

**Alexandria West Community Planning**  
Meeting 2 Q&A – Online and In-Person  
Monday, March 27, 2023

**Please Note: All meeting materials, including the webinar video recording, SLIDO meeting poll results and Q&A, are available on the project website at [alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest](http://alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest)**

## Housing Affordability

- 1. What is the specific law(s) that require this focus on affordable housing? Or, are they merely guidelines? Or, just Alexandria City’s individual initiative?**

Where there is not a specific law that requires the plan address affordable housing, housing affordability, opportunity, and equity are important policy and planning components for all small area planning processes, along with land use, transportation, open space, economic development, infrastructure, and other topics. The importance of housing affordability and opportunity to the City’s quality of life, commitment to racial and social equity, and economic competitiveness is articulated in the 2014 Approved City Housing Master Plan, the ALL Alexandria Resolution, and the City Council Priorities.

- 2. Is the “burden” and percentage of affordable housing being born/enforced evenly across the City? Will you severely apply affordable housing into the West End re-developments to make up for severe shortages in other areas of the City that aren’t undergoing redevelopment?**

Consistent with the goals of the Housing Master Plan, the City encourages housing opportunity across the city as small area plans are updated and (re)development is proposed and evaluated. Areas in proximity to transit (Metro and bus), jobs, services, and amenities are particularly well suited for affordable housing as they reduce the need for car ownership and have historically presented more frequent opportunities for such projects to be pursued through public-private partnerships. The City’s Zoning for Housing initiative is further examining ways in which barriers to housing access might be reduced through regulatory changes.

- 3. How do you determine a house with low income? Basics on what they truly earned or the way they declare on taxes to the IRS?**

Based on federal, state and local program guidelines, an applicant’s eligibility for an income-restricted committed affordable unit can be evaluated in different ways, for example, based on paystubs, tax returns, and employment verification forms. The City requires recent bank statements and can check that deposits and other incomes are verified on the statements.

- 4. What are you doing to secure housing for the people/families already living in the Area?**

The Office of Housing distributes on a monthly basis a Committed Affordable Rental Units list in English and Spanish. The list is posted on our website (<https://www.alexandriava.gov/housing->



[services/renter-resources#AffordableRentalOptions](#)) and shared via e-news. To sign up for eNews, please visit <https://member.everbridge.net/1332612387832027/login> and make sure to select “Affordable Housing”. In addition, the Office of Housing helps administer the affordable set-aside unit program at Southern Towers. To learn about that program, please visit <https://www.alexandriava.gov/housing-services/renter-resources#AffordableRentalOptions> or contact Virginia Patton at 703.746.3083.

**5. Do Alexandria city staff have trouble living in the city they serve? Due to high prices?**

While an individual’s housing decision is influenced by a variety of factors (including personal preferences and family needs), the high cost of housing (both rental and for-sale) poses challenges for many of Alexandria’s workforce looking to move to or remain in the City. The average assessed value of a condominium and single-family home in the City are approximately \$407,000 and \$940,000, respectively, and the average costs for a one- and two-bedroom rental are approximately \$1,900 and \$2,400 (including utilities), respectively.

**6. What are some renting prices that a lot of people in that community want for their housing?**

This is information staff would like to learn more about through the planning process. To date, staff have heard about the importance of providing a range of housing options, including more deeply affordable rental housing (affordable at 40% of the area median income, defined as \$39,880-\$56,920 for a household of 1-4, respectively), opportunities for homeownership, and options for seniors to age safely and affordably in place.

Census data further underscore the importance of preserving and deepening housing affordability: levels of housing cost burden are very high in Alexandria West. 97% of renter households earning up to \$50,000 pay more than 30% of their total income on housing related costs. 71% of homeowner households earning up to \$75,000 pay more than 30% of their total income on housing related costs.

**7. What are possible opportunities for tenant to organize to buy a current property for coop or condo?**

A number of national organizations work with tenant groups and associations on how rental communities can be collectively purchased and converted to homeownership using different shared-equity models, such as a housing cooperative.

