



FY 2018 – 2020
**STRATEGIC
PLAN**

January 2018





January 8, 2018

RE: FY 2018-2020 Strategic Plan - City of Alexandria

Dear Mayor Carlson,

I am pleased to present this FY 2018-2020 Strategic Plan and Summary Report to the City of Alexandria. The plan reflects the organization's commitment to strategic thinking, measurable results and the delivery of quality services.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist the City with this project. The City Council, staff and partners are to be commended for your interest, dedication and collective effort.

I also want to thank City Administrator Marty Schultz and Assistant City Administrator Karin Tank for their help and support during the process.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig R. Rapp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "R".

Craig R. Rapp
President

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Strategic Plan Summary 2018-2020.....	2
Mission, Vision, Values.....	3
Strategic Planning Process.....	4
Internal and External Analysis-SWOT.....	8
Strategic Issues and Challenges.....	9
Defining Priorities, Outcomes, Targets.....	11
Implementing the Vision: Strategic Initiatives.....	14
Strategic Planning Participants.....	16
Appendix: SWOT Analysis	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

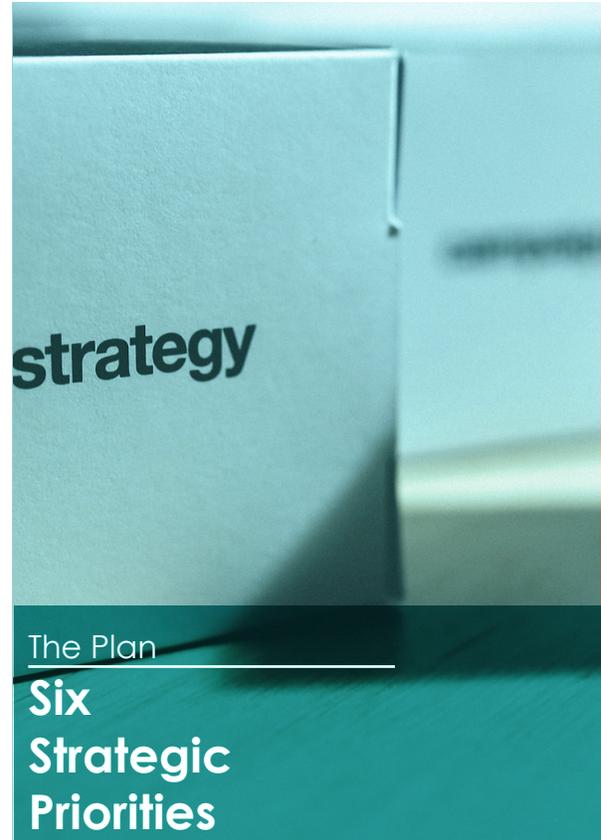
From September through December 2017, the Alexandria City Council, senior leadership team, and key collaborators, engaged in a strategic planning process. The process resulted in a strategic plan covering 2018-2020.

The plan consists of six **strategic priorities** – the issues of greatest importance to the City over the next three years. Associated with each priority is a set of **desired outcomes**, **key outcome indicators**, and **performance targets**, describing expected results and how the results will be measured. The plan also includes strategic initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve the targeted outcomes.

The planning effort began with an examination of the operating environment via a SWOT analysis and a staff review of current conditions. On September 28-29, the City Council, senior leadership team and key partners held strategic planning sessions. They developed a set of priorities, key outcomes and performance targets, and refined the organization's vision and mission.

Based upon those priorities, the City's senior staff met November 1 to develop a set of strategic initiatives and preliminary action steps.

The strategic priorities, key outcome indicators, and strategic initiatives are summarized here and on the following page.



strategy

The Plan

Six Strategic Priorities

- 1 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
- 2 LONG TERM PLANNING
- 3 SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4 ECONOMIC VITALITY
- 5 SAFE COMMUNITY
- 6 COMMUNICATIONS

