

## 1. What are your concerns?

- How much outreach is done to include a diverse array of the community so that multiple voices are heard? I think conversations are good, but too much time.
- Ensure participants understand the purpose, which I understood to be dialogue about process and not specific issues. We almost got derailed by an airing of grievances but some of us spoke up to get back on track.
- That the city is truly committed to have citizen input as opposed to merely advocate preconceived notions.
- City involvement should have public overview.
- Feeling that it is pre-cooked. Need to give people a chance to digest; summer is not a good time. October next step: 'Council Adoption' presupposes outcome. Who pays for all the new tasks the 'city' should take on.
- Openness. Correct information.
- In media field
- I would love to live in a city that sets a grand goal and works toward it to help stay focused on the most important issues. Personally, the issue is climate change for me. I didn't find that here.
- None.
- That participation will not be inclusive enough. Some people will not participate until they feel they have been wronged.
- Better communication and notification/warning of issues affecting the neighborhoods and city – the Gazette is my best source of information.
- Many community groups are not in these meetings/participation, Hispanic and other backgrounds.
- Not enough participants and summer months when many groups do not meet.
- There are probably scores of retirees or soon-to-be-retirees in the Alexandria community with very specialized knowledge/expertise in such important fields as education, communication, health, transportation, housing, etc. and that expertise goes largely untapped or unengaged. Need a brainstorming session to identify creative outreach strategies for engaging these individuals.
- People at our table were very confused about the 'network' concept.
- The 'grapevine' on the civic engagement process needs to be positive. It is not currently. This requires a proactive effort and strategy by the city's leaders and staff, especially Planning& Zoning. Find out the opinion leaders (list them), meet with them.
- People not understanding comments on preliminary draft and review draft of the handbook.
- Maximizing outreach to varied parts of the community.
- No concerns!
- Future developments in the west end area.
- This exercise was rather elementary and insulting to citizens who attended - telephone and mail, Amazing! – no answers about what this 'What's Next Alexandria' is all about.
- That city departments work out a plan and become wedded to it before they ever present it to the public.
- We need specifics – who, what, when. Nice words – how do we execute.
- It was good to hear strong statements by city officials that this will be applied citywide, not just Planning Department. That same strong statement needs to be expressed within the handbook.

- If we can't 'engage' more people by attending these meetings, how will a broader engagement process succeed?
- The city's decision making process needs to actually pay attention to what citizens say. It is otherwise just a charade to go through the whole 'What's Next' process.
- How best to disseminate to all.
- The goal is laudable, but implementation to reach all residents will be difficult to accomplish and costly to implement. Some residents did not participate – few immigrants or non-English speakers, few young people. Will people step up to make it happen on a consistent basis?
- What the city is planning next for 2014-15.
- That the development process is far from finished. The draft is in need of considerable work. There is no way of verifying that all comments will be respectfully honored or considered. Evaluations in the draft seem focused on meeting. This is not sufficient in any way. Meetings and online are mentioned repeatedly in the draft. They are not comprehensive.
- Still felt that there was more emphasis on speaking to us than on ...

## 2. Do you have suggestions for improvements?

- Continue to vary the night for these gatherings.
- Reiterate the purpose and try to focus the time and energy of participants constructively.
- Not disregard citizens.
- More city involvement in neighborhoods.
- Depends on what comes out of all four meetings.
- Make contact with other people which use other languages.
- The room was awfully loud. It was hard to hear my tablemates at times.
- Keep up the good work.
- The city is on the right track.
- Develop a 311 call maker for ease of finding the correct office in the city.
- Yes, I will pass the information n civic engagement to my communities and be able to encourage them to participate in this dialog.
- Going well so far. Need more diversity in participants.
- Not at this time.
- Real citizens (not staff) need to preview the activities to see if they are clear.
- I like the idea of a form for each 'project', including proposed project timelines, cost, deliverables and the civic engagement plan and timeline. Need to focus on public accountability for projects launched in 2013 with this process.
- Would like to see more youth and more diversity at these meetings. Better explanation of goal/purpose of activities – What are we trying to accomplish with this activity? 'Big Picture.'
- Specific starting and ending dates for comment periods.
- Locations close to public transit.
- So good so far.
- Change schedule for review so that there are no meetings in July/August – vacation time.
- Involve citizens before the plan has taken on an aura of inevitability.
- More time for presenting – beneficial to hear about all ideas and media.
- Explain benefits – not features.