Resources include:

<https://www.neighborworks.org/getattachment/57a35954-a321-4c7d-9042-a0f23d706766/attachment.aspx>

<https://impact.ncb.coop/hubfs/assets/resources/Co-op-Housing-Development-Guide.pdf>

<https://groundedsolutions.org/strengthening-neighborhoods/shared-equity-homeownership>

**8. How do you define “Affordable Housing” and does it depend on household income?**

Affordable housing is defined as rental or ownership housing costing no more than approximately 30% of a household’s gross monthly income before taxes. For more information on the type of affordable housing and levels of affordability, please visit:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/housing/housing-publications-reports-and-videos#HousingDefinitionsandTerminology>

**9. Do you communicate with the landlords to make sure that their rent increase is fair?**

The Office of Housing has Voluntary Rent Guidelines which are shared with all landlords in the city with ten or more units. While the City does not have the legislative authority to require landlords to comply with the policy, the policy encourages landlords to not increase rents by more than five percent annually. The policy does not extend to utilities. Residents experiencing high increases in rent are encouraged to contact the Office of Housing’s Landlord-Tenant Relations Division at 703.746.4990 to discuss opportunities for Housing staff to provide landlord-tenant mediation. However, the City cannot require landlords to reduce rent increases pursuant to state law.

**10. There used to be a rental relief program. Will there be any subsidized by the city?**

Rental assistance in the city was provided through the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program between 2020 and 2022; the program was federally funded. Outside of the Senior rent assistance program and Pilot rental subsidy program in new affordable housing projects, the City does have a current rent relief program. As part of the planning process, staff will examine opportunities and best practices to preserve and create housing affordability through a variety of tools, including zoning, density, financing approaches, and public-private partnerships.

**11. How will you ensure that housing is affordable for working families? *Como van asegurar que la Vivienda sea de bajo costo para las familias trabajadoras?***

Preserving existing and creating new affordable housing is very challenging. As part of the planning process, staff will examine opportunities and best practices to preserve and create housing affordability through a variety of tools, including zoning, density, and public-private partnerships.

**12. How will you preserve community when landlords are increasing rent each year? And we can’t from our incomes. *Como van a preservar la comunidad, si los arrendores van incrementando la renta cada año? Y no alcanzamos por nuestro ingresos.***

Preserving existing and creating new affordable housing is very challenging. As part of the planning process, staff will examine opportunities and best practices to preserve and create housing affordability through a variety of tools, including zoning, density, financing approaches,



and public-private partnerships. Staff will continue to engage closely with the community to learn about their priorities through the planning process.

**13. How can we solve unaffordable housing problems? What other benefits should government give low income families? Other best practices?**

Preserving existing and creating new affordable housing is very challenging. As part of the planning process, staff will examine opportunities and best practices to preserve and create housing affordability through a variety of tools, including zoning, density, financing approaches, and public-private partnerships. Staff will continue to engage closely with the community to learn about their priorities through the planning process, including ways to increase access to services offered through the Department of Community and Human Services which recently relocated to its new headquarters at 4850 Mark Center Drive.

Transportation

**1. “Don’t block intersection” signs at every intersection on King, Beauregard, Seminary, Braddock, Duke, etc.**

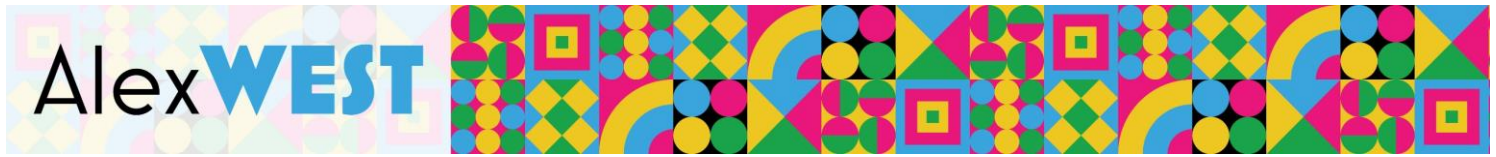
We do not place Do Not Block signs at every intersection unless we have seen repeated occurrences of an issue. An overuse of a sign can also result in less effectiveness. In general, certain intersections see significant back-up into other intersections and enforcement of such a sign can be very difficult with these conditions.

**2. Better traffic light timing**

The City currently has coordinated traffic signals based on the most likely traffic condition. As well, the intersection geometry plays a key role in operations and in certain instances may have reached capacity, regardless of the traffic signal timing. The city evaluates needs regularly if additional improvements are necessary, however it’s important that we balance all transportation modes by considering such things as pedestrian and cycling accommodations, general transportation safety, and the impact of the operational challenges.

**3. King/Beauregard Ped scramble?**

The City has completed the design of the King St and Beauregard St intersection improvement project which does include many updated pedestrian accommodations including crosswalks with pedestrian signals at all approaches. However, it does not include a “pedestrian scramble” with a full pedestrian phase and markings to allow pedestrian crossings in any direction. The construction on the planned project is expected to start in 2024.



