



Alexandria's Principles of Civic Engagement Poll - Results as of April 9, 2013

#1A	Do you support the Civic Engagement Principles developed by the community as synthesized above? (Each Principle Statement will be accompanied by recommended actions and expected outcomes based on community input.)
Total	Yes: 137 No: 23
#1B	What improvements would you suggest?
No	Transparency is a two-way street. ALL participants, including citizens with personal agendas, need to disclose act in good faith.
Yes	
Yes	I would like to see some committment to the well-being of low level City employees. We will all be forced out by the gentrification and it is good for the City if the folks who work here can live in the City.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Um how about actually follow those principles????? I guess raising taxes and changing waterfront zoning don't count.
Yes	
Yes	empower the citizens by creating wards within which neighbors can elect a neighbor to city council
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Formally incorporate early civic engagement into the Office of Planning & Zoning planning process
Yes	
Yes	

Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	The document is fine but the city elected officials and staff will never do it.
Yes	Looks good on paper. Shows intent. What's more important is the execution.
No	A colossal waste of time and resources by people who should seek a useful life.
Yes	
Yes	I think there has to be a mention of being "positive" many people in Alexandria seem to be very negative.
Yes	As far as they go. It is easy to create policies, I am waiting to see the kind of action that shows respect for those who are in need of affordable housing, healthcare, and public transportation.
Yes	
Yes	The City government should try to live up to these principles. They do not do so now.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Excessively complex; make it 25 words or less
Yes	
No	The entire What's Next Alexandria process is a farce and a waste of taxpayer dollars.
Yes	City needs to do much better job on transparency and early involvement
Yes	
No	Reduce City spending by 50%.
Yes	
Yes	Be sure that proposals for future development present at least two alternatives. It's easy to shoot down a single option; it's harder to propose an alternative that is feasible. It might help if citizens could choose between options.
Yes	None
Yes	
No	

Yes	
Yes	I am encouraged by the efforts regarding engagement. I would love to make a suggestions of reaching out to ordinary people who do not have access to the internet and making them feel part of your efforts. Methods to be explored. Mohammad
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	I am unclear as to how this process will be different from the current reliance on a heavy schedule of public hearings. I don't see much prospect that this new process won't get hijacked by the angry few in our City who go to all meetings.
Yes	A good start but too much jargon - get rid of "authentically," for example
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	I would like to see improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in all neglected parts of the city.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Please use "principal" (can be an adjective), not "principle" (always a noun!).
Yes	More concrete examples, goals
Yes	Under Inclusiveness and Equity, the first bullet reads, "Those who haven't been engaged are informed, engaged, and empowered." My experience is that, unless "empowered" is defined, it invites unnecessary conflict and results in stagnation.
Yes	
Yes	Require civic "leaders" to actually poll their groups about issues. They often speak only for themselves. Get info out to ALL early.
Yes	How do we ensure ongoing meaningful participation of those least likely to participate?
Yes	
Yes	
No	This is a good start but there are too many and each still has too many words.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Principles need to be able to clearly delineate what PUBLIC vs CITY STAFF decisions are. Citizens may think they have a right to be involved in every policy decision City makes. Think GROUP HOMES and SAFE HAVEN process.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
No	There needs to be some emphasis on expediency and finality of action. The current formation seems to lend itself to a process that drags on and doesn't bring change in any quck manner and gives the impression that debates can continue on forever.
Yes	

No	Alexandria is now a "pay to play" town for developers and elected officials and senior city staff. Time to change leadership of senior dept.staff. will city mgr. have the courage to do so now?If not, this exercise is futile.
Yes	Consider reordering the list, without numbering it, to reflect the principles' priorities.
Yes	Change "Mutual Accountability" to "Honesty and Integrity" ... fold the integrity info from "Transparency" into this revised principle. Change "Evaluation" to "Continuous Advancement"; includes feedback, evaluation, etc. Glad to provide rationale.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	MAKE PLANS AND DRAWINGS EASIER TO CONNECT TO - MAYBE USE A MAP TO HAVE LINKS TO THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS
Yes	there needs to be some kind of enforcement mechanism or alert system to demonstrate when commissions, boards, etc here have or have not complied with these principles - w/o one the entire idea is a waste of time.
Yes	The principle statements are too long. Perfecting principle statements is distracting and time consuming. Citizens could easily list problems and recommend actions and expected outcomes.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	Words and statements help focus, but it is ALL about COMMITMENT and ACTIONS to make these principles a reality!
Yes	Prioritize funding for libraries rather than Bike Share.
No	There should be an explicit statement on decisions being data driven. Also there should be an explicit statement that no particularly neighborhood will be favored over another. Perceptions still linger that if you don't live in Old Town or Del Ray
Yes	The principles are a lot of nice sounding words. Is the city prepared to change to give citizens a real opportunity to affect decisions?
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	What is meant by demonstrating respect? It varies from person to person, act to act. Define it.
No	This is FAR FAR too advanced for most people in the city. Most people don't even understand what synthized means.
Yes	It's a bit one-sided. Does the community respect the fact that government, in a democracy, usually means a comprise in the use a scarce financial resources?
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
No	I don't see the need to have much beyond we are transparent and open. Seems to be reaching to justify the exercise.
Yes	
No	This entire process is a farce!

