

Joint City-ACPS Facilities Master Plan

Virtual Community Engagement

Video Transcript

Slide 1:

Over the past year, the City of Alexandria and Alexandria City Public Schools have been working on a forward-thinking, collaborative planning process to develop a Joint Facilities Master Plan.

Today, we want to update you on that process through this 12-minute video and get your feedback through a short questionnaire.

Slide 2:

We'll share what's happened so far and where we are now in the process. Then we'll talk about what's next and ask for your thoughts and feedback.

The end of this video includes information on how to access the questionnaire and you can always pause the video as needed. Check the project website for more information.

Slide 3:

First, let's talk about what has happened so far.

We know that there are many facility and service needs across the City - we need to update and maintain our older buildings while adding new facilities such as fire stations and schools.

But our resources are limited. We need a plan with creative solutions to meet all our community needs.

Slide 4:

The Joint Facilities Master Plan will include three key elements - a framework to help us make project decisions amid changing circumstances, a baseline assessment of our needs across the entire City, and a roadmap so we can implement our plan.

Together, these three elements will provide Alexandria with a long-range, integrated, citywide blueprint for delivering public facilities and services.

Slide 5:

Since we began this work in late 2019, we have completed a draft of the framework and an assessment of needs. This video will show you what we've learned so far.

We want your feedback at this milestone of our process before we move forward with applying the framework and identifying solutions. There will be other opportunities to provide input in this process before we roll out the final roadmap and plan.

Slide 6:

Thanks to those of you who were able to join us in February 2020 at T.C. Williams High School. The Open House was held to introduce this effort to the community and understand your vision for Alexandria's public facilities. We received over 250 community comments about this process, our guiding principles, and your desires for the Alexandria community.

The comments addressed a wide range of topics - from a vision for the entire City's public spaces to input on specific projects and opportunities. You can find the compiled set of comments on the website.

There were a few key themes that emerged from the feedback:

- First, the community wants a clear process for project planning. And you want transparency about how and when project decisions are made.
- Second, you overwhelmingly supported the guiding principles that are part of the Framework.

We are excited for your continued engagement and if now is your first time participating in this process, welcome! Your feedback is very valuable to us.

Slide 7:

So where are we now?

Slide 8:

Since our community meeting, we've drafted a framework to guide future activities. The framework includes the guiding principles, which you'll see in just a minute. It outlines the phases of both high-level master planning and overall future project planning. Within the phases, activities and key milestones are identified. And lastly, we've developed some tools and strategies to guide project staff and city leaders through the process.

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As you can imagine, the Framework is full of detailed information. This video won't get into the details of the Framework, but we do want to remind you of our guiding principles.

Slide 10:

These guiding principles are the foundation of the entire Framework.

Let's take our first guiding principle as an example. "We are one community and one portfolio." Our public facilities - from libraries and schools to police and fire - all stand to benefit from coordinated thinking. It means we don't plan projects in a silo, but look at the bigger picture. As a community, we have to think beyond our own needs and wants to ensure that all needs are met.

Our fourth guiding principle states "Comprehensive and cohesive solutions provide lasting value." We are creating a long-term, 30-year plan that views projects as long-term investments rather than short-term fixes. We consider construction costs as well as operating and life cycle costs of our decisions.

All together, our guiding principles ensure everyone involved in public facility projects understand our city-wide values and goals.

Before we dive into the needs assessment findings, it is important to understand what is driving these needs.

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Population is one of the main drivers. In the past decade, Alexandria has grown by nearly 20,000 residents and public facilities have not kept up with this population growth.

In the next 20 years, we are projected to grow an additional 30,000 people, which will increase demand for public services and facilities even more.

Slide 12:

Because of the growth in population, we need more seats to accommodate current and future ACPS students. Our current school capacity, shown in green on the chart, is less than current school enrollment, shown in blue, and future projected enrollment, shown in orange.

In the next decade, we must provide more than 1600 seats at the high school level, 1200 at the middle school level, and 800 in elementary schools.

Enrollment growth is almost entirely in established neighborhoods, not where new development is taking place. To solve for the existing capacity crunch as well as accommodate future growth, we'll need to add capacity to existing schools.

