

North End Quality of Life Work Group

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

This Community Action Plan was developed by the North End Quality of Life Work Group to outline specific actions to be taken that will improve the quality of life for residents of Alexandria's "North End" community, which generally encompasses the areas south of First Street, east of the Braddock Metro, West of North Washington Street and North of Oronoco Street. However, the goals laid out in the plan transcend physical boundaries and encompass the objectives for which we continue to strive as one City.

After exploring the issues facing the neighborhood and discussing the root causes of these problems, it became clear to the group that the overarching need is an established sense of community. This neighborhood includes residents from a full spectrum of economic and ethnic groups as well as local business owners who all have invested personal time and money into making the neighborhood true community. However, there still remains a lack of connection between people of different ages, ethnicities and economic levels and therefore, the all-encompassing goal is to remove the lines that separate people from each other. People feel safe in a community where they know their neighbors, have access to vital services and where law enforcement officers are known and well integrated in the community. Children succeed when they have families and role models in their community to help them grow, learn and become contributing members of society. Local businesses thrive when the people who live in the neighborhood can afford to utilize the services provided as well as work in the jobs created by these businesses. The community benefits from residents who have a strong sense of ownership and respect for their surroundings as well as a connection with their neighbors.

The goals and strategies set out in this report are designed to achieve a unified and cohesive community with knowledge and access to essential services that supports every member of the community allowing them to thrive and excel.



BACKGROUND

The North End Quality of Life Work Group (the Work Group) was established by City Council as an Ad Hoc Work Group to meet over the course of one year to explore the root causes of issues in the area that lead to violence and lack of self-sufficiency, as well as identify ways to address those problems. Alexandria's "North End" generally encompasses the areas south of First Street, east of the Braddock Metro, West of North Washington Street and North of Oronoco Street. Members of the group were appointed by the City Manager, and the group met monthly beginning in December 2016. Representatives from the community and City departments were invited to these meetings to provide information to the group on different topic areas. Guest speakers included the following individuals and groups:

- Youth from the neighborhood
- Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs: Youth activities, Teen Center, and Charles Houston Recreation Center (CHRC) Programing
- Chief of Alexandria Police Department
- Business owners
- Director of Court Service Unit
- Office of Planning and Zoning
- Department of Community and Human Services Workforce Development Center
- ARHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program

In the summer 2017, the group began to compile all of the information that had been presented over the past six months in order to develop goals, strategies and actionable items to improve the quality of life for residents in the North End neighborhood.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL 1

ENHANCE AND SUSTAIN ONGOING TRUST AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

STRATEGY 1A: EXPAND POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Action Item 1: Support the residential police officer program
- Action Item 2: Encourage continued face to face foot patrol to foster continued engagement with residents
- Action Item 3: Encourage ongoing interaction between residents and law enforcement (e.g. community events and ongoing dialogue/interactions).

GOAL 2

IMPROVE CONNECTION OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

STRATEGY 2A: ORGANIZE EVENTS THAT BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

- Action Item 1: Host block party in the neighborhood where all people will participate
- Action Item 2: Encourage attendance at community events, such as movie nights and holiday events, for all members of the community via flyers, social media and promotion through CHRC and ARHA.

STRATEGY 2B: WORK WITH ARHA TO ENABLE MORE RESIDENTS TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY DURING REDEVELOPMENT AT ANDREW ADKINS AND SAMUEL MADDEN.

- Action Item 1: Explore opportunities to provide housing for seniors in existing multifamily buildings
- Action Item 2: Work with the Braddock Metro Citizens' Coalition and the North East Civic Association to establish a "partner family" program to maintain a community connection for displaced families during construction.
- Action Item 3: Host "Welcome Home" events as new housing is occupied

GOAL 3

PROVIDE MORE POSITIVE ROLE MODELS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH

STRATEGY 3A: SUPPORT CITY MENTORING PROGRAM EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AND INCREASE MENTORING PARTICIPATION

- Action Item 1: Promote and refer community members, customers and staff to Alexandria Mentoring Partnership through CHRC connections – via social media, newsletters, flyers and the service fair
- Action Item 2: Support youth participation in the workforce by encouraging and promoting adult participation in the mentoring programs that assist with job readiness or other opportunities such as job fairs or career exploration opportunities
- Action Item 3: Promote and refer community members to the Mentoring program developed through the Teen Center at CHRC

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS CONT.

STRATEGY 3B: FACILITATE CONNECTION BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS IN MENTORING PROGRAMS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR HIRING NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH

- Action Item 1: Connect local business leaders with existing mentoring programs and service providers (e.g. law enforcement, Court Service Unit, Social Services, Mental Health, Recreation/Parks/Cultural Activities) to facilitate the hiring of youth participants
- Action Item 2: Make a concerted effort to recruit employees and owners of local businesses to volunteer as mentors

GOAL 4

ENSURE RESIDENTS ARE RECEIVING THE EXISTING SERVICES THAT THEY NEED AND ARE ELIGIBLE TO ACCESS

STRATEGY 4A: CREATE AN AWARENESS OF EXISTING SOCIAL PROGRAMS

- Action Item 1: Work with teens through the Teen Center at CHRC to develop social media campaigns and relevant marketing materials to increase awareness of available services
- Action Item 2: Work with ARHA Families Self Sufficiency (FSS) to reduce dependency on government programs with evidence of incentivizing and eliminating barriers to self-sufficiency
- Action Item 3: Coordinate with the City's Workforce Development Center to replicate the services fair that has been held in other areas of the city at CHRC

STRATEGY 4B: ENSURE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CITY PROGRAMS AND EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

- Action Item 1: City and ARHA to meet quarterly to ensure programs are aligned and consistent and identify gaps in service

GOAL 5

ENHANCE THE STREETScape AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

STRATEGY 5A: ENSURE THE NEIGHBORHOOD FEELS WELCOMING FOR ALL PEOPLE

- Action Item 1: Encourage civic associations, businesses, ARHA residents and Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) to conduct biannual walk audits to identify and report issues pertaining to streets, sidewalks, lighting, etc.
- Action Item 2: Ensure that improvements are being addressed equitably on streets through the Braddock Streetscape Plan
- Action Item 3: Work with the City and BIAG as redevelopment occurs to ensure new streetscape projects create a welcoming environment.

STRATEGY 5B: PROVIDE ORGANIZED REPRESENTATION FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Action Item 1: Explore potential to coverage of existing civic associations to include areas between Wythe, North Patrick, First and North Washington Streets.
- Action Item 2: Encourage existing civic associations to include ARHA and future Carpenter Shelter residents in their membership and events.

FUNDING AN IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL 1

The funding for **enhancing and sustaining ongoing trust and communication between community members and law enforcement** is included in the existing Alexandria Police Department (APD) budget through resources that are allocated to the Community Oriented Policing (COPs) Unit. To implement the stated strategies and action items, the Residential Police Office (RPO) and will organize events for the community, and the APD will routinely check in with the RPO to ensure that they have the tools and resources necessary to do their job effectively. The COPs Unit will enhance engagement with the community by fully staffing the unit which will enable more patrol on foot and bicycle. By enhancing the Records Management System in the APD, data will be captured that will provide information on the amount of time officers patrol outside of their vehicles. Through additional coordination and communication with other patrol units in the department, the COPs Unit will be able to familiarize and educate other patrol officers about specific areas of the need within the community. It is a goal of the APD to impart the philosophy of Community Oriented Policing and increased interaction with the public as an everyday practice.

GOAL 2

The funding for **improving the connection of the community throughout the neighborhood** lies mainly with the existing civic associations and non-profits. The City will consider waiving permit fees for street closures adjacent to ARHA properties and will work with existing partners to encourage donations or staff time to participate at events. The City will encourage neighborhood associations to consider implementing an “Adopt a Family” program and hosting a “Welcome Home” event. The City’s Office of Housing and Department of Planning and Zoning will work with ARHA to encourage the inclusion of deeply affordable housing units as new development occurs. Members of the Work Group should coordinate with ARHA and the local apartment management groups to identify opportunities for temporary senior housing during redevelopment of Andrew Adkins and Samuel Madden.



FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION CONT.

GOAL 3

The funding for **providing more positive role models for neighborhood youth** is included in the City budget for the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership program and through local non-profit organizations. Additional funding is not required to initiate the action items tied to this goal. City staff working with youth through the Teen Center at Charles Houston Recreation Center will provide them information about the existing mentoring programs and encourage participation with a program that seems to be a good fit for the individual. City staff will facilitate a discussion with local business owners to inform them of the mentoring programs that exist and encourage them to partner with mentors for summer and after school employment opportunities. City staff will identify opportunities to initiate conversations with civic associations, business owners and employees to inform them of the benefits of becoming a mentor in the community

GOAL 4

A portion of funding for **ensuring residents are receiving the existing services that they need and are eligible to access** is included in departmental budgets and through ARHA. City staff at CHRC will work with youth in the Teen Center to determine the best ways to create awareness and increase involvement in existing services. ARHA Staff working on the Family Self Sufficiency program will schedule regular meetings with staff from the Workforce Development Center to better coordinate services and discuss partnerships that could assist both agencies achieve mutual goals. In conjunction with the neighborhood civic associations and ARHA, the City will identify funding for a Service Fair to be held at CHRC similar to fairs that have been held in other areas of the City. The City will work with the local businesses and neighborhood civic associations to address funding restraints and explore sponsorship opportunities to host the fair.

GOAL 5

The funding for **enhancing the streetscape and built environment to improve safety and create a sense of community** is included in departmental budgets for day to day maintenance and through developer contributions as part of the Braddock Small Area Plan public amenities fund. Members of the Work Group will coordinate with BIAG to prioritize an equitable distribution of future streetscape improvements and to advocate for development proposals that ensure the inclusion of the streetscape elements included in the City's Complete Streets Design Guidelines. Members of the Work Group should explore opportunities to participate on BIAG as vacancies arise. The City will initiate discussions with existing citizens' associations regarding possible expansion of boundaries to include currently underrepresented neighborhoods.

EVALUATION & MEASUREMENT

The objective of this plan is to take immediate action. One full calendar year after this Community Action Plan is approved, staff will provide an update on the status of each action item. The following data points will be assessed and reported.

GOAL 1

- Continuation of the RPO Program and number of events organized by the RPO ▲
- Amount of time police officers spend on foot or bicycle in the community ▲
- Number of community events attended by members of the Alexandria Police Department ▲

GOAL 2

- Number of events held per year and increased attendance by the community ▲
- Number of families that indicate a desire to stay in the neighborhood during or after construction of new housing and success rate for placement of these families ▲
- Commitments from existing civic associations to create a community of inclusiveness through programs and events ▲

GOAL 3

- Number of youth participating in mentoring programs ▲
- Number of youth employed by local businesses ▲
- Number of volunteer mentors from the local community, including businesses ▲

GOAL 4

- Number of neighborhood youth utilizing the Teen Center services ▲
- Number of service fairs held in the North End neighborhood ▲
- Number of meetings held between ARHA Family Self Sufficiency and the City's Workforce Development Center ▲

GOAL 5

- Number of completed tickets submitted for neighborhood improvements ▲
- Number of street trees in the neighborhood ▲
- Number of street, sidewalk and park projects planned for the community ▲



CONCLUSION

There are many existing programs in place to address the issues at hand and some to address the root causes of the problems in the neighborhood. However, there is insufficient awareness of these programs and there could be barriers to entry or gaps in how the services are administered and coordinated between agencies. Bringing the neighborhood together through community events promotes communication, discussion, dialog and awareness of resources. It is with this understanding that the North End Work Group submits this plan to improve the quality of life for its residents. The plan aims to foster a sense of safety and belonging in the neighborhood by creating connections rather than divisions between the people who live, work and play in this community.

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- Darnella McGuire, Member
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