



October 31, 2023

Mr. City Manager,

The Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) remains hopeful that we will have the needed resources in the City’s FY24 and FY25 budgets to address the climate emergency declared by Council in 2019. We are encouraged by discussions with our new Climate Action Officer and the new additions to the Office of Climate Action (OCA). We believe that fully funding the programs listed below will begin to “move the needle”; however, we **strongly recommend** that each item provided come with specific metrics in order for the City to determine effectiveness and adjust course as needed. The Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (*accepted on May 23, 2023*) detailed the **huge** task ahead to meet the EAP2040 target of 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reductions by 2030. The items provided in this letter, with the appropriate metrics, would enable the City to reach these goals. As a reminder, the Action Plan found we must:

- 1) retrofit 53,000 housing units with efficiency upgrades;
- 2) have 49% of existing housing units using electric heating (e.g., heat pumps vs. gas furnaces);
- 3) build 95% of new housing units to high energy performance (they must produce the same or more energy than they use); and
- 4) 13 million square feet of commercial space retrofitted to high performance standards by 2030.

On September 28, 2022, Council approved the OCA and its budget of \$1.85 million dollars for FY23. To date, the City has spent ~\$200,000, leaving ~\$1.65 million available for the rest of FY24. The EPC has proposed continuing the reoccurring amount of \$600,000 for FY25 to continue to address the impacts of the climate crisis that has not diminished since the Emergency Declaration in 2019. The EPC also notes that none of the recurring funds should include City Staff salaries beyond the initial first year as the Council directed.

The following is a list of projects, their funding amounts for FY24, and recurring amounts for FY25. All projects are linked to existing or new projects/programs to help “move the needle” and achieve the target of 2030 ECCAP action implementation. This list reflects the reality that the City alone cannot solve the climate crisis, but it must do everything possible to **educate, encourage and incentivize** the community. In doing so, we can collectively recognize the existential threat to the financial and personal health and well-being of those who live and work in our treasured City if we do not meet this threat.

The following is a summary of our list or programs/projects, with the full list and their estimated costs in the Table below:

- 1) **Incentivize** key electric transportation options (**ebikes/scooters**) and **batteries for lawn equipment** (\$200,000) and determine next steps for community solar or community choice aggregation (staff time);
- 2) **Community Solar for Affordable Housing Buildings** (\$350,000, plus \$100,000 annually thereafter);
- 3) **Electrification Showcase**: Educate and provide “how to” experts on gas to electric conversions, insulation and other ways to improve housing energy efficiency; how and where to get rebates and tax incentives; and how to get the best deal from contractors (\$100,000);
- 4) **Home Improvement Education**: Inform home remodelers early in the process by surveying residents about future home improvements and deliver tailored guidance on ways to improve energy efficiency during renovations and upgrades (\$100,000);
- 5) **EV Site Assessments**: Evaluate options for EV charging stations near multi-family buildings & off-street parking areas (\$200,000);
- 6) **Planning for After-school Program**: Educate schoolchildren about the climate crisis and ways they can take action as well as work toward future careers in sustainability, electrification, etc.(staff time first year & \$200,000 FY25);
- 7) **Green Building/Sustainability Coordinator**: Propose funding for a key School position (e.g., green buildings/sustainability lead) to help schools achieve net-zero Green Building Policy compliance /energy audits with Energy Star ratings (\$150,000 first year only);
- 8) **Business Recognition Program**: Encourage the business community to take steps to reduce waste, increase energy efficiency and utilize federal and state funds to achieve these goals (\$110,000\* for both business and residential programs & \$100,000 annually thereafter);
- 9) **ALX Climate Champions Program**: Deploy a recognition program for the residential community (e.g., yard signs to educate and incentivize residents to become more sustainable and energy efficient)(\$\* see above);
- 10) **Highlight net zero new schools with signage** commemorating net-zero status (\$20,000);
- 11) **Perform energy audits on all public buildings** start with top 20 highest energy users and continue annually (\$100,000 & \$100,000);
- 12) **Revise Green Building Policy** per Long Range Plan and set revision of EAP the following year (staff time);
- 13) Plan for **Community Solar, Green Bank and/or Community Choice Aggregation** to move faster to 100% electric (staff time);
- 14) **Farming with ALIVE**: Convert lawns to community gardens (\$50,000)
- 15) **First responder training** on controlling large lithium battery fires from cars, etc. (\$50,000)

The above funding totals equal \$1,330,000 for FY24 and \$600,000 for Recurring funding for FY25. Most of these items have been tried and proven successful in other jurisdictions and thus we are hopeful they will show the same here. It is critical that **EVERYONE** talk more about all of these programs at every opportunity so the community hears it, accepts it and implements these changes.

The EPC looks forward to answering any questions you, Council members or community members may have so we can all be a caring, kind, compassionate, fair, just, and equitable city that encourages people to live, work and play here.

Sincerely,

*Kathie Hoekstra*

Kathie Hoekstra, EPC Chair

cc: City Council members



#	Focus Area & EPC letter direction	Description of Focus areas as outlined by Julian Gonsalves on 9/28/22	Program/Project suggestion	EAP/ECCAP target/action	FY24 (Initial)	FY25 recurring & new programs
2	<b>Environmental Justice</b> – EPC’s #2 = EJ funds as determined by EJ community	EJ will apply in each focus areas; the City wants to be intentional in its efforts and proposes to have a set-aside for EJ related initiatives. While programs will be flexible to mitigate the impact of the climate crisis on historically underserved and vulnerable residents, initial efforts are focused on weatherization and energy assistance programs, addressing heat and vulnerable specific to EJ communities, and helping communicate climate actions in coordination with City Council and other priorities reflecting Race and Social Equity (RASE)	A. <b>Community Solar</b> – paired with Council approval of converting the purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates (essentially 5-year rental agreements) to DIRECT INVESTMENT in solar panels on low-income housing in ALX via Office of Housing, ARHA and/or Housing Alexandria. <b><u>The EPC proposes that the City Energy Manager stop purchasing RECs and instead invest the annual budgeted money in either direct purchase of solar panels for affordable housing units or a power purchase agreement for them which ever has the highest ROI.</u></b> <b>Needs Council approval</b>	EPC’s #2 – ALX principles of EJ and Equity	\$350,00 initial but conversion of RECs will allow already budgeted money to be used for this project in the future perhaps reducing future funding to zero if current year levels are maintained  <b><u>T – \$350,000</u></b>	A. <b>If conversion approved – \$100,000/year currently funded in present budget - but \$0 added budget impact</b> B. Farming with ALIVE - \$50,000  <b><u>T-\$50,000</u></b>

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3	<p><b>Education, Capacity Building and Outreach</b> – includes EPCs #3,4, and 5 = Promote use of C-PACE, Robust outreach campaign to engage all City community in combating climate crisis, and initiate collaboration with schools to create or adopt a plan to teach about the climate crisis</p>	<p>a. Educate students, residents, businesses</p> <p>b. Facilitate technical assistance programs to support residential/small business/non-profits in green building/renewable energy/energy efficiency/EV charging implementation. Includes potential leveraging local tech assistance providers to benefit workforce development and attract economic development opportunities.</p> <p>c. Conduct outreach to promote use of City, regional, state, federal incentive programs including C-PACE, other residential energy efficiency/renewable/EV charging programs and leverage partnership opportunities.</p>	<p>A. <b>Electrification Showcase</b> – grand kickoff showcase for community to learn about all fed/state tax incentives and point-of-sale rebates on solar, E/EE work, &amp; E/EE appliances</p> <p>B. <b>Home Improvement Education</b> – City would do survey of residents to get input early if they are thinking about remodeling so City could provide them with info early about benefits of E/EE and reducing future costs</p> <p>C. <b>EV Site Assessment</b> City assessment of where and how to deploy charging stations where no off street parking is available</p> <p>D. <b>Start Planning after school program</b> to educate students on climate crisis and how they can help and learn about</p>	<p>*ECCAP actions of 53,000 housing units retrofitted by 2030</p> <p>*49% of existing housing units use electric heating by 2030</p> <p>*50% of personal car sales are EVs by 2030 – less sales if everyone doesn't have a place to charge i.e. in multi-family buildings</p>	<p>\$100,000</p> <p>\$100,000</p> <p>\$200,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>A. <b>1<sup>st</sup> Responder training</b> – handling lithium battery fires \$50,000</p> <p>B. <b>Fund design of after school program</b> to educate students about E/EE and sustainability and careers in field \$150,000</p>

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			<p>potential future careers in field</p> <p>E. <b>Explore providing Funding for a Green-building staff person for the ACPS school system to improve the sustainability of its facilities.</b> This includes both existing building operations and maintenance, as well as new construction/ major renovation projects. The individual would work in collaboration with the City of Alexandria's Office of Climate Action and related green building City staff to accelerate ACPS facilities' decarbonization and net zero. This position could be akin to the former ACPS Energy Manager position held by Indrajeet Viswanathan.</p>		<p>\$150,000</p> <p><b><u>T-\$650,000</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>T-\$200,000</u></b></p>

4	<p><b>Disclosure, Monitoring and Recognition</b> – includes EPC’s 6 and 7 = create &amp; fund robust green building recognition program and establish a robust voluntary program for residents, schools and businesses to report their successes in reducing environmental impact on the community and recognition for that effort</p>	<p>a. Establish robust voluntary disclosure and recognition program for residents, schools, and businesses to report their successes in reducing Env. Impact/green building initiatives.</p> <p>b. Enhance EAP implementation by increasing monitoring, measuring, and reporting efforts by the City and the community including development of a Community Energy Model to track energy use and GHG emissions by various energy efficiency and renewable energy programs offered by the City and other partner organizations and to evaluate cost effectiveness and provide supporting information to optimize community energy use.</p>	<p><b>A. <u>Business Recognition program</u></b> – recognize those businesses that are reducing single use plastic, converting to electric and other E/EE, sustainable actions</p> <p><b>B. <u>ALX Climate Champion’s program</u></b> – yard and window signs for residents who have gone solar, purchased heat pumps, performed energy efficiency measure, converted to electric, purchases E/EE appliances and are willing to share their stories/experiences</p>	<p>To help Community meet the required action of ECCAP of electrifying 45% of our existing housing units to electricity by 2030 and 53,000 retrofitted with efficiency upgrades by 2030.</p>	<p>\$110,000 for both A &amp; B</p> <p><b><u>T-\$110,000</u></b></p>	<p>A. Continue Bis. Rec Prgm. and ALX Climate Champions Programs and inputting energy bills into EPA’s Portfolio Manager to see where the business ranks compared to others to help Staff focus on those most in need to help for guidance on IRA tax incentives or rebates as well as C-PACE, etc. Use staff times plus EPC volunteers plus ALX volunteers – \$100,000</p> <p><b><u>T - \$100,000</u></b></p>
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5.	<p><b>Demonstration</b> (includes EPC #9 and 10) = Perform energy audit on all public buildings starting with first 20 that use the most energy and aren't already on the list for rehab in the next 5 years and explore the option of instead of purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to offset the City's energy usage – repurpose this money by either buying directly solar panels or indirectly via PPA (to be determine best ROI by City Energy Manager) to put on affordable housing units in ALX</p>	<p>City/other agencies demonstration projects that represent viable business case for community and that build internal expertise available to the community – i.e. gas-powered equipment replacement, EV charging net-zero cost study, explore direct purchase of solar panels vs. REC funds</p>	<p>*See #2 above for Solar on Affordable Housing and use of REC funds to directly purchase solar *See #1 above for gas-powered equipment replacement *see #3 above for EV site assessment *DASH buses go electric *ACPS buses go electric <b><u>EPC suggestions -</u></b> *Highlight Net zero schools via signage * Perform energy audit on all public bldgs. starting with first 20 which use most energy and aren't already on list for rehab in next 5 years</p>		<p>\$20,000  \$100,000  <b><u>T-\$120,000</u></b></p>	<p>Continue Energy Audits on ALX public buildings – next 20 and invest in conversions of buildings with highest ROI scores. \$250,000  <b><u>T-\$250,000</u></b></p>
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6	<b>Policy, Procedures, Advocacy</b>	Coordinate a cross-departmental and agency effort to lead advocacy and implement policies, procedures and guidelines that achieve EAP2040 targets and upcoming ECCAP recommendations. Continue ensuring that the City is strategic with resources and has adequate capacity to maximize greenhouse-gas emission reductions and meet climate targets.	Revision of Green Building Policy	Staff time - ECCAP actions required: 95% of all new housing units are net-zero – producing the same or more energy as the building and its residents use	No additional funding	Propose Long range work plan add revision of EAP for FY25 after completion of Green Building Policy revision since revision is due every 5 years and given actions of ECCAP – EAP2040 must be revised to keep relevant Also - Add to the policy by reassessing stormwater, biodiversity, tree canopy, waste reduction, etc. – staff time
<b><u>Final Total</u></b>					<b><u>T-\$1,320,000</u></b> <b><u>Xtr \$280,000</u></b> <b><u>for rollover</u></b> <b><u>into FY25 if no</u></b> <b><u>unanticipated</u></b> <b><u>costs</u></b>	<b><u>T-\$600,000</u></b>