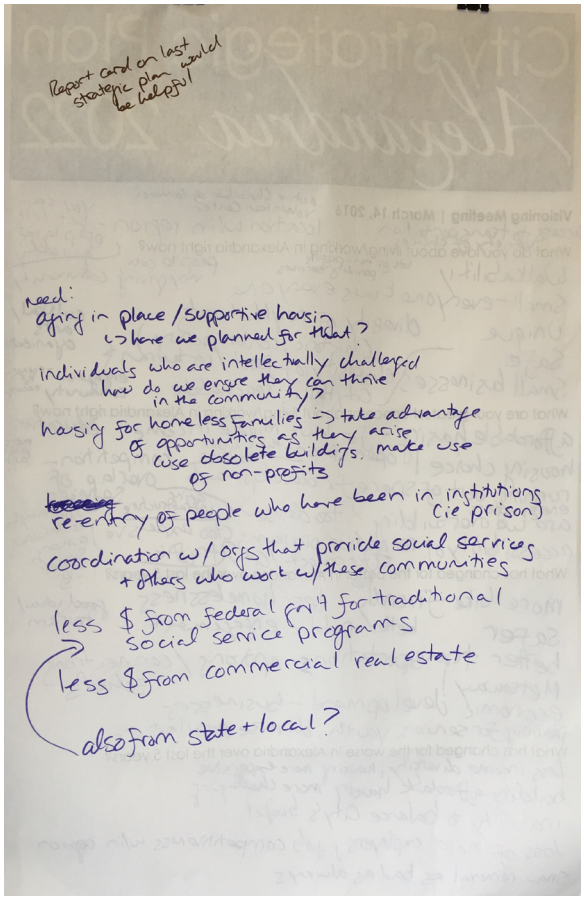
Traffic
Density
Unmanaged Growth
Infrastructure
Transparency

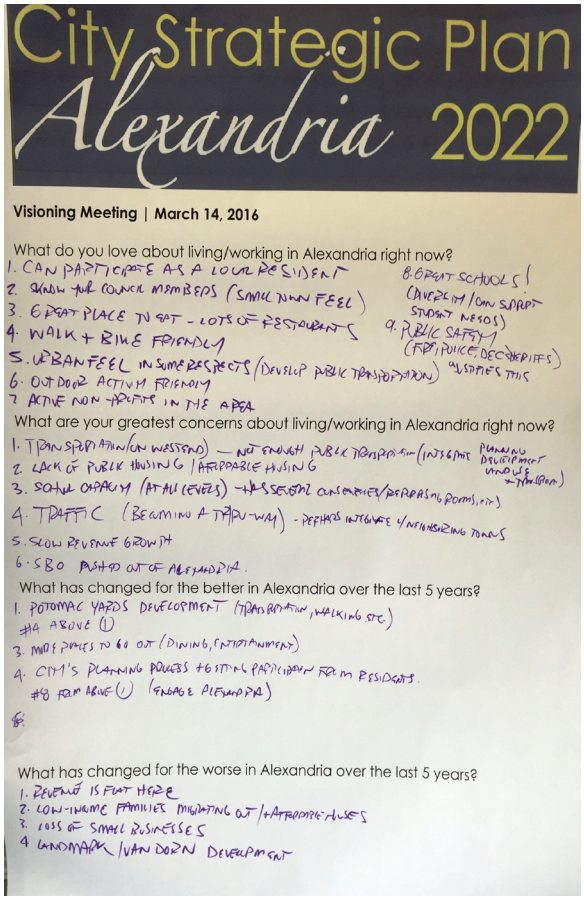

City Strategic Plan
Alexandria 2022
Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016
What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?
- Suburban Living
- Historic Architecture & style
- Recreational Facilities (Young & Old)
- Artistic & Cultural Activities
- Sense of Community & Neighborhood (others "chipping in")
What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?
- Traffic Increased traffic density
- Loss of green space
- Loss of afford housing (Ex.-Beauregard)
- Overdevelopment
- Degredation of historical identity via architectural styles (Potomac Yard, Route 1)
- Unrealistic/False assumptions from development
- Inefficient care of existing green space
What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
- Pert. Measurement
- Some schools have Pre-K
- Election of new mayor sensitive to concerns of development
- Citizen outreach (Academies) (Civic Engagement) → Police Handbook & Process Briefings
- Budget process recognized Police issues
- Police liasons to civic assoc.
What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
- Failure to realize consequences of development
- Degredation of historical identity via architectural styles (Potomac Yard, Route 1)
- Failing to publicize critical meetings
- Scheduling equally important meetings at same day/time
- Inadequate planning for infrastructure in development (incl schools)
- Loss of affordable housing
- Loss of tree canopy


