Curb Space and Parking

How the City regulates parking and manages curb use.

Introduction

This chapter is focused on how the City will manage competing demands for curb space and efficiently use parking to help achieve City goals. Over the past several years, Alexandria has seen an increase in e-commerce deliveries, rideshare use, and scooter and bikeshare use, all of which have unique demands for space along the curb. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the City saw increased interest in allowing retail uses and outdoor dining along the curb, which may continue into the future. The evolving nature of the curb and broader mobility trends prompt a need for the City to rethink how it allocates this resource and effectively manages demand to maintain order on our streets and ensure that various needs are being met.

To manage curb space, the City also must consider effective management of off-street parking. The policies and strategies set forth in this chapter will help guide the management of curb space and parking resources and concurrently support the City's commitment to sustainability and quality of life.

Key Context

126

unique on-street paid parking zones with space for more than 1,400 vehicles across the City

These zones are largely concentrated in Old Town. Street parking generally costs less than parking garages, which disincentives garage use and puts a great strain on street parking.

16

publicly accessible garages

and 6

parking lots

available for paid parking in Old Town

These facilities range in cost, typically featuring flat and hourly rates that cost more than metered street parking.

58%

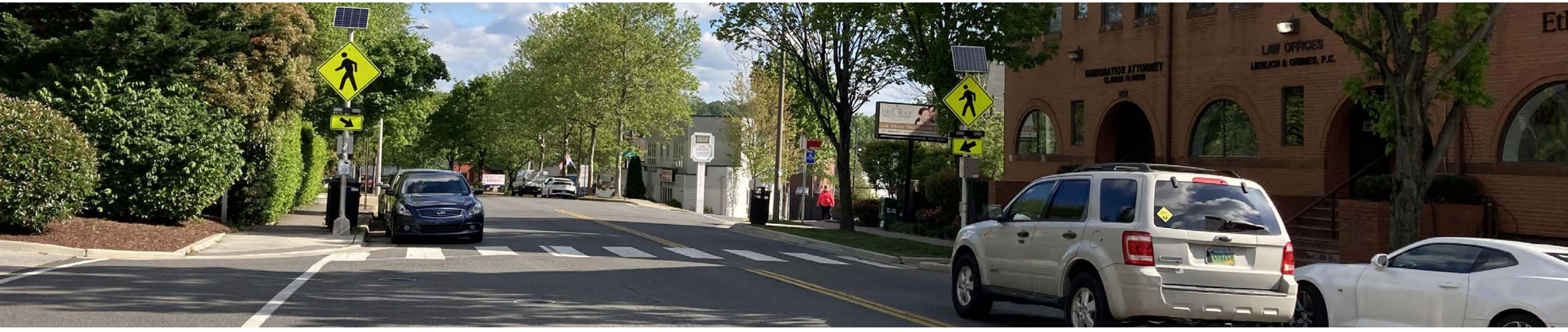
Alexandrians that have a positive experience with "Availability of parking near my home."[1]

52%

Alexandrians that have a positive experience with "Availability of on-street and garage parking."

Ratings for traffic flow, travel by car, overall ease of travel, and public parking among Alexandrians **decreased in 2020** compared to 2018.[1]

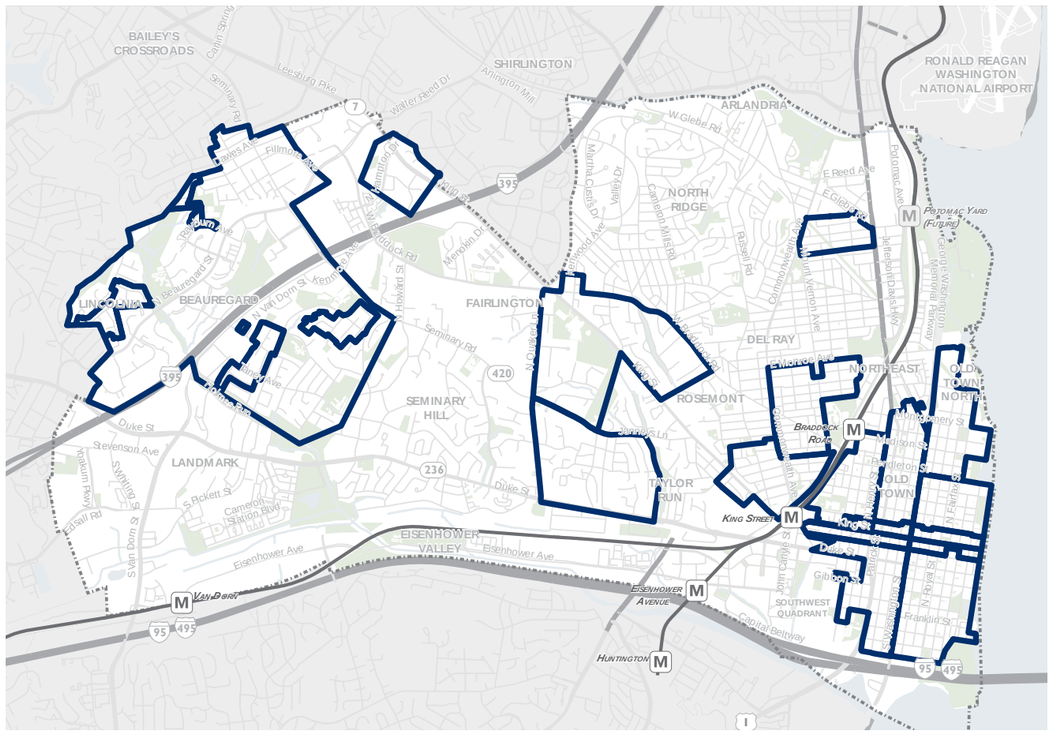
1. Alexandria 2020 Resident Survey.