**4. One of the big anxieties survey respondents expressed was traffic, but that seems overblown based on my experience. What does the data say about traffic?**

Traffic concerns have been generalized from safety to operations but current data does reflect that we see different concerns at different locations. The staff presentation from March 27, 2023, showed these transportation challenges within AlexWest. More specifically the City has identified high crash areas as part of the Vision Zero Action plan and operational challenges on Seminary Road between Beauregard Street and the I-395 area. As part of the AlexWest effort, the city will be reviewing the safety of all modes and operational conditions of certain intersections.

**5. Need to change left turn set up from Seminary to Beauregard and left turn into hotel. Dangerous!**

The City is re-evaluating the intersection of Seminary Road and Beauregard Street, as part of an on-going study. We expect to have public information meetings about the study this spring. For more information please visit [alexandriava.gov/transportation-planning/north-beauregard-street-and-seminary-road-intersection-improvement-study](https://alexandriava.gov/transportation-planning/north-beauregard-street-and-seminary-road-intersection-improvement-study).

### Parks and Open Space

**1. Please fix our trails! Holmes Run off Beauregard has a broken bridge & flooded tunnel. Dora Kelly Nature Trail Morgan Street Morgan Street entrance has been closed for close to a year!**

Substantial investments have been made to address storm damage to the Holmes Run trails. Capital Improvement Program funding of \$7.2M will address repairs to several sections affected by the storms, including Ripley Street to Beauregard. The City was also awarded a Northern Virginia Transportation Authority grant that will be used to fund the Dora Kelley fair-weather crossing replacement. Please go to the Holmes Run Trail Repair webpage for the latest updates on design and construction at [alexandriava.gov/capital-projects/project/holmes-run-trail-repairs](https://alexandriava.gov/capital-projects/project/holmes-run-trail-repairs).

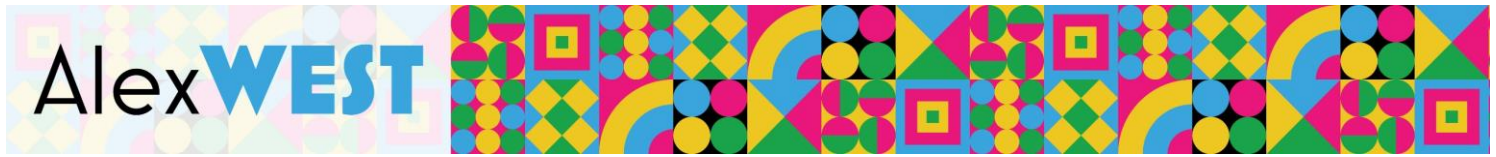
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/capital-projects/project/holmes-run-trail-repairs>

### Land Use

**1. How will you reconcile efforts to increase affordable housing and population with current plans to reduce traffic flow on Beauregard and Duke, as has already been done on Seminary?**

The City is doing a traffic study as part of the planning process and will examine various intersections in Alexandria West. More information on the traffic study can be found in the March 27 staff presentation on the project page.





**2. Is there any plan to rezone any areas for retail?**

We are still early in the process and so plans are not developed yet; however, we have heard from the community about having more non-residential amenities in Alexandria West. These include but are not limited to schools, restaurants, retail, grocery stores, pharmacies, hotels, shops, and attractions. This is certainly something we can discuss as we move forward.

**3. Do you happen to know if Fairfax County is looking at rezoning the Coca-Cola distribution center?**

The Coca-Cola distribution center on Dawes Avenue is within the Alexandria City boundary. We have reached out to property owners in Alexandria West informing them about the planning process. At this time, the property owner has not indicated a desire to redevelop but we will continue to update the community on future updates on this property.

**4. Is there any project that includes community kitchens or spaces open to meet needs of small business owners?**

Thank you for your comment. We don't have a project in mind that includes community kitchens or spaces open for small business owners but this can be discussed when we address non-residential uses during the process.

