

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 5, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ECO-CITY CHARTER FOR THE ECO-CITY ALEXANDRIA PROJECT

ISSUE: Eco-City Charter for the Eco-City Alexandria Project.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the City Council:

- (1) Receive the proposed Eco-City Charter (Attachment 1a);
- (2) Docket the Charter for public hearing and adoption on June 14, 2008; and
- (3) Thank the Environmental Policy Commission, Virginia Tech, the community, and City staff who participated in the development of the Charter.

DISCUSSION: The proposed Eco-City Charter has been adopted and recommended by the City's Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) for adoption by the City Council. At its January 22, 2008, legislative meeting, Council received "A Green-Ventory of City Environmental Policies, Plans, and Programs." This document, which was developed over several months and involved Virginia Tech professors and graduate students, summarized existing City efforts to address a broad range of environmental issues implemented by the Departments of Planning & Zoning; Health; General Services; Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities and Transportation & Environmental Services. At the January 22 meeting, Council initiated Phases II and III of the Eco-City Alexandria project.

The main objectives of Phases II and III are to develop an Environmental Charter outlining the City's environmental vision and principles and to draft an Environmental Action Plan for the City. As part of the development of the Eco-City Charter, there was an extensive public outreach process including two City-sponsored public forums: the Eco-City Café on March 8, 2008, at George Washington Middle School and the Eco-City Summit on May 10, 2008, at T.C. Williams High School.

Development of the Eco-City Charter

Public Outreach Process

The extensive public outreach process for developing and drafting the Environmental Charter is summarized in Attachment 3. The process was developed under the general guidance of the Eco-City Steering Committee consisting of Vice Mayor Del Pepper and the Council Member Rob Krupicka along with the EPC Chair and senior staff from the five City departments involved in the Eco-City project. The Steering Committee also facilitated the interaction and discussion between Virginia Tech and City Staff and also provided input and helped with the outreach efforts.

- EPC held the Eco-City Café on March 8, 2008, to obtain public input to develop the Eco-City Charter. Over 120 people attended this event and they made numerous suggestions about the Charter.
- The draft of the Eco-City Charter was released to the public on the day of the City's Earth Day celebration, April 26, 2008. Public input, and input from City Boards and Commissions was solicited for this draft charter.
- The City and the EPC organized the Eco-City Summit on May 10 to obtain public comments and suggestions on the Charter through a series of questions. Based on this input and City staff's comments, the EPC finalized the Eco-City Charter and passed a resolution to recommend that the City Council adopt the Charter.

Eco-City Summit

The City and EPC received public comments on the draft Charter, made revisions, then presented the amended Charter at another successful public forum, the Eco-City Summit, at T.C. Williams High School on May 10, 2008. About 200 citizens, elected officials and staff participated in this event to discuss and vote on the guiding principles of the Charter and the key environmental issues within each guiding principle.

Mayor Bob Harvey, of the City of Waitakere, New Zealand, was the keynote speaker. He is widely considered a pioneer of the Eco-City concept for having successfully transformed Waitakere into an Eco-City. Mayor Bob Harvey recently sent a letter of support and encouragement for the City's effort (Attachment 4).

For the first time the City used the key-pad voting system provided by Place Matters. This system allows the participants to obtain instant summary and statistical results on their voting.

The public input on the individual guiding principles and the overall charter is summarized below:

Table I – Public Approval of the Guiding Principles and of the Overall Charter

Guiding Principle/ Overall Charter	% Public Approval of Eco-City Charter		
	% Agree Strongly	% Agree Somewhat	% Agree Strongly or Somewhat
Land Use and Open Space	67	25	92
Water Quality	67	25	92
Air Quality	64	26	90
Transportation	65	24	89
Energy	70	24	94
Building Green	71	23	94
Solid Waste	69	21	90
Environment & Health	64	25	89
Emerging Threats	68	25	94
Implementation	65	25	90
Overall Charter	68	25	93

Although the sample size is relatively small (~200 people attended the Summit), it can be seen from Table I that summit participants' input on the Eco-City Charter was consistently for each guiding principle as well as for the overall charter.

Based on the strong public consensus on the Draft Charter, the EPC proceeded with finalizing the Draft Charter taking into account the public comments received at the Summit. The EPC responses and revisions to the charter based on citizen comments at the Eco-City Summit are summarized in Attachment 5 and include primarily changes with respect to emphasizing "safe" drinking water and food; stressing the "historic character" aspect of the City; and making reference to preservation, redevelopment/renovation and development in that order of priority.

Next Steps – Development of the Environmental Action Plan

The collaboration with the Virginia Tech's Department of Urban Affairs and Planning has been very successful and staff has invited Virginia Tech to continue working with the City in its development of the Environmental Action Plan. Funding for this effort was approved in FY 2009 budget.

The Eco-City Steering Committee has also provided helpful feedback to staff in its effort to develop the Charter. I recommend that this steering committee continue to provide guidance to the Eco-City Alexandria project team for the development of the Environmental Action Plan.

The process required for the preparation of the Environmental Action Plan is being developed by the EPC, Virginia Tech's Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, and City staff. The process will be finalized by the end of July 2008, and a work session will be scheduled with the City Council this Fall. We are also planning a public forum on the plan in the fall. During the development of the Action Plan, EPC will continue to seek public input through their monthly Work Sessions and regular meetings.

As the City moves forward on the development and implementation of the Eco-City Environmental Action Plan, those components that require CIP funding or have impacts on the operating budget, such as additional funding or staff, will compete for funding through the normal budgeting process. The City will also pursue the numerous grant opportunities for funding environmental activities.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact with respect to adopting the recommendations in this docket item. However, implementation of some of the recommendations will have a fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1a. Draft Eco-City Charter, Approved by EPC and Pending for Adoption by City Council, May 19, 2008.
- 1 b. EPC Resolution, dated May 19, 2008, recommending adoption of Eco-City Charter.
2. Environmental Action Plan docket item dated January 22, 2008.
3. Summary list of outreach efforts for the development of the Eco-City Charter.
4. Mayor Bob Harvey's letter to Mayor William Euille, May 29, 2008.
5. EPC Responses and Charter Revisions, May 30, 2008.

STAFF:

Richard Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES Department
William Skrabak, Director, Office of Environmental Quality, T&ES
Lalit Sharma, P.E., Division Chief, Office of Environmental Quality, T&ES
Khoa Tran, Senior Air Pollution Control Specialist, Environmental Quality, T&ES
Kathleen Leonard, Public Information Specialist, T&ES



**[Final Draft Approved by EPC on May 19, 2008,
Pending Adoption by City Council]**

ECO-CITY CHARTER 2008

city of alexandria, virginia

COMPILED BY:

Environmental Policy Commission
City of Alexandria

The Urban Affairs and Planning Program
Virginia Polytechnic & State University
Alexandria Center

SUBMITTED TO:

Alexandria City Council
Mayor, William D. Euille
Vice Mayor, Redella S. "Del" Pepper
Councilman Ludwig P. Gaines
Councilman Rob Krupicka
Councilmember Timothy B. Lovain
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilman Justin M. Wilson



Eco-City Charter

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Vision

Definition of Sustainability

Guiding Principles

Roles & Responsibilities

Pledge & Commitment

MAY 19, 2008



vision

On September 14, 2004, the City Council of Alexandria, Virginia adopted the 2004-2015 Strategic Plan* that sets forth the following vision:

Alexandria is a Vibrant, Diverse, Historic, and Beautiful City with Unique Neighborhoods and Multiple Urban Villages where we take Pride in Our Great Community.

Using the 2015 Strategic Plan as our guide, we offer the following Eco-City Vision in which Alexandria's citizens, businesses, and City government participate in a vibrant community that is always mindful of the needs and lifestyles of the generations to come.

We see Alexandria as a city where social well-being is supported by a strong economy and sustained by a healthy environment. Specifically, we envision Alexandria as a city that:

Builds Wisely

Where our built environment preserves and maximizes open spaces, natural landscapes, historic resources, and recreational opportunities, while protecting and improving our natural environment and public health.

Embraces Natural Beauty

Where we create beautiful parks, gardens, streetscapes, trails, and open spaces that embrace Alexandria's natural beauty, preserve our biodiversity, increase our tree canopy and streamside vegetation, and encourage a healthy, active lifestyle for all of our residents.

Improves Water Quality

Where we celebrate our heritage as a great port city by improving the Potomac River waterfront, eliminating combined sewer overflows, reducing storm water runoff, and improving the quality of our streams so that they are once again fishable and swimmable.

Clears the Air

Where we reduce significantly air pollution from all sources including vehicles, industrial sources, and power plants.

* See <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/council/info/strategicplan.pdf>



Moves Smartly

Where we travel less and less by car and increasingly by mass transit, walking, and bicycling.

Conserves Energy and Resources

Where we reduce our energy and water use and minimize our environmental footprint.

Minimizes Waste

Where we reuse and recycle materials and significantly reduce our volume of solid waste and toxic chemical releases.

Supports Healthy Living

Where we create environmental policy and programs not only for a healthier planet but also for a healthier and safer citizenry.

Readies for Change

Where we foresee and mitigate the impacts of environmental threats such as climate change.

Leads Intelligently & Holistically

Where we implement change harmoniously and synergistically across interdependent areas.

Shares Responsibility

Where individuals take responsibility, decision-making is shared, and the community works together to achieve common goals that reflect the interests of a growing, diverse, and well-informed population.

definition of sustainability

Sustainability means meeting our community's present needs while preserving our historic character and ensuring the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves balancing and integrating environmental, economic, health and social issues so as to maximize the quality of life for all of Alexandria's residents. Sustainability also requires us to consider the impacts of our decisions and actions beyond the City of Alexandria and seek the continuous evolution of policies and programs.

guiding principles

The following guiding principles are rooted in the definition of sustainability and reflect the goals established in Alexandria's 2015 Strategic Plan. This interdependent network of guiding principles and policies is consistent with a systematic and integrated approach to sustainability.

LAND USE & OPEN SPACE

The City's land use and open space policies must harmonize its built and natural environments to ensure that growth does not jeopardize environmental sustainability and preserves Alexandria's character. The City's land use policies will accommodate increases in people and jobs through green development that:

- Ensures that land use is designed to encourage walking, biking, and public transportation through mixed-use zoning, interconnected pathways, and targeted density increases around public transportation hubs.
- Creates greater opportunities for sustainable compact development and redevelopment that requires the use of green building practices and prioritizes provision of usable open space and recreational areas.
- Ensures that City building codes, zoning ordinances, and other land use regulations reflect the goals of this Charter, so that sustainability requirements are consistently applied to all preservation, redevelopment, and development across Alexandria in ways appropriate to the character of the particular neighborhood.
- Ensures that development protects and enhances natural resource capacity.
- Protects, enhances, and increases Alexandria's open space and green infrastructure including wildlife habitat, parks, trails, tree canopy, and watersheds.
- Ensures that land use decisions do not foster or perpetuate social injustice.

WATER RESOURCES

Alexandria's past, present, and future are indelibly linked to the Potomac River and the quality of life the river sustains. Water quality in Alexandria will be managed in a sustainable manner consistent with good stewardship of the local streams, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay for the public health, ecological and recreational benefits of current and future generations. The City will:

- Promote public health by continuing to ensure safe and reliable drinking water.
- Use environmentally responsible flood management, stormwater control, and wastewater treatment to protect the public's health and property.
- Promote - through sustainable practices - safe, swimmable, and fishable waterways for its citizens and visitors, and enhance the ecological integrity of its downstream waters, by minimizing stormwater runoff and pollutants draining to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

- Advocate water conservation and reuse in order to preserve the quantity, not just the quality, of our water resources.

AIR QUALITY

Alexandria faces significant challenges in improving air quality including those presented by emissions from vehicles, older industrial facilities, and the regional transport of air pollution. Given that one in eight residents have respiratory illnesses, the City should influence and control emissions sources in a manner that reflects the choices and wishes of the community. The City and its citizens will:

- Enhance their ability to manage outdoor air quality from damaging pollutants in its jurisdiction and will consider emerging threats when establishing outdoor air quality goals and regulatory approaches.
- Be proactive in protecting public health and ecological quality by lowering the amount and number of sources of air, light, and noise pollution.
- Educate those who manage commercial and public buildings on methods for improving indoor air quality and educate citizens on the harms associated with poor indoor air quality.

TRANSPORTATION

The City of Alexandria will encourage modes of transportation that reduce dependence upon the private automobile by promoting mass transit and pedestrian- and bike-friendly transportation networks. The City will integrate transportation options with land use decisions in order to ensure a healthy environment while continuing economic growth. The City will:

- Provide all its citizens - regardless of age, income, race or ability - with safe, accessible, efficient, and affordable transportation options.
- Prioritize walking, biking, and public transit in order to discourage single-occupancy vehicles.
- Reduce the environmental footprint of travel by introducing, designing and encouraging sustainable methods of transport and infrastructure.

ENERGY

The quantity and sources of energy used by Alexandria's government, businesses and residents impact our environment and quality of life—whether it be through pollutants added to the air, negative effects on water quality or local contributions to climate change. Recognizing this, Alexandria commits to managing its energy—both the electricity that powers our buildings and homes and the fuel that powers our vehicles and other equipment—based upon the following principles:

- Reduce energy consumption through conservation.
- Produce energy locally and sustainably, through installation and promotion of the use of renewable and efficient energy technologies.
- Convert existing uses of fossil-fuel energy to renewable energy.

We envision and work toward a day when Alexandria relies solely on renewable energy sources.

BUILDING GREEN

Alexandria's government, businesses, and citizens impact our environment through the choices they make when renovating existing structures and constructing new ones. These choices manifest themselves in the quantity and types of energy we use, the impact we have on our water quality, the amount of waste we create, the amount and quality of green space available to us, and our public health. Therefore, the City's building practices will:

- Adopt and maintain initiatives that require best in practice measures to reduce overall environmental impact of renovation, redevelopment, and new development.
- Integrate green building and sustainability standards into all private and public development, including historic preservation, renovation, and new construction.
- Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and promote the reuse and recycling of building materials in all development.

SOLID WASTE

Recognizing that managing waste is a public health issue as well as a quality of life issue, Alexandria will maintain its well-preserved public image by managing, handling, and disposing of solid waste in an environmentally sustainable manner. Alexandria will manage waste as a hierarchy of uses with the following priorities:

- Priority One: Reduce
- Priority Two: Reuse
- Priority Three: Recycle
- Priority Four: Resource recovery (e.g., convert to energy, composting, etc.)
- Priority Five: Proper disposal

ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH

Sustainability is not just about the health of the earth; it is also about human health. Indoor and outdoor air quality, water quality, land use planning, toxic chemical exposure, noise and light pollution, and the safety and habitability of buildings directly impact human health and the natural environment. Alexandria will:

- Promote and support policies and individual decisions that reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants, minimize environmental impact, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- Increase equitable access to safe, healthy, and organic food, in particular for children and adolescents, and encourage local and regional food production.

EMERGING THREATS

Alexandria must be adaptive and responsive to emerging and unforeseen environmental threats — such as climate change — that could strain infrastructure, deplete natural resources, disrupt the economy, and threaten public health. Failure to respond quickly and appropriately to such threats will likely have severe consequences for the health and economy of Alexandria and its citizens. To better prepare for and avert environmental crises, Alexandria will:

- Make policy, infrastructure, and land use decisions that prepare for flooding, drought, disease, and other impacts to humans and wildlife from environmental threats such as climate change.
- Conserve energy and achieve carbon-neutrality.

- Identify ways to reduce/eliminate nutrient loading to waterways.
- Conduct accurate and continual assessments of resource and infrastructure capacity when planning to ensure growth and development does not exceed capacity.
- Ensure that Alexandria understands these threats, its role in the problem, and its part in the solution.

IMPLEMENTATION

Improving environmental quality, conservation and the public welfare requires a harmonized approach to implementation, as well as collaboration both within and around Alexandria. The primary responsibility of environmental stewardship shall be equally shared by all Alexandrians. In order to achieve the Eco-City Vision and the Guiding Principles set forth in this Charter, the City will:

- Educate and engage its citizens, visitors, local businesses, schools, and civic organizations on the City's concept of sustainability, the importance of identifying goals for environmental quality, and the vision and principles of this Charter.
- Develop and encourage more public-private-civic partnerships within Alexandria and beyond, and work with federal, state, and neighboring governments to implement these principles and achieve sustainability.
- Conserve resources, make sustainable purchasing choices, and make the long- and short-term investments necessary to achieve the principles of this Charter.
- Ensure city policies give incentives for achieving the vision and principles of this Charter and disincentives for behaviors that impede sustainability.
- Become a leader, educator, advocate, facilitator, integrator, and innovator in sustainability.

roles & responsibilities

The Eco-City Charter serves as a guide for moving the city towards a sustainable future. Fulfilling this Charter requires coordinated participation and commitment by the EPC, City government, and the community. The Charter's success depends on each of these parties taking an active and innovative role as stewards and guardians of this Charter's principles and vision.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMISSION

- Develop an Environmental Action Plan that adheres to the principles outlined in this Charter and advances the City towards the vision of a sustainable city; review and revise the Action Plan as needed, but no less than once every five years.

- Inform and educate the community on the vision, principles, and policies outlined in the Charter and the Environmental Action Plan.
- Identify specific steps that citizens and businesses can take to help Alexandria achieve the principles and vision set forth in this Charter.
- Work with and support City Departments, Boards, and Commissions to promote and ensure that the principles within the Charter are considered in key decisions and infused in City programs and policies.
- Produce an annual report card that evaluates the progress of the City toward meeting the sustainable vision set forth in the Charter and Environmental Action Plan.
- Review the Charter no less than every ten years and amend as necessary to ensure that it continues to meet emerging sustainability issues and the needs of the City and its residents.

CITY COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER, CITY DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

- Lead by example: identify and implement specific projects for the City government to become more sustainable and create incentives for Alexandria citizens to do the same.
- Maintain our best environmental practices while investing in new ideas to achieve the vision and principles of this Charter.
- Incorporate sustainability practices, and encourage interdepartmental coordination to ensure all City decisions are compatible with the principles of the Charter.
- Work with the Environmental Policy Commission to advance the principles in the Charter and the steps set forth in the Environmental Action Plan.
- Work to make sustainability the natural, easy, and preferred choice for decisions by the City as well as its citizens and businesses.
- Develop and implement an outreach program to educate the community on the vision and principles in the Charter, with particular attention on ensuring that the City's youth are given a foundation of knowledge in the principles of environmental stewardship.
- Identify and develop key regional partnerships to address the sustainability challenges of the region.

CITIZENS & COMMUNITY

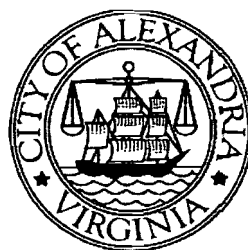
- Take responsibility for the social, environmental, economic, and health impacts of our decisions and be accountable for our actions.
- Encourage children, businesses, neighbors and community organizations to practice and demand sustainability.
- Engage in and contribute to the City's sustainability planning processes and bring forth ideas to ensure the Charter and the Environmental Action Plan are current and meet the needs of the community.
- Hold local, regional, state, and national leaders accountable for achieving sustainability.

pledge & commitment

We the undersigned will guide the City of Alexandria to a sustainable future. To achieve this, we commit our active participation and support to the actions outlined in this Charter.

*Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Departments
Environmental Policy Commission*

This charter is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Alexandria, its Environmental Policy Commission, and Virginia Tech's Urban Affairs & Planning Program in Alexandria.



16



City of Alexandria, Virginia
Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

P. O. Box 178
Alexandria, Virginia 22313



June 4, 2008

Mayor and City Council of Alexandria
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Eco-City Charter

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

Enclosed herewith please find the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) Resolution Recommending Adoption of the Eco-City Charter and the Eco-City Charter, both approved unanimously by the EPC on May 19, 2008. Also included is a document entitled "Citizen Comments on Eco-City Charter: EPC Responses and Charter Revisions." This document outlines comments received from the public on the Eco-City Charter and explains the EPC's rationale for changes made to the draft Charter discussed at the May 10, 2008 Eco-City Summit.

The EPC is proud of this Charter and are very grateful for the assistance we received from the City, Virginia Tech, and Alexandria citizens and stakeholders in creating what we believe to be a unique and vital document that we hope will both help Alexandria become a true Eco-City and serve as inspiration for other communities to do the same. We strongly recommend that the Council adopt the enclosed Charter and that it encourage others to pledge their commitment to its realization.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle C. Fidler".

Danielle C. Fidler
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

Cc: James K. Hartmann
William Skrabak
Rich Baier

Resolution Recommending Adoption of the Eco-City Charter

WHEREAS in 1998, the City of Alexandria and the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) brought together more than 200 residents, business leaders, civic activists and elected officials for an Environmental Quality of Life Summit to reaffirm the City's commitment to environmental stewardship of the City and to endorse the City's first environmental action plan; and

WHEREAS the City then expanded on this plan through the creation of the Transportation & Environmental Services Department (T&ES), implementation of an open space plan, adoption of a water quality plan and recent development of the Transportation Master Plan and Urban Forestry Plan; and

WHEREAS in January 2008, the City Council charged the EPC with assistance from T&ES to lead and manage a new strategic environmental planning process. The *Eco-City Alexandria* project would address local and regional environmental challenges that have emerged since 1998, including issues and opportunities such as climate change, rising energy costs and sustainability, aging stormwater infrastructure, Chesapeake Bay watershed protection, and green building design; and

WHEREAS the EPC, in collaboration with City Staff and Virginia Tech's Graduate School of Urban Affairs and Planning, conducted numerous activities to support this strategic planning process, such as:

- (1) A 2007 inventory of existing City environmental policies, plans, and programs, which was documented in *Eco-City Alexandria Greenventory* Report;
- (2) A review and analysis of sustainability charters, policy plans, strategies and resolutions from several cities and counties throughout the United States and abroad;
- (3) A series of events to solicit community input, including a half-day Eco-City Café featuring a series of conversations among over 100 community representatives offering their vision of sustainability and related principles and goals for the City, a full-day Eco-City Summit where over 150 Alexandria citizens and stakeholders commented and voted on the draft *Eco-City Charter*, and an on-line Eco-City Survey for collecting community input on sustainability in the City; and
- (4) Held several EPC meetings researching and discussing sustainability concepts, principles, and themes, and what it means to be an Eco-City.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the EPC hereby endorses and recommends that City Council adopt the attached *Eco-City Alexandria Charter* and recommends that City Council work with the EPC, City departments, Boards and Commissions to develop policies, plans and actions that are consistent with the vision and principles defined within this Charter; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the EPC will develop an Environmental Action Plan with a menu of short and long range policies, programs, and benchmarks to implement the principles outlined in the Charter and advance the City towards the vision of a sustainable Eco-City; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the EPC will offer guidance and support to City Departments, Boards and Commission on the development of these plans and actions; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the EPC will produce an annual report on the progress of the City towards its vision and will review and revise the Charter no less than every five years to ensure that it continues to meet emerging sustainability issues and the needs of the City and its residents.

Adopted Unanimously on May 19, 2008


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle C. Fidler', is written over a horizontal line.

Danielle C. Fidler, Chair

EXHIBIT NO. 115
1-22-08*City of Alexandria, Virginia***MEMORANDUM**

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF PHASE I OF THE ECO-CITY PROJECT, A GREEN-VENTORY OF CITY ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMS AND CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INIATIVES (ICLEI)

ISSUES: Receipt of Phase I of the Eco-City Project, a Green-Ventory of City Environmental Policies, Plans and Programs and Resolution authorizing the City to join the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

- 1) Receive the Green-Ventory of City Environmental Policies, Plans, and Programs report prepared by Virginia Tech. We will make the report available, primarily through the City's Web site, and we will issue a press release to highlight the City's environmental accomplishments and ongoing activities;
- 2) Adopt the attached resolution authorizing the City to join ICLEI; and
- 3) Note upcoming Eco-City Project events including Alexandria Earth Day scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2008 and the Environmental Summit scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2008.

DISCUSSION:

Eco-City Project In 1998, City officials and community leaders engaged in a collaborative process to produce Alexandria's first environmental strategic action plan. More than 200 residents, business leaders, civic activists, and elected officials attended the Environmental Quality of Life Summit. The Summit and Action Plan produced dozens of ideas and recommendations to enhance existing, and to develop new environmental programs and policies. Subsequently, the City has made great progress in addressing these issues through the implementation of the Open Space Plan, the adoption of the Water Quality Plan, and the development of a Transportation Master Plan.

With the passage of nearly ten years, we need to design a new environmental action plan that sets forth goals and priorities for the *next* ten years:

- The City and the region will confront new environmental challenges, e.g., climate change, rising energy costs, aging stormwater infrastructure, and dwindling opportunities for preserving open space;
- Support for protecting the environment continues to grow. In 2005 Mayor Euille endorsed a series of national resolutions on the environment that were formally adopted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM). Alexandria formally joined the USCM/Sierra Club Cool Cities Initiative;
- Alexandria, like many communities, has launched new environmental policies related to open space, urban forestry, Chesapeake Bay watershed protection, recycling, and green building design;
- Numerous cities across the nation have created model environmental programs. Several cities have devised holistic ecological plans and launched sustainability programs that Alexandria could adapt to fit local needs.

The primary challenge is pulling together all of Alexandria's respective plans, programs, and policies into one unified and cohesive action plan and then coordinating its implementation across existing City departments.

Building on the legacy of the 1998 Environmental Quality of Life Summit, and at the suggestion of Councilman Krupicka and Vice Mayor Pepper, Council requested the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) and City staff to partner with Virginia Tech University's Urban Affairs and Planning program in Alexandria to design and manage a new strategic environmental planning process called *Eco-City Alexandria*. The City Council approved the Eco-City Project at the Council meeting on January 23, 2007 (Attachment 1).

As part of Phase I of the Eco-City Project, Virginia Tech subsequently worked with the EPC and City departments to produce two documents:

- "A Green-Ventory of City Environmental Policies, Plans, and Programs" (Attachment 2). This document was developed over several months and involved Virginia Tech Professors and graduate students reviewing and summarizing existing City efforts addressing a broad variety of environmental issues implemented by the Departments of

Planning & Zoning, Health, General Services, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Activities and Transportation & Environmental Services.

- “Compendium of Model Environmental Policies and Programs.” This document is intended to identify model policies, programs and Best Management Practices (BMPs) that other jurisdictions have implemented that the City may wish to consider evaluating for inclusion in the Environmental Action Plan. The document is presently in draft form but is intended to be made available for release prior to the Summit.

City staff held several discussions with Virginia Tech during September 2007 on the scope of work and budget for Phases II and III of the Eco-City Project. The main objectives of Phases II and III are to develop an Environmental Charter outlining the City’s environmental vision and principles, to draft an Environmental Action Plan for the City and to facilitate an Environmental Summit scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2008, at T.C. Williams High School.

The process of drafting the Environmental Charter includes Virginia Tech staff facilitating brainstorming sessions with the City’s key departments involved with environmental issues. Virginia Tech will also facilitate an Environmental Charter writing workshop with the EPC. The EPC has also sent letters to all the City Boards and Commissions soliciting their input on identifying and prioritizing the environmental issues in the City. A similar letter will be sent to civic, citizen and other groups. It is anticipated that a draft of the Environmental Charter will be available at the Summit to solicit public comment. The input from the public will be used to identify and prioritize the environmental issues that should be addressed in the Environmental Action Plan. The proposed schedule calls for the Environmental Charter to be considered by Council in June of 2008.

The final task of the Eco-City Project is the development and adoption of the City Environmental Action Plan. After reviewing the Compendium of Model Programs and Plans, receiving input from the public, Boards and Commissions, civic and other groups, City staff working with the EPC and Virginia Tech will develop a draft Environmental Action Plan to be presented to the City Council for consideration in FY 2009.

As the City moves forward with the development and implementation of the Eco-City Environmental Action Plan, those components that require CIP funding or have impacts on the operating budget, such as additional funding or staff, will compete for funding through the normal budgeting process. The City will also pursue the numerous grant opportunities for funding environmental activities.

Alexandria’s Climate Change Initiatives including the recommendation to join ICLEI

In 2005, the Mayor signed on behalf of the City, the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and as a result, the City was recognized by the Sierra Club as a “Cool City” for moving forward with solutions to reduce global warming.

As part of this broad effort the City is pursuing a variety of measures that will help reduce global climate change. Specifically, the City is implementing the Open Space Master Plan, developing an Urban Forestry Plan, increasing and enhancing our recycling program, pursuing good land use

policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space and create compact walkable urban communities, promoting transit and the use of bike trails, and participating in the Clean Air Partners Program. The City Department of General Services has hired an energy manager and adopted a Green Building Policy for City facilities that includes the use of energy efficient fixtures and compact fluorescent bulbs. The City installed green roofs on City buildings including the Health Department and the Duncan Library and is pursuing LEED certification on many more City Projects. The new T.C. Williams High School was built to be a LEED certified building.

Following through on Alexandria's commitment to the 2005 Conference of Mayors Climate Change Protection Agreement, the City is planning to develop an emissions inventory of greenhouse gases and other criteria air pollutants. To facilitate the development of this inventory, City Council approved funding for this task in FY 2008. In addition, staff recommends that the City joins ICLEI as a full member by passing the attached resolution (Attachment 3). As a member of ICLEI, the City is entitled to use their software that will assist in the development of the emission inventory.

ICLEI is an international membership association of local governments dedicated to addressing issues through local actions. The organization was founded in 1990 when more than 200 local governments from 43 countries convened at their inaugural conference, the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future, at the United Nations in New York.

The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCP) is ICLEI's hallmark program that engages cities, towns, and counties in reducing the pollution that causes global warming. At present, there are more than 250 municipalities in the United States that have joined CCP and passed resolutions pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their local government operations and throughout their communities. To achieve this goal, ICLEI has established the following milestones for its members.

1. **Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast**
The emission inventory will provide a quantitative analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the City of Alexandria. The first of the analyses will focus on emissions from government buildings, fleet vehicles, and operations, and secondly community-wide emissions from residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and waste sectors.
2. **Establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target**
The City will establish an emission reduction target based upon data gathered from the emission inventory analyses. The reduction target is the specific GHG emissions reduction goal the City will aim to achieve by a designated year, taking into account the emissions produced during the baseline year.
3. **Develop a Climate Action Plan**
The Climate Action Plan will describe the policies, programs, and projects the City will implement to meet the GHG reduction target. These policies and programs will focus on reducing emissions from industrial sources such as power plants, mobile sources, and residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

4. **Implement the action plan**

T&ES and other City Departments will develop performance measures, timelines, and the financial requirements needed to successfully implement the strategies outlined in the action plan. These efforts will be coordinated by the City's internal Environmental Coordination Group and incorporated into the Environmental Action Plan.

5. **Monitor and report progress**

Monitoring activities are pivotal for determining the success of the plan. This will be an ongoing exercise performed by City staff to assess overall accomplishments and refine policies and goals.

The annual membership dues for ICLEI are based upon the population size of the municipality. Alexandria has approximately 136,000 residents, and the annual cost is \$1,750. This annual fee includes the following services:

- Access to and training for Clean Air and Climate Protection (CACP) emission inventory software;
- Technical support for CACP software at a discount price;
- ICLEI Toolkit which contains information on funding, technology, barriers, outreach, and case studies related to climate change initiatives;
- Media support in the form of talking points and press releases; and participation in national, state, and regional workshops for both elected and staff representatives.

FISCAL IMPACT: This phase, Phase I of the plan, was funded in the amount of \$15,000. In FY 2008, Council approved \$50,000 for completing Phases II and III of the Eco-City Project. With respect to the recommendations in this docket item, annual membership costs for the City to be a member of ICLEI are \$1,750. The Department of T&ES will absorb those costs within its existing budget for FY 2008. City staff will evaluate the membership benefits prior to renewing membership in future years. Finally, the City may receive donations, to assist in funding the Eco-City Project. For example, the City has already received \$4,000 from the Virginia American Water Company to underwrite some of the costs of the Eco-City Environmental Summit.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 Environmental Action Plan docket item dated January 23, 2007

Attachment 2 "A Green-Ventory of City Environmental Policies, Plans, and Programs"

Attachment 3 Proposed resolution authorizing the City to join ICLEI

STAFF:

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William Skrabak, Division Chief, Environmental Quality, T&ES

Lalit Sharma, P.E., Program Supervisor, Environmental Quality, T&ES

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ATTACHMENT 3

ECO-CITY ALEXANDRIA

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Date	Activity	Objective
10-09-07	Meeting with Vice Mayor Del Pepper and Councilman Rob Krupicka	Kick off phases II and III of Eco-City project Establish Steering Committee
10-30-07	EPC Chair sent out letters to Alexandria Boards and Commissions	Invite them to identify and bring to EPC's attention environmental issues facing the City and Alexandrians
11-13-07	Environmental Coordination Group (ECG) meeting	Update on Eco-City project, and request submission of recent environmental achievements
12-10-07	Staff presentation at the Open Space Advisory Group	Update on Eco-City project
12-13-07 01-03-08 01-15-08 01-31-08 03-04-08	Virginia Tech brainstorming session with City departments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Rec • T & ES • P&Z • GS • Alexandria Health Department 	Develop environmental action plan
12-19-07	EPC/ staff presence at the Archeology Commission meeting	Discuss Eco-City project
01-10-08	EPC/ staff presentation at the Alexandria Beautification Commission	Discuss Eco-City project
01-22-08	Adoption of Eco-City resolution by Council and Eco-City project kick-off	Considering endorsing MWCOG green building recommendations Join ICLEI Present deliverables for Phase I of Eco-City project Present brochure on City's Climate Change Initiatives
02-07-08	Holmes Run Park Committee	Discuss Eco-City project
02-12-08	ECG meeting	Bring other City departments up to date on the Eco-City project
03-08-08	Eco-City Café	Public discussion on environmental charter and action plan
03-25-08	ECG meeting	Bring other City departments up to date on the Eco-City project
04-04-08	EPC Charter drafting session	Draft the Eco-City Charter
04-08-08	Earth Day proclamation by Mayor	
04-14-08	Christine Michaels (Chamber of Commerce) Panel interview Re Eco-City project	

Date	Activity	Objective
04-15-08	ECG meeting	Bring other City departments up to date on the Eco-City project
04-16-08	Mayor's invitation to Eco-Summit letter was sent by mail to all City's commissioners and board members, Churches, and Homeowner Association Committee. (1200-1500 people),	
04-21-08	Rob Krupicka: Comcast Newsmakers Interview Re: Eco-City Alexandria Initiative	
04-26-08	Earth Day at Ben Brenman Park	Draft Eco-City Charter was presented to the public for comments
05-01-08	3WT Radio interview on Eco-City project	
05-10-08	Eco-City Summit at T.C. Williams High School	Public discussion and input on draft Environmental Charter and development of Action Plan
05-19-08	EPC adoption of draft Charter and recommendation to City Council	
06-14-08	Public hearing and possible adoption of draft Charter by City Council	



Waitakere City Council

Office of The Mayor, Bob Harvey

FILE COPY

Mayor Euille and Councillors
City of Alexandria
301 King St
Alexandria, VA 22314
United States of America

May 29 2008

Dear mayor and council members

I understand you are shortly to discuss, and hopefully adopt, the "Eco-City Charter".

I take this opportunity to offer my support and congratulations on this initiative. There is absolutely no doubt that sustainability must be at the core of council/city operations in the 21st century.

Indeed sustainability and environmental protection and enhancement are as vital and important as roads, rubbish and other essential services.

For many years the world has been looking to the United States for an indication of what the world's leading energy consumer and greenhouse gas emitter would be doing in this area. Congratulations to Alexandria for taking up the challenge.

Kind regards

ROBERT A HARVEY QSO, JP
MAYOR
WAITAKERE

CITIZEN COMMENTS FROM ECO-CITY SUMMIT

EPC RESPONSES AND CHARTER REVISIONS

May 30, 2008

Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) carefully reviewed all citizen comments about the Eco-City Charter compiled by Virginia Tech from the May 10th Eco City Summit. At their May 19th meeting the EPC chose to focus on those comments that were consistent with the existing principles, address gaps, and that could also enhance the Eco-City Charter. For those comments that related to specific policies and programs, EPC will consider those this fall when they develop a new Environmental Action Plan.

Summarized below are the suggestions made to each of the eleven principles followed by EPC's actions and responses. Remarks in italics indicates EPC made the proposed change or comment. A strike-out version of the Charter is also attached. It highlights all changes the EPC made to Charter since the Summit.

LAND USE AND OPEN SPACE PRINCIPLE – Summit Comments

- ◆ Reframe the opening paragraph to make it more positive – *EPC added “preserve” instead of “adversely affects” Alexandria’s character*
- ◆ Suggestions on the inclusion of historic preservation -- *EPC added this*
- ◆ Suggestion to add “protects and enhances ...” natural resource capacity to more clearly depict the balance between higher/more dense development in order to preserve open space – *EPC agreed*
- ◆ Suggestions to recognize the social impacts of land use decisions – re-gentrification and displacement, and social justice – *EPC added a bullet to reflect the importance of these social impacts*

BUILDING GREEN – Summit Comments

- ◆ It was suggested that the second sentence is repetitive, since it addresses other principles but later in the discussion, the EPC felt that the language as written was important and should remain in the charter.
- ◆ Suggestions to emphasis adaptive reuse where possible – *EPC liked this suggestion and added a new bullet about adaptive reuse and they also ranked priorities of development by citing renovation, redevelopment and new construction in that priority order when referenced.*
- ◆ Recognize that historic preservation is a key aspect to building green – *EPC reviewed these comments and decided to add the concept of “preservation” to the new bullet about reuse; they also decided to explain how the city should address the challenge of balancing building green with maintaining the integrity of historic structures in the Action Plan.*
- ◆ There were several suggestions that seemed to be more appropriate for the Implementation Principle; the topics included: “responsible partnerships”; “research

Summit Comments to Amend the Charter

of green building initiatives and benefits”; and incentives for building green. However, the EPC decided that they would address enforcement and incentives in the Environmental Action Plan.

ENERGY – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggestions to broaden the focus to include efficient utilization of energy (e.g., CFLs, Energy Star products, etc.) – *EPC added this concept*
- ◆ Suggestions to produce energy locally – much interest in small scale solar, wind and other non-polluting generation – *EPC liked this suggestion by decided that it was more appropriate for the Environmental Action Plan than the Charter*

AIR QUALITY – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggestion to mention both stationary and mobile sources of air pollution – EPC discussed this and decided that they can accomplish that by referring to vehicles and facilities. The EPC preferred this approach, because the terms -- “stationary and mobile” are environmental policy jargon.
- ◆ Suggestions to strengthen the connection between air pollution and public health policies. The EPC thought this comment was more relevant for the Environmental Action Plan since they felt existing language in this principle and in other parts of the Charter make a good connection between air quality and health (e.g., the specific referencing to the number of individuals with respiratory illness).
- ◆ Air quality is related to CO₂ emissions and should be referenced as such. The EPC members purposefully did not want to emphasize a single pollutant in this or any other section since the Charter and its principles set forth a broad vision and scope. Additionally, the EPC did not want to emphasize greenhouse gas at the expense of deemphasizing the control of other pollutants with more immediate (i.e., local) effects, such as those typically associated with car emissions.
- ◆ Suggestion to change the language from “maintain” to “improve” air quality, since Alexandria doesn’t meet the Federal requirements now. *EPC accepted this suggestion.*

WATER QUALITY – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggested that a specific reference to the tributaries as well as the Potomac River – “local waterways” or watersheds be added, (especially those in Alexandria, e.g., Holmes, Cameron, and 4 Mile Runs) EPC members felt that the reference to “local streams” was sufficient without listing all the names of relevant waterways within the region.
- ◆ Suggestion was made to specifically reference to groundwater management – EPC decided that groundwater management is beyond the scope of this bullet, which is focused on surface impacts from flooding, etc.
- ◆ Suggestion that there is mention of the importance to “advocate and promote water conservation and reuse” -- *EPC agreed.*

Summit Comments to Amend the Charter

- ◆ Suggestion that “city should take an active role in regional stormwater-related initiatives and collaboration”. EPC believes that regional relationships is specifically mentioned under the Implementation principle that applies to all principles, not just to water quality; regionalism is also mentioned under Roles and Responsibilities for the City Council.
- ◆ Reduce water usage through conservation (not just water quality) – *EPC agreed and renamed the principle to “water resources” instead of “water quality”*

TRANSPORTATION – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggestion to separate transportation modes from setting a priority by mode type. *EPC liked this suggestion and created a new bullet.*
- ◆ Suggestion to remove the reference to villages is too narrow – *EPC agreed*
- ◆ Suggestion to make a closer connection between land use and transportation – *the EPC agreed*
- ◆ Suggestion to remove the reference to “National Complete Streets Coalition” because it is too specific and while it might be a contemporary approach today, it might be dated 10 years from now – *EPC agreed*
- ◆ Suggestion to add the importance of accessible modes to this principle – *the EPC agreed and added “safe, accessible, efficient and affordable ...”*

SOLID WASTE – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggestion to clarify the reference to “zero waste” and whether this is realistic – *EPC removed the term and added priority setting on how to dispose of waste*
- ◆ Suggestions to add reference to composting – *EPC agreed and added it to “resource recovery”*

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – Summit Comments

- ◆ Suggestions to change the name of this section to “Environment and Health”. It was felt by some that “environmental health” was too narrow in its focus. – *EPC agreed and changed the name of the principle*
- ◆ Suggestion to mention noise pollution under this principle, even though it is mentioned under the Air Quality principle. EPC decided that it was more appropriate under the Air Quality principle
- ◆ Suggestion to add both indoor and outdoor air quality – *EPC accepted this and added “Indoor and outdoor” air quality, water quality,”*
- ◆ Change the phrasing of “health lifestyle” to “healthy lifestyle” – *EPC made this editorial change.*
- ◆ Promote more locally grown food choices, not just organic food options – *EPC agreed*

EMERGING THREATS

- ◆ Suggestion this principle needs to connote a sense of urgency, especially in light of discussions on climate change – *EPC agreed and added new language*

Summit Comments to Amend the Charter

- ◆ Emphasize that public infrastructure in the city is dated and must be updated to address these emerging threats, esp. rise in water levels – EPC members agreed but decided that this should be addressed in the Environmental Action Plan
- ◆ Suggestion to mention population density and development patterns are a threat – EPC members felt this was addressed under the Land Use principle and is also implied by last bullet
- ◆ Concern about the “carbon neutrality” language; seems like jargon and the rest of the document is jargon-free – EPC felt that carbon neutrality is now common term and could be used
- ◆ Suggestion to add “stormwater management” – EPC included this under Water Resources principle
- ◆ Suggestions to list anticipated emerging threats – EPC members felt this might limit and date the charter for the future
- ◆ Several comments about the need to educate Alexandrians about these emerging threats since the city population is transient and citizens need to commit to personal action – EPC felt that education and outreach is addressed in the implementation principle that applies to all principles of the Charter and they will also address specific implementation strategies and programs under the Action Plan

IMPLEMENTATION

- ◆ Include “facilitating sustainability” – EPC felt this was implied in last bullet
- ◆ Suggestions that this should not be a principle because it is a method and seems perhaps more appropriate for the Action Plan– EPC felt that setting general guidelines under this principle for implementation would be critical to the overall import and effectiveness of the Charter.
- ◆ Participants had offered a variety of suggestions that were detailed and specific, such awards and incentive programs, enhanced coordination with the school regarding environmental education, and citizen outreach efforts – EPC appreciated all of these suggestions and comments and will incorporate them into the Environmental Action planning process
- ◆ Suggestion to add “educator” to the last bullet – *EPC agreed*
- ◆ Suggestion to an enforcement clause under this principle – *EPC agreed to revisit enforcement and incentives through the Environmental Action planning process*

Roles and Responsibilities

There were some suggestions offered by Summit participants to this section of the charter, including whether this section of the charter was necessary. EPC members discussed this on May 19th and confirmed that this section should remain and additionally they felt that this section as drafted was appropriately targeted.

Vision and Definition of Sustainability

There was broad support for the vision and sustainability definition among Summit participants. However, there were some specific suggestions that the EPC members found to be very enlightening. For example, the vision statement and sustainability definition both were reframed to be ever more positive and forward-looking. One of the categories was redefined as “supports healthy living” instead of “living healthy.” “Streamside vegetation” was added to the second concept regarding natural beauty to address issues of stream restoration and stormwater management. The definition of sustainability was modified slightly but importantly. The reference to “without sacrificing our historic past” became “while preserving our historic past”.