Existing Programs, Policies, and Initiatives

Residential Parking Permit Program

Alexandria's Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program designates certain areas in the city as residential permit parking districts. As a means to preserve on-street parking in these areas for Alexandria residents, the RPP ordinance prohibits on-street parking for more than 2 or 3 hours during varying time periods. Only persons who maintain their residence within the boundaries of an RPP district are eligible to obtain parking permits, and vehicles that display these permits are exempt from the timed restrictions.



Residential Parking Permit Districts

Electric Vehicle Charging

The Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Readiness Strategy will develop a road map to anticipate the electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs of City residents, workforce members, and visitors as electric vehicles become more mainstream. The project includes:

- Evaluating projections for current and future electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs
- Recommending locations for publicly accessible charging infrastructure with integration into a broader regional network
- Reviewing and updating the City's zoning, codes, permitting, and inspection codes and development processes and requirements
- Recommending policies, approaches, and synergies for locating electric vehicle charging infrastructure at businesses, multi-unit dwellings, single-family homes, right-of-way, and other locations along residential and commercial streets

Residential Pay by Phone Program

Certain residential permit blocks within Old Town have been made "pay by phone" for non-residents who choose to park. After a successul pilot, City Council made this permanent in 2019.

Parking Standards for New Development Study

This study, completed in 2018, conducted an assessment of the previous parking standards and established updated standards for new development projects. This update established an Enhanced Transit Area with reduced parking requirements to encourage non-auto travel, and outlined provisions for shared parking.

Micromobility Corrals

In some locations around Alexandria, the City has installed micromobility corrals to maximize curb space and encourage parking of micromobility devices in locations that do not hinder vehicle or pedestrian travel.

Policies

The Curb Space and Parking chapter policies will guide the City's decision-making around smart use of curb space and make parking more efficient and available toward the advancement of City goals.

Policy A: Connect parking policy to City goals

Achieve broader City goals related to sustainability, congestion, and housing affordability through parking.

Parking facilities are expensive to build and maintain, and when it is easy to park, more people will drive. The goals of the Environmental Action Plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase the use of sustainable travel modes require the City to reimagine the curb space. The City of Alexandria will continue to use policy to right-size parking facilities and unbundle the cost of parking from housing to reduce the cost burden of parking on non-vehicle owners and limit its role in contributing to traffic.

Policy B: Ensure parking availability

Seek to maintain parking availability in the city's residential and commercial districts, recognizing that some people may need to walk a short distance to their destination.

The City will seek to ensure a reasonable parking option is available by strategically aligning curb space with its highest and best use and managing on- and off-street parking through technology and pricing.

A recent study has demonstrated that in an urban area, more parking led to more car ownership, more driving, more congestion, less transit use, and less walking.[2]

2. More Parking Puts More Cars on the Road, Sightline Institute. https://www.sightline.org/2021/01/28/more-parking-isnt-harmless-it-actually-makes-us-drive-more/.