- It would be good to improve city's website now – it's difficult to find things you want to know.
- More information to community.
- Each comment on the draft be responded to so that the author understands its disposition; this has not been done as this process has moved forward to date.

### 3. How would you explain in 2 sentences what we have accomplished at this meeting?

- Assessed the benefits and disadvantages of utilizing varying tools of communication to disseminate important messages. Provided opportunities for networking amongst various members of the community.
- A better understanding of the advantages and limitations of various methods of communications, as view by others.
- The dialogue was a formal opportunity for constructive reflection on the community engagement process, and a ...
- Not disregard citizens.
- Very good dialog.
- Good discussion – moved proposal forward.
- How to disseminate information.
- I think we identified some strategies that could offer much greater levels of personalization in the communication strategy. This could facilitate improved engagement of the citizens.
- Provided opportunity for city staff and citizens to recognize the noble intentions of both sides. A refreshing air of non-adversarial dialogue.
- General agreement. Interesting ideas. Fellowship.
- We have cooperated to begin a program of inclusiveness. We have agreed on the importance of 2-way communication.
- You made me feel good (or better) about the city.
- To understand the calendar/timeline and the ways we can participate.
- Moving forward to completion of a tremendous task.
- Highlighted that city resources will be needed for this to work. The need for outreach and debriefing.
- Looked at ways to effectively communicate with city residents about .... Updated attendees re civic engagement process. Got personal links to specific organizations in the city.
- Reinforced what has been done so far and key future milestones. Developed suggestions/action steps for informing community members.
- Brainstorming helped identify some options. Talking points helped clarify the main goals.
- We gave feedback on methods of communication and committed to spreading the work.
- We have tried to organize our thoughts so we can implement them in the future.
- Not much. Another exercise in futility by city staff! Please give/show us outcomes for this 'What's Next.'
- We had a pleasant discussion but I am not sure we accomplished much of anything.
- Moved toward some specifics.
- 2 topics – both were not as relevant to me as other topics, I think because of age.
- Good idea came forth. Limitations also surface.
- New ways of communication – internet; social media.

- Our discussion of print media was narrow though germane to those of us who are not users of electronic media. It was impossible to discern how this will be integrated.

**4. Please list one idea that occurred to you as a result of the exercises and presentation.**

- The importance of expanding my reach by utilizing multiple communication tools.
- Social media has reduced youth apathy!
- City (?) to civic associations what is expected of them.
- Use of iPods and cell phones for communication
- Use an app to link people.
- How important inclusion is.
- I think we can use app friquence into news to community.
- Need a robust Smartphone app for ios and android
- The need for communication is going to prove as challenging as it is important.
- We cannot have too many forms of communication!
- Use of "QR" codes on all documents.
- Lots of wonderful people willing to give their thoughts, energy and time.
- The limitations that may exist because of the lack of staff committed to maintain social media channels. Our group suggested using youth interested in marketing/communications to assist with lack of manpower.
- Involvement needs to be in all the phases to ensure participation.
- May be added work put email of list that was given out of organizations, civic groups, etc.
- Will incorporate important announcements as an agenda item in future board meetings.
- We need to look seriously at how to communicate with those who cannot or do not choose to use computers – again, disabled, low income, other languages.
- In terms of communications tools, engage people from the target audience you are trying to reach to actually create the message with and through the tool you are using, i.e., message to youth should be created by youth; message to elderly should be created by elderly.
- Critical importance of ensuring that community members feel their concerns have been heard.
- Online communication will work only if everyone who communicates online provides his or her name. otherwise the feedback will be only so much internet dross and misinformation.
- Have one standard communication format, content to be used in many ways.
- Standardizing city posters, and listings in newspaper – design, color code, branding (not my idea but I agree with it)
- For the community to get involved.