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2018-2020

City of Alexandria

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	DESIRED OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Operational Excellence <i>An effective, high performing, accountable organization</i>	A well-trained, high-performing organization	-Certifications -IDP's	- 100% required credentials achieved; - 80% of IDP targets met	a) Training & professional development program b) Deploy ERP c) Reframe budget process/document -priorities d) Implement strategic reporting framework
	Effective and efficient organizational processes	Processing time: financial, HR	-50% decrease in processing time-payroll and A/P; -50% reallocation of budget dev activities	
	Strengthened financial position	-Bond rating -Fund balance	-Maintain AA+ bond rating -Maintain general fund balance per policy	
	An accountable organization	-Strategic Plan results -Self-evaluation results	-70% strategic plan targets met/on schedule -City Council: >7 on 1-10 self-evaluation scale	
Long Term Planning <i>A visionary road map for strategic development</i>	Clear, long term vision for growth	Project milestones	Vision plan completed 12/2018	a) Comprehensive Plan update b) Establish coordinated growth plan
	A well-planned region	Jurisdictional plan alignment	A collaboratively developed and approved regional plan	
Sustainable Infrastructure <i>Maintain and improve infrastructure</i>	Full funding of current infrastructure maintenance & replacement needs	-Replacement schedule compliance -Maintenance plan compliance	Full finding strategy adopted by 12/2020	a) Comprehensive infrastructure plan & funding strategy b) Establish internal financing policy (inter-governmental) c) Establish external (private developers) financing policy
	Adequately address future infrastructure needs	-Capital plan compliance -Funding strategy	10-year Capital expansion plan and funding strategy adopted by 12/2020	
Safe Community <i>Provide a safe, secure community</i>	A stable, well-trained public safety workforce	-Turnover rate (minus retirements) -Voluntary separations	>85% retention rate -100% meet required training standards	a) Comprehensive recruitment/retention strategy b) Continue & expand proactive enforcement, education and outreach program c) Explore body camera policy and implementation d) Launch online permit, inspection management system (PIMS)
	Properties are well built and maintained	-Code violations -Automated permitting program	10% increase in code enforcement cases closed 10% reduction in processing and development review process	
	Enhanced emergency preparedness & response	Body cam training and implementation	Police body cams implemented 100% by 1/2020	
Economic Vitality <i>Promote a strong, resilient economy</i>	Workforce housing meets community needs	Workforce housing units	150 New workforce housing units by 12/2020	a) Housing study update b) Create & implement workforce strategy c) City of Alexandria competitive assessment d) Create economic development task force
	Successful recruitment and retention of businesses	-Success rate, recruitment -Turnover rate	-No net loss of existing business; -One New manufacturing businesses; -One new => sq. ft. retail businesses; -Five new businesses	
	Sufficient workforce to meet community needs	-Applicants -Job openings	Reduce job openings by 50% between 1/2018 and 12/2020	
Communications <i>Enrich community pride, engagement, and relationships</i>	Improved trust & engagement throughout the organization	-Culture survey results -Self-evaluation results	- =>7 on 1-10 scale-employee survey and Council self-evaluation	a) Communications strategy b) Community Engagement strategy c) Employee engagement survey and plan d) Robust recruitment/orientation plan for Council/Commissions e) Council-staff trust building process, tools, policies f) Core relationship/partnership building with community stakeholders
	Enhanced public understanding of the City	Community feedback results	50% or greater indicate that they have a good understanding of city programs and services	
	Strong, vital regional relationships & partnerships	Collaboration effectiveness results	-Collaboration effectiveness targets established -One new project via partnerships	

OUR WHY

To make Alexandria the place you choose.

OUR HOW

Providing efficient and effective delivery of quality services and strategic investments that improve the quality of life for all its citizens and visitors and the sustainable management of city resources.



OUR VALUES

GROWING COMMUNITY

Alexandria will grow to accommodate new residents, visitors and employees while maintaining the community's quality of life.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a sustainable community that limits its impact on natural resources and on the local, regional and global environment.

COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a well-integrated city with a transportation system that encourages connectivity and multimodal options, public facilities and neighborhoods.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a welcoming, vibrant, diverse and culturally rich community with opportunities for positive social interaction and inclusive of all citizens.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Alexandria encourages and provides for healthy, active living through public policies and community design.

ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Alexandria encourages and facilitates meaningful community participation, collaboration, leadership and is efficient, open and responsive to community needs and concerns.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is a process that helps leaders examine the current state of the organization, determine a desired future state, establish priorities, and define a set of actions to achieve specific outcomes. The process followed by the City of Alexandria was designed to answer four key questions. The process is divided into a development phase and an implementation phase. The full process is depicted below.



DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION

Where we are now?

Where we are going?

How will we get there?

What we will do?

- Scan the environment
-
- Conduct internal and external analysis (SWOT)
-
- Develop Strategic Profile
-
- Identify Strategic Challenges

- Define our Mission
-
- Articulate Core Values
-
- Set a Vision
-
- Establish Goals
-
- Identify Key Intended Outcomes

- Develop Initiatives
-
- Define Performance Measures
-
- Set Targets and Thresholds
-
- Cascade throughout organization

- Create Detailed Action Plans
-
- Establish Accountability: Who, What, When
-
- Identify Success Indicators
-
- Provide Resources

Effective Governance – Establishing a Foundation for High Performance

The City Council and senior staff began the strategic planning process on September 28 with a review of the results of the StrengthFinders assessment recently completed. The group's differences were noted, and put in the context of developing a high-performance Council-staff team and organization. They discussed how teamwork will be fostered, and working relationships going forward. The group made a commitment to use the information as the basis for on-going discussions within and between staff and Council.

The session continued with a discussion about the future vision for the city. The facilitator presented the concept of “Start with Why”, which challenged the participants to articulate the unique characteristics of Alexandria — using emotional responses, rather than statistics or slogans. This resulted in a wide variety of responses that formed a picture of why Alexandria is an attractive place for residents, businesses and visitors. The group then reviewed the current vision statement and determined it needed modification. A variety of sample vision statements were presented for comparison. A discussion ensued regarding a future vision for the city — ultimately leading to the identification of key characteristics:

For the good of the whole

Balance – live, work, play, prosper

Quality of life – just like home

Community

Family

Safe

Clean

Pride

Heathy

Friendly – connected

We have everything we need, but still a small town

Choice – want to be here

Planned, progressive

High quality

Where all citizens are heard/valued

Take the high road

Collabrative – energy, vibrancy

Potential

Visionary

This was converted to a draft vision statement, that was ultimately changed to “Our Why.”

“To make Alexandria the place you choose.”