Policy C: Promote equitable allocation of curb space

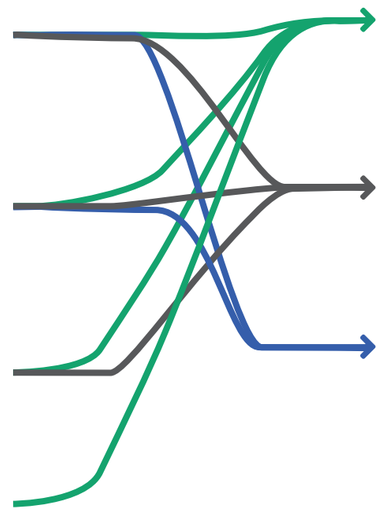
Treat all curb space as a public asset that should be allocated in an equitable manner for its highest and best use, appropriate for the specific location, time of day, and time of year.

Recognizing the competing demands over curb space, the City of Alexandria will work to manage this finite resource in a way that considers a diversity of needs and maximizes community benefits and goals. Local context will drive decision-making to ensure that solutions for the curb space use are tailored to needs.

Strategies
That support policies

1. Implement a prioritization framework for making changes to curb space
2. Consider pricing, regulation, data, and communications to manage parking availability
3. Reconsider parking requirements in new developments
4. Promote electric vehicle charging opportunities

Policies
The City of Alexandria will...



Strategies

Strategy 1. Implement a prioritization framework for making changes to curb space

Actions

- Implement a framework to prioritize parking, loading, drop-off, bike lanes, and mobility hubs, among other uses, when making curbside changes
- Work with the community and the Traffic and Parking Board to apply the framework when a new use is considered on a street

The City's **Curb Space Prioritization Framework** is included at the end of this chapter.

Credit: Misha Enriquez for Visit Alexandria

Addressing the Need

Alexandria's curb space is a valuable commodity and is very much in demand. Many modes of access—pedestrians, parking, transit, bicycles, and commercial and private vehicles—compete for curbside access to shops, restaurants, housing, offices, and community facilities. The City must find a way to balance these needs while encouraging the use of off-street parking and loading when appropriate to reduce the demand for the curb.

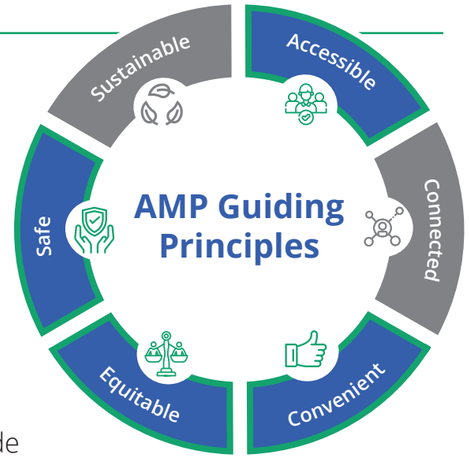
Advancing City Plans and Goals

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Automobile Dependency and Educate Individuals and Employers on Mobility Options Other Than Single-Occupancy Driving

Complete Streets Policy and Design Guidelines

- Accommodate All Modes of Travel and for the Health and Safety of All Users
- Smart and Efficient Management of the Curbside



Age Friendly Plan for a Livable Community

- Those Who Walk, Drive, and Ride a Bicycle in Alexandria Can Do So Safely

Housing Master Plan

- Preserve the Long-Term Affordability and Physical Condition of the Existing Stock of Publicly Assisted Rental Housing, as well as Market Rental Housing Where Affordability Commitments Can Be Secured

Strategy 2. Consider pricing, regulation, data, and communications to manage parking availability

Actions

- Consider technology to collect and disseminate more and better data on parking availability and usage
- Improve signage and availability of real-time information via technology to guide users to off-street parking, pick-ups, drop-offs, and loading to free up on-street curb space whenever reasonable and practicable
- Consider coordinated pricing strategies to encourage more efficient and equitable use of on- and off-street parking spaces
- Improve the perception of safety in garages through improved communications, wifi connections, and cellular service

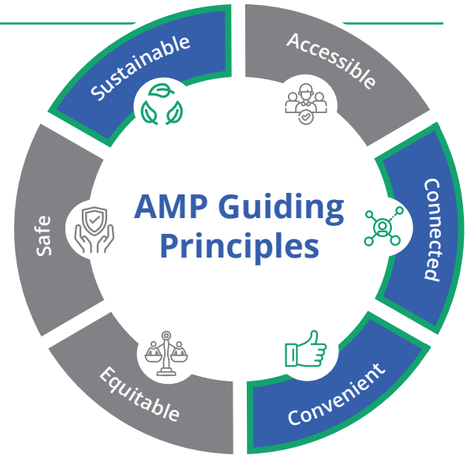
Addressing the Need

The perception that parking is hard to find in certain areas, while not always a reality, can lead to frustration and encourage drivers to circle the block to find available spaces or free parking. By making off-street parking more attractive through pricing or improved information, more people may use it, freeing up on-street spaces and reducing the perception that parking is in limited supply.