Slide 13:

Population growth is just one of the many drivers. Many of our existing buildings have reached an age where their internal systems need replaced.

On average, our buildings are 34 years old. Schools are an average age of 54 years.

Slide 14:

There are many needs across the city.

Our existing buildings have aging components like the roof, plumbing, and HVAC systems that need replaced over time.

Building designs also age. For example, educational models have changed since the school-building boom of the 60s and 70s. Libraries now offer far more than books. Fire

stations need to house bigger trucks. Thus, buildings need to be modernized to function appropriately.

Population and enrollment growth directly influence our needs. As Alexandria grows, it must adapt to serve all residents with appropriate levels of service and the location of those services. We must ensure existing and new services are accessible to all of Alexandria.

Lastly, there are needs that reflect the City's strategic goals and help us continue to be a vibrant liveable city.

The next few slides provide an overview of needs. They are presented within what we call an “academic approach” – these are not projects currently funded within the Capital Improvement Program. Rather, it is a baseline measure of Alexandria’s needs based on what we know today.

Slide 15:

There is a significant number of urgent needs in Alexandria. Urgent needs are the ones that should be addressed in the next 10 or so years based on conditions and responding to direct service needs like school capacity. They are dispersed across the entire City. Many of these reflect maintenance that we have deferred or delayed for years.

9 schools need investment and must provide a collective 3,600 seats for Alexandria's projected enrollment growth.

First responders need new facilities too, including 5 new fire stations and training facilities for police and fire. Many of Alexandria's fire stations can't hold modern fire trucks and apparatus. 4 of the 5 stations need new locations to maintain adequate response times throughout the City.

Slide 16:

Alexandria's intermediate needs are just as vast and dispersed. We must continue to address buildings as they age during the next 15 to 20 years as well as add new capacities.

These needs may shift over time based on new information such as updated enrollment projections or the 2020 Census. In alignment with our guiding principles, we must design our buildings to be flexible and adaptable to change.

Slide 17:

The long-term needs focus on being good stewards of our resources and addressing needs as we can predict them today. Several needs are buildings that were recently renovated or constructed and will need major investments as they reach 30-40 years

old. In alignment with our guiding principles, we must design our buildings to be flexible and adaptable to change.

Slide 18:

Overall the needs assessment provides a long-term outlook of what investments need to be considered.

- By seeing the urgent, intermediate, and long-term needs, you understand that despite recent community investments, we still have a lot of needs to address.
- And we don't have enough funds to solve these needs independently.
- You also saw how our needs are dispersed across the city – they affect every corner of our community and will require us to work together as one.
- Lastly, we know buildings require constant upkeep and we have a lot of deferred maintenance. This plan is important to help us maintain and refresh our public assets.

Looking at these needs all together helps us understand the big picture and observe opportunities to be creative so we can solve our needs sooner.

More detailed information about the needs assessment is available on the website.

Slide 19:

Now that you've seen parts of the framework and the needs assessment, what's next in this process?

Slide 20:

We are almost ready to begin developing a roadmap that will chart a path for the next 30 years. But before we can move forward with strategies and potential solutions, we need your feedback to refine and finalize the guiding framework and the baseline needs assessment that you've seen here today.

Slide 21:

There are numerous strategies that can be applied to our vast needs. To be successful, we know we must be creative.

Since we know land is scarce in our city, we must use our existing real estate efficiently. That means when it's time to rebuild a site, we can reimagine how the building and site are designed and look for opportunities to share that site with other public services.

Alexandria isn't the only place facing these issues, there may be opportunities to create a facility that can be shared with our neighbors in Fairfax or Arlington - and even allow us to share the capital and operating budget of a facility.

These are just 6 examples of the many strategies we are going to explore. We want your input to help develop other creative strategies worth exploring.

Slide 22:

So please, take a moment to provide your ideas. We need your input to help us understand if we overlooked any needs across the City. We also want ideas for how we can be creative in solving these needs.

Slide 23:

Please complete our questionnaire and provide your input on this process.

You can access it by:

- Typing this website into your browser: **bit.ly/AlexandriaJFMP**
- Visiting the Joint Facilities Master Plan website where this video is posted.

We hope you'll pass along this video to your neighbors, community organizations, and friends so that all of Alexandria can voice their ideas.