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

ASSESS CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

- Strength Finders
- Culture, Value Proposition
- Scan the Environment
- SWOT Analysis
- Draft Vision, Mission, Values

SET PRIORITIES, TARGETS

- Two Days – Sept 28 - 29
- Operating Environment
 - Environmental Scan
 - Internal SWOT
- Challenges, Priorities
- Outcomes, Targets

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

- Management Review – Nov 1
- Initiatives Development
- Action Plans
- Vision, Mission Refined
- Council Review, Amend

Setting Direction, Value Proposition and Organizational Culture

Following the StrengthFinders and Vision discussion, the group turned its attention to the City's operating environment. First up was a review of the organization's culture and value proposition. The culture and value proposition are important because they provide the foundation for City's mission and the way in which services are delivered and strategic direction is set. Four core cultures and three value propositions (including strengths and weaknesses) were presented and summarized:

Three Value Propositions

Operational Excellence

They adjust to us

Product/Service Leadership

They 'ooh and 'ah' over our products/services

Customer Intimacy

We get to know them and solve their problems/satisfy their needs

Four Core Cultures

Control Culture

Strengths: Systematic, clear, conservative

Weaknesses: Inflexible, compliance more important than innovation

Competence Culture

Strengths: Results oriented, efficient, systematic

Weaknesses: Values can be ignored, human element missing, over planning

Collaboration Culture

Strengths: Manages diversity well, versatile, talented

Weaknesses: Decisions take longer, group think, short-term oriented

Cultivation Culture

Strengths: Creative, socially responsible, consensus oriented

Weaknesses: Lacks focus, judgmental, lack of control



The Council and staff engaged in a discussion regarding the organization's value proposition- coming to a consensus that **operational excellence** is the primary value proposition - with a secondary emphasis on **customer intimacy**. The group agreed to continue this discussion to determine whether any changes were necessary to achieve their desired state or equilibrium amongst the three value propositions, and to align the supporting culture.

The group then reviewed the City's current mission and values statements to ensure alignment with the culture and value proposition, and with the "Why statement". After a brief review, the group agreed that the mission statement needed updating but that the value statements were appropriate. The draft mission statement and current values statement:

MISSION STATEMENT (OUR HOW)
 Providing efficient and effective delivery of quality services and strategic investments that improve the quality of life for all its citizens and visitors and the sustainable management of city resources.

Organizational Values

GROWING COMMUNITY

Alexandria will grow to accommodate new residents, visitors and employees while maintaining the community's quality of life.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a welcoming, vibrant, diverse and culturally rich community with opportunities for positive social interaction and inclusive of all citizens.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a sustainable community that limits its impact on natural resources and on the local, regional and global environment.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Alexandria encourages and provides for healthy, active living through public policies and community design.

COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Alexandria is a well-integrated city with a transportation system that encourages connectivity and multimodal options, public facilities and neighborhoods.

ENGAGED COMMUNITY

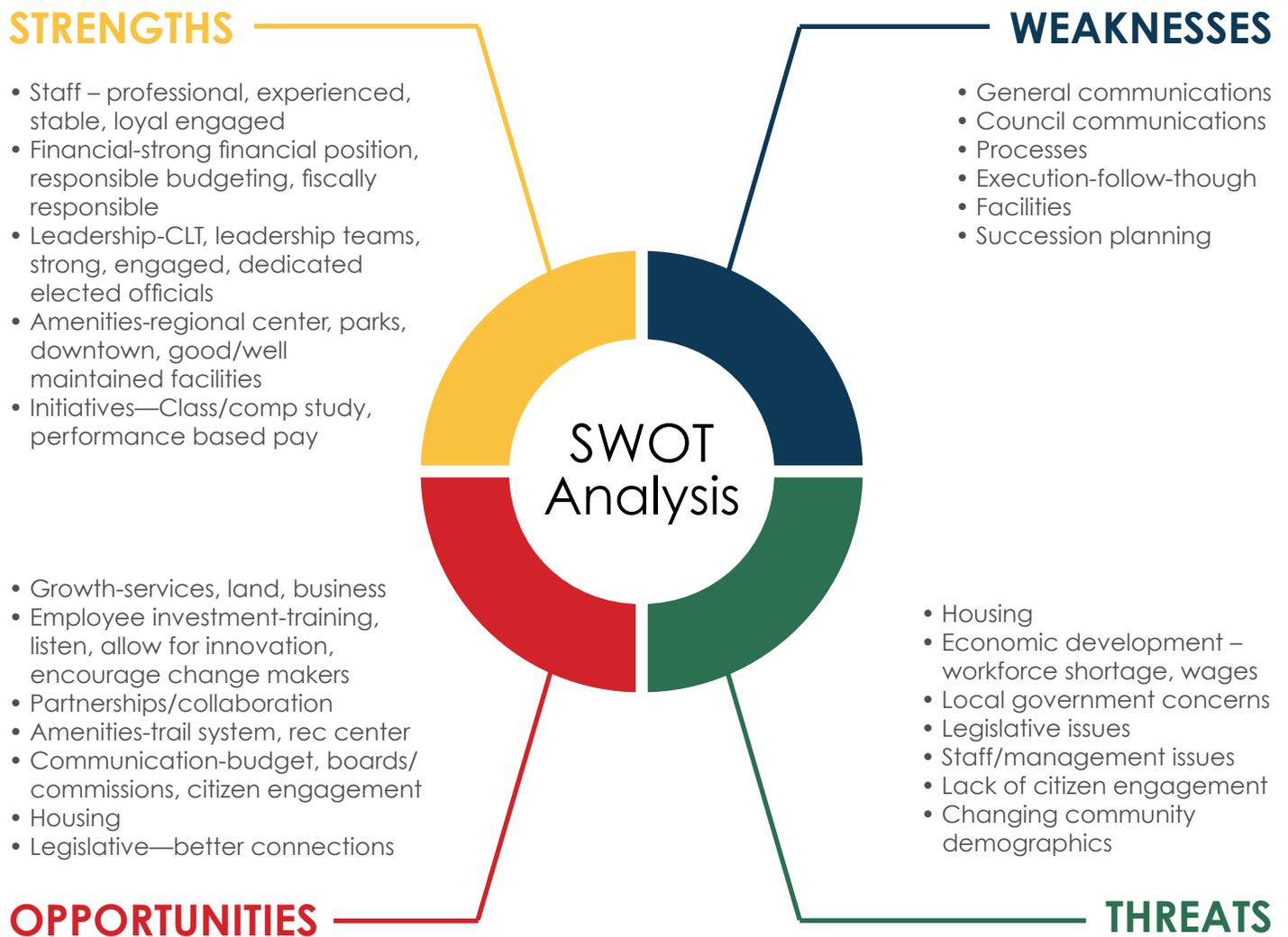
Alexandria encourages and facilitates meaningful community participation, collaboration, leadership and is efficient, open and responsive to community needs and concerns.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