Advancing City Plans and Goals

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Automobile Dependency and Educate Individuals and Employers on Mobility Options Other Than Single-Occupancy Driving



Strategy 3. Reconsider parking requirements in new developments

Actions

- Build upon recent efforts to right-size parking for residential and commercial development, recognizing that increased parking leads to increased traffic
- Review shared parking section of the zoning and ordinance to identify opportunities to make shared parking more viable. For example, a bank that closes at 5:00 PM and a restaurant that opens at 5:00 PM may be able to share parking facilities
- Leverage the ability of new data sources to regularly evaluate parking uses and trends
- Increase the percentage of parking spaces in new developments that can support electric vehicle charging

Addressing the Need

Parking facilities have several adverse effects on the natural and built environments, including increased stormwater run-off and pollution due to their impervious surfaces; reduced density of land development that hinders the use of sustainable travel options such as walking, biking, or public transit; and increased use of vehicles that can lead to more traffic congestion and air pollution. It is important to reconsider parking standards and requirements to reduce the number of parking facilities that may be larger than necessary.

Updating parking standards can yield several positive outcomes for communities. Maximum standards for off-street parking work to limit the construction of parking facilities that are larger than necessary. Recently, cities such as Hartford, CT and Portland, OR recognized the need to limit parking and established parking maximums in their regulations, thus controlling the amount of land and impervious surface associated with parking. **In Alexandria's recent "Parking Standards for New Development Projects Study - Phase 2," the City also has implemented parking maximums and an Enhanced Transit Area in which requirements are lower.**

Advancing City Plans and Goals

Housing Master Plan

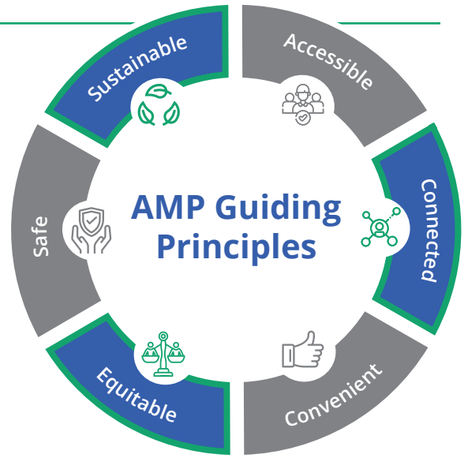
- Preserve the Long-Term Affordability and Physical Condition of the Existing Stock of Publicly Assisted Rental Housing

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Reduce Automobile Dependency

City Strategic Plan

- Increase the Percentage of Commuters Using Alternative Transportation Options



Strategy 4. Promote electric vehicle charging opportunities.

Actions

- Establish electric vehicle (EV) installation checklists for different uses
- Develop a policy for providing public charging infrastructure in public spaces
- Coordinate between parties interested in charging stations

Addressing the Need

Transportation accounts for more than a third of Alexandria's greenhouse gas emissions. Converting more vehicle trips from internal combustion engine vehicle trips to electric vehicle trips can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially as the energy to charge them is anticipated to come from increasingly sustainable and renewable sources. There are a growing number of Alexandrian's who own or are interested in owning electric vehicles, and the increased numbers of EVs will require additional charging infrastructure to support them.

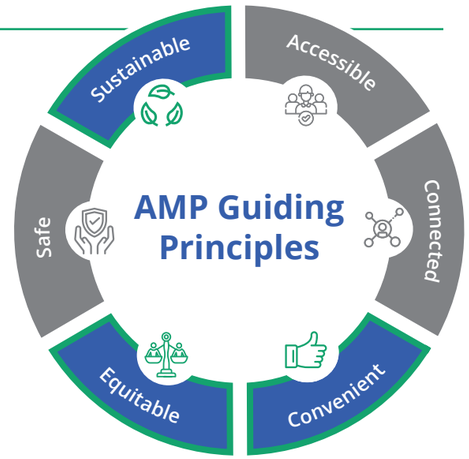
Advancing City Plans and Goals

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Readiness Strategy

- Meet electric vehicle charging demand

Environmental Action Plan 2040

- Implement and support implementation of publicly-accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure that is supported by renewable energy



Curb Space Prioritization Framework

This framework sets priorities for curb access based on land uses. Land uses are broadly defined into four categories based on the kinds of curbside activity in different parts of the city.