City Strategic Plan
Alexandria 2022
Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016
What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?
What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?
What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
- Failure of complete streets program to serve citizens majority
- Unproven Assertions that "econ. development" & "minimizing tax burden" necessitate & drive massive development.
- Failure to focus on productive development in less controversial areas (Ex. Landmark vs. Waterfront).
- Loss of local small businesses → parking absence of afford. parking
- Impact of staff decisions on latest & greatest → Bike lanes


City Strategic Plan
Alexandria 2022
Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016
What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?
- Small enough to have REAL sense of Community
- Walkability
- Mechanisms to be able to have voice heard
- Sense of volunteer commitment
- Considerable public transportation
- Proximity to good jobs
- Park System
- Great restaurants/amenities
- Diversity in population
- Trees/Landscape
- "Knowing my neighbors"
- Feeling part of the neighborhood
- Local businesses
- Sense of history
- Close to DC yet small community (Bedroom community to DC)
What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?
- Affordability/Lack of Affordable housing (full spectrum low-income - workforce)
- Accessible housing
- Hiding older housing sites visible
- Voices aren't heard
- Gentrification - People are having to move out of the area
- Diff cult accommodations for immigrants/minorities
- Navigating system, understanding what's available
- Continuous budget cuts of necessary services
- Insufficient healthcare for the very low-income/cuts in dental program
- NIMBYism
- Need for better public transportation
- Safety for pedestrian x-ing
- Redevelop landmark mall
What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
- Greater support for older Alexandrians
- Effort to make the community good for all ages
- Talking w/ one another - addressing complete streets
- Better development - Neighborhood serving options (grocery, park, etc)
- Less requirement for back sidewalks
- Effort to bring people together w/ opposing views + building consensus
- Community engagement plan
What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
- Lost A LOT of market affordable housing
- City Budget cuts
- Misunderstanding about development (NIMBYism)
- Accessibility to healthcare
- Getting crowded
- Division b/w services for children and others in community
- Caregiving becoming a crucial situation (Service providers/childcare providers can't afford to live here.
- Vacant office space
- Cost of parking
- Loss of business enterprise


City Strategic Plan
Alexandria 2022
Visioning Meeting | March 14, 2016
What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?
Walkability
Small - everyone knows everyone
Unique
Safe
Small businesses
diversity of neighborhoods (historic, contemporary)
diversity of food/restaurants
City Hall is reachable
people care very giving community
cultural/arts organizations
What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?
affordable housing - for low + middle income
housing choice
open space
competition - overlap of services
running out of space for development
too dense
too expensive
traffic
accessibility of recreation programs
What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
more bike-friendly
less homelessness
better public engagement
safer
better transportation options/connections
schools
Metroway
economic development - businesses
planning for seniors, youth, diverse populations
What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?
less income diversity, housing more expensive
building affordable housing more challenging
inability to balance City's budget
loss of major employers; job competitiveness w/in region
snow removal as bad as always





Below is text from the worksheets above:

- **What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?**
  - Great walking community; convenient
  - Bike-friendly- bike lanes
  - Affordable housing/mixed income communities
  - Responsive government services
  - Historic character
  - Close to city/urban-also diversity of activities for range of people
  - Engaged community and engagement is encouraged

  - Diversity (age, ethnic/cultural)
  - "Right size"- large enough for resources, small enough to be able to touch all facets
  - Values civic engagement
  - Breadth of city services
  - Livability factors (history, walkability)
  - Citizenry are engaged (grassroots, etc.)

  - Sense of community
  - People care about what's going on
  - Historic nature
  - Walkable
  - Balance of uses (like not love)
  - New metro station
  - "Small town"
  - Good school admin/teachers
  - Private schools

- Location
- History
- Size (small)
- Identity
- Art/Culture
- Easy travel
- DASH bus
- Wildlife
- Green space

- Suburban living
- Historic architecture and style
- Recreation facilities (young and old)
- Artistic and cultural activities
- Sense of community and neighborhood (others “chipping in”)

- Small enough to have REAL sense of community
- Walkability
- Sense of volunteer commitment-mechanisms to be able to have voice heard
- Considerable public transportation
- Proximity to good jobs
- Park system
- Great restaurants/amenities
- Diversity in population
- Trees/landscape
- “knowing my neighbors”
- Feeling part of the neighborhood
- Local businesses
- Sense of history
- Close to DC yet small community (bedroom community to DC)