Internal and External Analysis – SWOT

Following the culture, value and mission discussion, the leadership team continued the process of assessing the operating environment. This was done via a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis: a process that examines the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment. To facilitate this, a SWOT questionnaire was distributed to the City Council and senior staff in advance of the planning session. The SWOT process revealed the most frequently mentioned characteristics in each area:





Meaningful community participation, collaboration and leadership.

The group compared **strengths** with **opportunities** and **weaknesses** with **threats**, to determine which opportunities would maximize strengths, and which weaknesses would be exacerbated by the threats. Below are the results of this analysis.

STRENGTHS LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

(Make good things happen)

- Financial – growth, housing
- Staff – employee investment
- Leadership – partnerships, communication, legislative connection
- Amenities – attract people, tourism

WEAKNESSES EXACERBATED BY THREATS

(Keep bad things from happening)

- Operational inefficiency
- Poor communication
- Housing-affordable
- Wages –low
- Workforce
- Incivility

Following this exercise, the group examined the results, and then engaged in additional brainstorming to identify a broad set of issues and challenges facing the community.



ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- Operational inefficiency
- Poor communication
- Housing-affordable
- Wages –low
- Workforce
- Incivility

Based upon the issues and challenges identified, the group debated where the City's focus should be over the next three years. After significant discussion, six strategic priorities emerged, and were adopted.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

LONG TERM PLANNING

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

SAFE COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY

COMMUNICATIONS

Defining the Priorities

To clarify the meaning of each priority, the group identified key concepts which were used to create guidance, and ultimately, definitions.

1. Operational Excellence

Workforce development, process improvement, execution, succession planning, programming.

2. Long Term Planning

Vision, comprehensive plan, growth/annexation, systems, collaboration and partnerships.

3. Sustainable Infrastructure

All underground infrastructure, city facilities, amenities including natural, streets and stormwater, internet/fiber.

4. Safe Community

Policing, crime, Fire, hidden poverty, security, emergency preparations.

5. Economic Vitality

Housing, workforce recruitment, business recruitment, business expansion, business retention.

6. Communication

Incivility, internal, council-staff, community engagement, collaboration - partnerships.

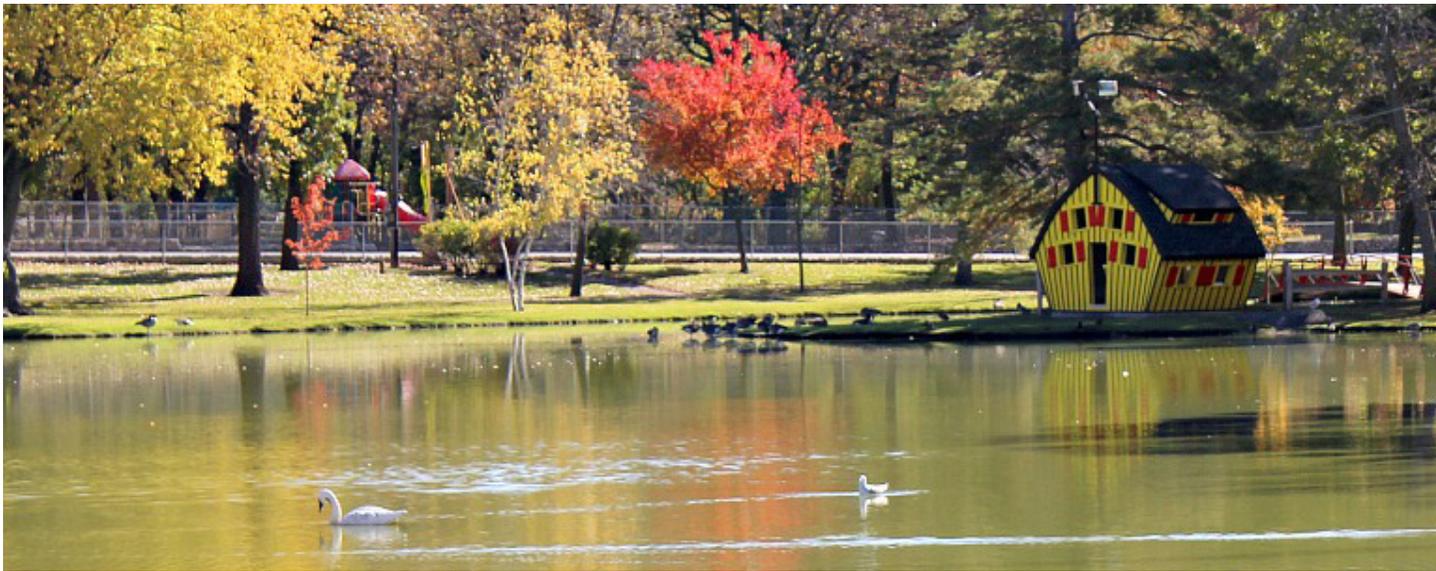
Key Outcomes, Indicators, and Targets by priority

With definitions in place, the group determined the most important outcomes to be achieved for each priority, defined Key Outcome Indicators (KOI's), and developed Performance Targets. KOI's define progress toward desired outcomes. Performance Targets define successful outcomes, expressed in measureable terms.