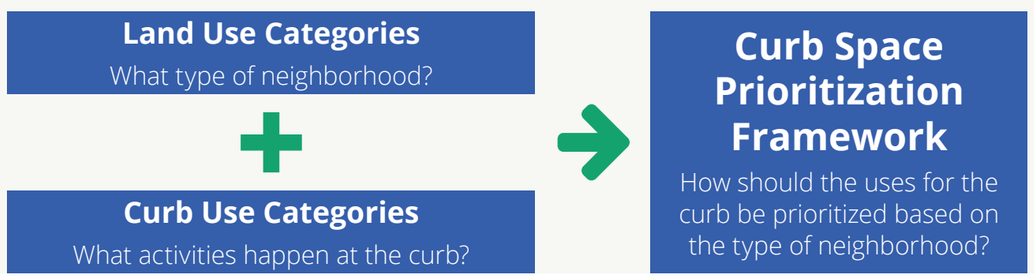
Curb uses are also categorized broadly to enable future mobility options to fit into this framework. For example, previous plans mentioned bus stops, but did not anticipate bikeshare systems, dockless scooters, or ridehail companies like Uber and Lyft.

As part of the Alexandria Mobility Plan, the City has begun the work to realize Strategy 1 and develop a curb space prioritization framework. This framework outlines varying priorities for curb uses in areas of the city, depending on their land use. Staff will use this framework to guide future decisions.

This framework can be applied to existing streets as well as future streets outlined in small area plans.

When evaluating proposals and resident requests that will impact curb space, staff will work through the framework with affected parties to understand the needs and context of the street. This framework helps guide decision-makers when evaluating requests and applications—it is not a proposal for changing the City's streets.

- The specific context for each block matters. If a proposal is not feasible on a given street, this framework would not apply.
- Not every curb use category will apply to every street. For example, low-density residential streets with available curb space will not need large (or any) changes to provide adequate access for people.
- Higher priority uses will not eliminate lower priorities. Providing access for goods, for example, does not mean that all the parking on a street will be eliminated, but instead that a parking space may be considered for removal to introduce improved access for goods.



Land Use Categories

	Description:	Examples:
Residential	Predominantly residential uses, including detached houses, rowhouses, and apartment buildings	• Cameron Station Blvd between Duke St and S. Pickett St • Taney Ave between N. Jordan St and Van Dorn St
Main Streets	Mixed-use neighborhoods with office, residential, and retail uses as well as neighborhood retail corridors	• Mt Vernon Ave in Del Ray • King St in Old Town
Office & Commercial	Areas with predominantly office, retail, and other 'Downtown' functions—often high-density and often including residential towers	• Eisenhower Ave between Holland Ln and Telegraph Rd in Carlyle • Duke St between Holland Ln and Dulany St
Warehouse and Industrial	Areas with mostly industrial and warehouse uses, including redeveloping areas adding retail uses and residential developments	• Wheeler Ave west of S. Early St • S. Pickett St west of Van Dorn St

Curb Use Categories

	Examples:
City Plan Priorities	Safety improvements, bus lanes, bike lanes, green infrastructure, electric vehicle charging, and other items specifically included in City plans
Access for Goods	Loading zones, deliveries, food pick-up/drop-off
Access for People	Bus stops, pick-up/drop-off, bikeshare stations, scooter corrals
Parking	Metered parking, residential parking, bike parking
Activation	Parklets, in-street dining, public art

Curb Space Prioritization Framework

Priority:	Residential	Main Streets	Office & Commercial	Warehouse & Industrial
1: High	City Plan Priorities			
2	Access for People	Access for People	Access for People	Access for Goods
3	Parking	Access for Goods	Access for Goods	Access for People
4	Access for Goods	Activation	Parking	Parking
5: Low	Activation	Parking	Activation	Activation

Metrics

The strategies and policies in this chapter are intended to move the needle on the following measurable metrics. Additional details on metrics, including applicable targets for future years, can be found in **Appendix II - Monitoring, Reporting, and Key Performance Indicators**.

Metric
Number of curb space changes informed by the Curbspace Prioritization Framework introduced to the Traffic and Parking Board
Positive rating of ease of public parking (Resident Survey) *
Positive rating of availability of parking near my home (Resident Survey) *
Positive rating of availability of on-street and garage parking near shopping (Resident Survey) *
Number of publicly accessible level 2 or higher electric vehicle charging plugs per population

* The Alexandria Resident Survey reports results based on race/ethnicity, income, and age in addition to all residents.

Credit: Misha Enriquez for Visit Alexandria