No	While I agree with principles of openness, transparency and inclusiveness, I see nothing above that roots these principles in the basis of law. (see email)
Yes	I would suppose that these engagements with the community are/are not ones that will come before planning commission and then to city council. When plans come before planning commission, it seems that citizens have to scramble to find out informatio
No	Make sure all persons living in the city have affordable housing no matter if the family is 1 person or more. No one should pay more that 800.00 for affordable housing.
No	making sure that affordable hosueing is available in all parts of the city especially the westerd where the BRAC builings are.
Yes	
No	
Yes	
Yes	The City should not wait for formal adoption of the priciples to put them into practice. Please put them into practice now.
Yes	
Yes	Generalizations meaningless unless tied to specific actions. Mayor, city manager and council have an agenda that expands the government. I believe in less government. Conflict in goals results.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	I access through email for most of my information and contact with telephone if necessary.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
No	synthesis down to four
Yes	That the above statements be reality and not a fantasy land wish list.
Yes	
Yes	
No	There needs to be an understanding of how items get put on the City's 'To Do List'. Citizens need to know how to get an item on the 'To Do List'. The process needs to be posted and have clear steps as to how this takes place.
Yes	
Yes	Include transparency requirement for school board and police department
Yes	A danger in democracy: the loudest noise is ofen not a valid reflection of community desires.
No	There is nothing wrong with the principles, but we did not need a 6+ month long, expensive, consultant driven process to develop obvious principles. We need actual substantive engagement.
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	

No	Civic advocates participate, yet where are the long term results? e.g. Complete streets policy yet where are the bike lanes in Potomac Yard???
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	I prefer the word "civility" over respect. The root that goes with that word also hearkens to "civil" behavior, and "citizenship."
No	These principles do not address how the City will respond to comments, queries, etc.
Yes	more bike lanes in the city of alexandria
Yes	
Yes	
No	All but "Mutual Accountability" are acceptable. The synthesized statement is not clear & the "mutual" is not something the city can perform. These are statements of commitment to the citizens as I see it. Delete "mutual" & "evaluation" is critical.
No	The Mutual Accountability synthesis did not capture the essence of the inputs, i.e. it missed the point. Here is an alternative synthesis that should be presented on 30 April so participants can chose which they prefer. Alternative Synthesized Statement: The City and community are mutually accountable for honest and respectful participation, informed and fact-based discussion, and outcomes that reflect citizen participation. City processes will include meaningful assessments to measure progress, implementation of improvements as needed, and effective communication of both.
Yes	clarity that once decisions are made; the deliberation process ends and it is time to move forward. Things should not be re-litigated endlessly -- the city needs to keep moving forward

#2	Tell us about your participation in What's Next Alexandria	
	I attended the first Community Dialogue (November 15, 2012)	40
	I attended the second Community Dialogue (January 29, 2013)	39
	I did not attend the Dialogues, but I have been following the process	58
	This is the first time I've ever participated in this process	39
	I participated in the Virtual Table during the 2nd Community Dialogue	9
	I plan to attend the next Community Dialogue meeting, scheduled for April 30	41

#3	The City has piloted online participation in meetings in real time. Is this a tool you would utilize?	
	Yes	104
	No	51

#4A	Effective civic engagement relies on a partnership between government and the community. Would you be willing to assist by:	
	Serving as a civic engagement ambassador by helping the City reach neighborhoods and groups with whom you are already connected?	47
	Serving as a community facilitator at a future What's Next Alexandria or other community meeting?	33
	Other	26

#4B	If you answered other, please explain:	
	"ambassadors" or "community facilitators" be credible, objective and not advocates for staff.	
	As a political sociologist, I'm happy to help nurture more participatory gov't.	
	As president of our HOA, I would be willing to act as a conduit of information.	
	Facilitation skills as part of my training I use them on ongoing basis. I would be honerd to help	
	Helping communicate and disseminate information through my website, blogs, and contacts	
	I am actively encouraging my fellow Alexandrians to boycott this farcial process.	
	I am interested and willing to participate. I am heavily involved in local civic and political affai	
	I do not sign up to assist with a group that I have not seen first in action, at least three times.	
	I question the city's goals and would be glad to explain my questions to others	
	I want to reverse the bias. The city must be the servant; not the master	
	I want to see how this works out.	
	I will participate as much as time permits.	
	I would be glad to volunteer my time for planning in reaching to ordinary people out efforts	
	I would like to perform as an ambassador but must know more fully what the responsibilities are.	
	I'd facilitate and engage with others	
	I'd like to help but not sure those 2 are a good fit for me	
	I'm on the Commission on Aging, the AHAC, ALIVE, and active in my church-NO MORE TIME	
	Informally relay information received to friends and neighbors who don't keep up with events.	
	I've mailed my offer to whatsnext@alexandriava.gov.	
	Participate as best I can as a new resident of Alexandria.	
	Participation depends on my work schedule.	
	Provide input/feedback where I am able.	
	reside at southern towers and are friends with its residents	
	Review budget for cuts.	
	Serve as a constructive "critic" of the process moving forward	
	What? Who has time for this?	
	willing to present the facts to citizens and really listen and relay back to city hall how we feel.	
	Yes to all opportunities within the constraints of a full time job.	
	Yes, but so far I'm totally unimpressed by the process. If there is a serious effort count me in.	