The alignment created between priorities, outcomes and targets is important, not only for clarity, but also for maintaining a disciplined focus on the desired results.

Operational Excellence

- a. Outcome:** A well-trained, high performing organization
KOI: Certifications, IDP's
Target: 100% required credentials achieved, 80% of IDP targets achieved
- b. Outcome:** Effective and efficient organizational processes
KOI: Processing time: financial, HR processes
Target: 50% decrease in processing time-payroll and A/P; 50% reallocation of budget development activities
- c. Outcome:** Strengthened financial position
KOI: Bond rating, fund balance
Target: Maintain AA+ bond rating, Maintain general fund balance per policy
- d. Outcome:** An accountable organization
KOI: Strategic plan targets met; self-evaluation results
Target: 70% strategic plan targets met/on schedule; City Council: 7 or greater on 1-10 self-evaluation scale



Long Term Planning

- a. Outcome:** Clear, long term vision for growth
KOI: Project milestones
Target: Vision plan completed by 12/2018
- b. Outcome:** A well-planned region
KOI: Jurisdictional plan alignment
Target: A collaboratively developed and approved regional plan

Sustainable Infrastructure

- a. Outcome:** Full funding of current infrastructure maintenance and replacement needs
KOI: Replacement schedule compliance, maintenance plan compliance
Target: Full funding strategy adopted by 12/2020
- b. Outcome:** Adequately addressing future infrastructure needs
KOI: Capital plan compliance, funding strategy
Target: 10-year capital expansion plan and funding strategy adopted by 12/2020

Safe Community

- a. Outcome:** Stable, well-trained public safety workforce
KOI: Turnover rate (minus retirements) voluntary separations
Target: >85% retention rate, 100% meet required training standards
- b. Outcome:** Properties are well built and maintained
KOI: Code violations, Automated permitting program
Target: 10% increase in code enforcement cases closed; 10% reduction in processing and development review process
- c. Outcome:** Enhanced emergency preparedness and response
KOI: Body cam implementation
Target: Police body cams implemented 100% by 1/2020

Economic Vitality

- a. Outcome:** Workforce housing meets community needs
KOI: Workforce housing units
Target: 150 New workforce housing units by 12/2020
- b. Outcome:** Successful recruitment and retention of businesses
KOI: Success rate-recruitment, turnover rate
Target: No net loss of existing business, One new manufacturing businesses; one new =/> sq. ft. retail business; five new businesses-other
- c. Outcome:** Sufficient workforce to meet community needs
KOI: Applicants, job openings
Target: Reduce job openings by 50% between 1/2018 and 12/2020



Communications

- a. Outcome:** Improved trust and engagement throughout the organization
KOI: Culture survey results; self-evaluation results
Target: 7 or greater on a 1-10 scale-employee survey and Council self-evaluation
- b. Outcome:** Enhanced public understanding of the City
KOI: Community feedback results
Target: 50% or greater indicate that they have a good understanding of city programs and services
- c. Outcome:** Strong, vital regional relationships and partnerships
KOI: Collaboration effectiveness results
Target: Collaboration effectiveness targets established; One new project via partnerships

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

ASSESS CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

- Strength Finders
- Culture, Value Proposition
- Scan the Environment
- SWOT Analysis
- Draft Vision, Mission, Values

SET PRIORITIES, TARGETS

- Two Days – Sept 28 - 29
- Operating Environment
 - Environmental Scan
 - Internal SWOT
- Challenges, Priorities
- Outcomes, Targets

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

- Management Review – Nov 1
- Initiatives Development
- Action Plans
- Vision, Mission Refined
- Council Review, Amend

Implementing the Vision: Developing Strategic Initiatives and Action Plans

To successfully address the strategic priorities and achieve the intended outcomes expressed in the performance targets, it is necessary to have a focused set of actions, including detailed implementation steps to guide organizational effort.

The City of Alexandria will accomplish this through a set of strategic initiatives. Strategic initiatives are broadly described, but narrowly focused activities that are aligned with the priorities, and targeted to the achievement of outcomes expressed in the Targets. On November 1, senior staff met to identify strategic initiatives. Following this session, staff teams worked to develop detailed action plans for each initiative.

The following are strategic initiatives developed by staff, refined by the City Council.

Operational Excellence

- Training and professional development program
- Deploy ERP
- Reframe budget process/document—priorities
- Implement strategic reporting framework

Long Term Planning

- Comprehensive Plan update
- Establish coordinated growth plan

Sustainable Infrastructure

- Comprehensive infrastructure plan & funding strategy
- Establish internal financing policy (inter-governmental)
- Establish external (private developers) financing policy

Safe Community

- Comprehensive recruitment/retention strategy
- Continue and expand proactive enforcement and outreach program
- Explore body camera policy and implementation
- Code enforcement



Economic Vitality

- Housing study update
- Create and implement workforce strategy
- City of Alexandria competitive assessment
- Create economic development task force

Communication

- Communications strategy
- Community Engagement strategy
- Employee engagement survey and plan
- Robust recruitment/orientation plan for Council/Commissions
- Council-staff trust building process, tools, policies
- Core relationships/partnership building with community stakeholders

Strategic Planning Participants

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of many individuals. The City Council led the way, taking time out their schedules to commit to long-term thinking. They defined a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the citizens, businesses and stakeholders with whom they partner and serve.

