



ResilientALX Charter

*Prepared for Alexandria City Council by
Alexandria Citizen Corps Council (CCC)*

2020



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ResilientALX Charter

Project Description

On November 12, 2019, Alexandria City Council unanimously passed a motion asking the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council (CCC), a City Council-appointed commission made up of members of the community, experts in the emergency management field, and representatives from the city's emergency preparedness volunteer organizations, to propose updates to the Alexandria Strategic Plan in order to make a more Resilient Alexandria. The CCC accepted this responsibility and this charter, ResilientALX, outlines how the CCC plans to issue those proposed updates to the Strategic Plan in the *Safe and Resilient Community* focus area. The CCC will complete the following steps to arrive at substantiated and community-based recommendations:

1. **Conduct assessments of community preparedness and resilience;**
2. **Report on the preparedness and resilience findings; and**
3. **Provide recommendations on how the City can achieve strategic goals for preparedness and resilience in form of a ResilientALX Action Plan.**

Problem Description

After a thorough review of the City of Alexandria's Strategic Plan, the CCC found that Alexandria's preparedness strategy deferred disproportionately to emergency services, without a holistic approach for resilience in the face of an increasing myriad of hazards and threats. While the City's Strategic Plan has a section on a *Safe and Resilient Community*, it addresses resilience solely through the lens of emergency services, law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services.

The Resilient Alexandria project (ResilientALX) will address this gap through a **comprehensive assessment** of current activities and plans as well as the needs of the people and businesses in Alexandria—the whole community. The assessment will also encompass the involvement and coordination of different levels of government (local, state, and federal) and neighboring jurisdictions in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises, disasters, and shared threats.

The follow-up report will be shared and then serve as the basis to provide Alexandria City Council and City Staff with recommendations for updates, revisions, and amendments to the *Safe and Resilient Community* focus area of the Alexandria Strategic Plan so that City Staff and resources may be applied towards holistically increasing the resilience and preparedness of the City.



Focus Areas

The project will address preparedness and resilience for crises, emergencies and disasters, whether large or small, routine or extraordinary in order to promote the concept of *Whole Community Resilience*. Our focus areas reflect FEMA’s definition of *Community Lifelines* and socio-economic factors, as depicted in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. The ResilientALX Project focuses on both lifelines and socio-economic considerations.



Disruptions to any of these can have cascading impacts to other lifelines and have economic and social effects as well.

Project Overview

Assessment

The CCC will organize and direct the assessments and provide written reports, assisted by graduate students to be recruited from local universities and other volunteers.

Through the assessment process, CCC will gather and analyze data on preparedness and resilience from various City demographics. This may include:

- Alexandria City residents and community organizations;



- City departments such as Police, Fire/EMS, and Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES);
- Private sector critical infrastructure businesses and those deemed essential (“lifelines”);
- Businesses potentially affected by disasters and emergencies;
- Organizations that provide disaster response and recovery services; and.
- Neighboring jurisdictions

In addition, the assessment will incorporate existing data on preparedness and efforts for disaster mitigation, response, and recovery.

Report

The Report will use findings from the assessments and identify perceived strengths and weaknesses in Alexandria’s resilience posture, along with opportunities for improvement. With a sensitivity to budget considerations, the report will further explore cost effective options for improving resilience, as well as identify grant and other funding opportunities to help the City realize its goals.

The City Council members of CCC will receive updates on progress during regularly scheduled CCC meetings. Over a two-year period, CCC will complete an initial and final assessment followed by a draft and a final report.

By relying on expert members of CCC, volunteers, and graduate students, the project will require only nominal costs in exchange for deliverables that would otherwise require a paid consultant.

Assumptions, Constraints, and Managing Those Project Risks

1. We assume a sufficient cadre of graduate students and other volunteers will be available to support design of survey instruments, collect survey data, analyze results and other information, and to draft the report.
 - However, COVID-19 may cause delays for project activities and associated deliverables.
 - We will explore obtaining grant funding for portions of the project to provide financial resources that will promote more dedicated assistance.
2. We also assume that cooperation of all groups and key stakeholders will be possible. However, meetings may be negatively impacted by restrictions related to COVID-19.
3. We assume that among stakeholders, there will be a willingness and openness to share information, based on the mutual understanding that disaster response and recovery are more effective when there is better understanding of respective areas of responsibility, improved information sharing, and early identification of available resources and capabilities.

Expected Outcomes

Throughout the reporting and assessment process, the CCC will create clear deliverables, which will be presented as basis from which The Alexandria Strategic Plan can be updated. Our goal will be to share a



clearer vision for preparedness and resilience planning across the City, while also forming a basis for which we may reduce the burden on the City’s first responders and disaster relief groups in emergency situations, allowing them to extend their reach to focus their resources and efforts on those most in need. These deliverables will include the following:

- A roadmap for educating Alexandria residents and businesses to become more knowledgeable and better prepared for and resilient to emergencies and disasters. This will encourage more educated and prepared residents and businesses so that they will ultimately experience less damage, less stress, and lower economic losses and be able to recover more quickly.
- A roadmap for planning mitigation of weaknesses in and hazards to the primary community lifelines or other conditions in order to reduce the impacts of disasters on people, property, and the environment and the associated financial costs of those impacts.
- A diagram that reflects the relationships and channels for communication with private sector lifeline businesses, emergency and disaster support partners, and regional organizations, which can be used to complement the planning and education amongst the various stakeholders.

Key Stakeholders

While the whole community shares responsibility for keeping Alexandria prepared for and resilient when disasters occur, the ResilientALX project will be socialized with groups that have significant capabilities for planning for and strengthening local capacity to deal with the impacts of disasters. CCC plans to socialize the charter, assessment, and report with these key stakeholders, across four tiers. Other stakeholders, not listed here will also be taken into consideration during project research.

Figure 2. CCC will seek input for elements of the ResilientALX project from four tiers of stakeholders.





Constituents of the stakeholder tiers are detailed below. Indicators after some constituents are based on responsibilities assigned in the City's 2016 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP): **P** = Primary; **PS** = Primary Support.

Tier 1

- Alexandria City Council: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Council Members (sponsor)
- City Manager (P), City Clerk, and City Attorney
- Alexandria's first responders
 - Fire, including the Office of Emergency Management (P)
 - Police (P and PS)
 - Sheriff (PS)
 - Emergency and Customer Communications
 - Alexandria Health Department (P)
- Official City Disaster / Emergency Response Support Groups
 - Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
 - Citizen Corps Council (CCC)
 - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
 - Volunteer Alexandria
 - Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
 - Alexandria Radio Club

Tier 2

- City Departments and Related Agencies (front-line or essential in disaster response or emergency preparedness)
 - Alexandria City Public Schools (PS)
 - Alexandria Transit Company (DASH bus) (PS)
 - Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
 - Code Administration (PS)
 - Communications & Public Information (P)
 - Community & Human Services
 - Finance (P)
 - General Services (PS)
 - Housing
 - Human Rights
 - Information Technology Services
 - Planning & Zoning
 - Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities (P and PS)
 - Transportation & Environmental Services (P and PS)



Tier 3

- Other City Departments and Agencies including, but not limited to Management & Budget, Project Implementation, Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA),
- AlexRenew

Tier 4 External Organizations

- Lifeline Organizations
 - INOVA Alexandria Hospital
 - American Red Cross
- Regional Responders
 - Virginia Department of Emergency Management Region 7
 - Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS)
 - Arlington County Emergency Management
 - Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management
 - Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (MWCOC)
 - Northern Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVVOAD)
- Faith-based and Service Organizations
- Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations and other neighborhood associations
- Business and Professional Organizations
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Small Business Development Center
 - Neighborhood business associations: Del Ray, Old Town, West End Business Association
- Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Related Plans and Initiatives

A. The City of Alexandria's Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 – FY2022 Strategic Plan highlights the importance of a *Safe and Resilient Community*. Resilience factors identified are:

- Avoiding preventable problems
- City government takes a regional view for emergency response and recovery
- Community members are prepared to handle emergencies and emerging risks
- Support for residents with special needs during emergencies
- Buildings are up to code to ensure they are structurally sound and safe

Resilience-related action items for FY 2018 from the Strategic Plan are to:

- Initiate a community risk reduction plan, with the goal of improving emergency preparedness
- Design waterfront flood mitigation

B. Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan

C. Alexandria Mobility Plan (forthcoming)



Contact Information

Alexandria CCC is pleased to take on this important assessment and reporting process. As such, we are seeking the ideas and insights of our community stakeholders. If you would like to learn more or provide input into this process, please contact the ResilientALX Committee Co-Chairs, Marjorie Windelberg at axcert@earthlink.net and Taryn Wilkinson at wilkinson.taryn@gmail.com, or Citizen Corps Council Chair, Patrick Moran at patrick@moranstrategy.com.



Charter Ratification Signatures

Mayor, Justin M. Wilson

City Manager, Mark B. Jinks

Deputy City Manager, Debra Collins

Fire Chief, Corey Smedley

Acting Emergency Manager, Raymond Whatley

CCC Chair, Patrick Moran