- Walkability
- Small- everyone knows everyone
- Unique
- Safe
- Small businesses
- Access to transportation
- Variety of choices
- Lots of non-profits providing services
- Diversity of neighborhoods (historic, contemporary)
- Diversity of food/restaurants
- City Hall is reachable
- Active Chamber of Commerce
- Volunteer center
- Location within region- you can get lots of places quickly
- People care, very giving community
- Cultural/arts organizations

- Can participate as a local resident
- Know your council members (small town feel)
- Great places to eat- lots of restaurants
- Walk + bike friendly
- Urban feel in some respects (develop public transportation)
- Outdoor activity friendly
- Active non-profits in the area
- Great schools! (diversity, can support student needs)
- Public safety (fire, police, DEC sheriffs)

- **What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?**
  - Metro reliability- access to work/weekend service
  - Traffic congestion- limited alternative routes when there are accidents- concerned about more growth = more traffic
  - Lack of broadband
  - Lack of bike connectivity- central city
  - Lack of affordable housing- workforce housing
  - Lack of diverse/mid-level job opportunities
  - Office/residential balance of uses

  - Density
  - Affordable housing
  - Crime
  - Workforce cannot afford to live in City "disconnect"
  - Traffic (recklessness/cut thru)

  - Equal distribution of resources between neighborhoods
  - Balance of uses (i.e. business, redevelopment, Landmark Mall)
  - Lack of positive change (i.e. Landmark Mall)
  - Lack of investment in parks and rec
  - Walking/walkability
  - Lack of lights on crosswalks/pedestrian safety
  - See business transformation happen faster (restaurants, convenience) mixed use
  - Cost of doing business
  - Be more business-friendly
  - Decreasing trend of office space
  - School test scores

  - Traffic management
  - Public transportation
  - Planning
  - Density
  - Cultural divide
  - Quality of life
  - Crime in Old Town
  - Historic revision

  - Traffic, increased traffic density
  - Over-development
  - Degradation of historical identity via architectural styles (Potomac Yard, Route 1)
  - Unrealistic/false assumptions from development
  - Loss of green space
  - Loss of affordable housing (Ex. Beauregard)
  - Inefficient care of existing green space

  - Affordability/lack of affordable housing (full spectrum low income workforce)- workforce can't live in the city
  - Accessible housing
  - Making older housing sites visible
  - Voices aren't heard
  - Gentrification- people having to move out of the area
  - Difficult accommodations for immigrants/minorities- navigating system, understanding what's available
  - Continuous budget cuts of necessary services
  - Insufficient healthcare for the very low income/cuts in dental program
  - NIMBYism
  - Need for better public transportation- *real lack of information, lack of courtesy, signage
  - Safety for pedestrian crossings
  - Redevelop Landmark Mall

- Affordable housing- for low + middle income
- Housing choice
- Running out of space for development
- Energy options
- Are we over-building? Too dense?
- Accessibility of recreation programs 9too expensive)
- $$ for projects/city
- Education
- More public art
- Open space- think about systems
- Aging infrastructure
- Traffic
- Competition- overlap of services, not enough collaboration among social services
- Aging in place/supportive housing- have we planned for that?
- Individuals who are intellectually challenged- how do we ensure they can thrive in the community?
- Housing for homeless families- take advantage of opportunities as they arise (use obsolete buildings, make use of non-profits)
- Re-entry of people who have been in institutions (i.e. prison)
- Coordination with organizations that provide social services and other who work with these communities
- Less $ from federal government for traditional social service programs, also from state and local programs?
- Less $ from commercial real estate

- Transportation (on West End)- not enough public transportation (integrate planning, development, land use, and transportation)
- Lack of public housing/affordable housing
- School capacity (at all levels)- has severe consequences (repurposing rooms, etc.)
- Traffic (becoming a thru-way)- perhaps integrate with neighboring towns
- Slow revenue growth
- SBO pushed out of Alexandria

- **What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?**
  - Braddock community- vibrant neighborhood/community strength/vitality- neighbors helping each other
  - Alternate transportation- more bike lanes
  - Up until 2016, there was solid political discussion and movement forward

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  - Value/data-driven mindset (city leadership)
  - Greater alignment (schools/city vis a vie children/youth/families)
  - Libraries (outreach)

  - Community engagement
  - Eco-City changes
  - Development

  - Bike lanes
  - Bikeshare
  - School facilities, TC Williams
  - Elementary schools have a good reputation
  - Permit process (i.e. building permits)

  - Performance measurement
  - Some schools have Pre-K
  - Election of new mayor sensitive to concerns of development
  - Citizen outreach (Academies) (Civic Engagement handbook and process)- Police briefings
  - Budget process recognized police issues
  - Police liaisons to civic associations

  - Greater support for older Alexandrians- opposing budget cuts for aging services, approved aging strategic plan
  - Effort to make the community good for all ages
  - Talking with one another- addressing complete streets, ADA compliance
  - Better development- neighborhood serving options (grocery, park, etc.)

- Less requirement for brick sidewalks
- Effort to bring people together with opposing views and building consensus, City Council will listen, voices represented
- Community engagement plan

- More bike-friendly
- Safer
- Better transportation options/connections
- Metroway!
- Economic development-businesses
- Planning for seniors, youth, diverse populations
- Less homelessness
- Better public engagement
- Food jobs with tourism
- Schools

- City's planning process and getting participation from residents (AlexEngage)
- Potomac Yards development (transportation, walking, etc.)
- Walking and bike friendly
- More places to go out (dining, entertainment)
- Great schools!

- **What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?**
  - Acrimony at City Council (loss of respectful discourse)
  - Congestion (traffic)- need infrastructure to keep pace
  - Invest in infrastructure- sewer, stormwater, broadband

- Misuse of data
- Traffic, traffic, traffic
- Parking
- Reckless driving
- Landmark Mall
- Loss of small businesses
- Cut thru/commuters

- Traffic
- Taxes and allocation
- Decrease in parking in Old Town
- Decrease in affordable housing/ increase in housing costs

- Traffic
- Infrastructure
- Density
- Unmanaged growth
- Transparency

- Failure to realize consequences of development
- Degradation of historical identity via architectural styles (Potomac Yard, Route 1)
- Failing to publicize critical meetings
- Scheduling equally important meetings at same day/time
- Inadequate planning for infrastructure in development (including schools)
- Loss of affordable housing
- Loss of tree canopy
- Unproven assertions that "economic development" and "minimizing tax burden" necessitate and drive massive development
- Failure to focus on productive development in less controversial areas (ex. Landmark versus Waterfront)
- Loss of local small businesses- absence of affordable parking
- Impact of staff decisions on latest and greatest- Bike lanes
- Failure of complete streets program to serve citizens majority

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- *lost a lot of market affordable housing*
- City budget cuts
- Misunderstanding about development (NIMBYism)
- Accessibility to healthcare
- Getting crowded
- Division between services for children and other in community, perception of needs that are more pronounced
- Caregiving becoming a crucial situation (service providers/childcare providers can't afford to live here)
- Vacant office space
- Cost of parking
- Loss of business enterprises

- Less income diversity, housing more expensive
- Building affordable housing more challenging
- Inability to balance City's budget
- Loss of major employers; job competitiveness within region
- Snow removal as bad as always

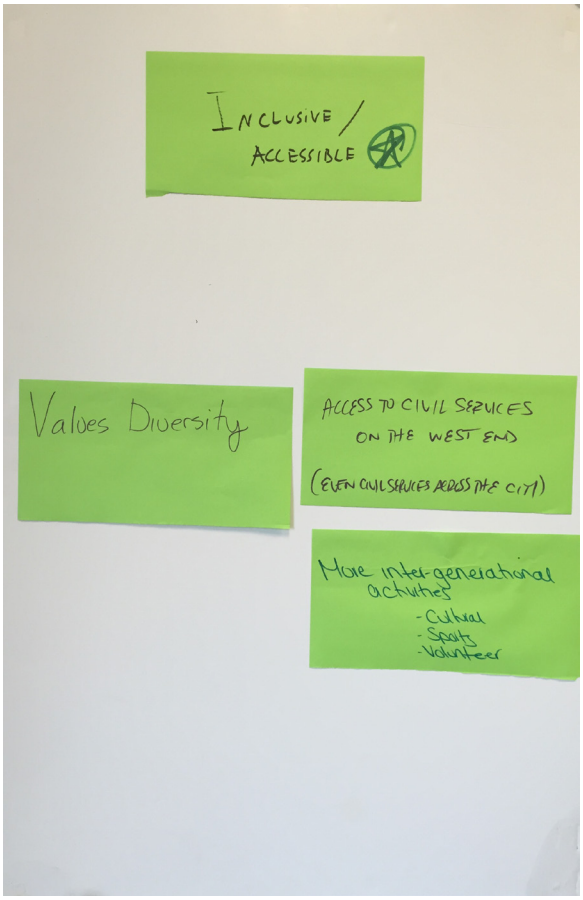
- Revenue is flat here
- Low-income families migrating out and affordable houses
- Loss of small businesses
- Landmark/Van Dorn development

2. Large Group Activity: What would you like Alexandria to look like in 2022?

A facilitator guided a discussion among all meeting participants to gather feedback on a collective vision for the future of Alexandria. Suggestions were written and grouped according to the following themes:

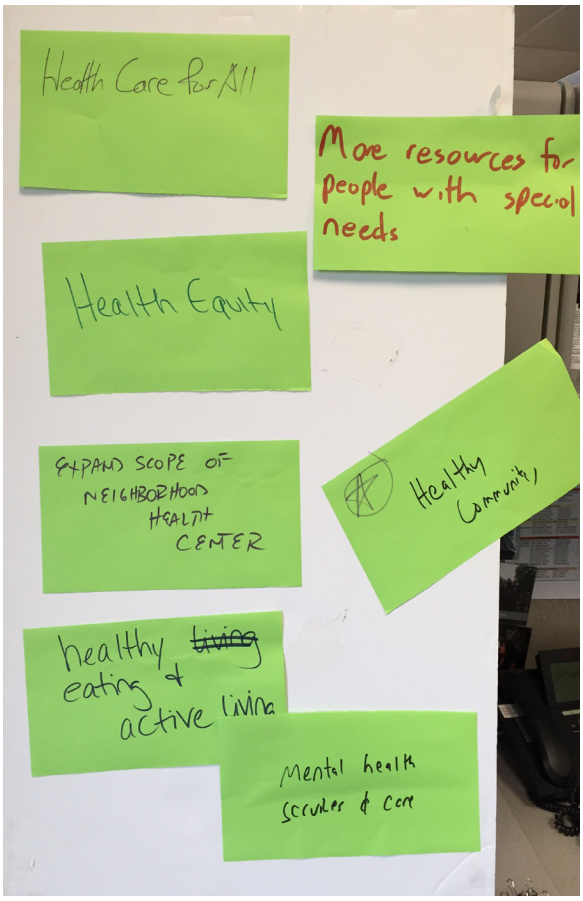
1. Inclusive/Accessible
2. Good Governance
3. Green Community
4. Healthy Community
5. Housing
6. Economic Development
7. Public Safety
8. Transit
9. Youth
10. Quality of Life

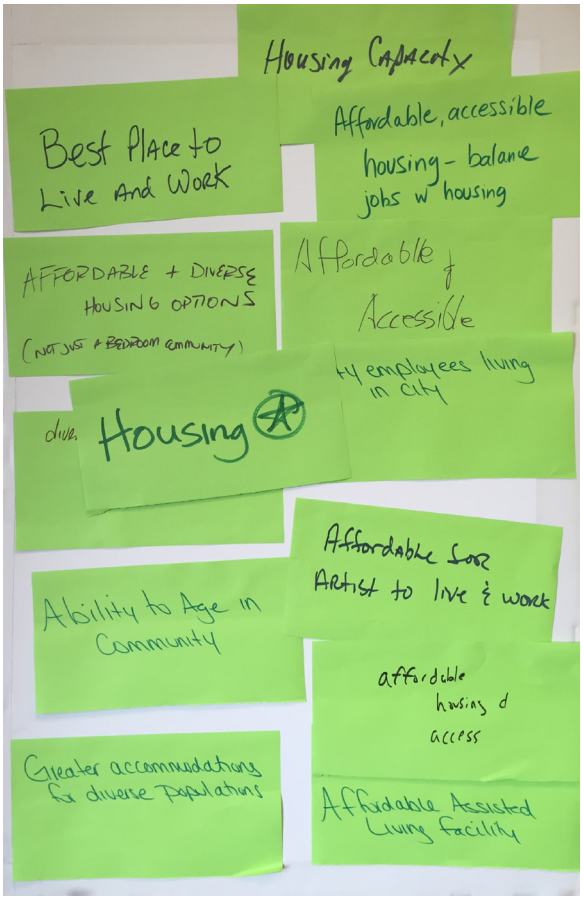
Board images from large group activity follow on succeeding pages:

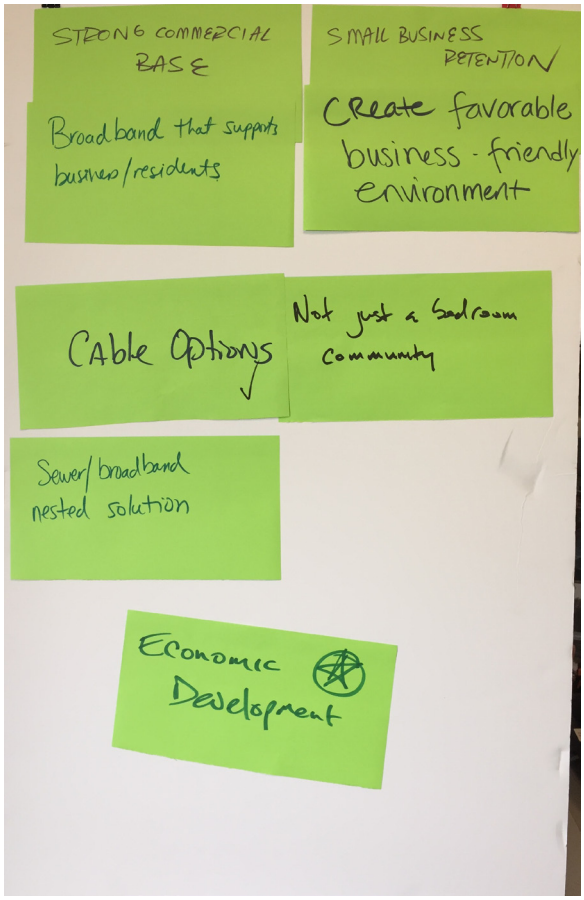

INCLUSIVE / ACCESSIBLE
Values Diversity
ACCESS TO CIVIL SERVICES ON THE WEST END
(EVEN CIVIL SERVICES ACROSS THE CITY)
More inter-generational activities
- Cultural
- Sports
- Volunteer

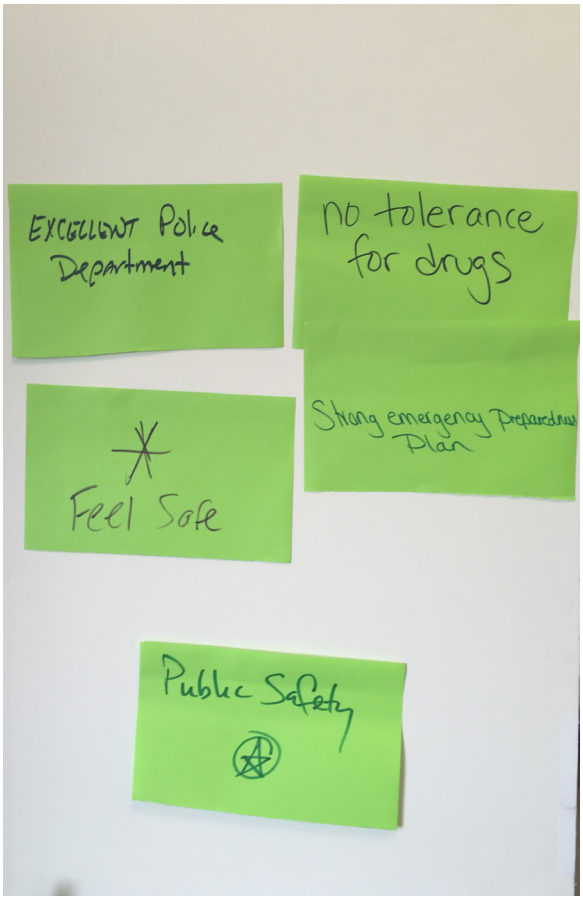
Good Governance
Multiple Modes of info
Multi Faith Organization To Address Community Issues
Greater Outreach
evident in all public decisions
Strong Volunteer and Philanthropic Organization
Voice of community is very evident in decisions
Values Civic Engagement
Stagnate residential taxes
More sustainable Solutions for the budget
OPEN & RESPONSIVE GOV'T
Sustained responsive City government
Debt Service Trend Reversed

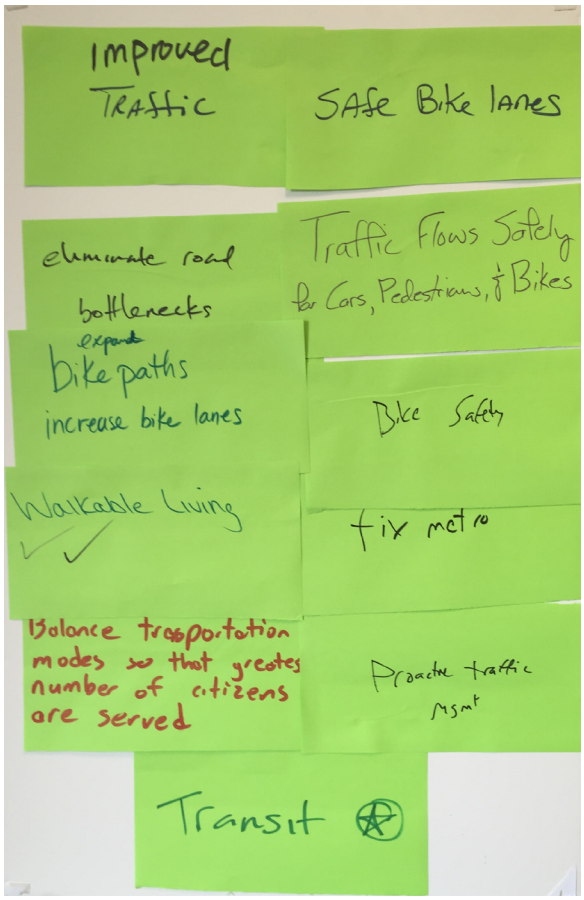
Green Building And Living Destination
Energy or conservation environment that supports healthy living and recreation
Stop polluting Potomac River w/ sewage overflow
Landmark Solution
Green Community
Environmentally Friendly
power plant

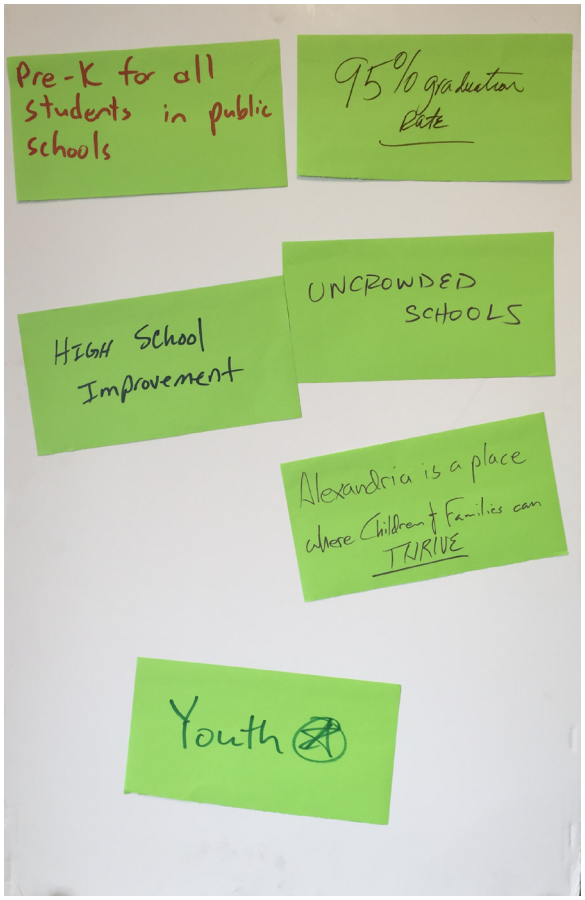

Health Care for All
More resources for people with special needs
Health Equity
EXPAND SCOPE OF NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER
Healthy Community
healthy eating & active living
Mental health services & care

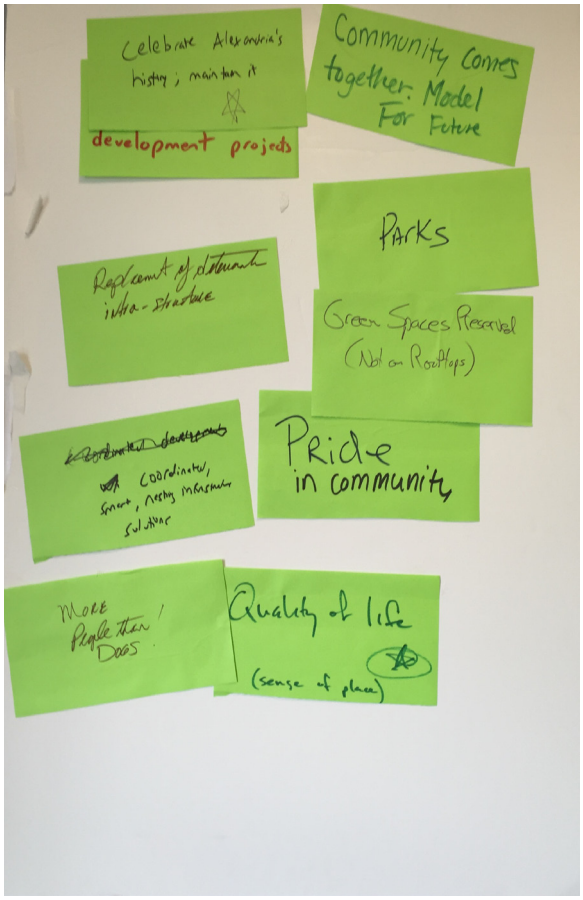

Housing Capacity
Best Place to Live And Work
Affordable, accessible housing - balance jobs w housing
AFFORDABLE + DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS (NOT JUST A BEDROOM COMMUNITY)
Affordable & Accessible
Housing
employees living in city
Ability to Age in Community
Affordable for Artist to live & work
affordable housing & access
Greater accommodations for diverse populations
Affordable Assisted Living facility