The City's senior staff supported the City Council and offered challenges to conventional thinking. In addition, key collaborators from partner organizations made valuable contributions to the final product.

City Council

Sara Carlson, Mayor
Dave Benson, Councilmember
Bobbie Osterberg, Councilmember
Bob Kuhlman, Councilmember
Todd Jensen, Councilmember
Virgil Batesole, Councilmember

Senior Staff, Partners

Marty Schultz, City Administrator
Karin Tank, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director
Rick Wyffels, Chief of Police
Kent Scott, Police Captain
Jane Blade, Finance Director
Reed Heidelberger, City Assessor
Sara Stadtherr, Communications Coordinator
Lynn Timm, Building Official
Mike Weber, Community Development Coordinator
Jeff Karrow, Fire Chief
Andy Mellgren, Liquor Operations Manager
Bill Thoennes, Public Works Division Director – Parks & Facilities
Dane Bosl, Public Works Division Director – Streets & Stormwater
Vinnie Hennen, Runestone Community Center Manager
Tom Jacobson, City Attorney
Al Crowser, ALP General Manager
Jeff Hess, Alexandria HRA Director
Tim Schoonhoven, City Engineer
Nicole Fernholz, Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission Executive Director
Bruce Nelson, Alexandria Lake Area Sanitary District Executive Director
Todd Roth, Alexandria Airport Manager

APPENDIX

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- teamwork
- common mission and values
- transparency
- ethics
- tradition and culture
- organized
- no one joined for the money
- income producing department - liquor stores
- movement on leadership development
- leadership team meetings - good start
- wonderful parks
- great downtown
- Staff stability- key staff leaders are experienced in their roles
- Council support for consistent levy increases to match needs, no wild swings in tax levies
- Council support for staff professional development
- The high tax capacity of the City and fiscal stewardship has led to a low tax rate
- The City has a AA+ bond rating
- Interdepartmental trust is at a high level, particularly between the Police Department and City Hall
- The development of monthly Leadership Team meetings has helped to build staff relationships
- Customer Service: Staff are dedicated public servants who tend to go above and beyond to provide - - - high- quality service
- Certainly experienced staff
- Professional exemplified staff - Marty
- Great union negotiation
- Young and energized staff
- Vision mission training
- Performance based pay
- Willingness to grow and learn and adapt
- Leadership teams
- Constant work on staff management and leadership
- Strategic planning
- Large and overarching goals and dreams for team building and city building
- New ideas in budgeting
- Training and development for all
- Class and Compensation studies underway
- Communication constantly worked on
- Dedicated experienced staff
- Strong Balance Sheet
- dedicated and experienced staff
- strong financial position
- We have very competent and knowledgeable people in our work environment
- Many with years of history at the city

Strengths continued

- Sara Carlson is a warm leader
- Bobbie Osterberg's heart is in the right place. She makes decisions that are best for the city, not just for herself or just her ward It isn't about her personally
- Andy does a great job with the liquor stores
- Rick and Scott have a strong PD employee buy in
- our staff is great
- we are the Go To dept when it comes to getting something completed
- staff knows what needs to be done on a day to day - week to week - season to season basis
- they take pride in doing a good job
- our job responsibilities have really evolved over the past 10 years by adding new project and taking on more responsibilities and well as doing what we have been doing
- reputational capital
- regional center
- ability to retain employees
- commitment to public service by staff, council and mayor
- strong financial standing
- willingness to give change a chance
- Knowledgeable Staff
- Longevity/Low Staff turnover
- Strong Leadership from our Mayor
- Commitment to the Community
- problem solving
- good leadership
- work together well
- Willing, able, trained workforce
- Strategically aligned plan of action
- Strong leadership from Mayor and Administrator
- strong department heads and staff with an open minded
- dedicated committee members
- great bond rating, strong financial
- engaged in community
- good infrastructure in most of the city
- Long standing employees - history of employment retention
- Engaged City Council - ask questions and want to know issues
- Experienced & dedicated staff
- Decent elected leadership
- Progressive mindset
- Pride in the community we serve
- Up to date/maintained facilities
- A strong vision
- Strong staff (well- qualified and dedicated individuals who are looking out for the City's best interests)
- Strong community involvement in key boards, committees and commissions
- Solid fiscal position

Strengths continued

- Tremendous community assets (natural resources, strong and diverse local economy, ATCC, school district, medical community, etc)
- fiscal responsibility
- loyal staff
- positive work environment
- experienced, dedicated staff
- technical expertise
- diverse perspectives
- engaged leadership
- depth of knowledge of the city's infrastructure and operations
- depth of knowledge of statewide resources and processes
- knowledge of local resources
- community engagement
- community involvement
- strong citizen representation on various committees
- Staff engagement is good with Council and residents of the city
- Council engagement is good with residents-much improvement since last review of Strategic Planning
- Day-to-day operation situations are good with city residents
- The arms of the city (HRA, EDC, and ALP) improving

Weaknesses

- tradition and culture
- difference of mindset/ investment of time- tasks
- leapfrog of tasks lot on the plate
- more like just keep up vs grow and excel (again mindset- vision)
- Status quo
- apathy
- some facilities need upgrades throughout
- outdated processes
- Strained relationships among Council Members
- Need for better communication between Council Members and Staff;
- develop more shared understanding of processes and procedures
- Onboarding of new City Council Members is not adequate
- Deferred maintenance at certain city facilities
- There are several key staff positions that will need to be replaced in the next few years as retirement of baby boomers continues
- Staff that will/would be hard to replace
- Need more growth in staff management
- Facilities that need repair
- Growth and change and moving forward are expensive
- erratic elected leadership
- communication

Weaknesses continued

- Too much secrecy
- Some have mentality of not my job
- teamwork is at a minimal
- Disconnected employees
- there are some things that just have to slide due to workloads etc
- we are not a dept. that likes to see things not finished
- on my end of it it is the facilities piece that i have not done a very good job of tracking outdated processes
- willingness to step outside the box, take risks, unless the cost/benefit analysis is a no-brainer
- executing the plan (in reference to budgeting for projects but not completing the projects)
- Communication between Staff & Council
- Follow Thru
- Chasing Shiny Objects
- Long Term Planning by some departments
- Differentiation between wants and needs
- not seeing what economic income does for the city and how it translates to tax dollar
- using athletic recreation to bring people to the city (baseball- soccer- hockey)
- Internal discord among the elected officials
- compassion with each other
- understanding
- other points of view
- reasoning with each other
- stronger workforce and home ownership
- Outdated regulations
- Long standing staff resistant to change - this leads to citizens feeling frustrated with government employees
- Conflicted personalities on Council
- Number of staff who will be retiring in the next 5- 10 years
- Increasing level of bureaucracy
- Ability to discuss things but difficulty in implementing them
- Elected officials whose behaviors have eroded the community's and staff members' trust and confidence in them
- Unwillingness to acknowledge societal / cultural challenges facing the community, which results in lack of preparedness to address them
- aging workforce/turnover
- discord on the council (not a major issue, but troubling and potentially will get worse)
- limited investment in infrastructure and facilities
- dysfunctional council members
- lack of cultural diversity
- Long range plan (5-10-15-20 years) is very limited
- General feeling that there are too many restrictions that hinder development in the city and developers and individuals would rather build outside of the city (sprinklers, two-mile limit, rules and regulations)
- EDC and HRA need better communication and direction from the City Council

Opportunities

- expand city limits
- extend water distribution system
- growth of all services
- leadership and management training at all levels
- taking the community to another level
- working with area groups such as Chamber and Downtown Merchants Association
- community collaboration
- There is an opportunity to broaden our partnerships with other governmental entities in the region
- There is ample room for development along key transportation corridors
- The City's desire to renew the budget process with the goal of priority based budgeting opens new doors for community understanding and involvement in government
- Alexandria's natural amenities, broad manufacturing base,
- high- quality education system, and site along Interstate 94 are a potent mix in attracting all generations to the community
- The City has the resources available to take a big swing at addressing workforce housing/housing stock concerns
- Time to start again and be better
- We work really well with other entities
- Communication with taxpayers
- Using monies well and creatively to get projects done
- Ample but not abundant land for development
- Collaboration with other governments
- Ask employees for opinions and listen more
- Get out of this is the way we have always done it
- need to really ask why
- build trust
- Public Works Dept
- we work very well without group/entities/organizations to complete a project or other for the betterment of the community
- land is available for development
- strong representation in St Paul
- Citizen engagement Encourage, recruit citizens to step forward for board appointments
- Age friendly community
- Many semi and recently retired citizens with great life experience to share
- Strong Economic Development
- Increasing Tax Capacity
- Willingness to embrace change (by most)
- Strong Business leadership within the community
- continued growth of housing, industry, athletics, fairgrounds master plan
- being a regional center
- Ample resources (financial and personnel) to apply to issues (development, redevelopment, infrastructure, etc)

Opportunities continued

- Excellent working relationships and partnerships with Townships, Douglas County, and other public stakeholders (MnDOT, DEED, etc)
- expanding airport income with Blanca
- building new website to be more user friendly
- open to the public
- new and easier program for building permits
- lot of land for expansion of the city
- Changing demographics
- real opportunity to attract young families with what Alexandria has
- Abundant land to develop
- Ability to implement changes to policy to have impact on community needs
- this is not an event's center
- Call it what it is - a hockey arena
- Great natural resources
- Great people with great ideas
- People/businesses want to be here
- Increasing tax base
- Available commercial / industrial space
- Collaborative attitude of the business and school communities
- The fact that people like to be here to enjoy the city's many amenities, including natural resources, special events, etc
- Alexandria is a destination
- geographical location
- local economy
- strong education and medical facilities
- leveraging funds with other governmental agencies
- long term area wide planning
- expansion of multi-modal transportation network
- expansion of secondary education system
- The greatest opportunity for the City is planning and organizing for the future of long-range planning to layout the city's utilities, parks and streets for 5-10-15-20 years.
- Getting EDC to help with developing the long-range plan of the City in an organized planned direction.
- Follow the approved City Charter
- documented specifications of the people that are in the Charter that may have evolved differently (electronic development) and submit changes (referendum) to the people to
- HRA and EDC are arms of the City Council and need more direction from the Council and committees
- The City Council should be diligently working with surrounding townships to establish a comprehensive strategic plan of the future (long-range plan)
- City council needs to communicate better with the people to improve the image that the City is not willing to work with them but is willing to help them
- People should not be afraid of retaliation and want to stay away from staff, Mayor and Council (we work for the people)