**Tech/Audio Issues**

1. i can't read the slide presented
2. Please zoom the camera onto the display screen! Thank you.
3. We can hear the pashto in the english room
4. We're hearing the Pashto interpreter
5. I'm signed into English, but am hearing Pashti in addition to the main speaker.
6. Audio for English is doubling with someone's translation.
7. I have english selected and the pashto interpreter can be heard in my audio over the audio in the room. Is it supposed to be like that?
8. I am hearing one of the translators feeding into the online audio even though I selected English.
9. Hello, I'm in the English room, but I'm hearing an interpretation into another language in the background.
10. I selected "English" language, but I also hear the Pashto interpreter as well. Please try to correct this.
11. "Hello
12. I did not click on the link to hear language interpretation, but I'm hearing it on my computer. With 2 speaking at once, I'm unable to clearing understand what is going on."
13. We are hearing the Arabic tranlator over the voice of Richard. Can you please shut that down for us?
14. I have selected original audio first and am getting Pashto interpereter. Then I selected English and still have the Pashto
15. serious interference going on from arab speaker



16. As well, his black screen with his name keeps interrupting the main feed of Richard in the meeting room.
17. Translation is breaking across rooms
18. Can you please turn the Pashto interpreter off. Its hard to hear anyone speaking English
19. It's not corrected
20. Hi Jared! It's intermittent now
21. Pashto keeps coming back.
22. it is not fixed. Just heard Pashto conversation again. It is intermittent.
23. I cannot read the projetor screen in the briefing room...please zoom in on it. Thank you.
24. the intepretation has been resolved, thank you, but I still can't read the screen.
25. "ok now
26. thanks"
27. Jared Alves...please 1) zoom the camera in on the speaker and please include the display screen in the room. This will allow 2) the camera focus to be on the speaker...the focus is currently on the people in the back row.
28. Any chance that the speaker can share her screen? On Zoom via the camera across the room, the slides are not visible.
29. "FYI
30. screen graphics were totally unreadable, until just now - 7:30 pm"
31. The slide shown in Zoom is not the slide being explained by the speaker.
32. No problem! Can see the bio slides but not the presenter's slides.
33. We're not seeing the slides, just the biographies
34. Thank you for sharing the screen. Can the screen be advanced to show the current slides being discussed?
35. The speakers screen is so bright compared to the view of the room as to be unreadable even in full screen. Now the screen has been taken over with a static head shot of Leah and Dominic so the view of the speaker is a tiny block in the corner.
36. FYI Ms. Vicinazo's screen is not advancing the slides. It's still on the intro slide. Thank you.
37. Hello, the slides are visible on zoom now from Ana Vicinanzo, but they are still on the slides introducing Leah Hendey and Dominic
38. All we are seeing is the fixed screen with the 2 speaker profiles.
39. I see that Ana Vicinanzo is sharing her screen, thank you. Will the slides be advanced to coincide with with the speaker?
40. The Zoom slide being shown is the previous speaker's first slide...please try to display the current slide within Zoom!
41. We can't hear the interview on Zoom
42. 7:39 pm no sound
43. "7:39 pm
44. no sound"
45. cannot hear anything on this interview
46. I cannot hear anything. Even hearing it in Latin would be better than this. :-)
47. No sound
48. No sound.....
49. Sound!



50. Sound!
51. now there is garbled speech from mr. Moulden.
52. 7:41 pm sound garbled - uninterpretable
53. This is so frustrating...sound is bad...speaker is not clear or understandable. Waste of time
54. Horrah! I hear English, I think. The current speaker 's ,Moulden, is not coming through OK.
55. Did Jose select share with audio when they shared their screen?
56. Is it possible to please share the screen containing the slides? The projector screen is illegible over Zoom.
57. Regretfully I am going to exit from this program. It is too difficult as well as frustrating to try and hear what is going on. I am a resident of Alexandria West and very concerned about the proposed increased density of Beauregard St and surrounding areas in nearby Arlington that will have direct negative impact on our community.
58. "7:48 pm
59. We were not able to hear anything the gentleman said.
60. I appreciate the city's efforts to host a hybrid meeting. Technical issues aside, this has been valuable nevertheless.
61. Will a recording of this event be available afterwards?
62. can we please see the speakers??
63. I already looked for that, but none of those View options are showing ... all that shows up is Zoom ratio and "fit to screen".
64. thank you

## General

### **1. Are the slides available online? They cannot be seen well from the zoom video.**

Slides from the meeting can be found on the Alexandria West Planning project page Community Meeting 2.

### **2. Are the presentation slides available online/website? (since we can't properly read them online - the screen is completely blurred)**

Slides from the meeting can be found on the Alexandria West Planning project page Community Meeting 2.

### **3. Will look for email with links for meeting recording - thank you - signing off"**

Thank you for joining and sorry again for the technical issues.