Alexandria's Principles of Civic Engagement



At the January 29th *What's Next Alexandria* Community Dialogue, community members worked together to develop civic engagement principle statements to guide public participation in Alexandria. Subsequent to the meeting, facilitators from each table collaborated with staff to synthesize the 17 table statements into 8 single statements. [Click here for information about the process of synthesizing the statements](#), and [click here to get more information about the *What's Next Alexandria* initiative](#).

Please review the synthesized principle statements below and answer a few follow-up questions.

EASY PARTICIPATION (Changed from Informed and Accessible Participation)

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria promotes open and readily accessible government. Communications and information are timely, easy to understand, and offered in a variety of formats, appropriate to a given process. The City will provide clarity about the public decision making process, including milestones and a defined endpoint. Participants will have the flexibility to participate in a variety of ways, including online and in person. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

RESPECT (Changed from Civility)

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria values a process of engagement where participants demonstrate respect in words and actions and approach decisions with open-mindedness so that everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinion regardless of differences. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

EARLY INVOLVEMENT

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria identifies and involves stakeholders early in decision-making processes. Community members are involved in framing issues before any conclusions have been drawn, requiring early and ongoing communication with participants through each phase in the process. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria reaches out to and encourages the participation of all members of the community in dialogue and decision-making processes, including those who will be affected by the issue as well as those who have not historically been engaged. All members of the community are informed and empowered to participate; all views are equally heard and inform the outcome; and all impacts and benefits are fairly distributed. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria provides opportunities for all community members to participate in an open and unbiased process, free of predetermined outcomes, to consider and deliberate feasible options. The City authentically solicits, acknowledges, incorporates, and responds to community input. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Synthesized Statement: The City and community are mutually accountable for honest and respectful participation, informed and fact-based discussion, and acceptance of the outcome of a fair process that reflects the input of participants. The conclusion of a process will result in meaningful follow-up, ongoing assessment to measure progress, and implementation of improvements as needed. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

SUSTAINED COLLABORATION (Changed from Sustained Cooperation)

Synthesized Statement: Alexandria promotes a culture of community engagement that enhances public decision making processes and invests in long-term working relationships, learning opportunities and ongoing, open collaboration between community members, community groups, City leaders and staff. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

TRANSPARENCY

Synthesized Statement: City government will act with integrity in an open process, and will provide timely access to clear, trustworthy information, presented and employed by all parties from the beginning to the end of the process, including the reasoning that leads to and supports the policy conclusion. [Link to statements created on January 29.](#)

Addition of a 9th principle:

EVALUATION

The City will work in partnership with the community to periodically assess the application of civic engagement principles. The evaluation will quantify participant feedback, document lessons learned, and identify strategies for refinement.

At the next Community Dialogue on April 30, participants will have the opportunity to affirm Alexandria's Principles of Civic Engagement based on feedback received from this poll.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you support the Civic Engagement Principles developed by the community as synthesized above?

(Please note, in the final document, each Principle Statement will be accompanied by recommended actions and expected outcomes based on community input).: *

- Yes
- No

What improvements would you suggest? (If you would like to send additional comments that do not fit in the space below, please email whatsnext@alexandriava.gov):

Please provide information about your past participation and your expectations about future participation: (Select all that apply)

2. Tell us about your participation in What's Next Alexandria::

- I attended the first Community Dialogue (November 15, 2012)
- I attended the second Community Dialogue (January 29, 2013)
- I did not attend the Dialogues, but I have been following the process
- This is the first time I've ever participated in this process
- I participated in the Virtual Table during the 2nd Community Dialogue
- I plan to attend the next Community Dialogue meeting, scheduled for April 30

3. The City has piloted online participation in meetings in real time. Is this a tool you would utilize? :

- Yes
- No

4. Effective civic engagement relies on a partnership between government and the community. Would you be willing to assist by: :

- Serving as a civic engagement ambassador by helping the City reach neighborhoods and groups with whom you are already connected?
- Serving as a community facilitator at a future What's Next Alexandria or other community meeting?
- Other

If you answered other, please explain :

Please provide your name and email address:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address: