

Good evening, I'm Susan Johnson Chair of the Early Childhood Commission. I admit I am not sure exactly what you are looking for tonight in the form of public comment but on the direction of the Commission I am here to comment on children as part of the Cities vision and plan for 2015.

We thank you for the invitations to many of use to be directly involved in this process but time and schedules often prevent the depth of involvement we would like. However, we have been keeping ourselves informed about the plan and following the various drafts through the process. At our last meeting we understood that two items which we are supportive of are part of the plan and with general direction to support these items and children the Commission asked the executive Board to draft a statement.

The Executive Board met and reviewed the draft strategic plan on the cities web site. We also reviewed it in light of previous drafts which we found a bit more friendly to read.

We are pleased that children are mentioned in this document but dismayed that they first appear on page 29 in the last objective of the last goal of the action plan for 2004-09 and not in the vision, mission of the city or related goal statements.

We are pleased that the before and after school program expansion is part of the policy actions for 2004-05 and that an early childhood intervention strategy (which we look forward to learning more about) is also part of the plan. We are not clear just how these items fit with the goal of **public schools that are among the best in northern Virginia** or the objective under that goal to **Prepare children to enter city schools with the basic knowledge and skills needed to be successful**. We also noted that neither of these two items had priority for the coming year.

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It is difficult to see a clear relationship between these goals and the objectives that follow in fact the whole document is difficult to understand and follow if you assume that it should show simply and clearly where we are going and how we are going to get there. We understand that there are many models for strategic planning but it is difficult to get a clear picture of just where this model is going.

Seward

by committee

In general the Board not speaking for the full commission... We felt the focus of the document was off center somehow. There are many wonderful statements in this document. If I were a tourist I would want to visit. But as a citizen I find that people and children are not as prominent in this vision as history, beauty, buildings and fiscal issues. And while all these issues involve people and benefit people they are not in themselves as important as the people and children of Alexandria and that is what we hoped this document would convey.