

ALEXANDRIA'S PRINCIPLES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Respect – *participants demonstrate civility and open-mindedness in words and actions*

Easy Participation – *accessible government, clarity and flexibility about how to participate*

Early Involvement – *the community is involved in framing issues before conclusions are drawn*

Inclusiveness and Equity – *all stakeholders are informed and empowered to participate*

Meaningful Engagement – *open and unbiased process to solicit and incorporate input*

Mutual Accountability – *community and government share in responsibility to inform/engage*

Transparency – *open, timely access to clear information at each step in the process*

Evaluation – *performance assessment, quantifying participant feedback, lessons learned*

Sustained Collaboration – *long term partnership between the City government and community*

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH ALEXANDRIA'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Establish the Civic Engagement Principles and supporting processes as set forth in the Alexandria Handbook for Civic Engagement ('Handbook') to guide the City's effort to involve the public in the development of public policy, program and planning decisions in the City of Alexandria.

WHEREAS, the City Council in 2012 charged the City Manager's office with launching a civic engagement initiative to gather information and develop and implement strategies for improving and expanding civic engagement in Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, the primary goal of the civic engagement initiative, What's Next Alexandria, is to improve the quality of Alexandria's public participation process so that members of the community are actively, constructively, and meaningfully involved in the public decisions that affect the city; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between community members and Alexandria city government leads to better results than either working separately, and as an outcome of that partnership, results better stand the test of time; and

WHEREAS, effective civic engagement:

- Improves understanding of the value of working together to solve common problems;
- Creates and encourages a fully informed public that knows how to participate and embraces commonly held Principles of Civic Engagement and the processes that support full participation;
- Increases public participation, representative of the City's demographic diversity;
- Ensures active leadership by the public in organizing their community to participate in civic engagement processes and help shape broader goals of the City;
- Inspires members of the community to endorse decisions and actions by the City because decisions clearly reflect public participation in a transparent process;
- Stems from consistency across City departments, Boards and Commissions in the application of civic engagement principles and process;
- Results in confidence in the equity of the public decision making process; and

- Reinforces mutual trust between the community and City government; and

WHEREAS, the attached Handbook and Principles for Civic Engagement serve as the foundation for public participation in Alexandria and is intended to guide the city government and members of the community in how Alexandrians can best participate in public dialogue for decisions that shape the city;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA:

That the City Council of Alexandria, Virginia:

1. Establish as City policy the concepts contained in the attached Civic Engagement Principles and process framework specified in the Handbook for the purpose of more meaningfully engaging the community in the development of City policies, plans, and projects. It is the purpose of this policy to ensure that public participation in the formulation of City public policy shall be welcomed and encouraged. Further, it is the purpose of this policy to ensure all members of the Alexandria community, regardless of station or circumstance, shall have the opportunity to express their views on matters of public policy and that their views are given fair and respectful consideration.
2. Ensure that prior to the adoption of public policies which will significantly impact the quality of life of members of the community, (1) the nature of the proposed policy or action has been fully disclosed, (2) the public has had reasonable opportunity to be informed, consulted, involved, or to collaborate on the proposed action, and (3) the decision-making body has had sufficient opportunity fairly to consider and reflect before acting.
3. Charge the City Manager's Office with providing oversight to ensure that expectations are clear, request for resources are adequate to meet expectations, and staff is held accountable for results;
4. Charge the City Manager's Office with directing city departments to conduct ongoing assessments of civic engagement performance by project as stipulated in the Handbook, including but not limited to:
 - Assessing community evaluation of performance vis a vis each principle;
 - Assessing the organizing and communication process;
 - Reviewing and assessing use of the Framework;
 - Assessing project accountability and transparency;
 - Managing resources to provide appropriate facilitation training to staff involved in civic engagement work throughout the City; and
 - Incorporating internal and external evaluation methods for further measurement and insights into the quality of the civic engagement process as a whole and each department's performance in pursuit of the Civic Engagement principles.
5. Direct the Civic Engagement Interdepartmental Working Group to advise city departments, the City Manager, and City Council in these assessment processes and to develop a proposed plan for future annual review of civic engagement performance in collaboration with the community.
6. Through this resolution establish binding city policy.

ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL, WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR, JANUARY 25, 2014