STRONG COMMERCIAL BASE
SMALL BUSINESS RETENTION
Broadband that supports business/residents
Create favorable business-friendly environment
Cable Options
Not just a bedroom community
Sewer/broadband nested solution
Economic Development


EXCELLENT Police Department
no tolerance for drugs
Feel Safe
Strong emergency Preparedness Plan
Public Safety


Improved Traffic
Safe Bike lanes
eliminate road bottlenecks
Traffic Flows Safely for Cars, Pedestrians, & Bikes
expand bike paths
increase bike lanes
Bike Safety
Walkable Living
fix metro
Balance trasportation modes so that greates number of citizens are served
Proactive traffic mgmt
Transit





Below is text from the worksheets above:

- **Inclusive/Accessible**
  - Values Diversity
  - Access to civic services on the West End (even civic services across the City)
  - More inter-generational activities
    - Cultural
    - Sports
    - Volunteer

- **Good Governance**
  - Multi-faith organization to address community issues
  - Evident in all public decisions
  - Voice of community is very evident in decisions
  - Stagnate residential taxes
  - Open and responsive government
  - Debt service trend reversed
  - Multiple modes of information
  - Greater outreach
  - Strong volunteer and philanthropic organizations
  - Values civic engagement
  - More sustainable solutions for the budget
  - Sustained responsive city government

- **Green Community**
  - Environmentally friendly
  - Power Plant
  - Green Building and Living Destination
  - Energy or environmental conditions that support healthy living and recreation
  - Stop polluting Potomac River with sewage overflow
  - Landmark solution √√

- **Healthy Community**
  - Healthcare for all
  - Health equity
  - Expand scope of neighborhood health center
  - Healthy eating and active living
  - Mental health services and care
  - More resources for people with special needs

- **Housing**
  - Housing Capacity
  - Best place to live and work
  - Affordable, accessible housing- balance jobs with housing
  - Affordable and diverse housing options (not just a bedroom community)
  - Affordable and accessible
  - Diversity in housing choices √
  - City employees living in the City
  - Ability to age in community

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3. AlexEngage - Online engagement opportunity February 26 - March 20, 2016

Community members were given the opportunity to provide feedback on what matters most to them about Alexandria and how they would like the city to be in 2022 through the City's online engagement forum, AlexEngage.

The total number of visitors to the AlexEngage topic page were 395; of those visitors, 236 provided responses.

A summary of feedback received during the online engagement period follows on the succeeding pages. For a detailed report of comments, please refer to AlexEngage or the project website.

- **What do you love about living/working in Alexandria right now?**
  - accessibility
  - architecture
  - amenities
  - character / charm
  - sense of community / small town feel
  - cultural opportunities
  - development
  - diversity
  - great neighborhoods
  - green space
  - historic / Old Town
  - location, proximity to dc, chesapeake, shopping
  - quality of life
  - restaurants
  - safe
  - schools
  - services
  - walkability

- **What are your greatest concerns about living/working in Alexandria right now?**
  - affordability
  - architecture
  - congestion
  - cost of living
  - development (over) / loss of character
  - loss of diversity
  - environment
  - historic preservation
  - housing
  - infrastructure
  - loss of open space
  - parking
  - safety / crime
  - schools
  - loss of small business
  - sustainability
  - taxes
  - traffic

- **What has changed for the better in Alexandria over the last 5 years?**
  - civic engagement policy
  - bike network
  - development
  - environmental focus
  - housing
  - parks
  - restaurants
  - security
  - schools
  - services
  - transit
  - walkability / bicycle infrastructure
  - waterfront

- **What has changed for the worse in Alexandria over the last 5 years?**
  - affordability
  - architecture
  - civic engagement discouraged despite new policy
  - congestion
  - concrete jungle
  - development / density
  - green space
  - historic preservation
  - infrastructure
  - parking
  - services
  - taxes
  - traffic

- **What would you like Alexandria to look like in 2022?**
  - affordable
  - better architecture
  - economically stable
  - great schools
  - greater sensititivye for diversity
  - greater west end development
  - green / renewable energy sources
  - incrased public transit
  - investment in infrastructure
  - large tree canopy
  - less traffic
  - maintain historic characters
  - more amenities (recreation)
  - more parks
  - more pedestiran and bike friendly
  - responsible development / sensible growth
  - safe
  - small businesses thriving

Next Community Meeting:

Saturday, April 9, 2016, 10:00am - 12:00pm, George Washington Middle School Library, 1005 Mt. Vernon Avenue