Opportunities continued

- The City should be working with the townships and county government on future growth and development now rather than later
- Assist developers rather than antagonizing the housing industry to develop in accordance with an organized plan

Threats

- citizens or department distrust?
- understanding
- buy in?
- reasoning
- apathy
- citizens not informed or not caring
- lack of cohesion or a division among city entities - ALP, RCC,
- Liquor
- working with county and state
- Our last election had three Council Members running unopposed
- The City's well- publicized conflict between Council Members could lead to lack of interest in running for office
- Continued trend of unfilled positions at key manufacturers could lead to them looking elsewhere for their business
- The service demands of a growing regional center may be more than what taxpayers can afford (i.e. the expectations of residents may not match up with what the City can afford)
- The City's lack of diversity could hamper the ability of companies to hire workers
- Lack of housing
- Lack of jobs
- Crime
- Legislature and their volatility
- Getting and keeping quality workers to replace retiring workers or new positions created
- Citizens that are increasingly complaining about all aspects of their life and blaming the city - - - police should do this/ city should do that, etc. when it should be them
- Housing stock needs help
- New affordable workforce housing needs to be developed
- No succession planning
- Management not unified
- having staff burn out
- city council not funding projects
- do-nothing state legislature, unwillingness to work together for the good of all citizens
- Threat to stability of state funding that makes up a significant share of the City budget
- Lack of citizen engagement
- decrease in percentage of home ownership
- Housing Shortages

Threats continued

- Workforce Shortages
 - Deteriorating Infrastructure- Aging City Staff
 - not giving young family's things to do
 - a non-functional city council
 - Continued discord among the Council may drive off private investment harm public partnerships
 - External financial conditions (another housing crisis or recession)
 - new EPA treatment requirement
 - workforce housing
 - Distrust of government
 - Housing stock
 - High cost of living compared to relatively low wages
 - Condition of our lakes - this impacts tourism and quality of life
 - Finding the long-term balance between adding tax base and degrading our natural resources before it's too late
 - Impact of changing demographics
 - Losing the small town feel
 - Property maintenance issues
 - Unwillingness to acknowledge and plan for change
 - Eroded trust and confidence in our elected officials
 - lack of affordable housing
 - lack of engaged, knowledgeable elected officials
 - non- progressive
 - overly conservative politics
 - short term thinking
 - lack of affordable housing
 - inability to attract workers
 - The City is not doing long-range planning for 5-10-15-20-25 years from now.
 - City is not keeping taxes low so that developers will want to build in our city versus building in other cities
 - Economic Development - communicating with developers of industrial and housing as to why they should build in the city rather than in another city or outside the city limits.
 - Developers need to know that taxes are low, utilities are low and they must understand that the future is planned.
 - The city should improve on its relationship with builders and developers and have better trust that the city will help them with building in the city versus building outside of the city
- The housing arm of the city needs to improve its communications
- the poor middle class that needs help in keeping their house conditions safe and comfortable.
 - The industrial businesses need to know the City is making efforts to improve the workforce housing needs and keeping building permit costs as low as possible
 - The City needs to do many things (some already stated or implied) that would change the attitude that would make people want to annex to the city and want to live, work and play in the city

Challenges

- long term financial sustainability
- how to fund growth of services
- housing that can assist in attracting businesses with living wage jobs
- attracting businesses with living wages
- community members getting involved
- Planning for upcoming staffing transitions
- Changing financial and budget processes to improve efficiency
- Identifying funding sources to keep infrastructure (including high- speed internet) and recreational amenities up to date and desirable for residents
- Attracting businesses with no housing available
- Continuing to provide services at quality pricing (with modest levy increase)
- Good working relationships with entities competing for the same monies
- ALASD and the \$ needed to solve the problem there
- maintaining quality infrastructure
- committing to continue with the street reconstruction program
- transfer of knowledge from retiring employees at the same time as recruiting the best to replace them
- We need to encourage the thoughts of change is good
- the need to replace some bigger/more expensive of equipment
- some needed major facilities repairs
- labor force that is not large enough or trained enough to fill available positions
- Filtering community wants from community needs
- Cohesive council leadership
- Street Maintenance/Infrastructure
- Meeting Housing/Workforce needs
- Maintaining appropriate population & business growth
- working on a third rink
- maintaining streets
- working on fairgrounds master plan
- Workforce housing availability/affordability
- Succession planning for senior City leadership staff
- Transportation funding, particularly to create additional connectivity/flow, and capacity
- expansion of the city population and industry
- expanding and improving infrastructure
- Attracting businesses with living wages
- Maintaining infrastructure without taxing residents to the brink of having to relocate
- Finding the long term balance between adding tax base and degrading our natural resources
- Maintaining quality infrastructure
- Handling the impact of changing demographics
- attracting and retaining well- paying jobs
- restoring trust and confidence in our elected officials
- affordable housing
- attracting/retaining younger demographic

Challenges continued

- sustainable funding of infrastructure
- finding skilled workers
- It is all long- term planning to give the general public the idea that the city is growing in an organized plan
- That the city is working with businesses to not only live comfortably in Alexandria but that our standard of living will rise economically and recreationally
- Communication with the city residents that the City Council and staff
- Citizens come first
- The City Council should spend more time among themselves, establishing policy for staff, the arms of the city (such as HRA, EDC, and ALP)
- City Council attending committee meetings and concentrating on the day- to- day problems that should be handled by the City Clerk which should be a City Manager
- Alexandria is booming and becoming a regional center which should be a City Manager form of government in lieu of what we currently have