

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Alexandria Housing Activities March 2021

FY2022 Budget City Manager Mark Jinks presented his [proposed FY22 budget](#) to City Council on February 16. The proposal incorporates a 2 cent real estate tax rate reduction, no service reductions, no major program reductions and no employee reductions in force. It includes \$2 million for targeted new operating investments and will fund 100% of ACPS' approved CIP and 100% of the ACPS Superintendent's proposed operating budget. To learn more about revenues and expenditures for the **Office of Housing's** programs and activities, visit the [budget section on Liveable, Green and Prospering pp 13.29 - 13.4](#). We note that the budget proposal retains the dedicated revenue of 0.6 cents of the real estate tax for housing. Additionally, the loss of revenue from the 1 percent meals tax dedicated to affordable housing (due to the pandemic) has been made up with general tax dollars in the CIP. The Council work session for Housing is **March 24 at 7:30 PM** [Livable, Green and Prospering Session](#).

Arlandria/Chirilagua Small Area Plan The City continues to work on updating the [small area plan for Arlandria/Chirilagua](#) which it began pre-pandemic in the summer of 2019. This area of the City is home to Latinx households and minority-owned businesses and has a unique cultural significance in the Del Ray/Arlandria area. It is also located within walking distance of [Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus](#), the new [Potomac Yard metro station](#) and less than a mile from [Amazon's HQ2](#). This proximity creates a risk of displacement for residents and the market-affordable housing located there. Slides 9-10 of the plan presentation identify ways to continue to [engage the Chirilagua community](#) as the City develops strategies to address the housing needs for households who earn 30% or less of the area median income ~ \$45,000 for a family of four.

Redeveloping Landmark Mall [The Redevelopment of Landmark Mall](#) has been on the City's planning agenda for almost 20 years, but now a viable plan is coming together. The four million square foot proposal includes creating a medical campus with a new and expanded Alexandria INOVA Hospital relocated there. Build-out for this site will be over a 10 to 15 year time span, but advisory group meetings are taking place now. A [recent presentation to the Eisenhower West Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group](#) provides a timeline for upcoming community engagement sessions. These sessions are virtual and open to the public. The [March 25 session will focus on sustainability and affordable housing](#). We'll be following the discussions for this site and report back to you.

Former GenOn Power Plant Another area of planning focus is the [closed GenOn power plant site](#) on the Potomac River in North Old Town. [Melissa Schrock, a spokesperson for developer Hilco says](#) "the plan is to develop the parcel as an urban, mixed-use development with housing. Representatives of the development weren't shy about saying that the upcoming plans for Potomac Yard and Amazon's HQ2 also play a role in how the site will ultimately shape up." A rough timeline for redevelopment calls for deconstruction starting in 2023, with a DSUP plan for infrastructure submitted around the same time. The first phase of development would begin after remediation in early 2023. Construction would be sometime between 18-31 months after that. As housing will be a significant component of this development, we'll be watching this space.

Winter 2021 Alexandria Mobility Plan (AMP) Project is "a critical transportation plan for the city's future, serving the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors as the region grows and as new technology changes the way we think about transportation and mobility." You can review the [comprehensive summary of those findings](#) shared at a recent Advisory Committee meeting. It is anticipated that the draft Mobility Plan will be released in the March/April timeframe for public review and comment. To keep abreast of the plan's progress, go to the City's [mobility website](#) for eNews announcements, flyers, and social media posts on when the draft document and short feedback form are made available.

Broadband for All The City's [Commission on Information Technology](#) has multiple responsibilities, including (but not limited to): reviewing the proposed information technology plan; making recommendations to and advise the city government in the formulation and implementation of information and telecommunications policy, and promoting citizen participation in the formulation of such policy; identifying new information and telecommunications technologies; evaluating their potential for enhancing the delivery of services by the city, and identifying the resources and legislative changes required to implement these technologies. We are pleased to see that a digital equity plan is a recurring item on the Commission's agenda.

The pandemic has brought the necessity of broadband for all into sharp relief. Too many low income households cannot afford even the most basic broadband plan. They also lack the appropriate devices for online learning, telehealth access, and securing information about critical assistance for rent relief and other programs providing support. Broadband access is a digital justice issue that disproportionately impacts Black and Brown residents in the City. In a recent newsletter, the **Benton Institute for Broadband & Society** wrote about "[Broadband Solutions for Pandemic Problems](#)". To learn the lessons that the pandemic has taught us, affordability and accessibility of broadband must be included in our advocacy for more inclusive, equitable communities.

Virginia General Assembly The 2021 Virginia General Assembly session resulted in significant gains for housing that translate into additional resources for developers of affordable housing in Alexandria. The approved biennium budget includes \$70.7 million in FY21 and \$55 million in FY22 for the state Housing Trust Fund. This is a quantum leap from where the state fund was just a few years ago with an allocation of \$12 million. Another significant achievement was creation of the new State Housing Opportunity Tax Credit, funded at \$15 million for ten years. It's a modest start for a program meant to complement the federal Low Income Housing Tax

Credit, but supporters will be back to advocate for expanding the program next year. Kudos to **Virginia Housing Alliance**, our statewide partner, for leading this year's successful advocacy campaigns. Clearly advocacy works!! The budget also provides \$20 million in FY21 and \$34 million in FY22 for permanent supportive housing. The **Virginia Poverty Law Center** has been tracking important legislative protections addressing eviction prevention during this GA Session. Check their [website](#) for the latest updates.