

**ALEXANDRIA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

Supporting Businesses &
Cultivating Community

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2027

Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
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INTRODUCTION

For 120 years, The Alexandria Chamber of Commerce has been a pivotal voice for the business community in the City of Alexandria. We have witnessed and helped shape the City's remarkable evolution—from an industrial railroad town to the thriving innovation hub, economic center, and world-class destination it is today.

As we look toward the next 120 years, we must ask ourselves: How do we ensure Alexandria continues to thrive for generations to come? The world around us has changed significantly, and the economic landscape presents both new challenges and new opportunities. Meeting this moment requires bold leadership, thoughtful collaboration, and an innovative vision for the future.

Our response is the 2027 Legislative Agenda, which reflects the priorities and opportunities that will help shape the Alexandria of tomorrow and provides a roadmap for meaningful engagement, collaboration, and advocacy throughout the year ahead.

We remain committed to partnering with elected officials, community stakeholders, and our members to advance policies that foster economic opportunity, support a thriving business community, and position Alexandria for continued success in the decades ahead.



SECTION 01

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

To advance long-term economic resilience and sustained growth, Alexandria must continue to strengthen its competitive position, diversify its revenue base, and strategically invest in the people, places, and industries that drive a thriving local economy.

This will require coordinated and innovative action from all stakeholders to ensure Alexandria remains a premier location to live, work, visit, and do business in.

To start, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce recommends:

- › expanding and diversifying Alexandria’s commercial tax base by leveraging strategic incentives to attract new businesses, support existing employers, encourage investment, and create a more resilient local economy.
- › maintaining Alexandria’s competitiveness as a place to start, grow, and operate a business by ensuring a fair and predictable regulatory environment, avoiding disproportionate taxes on specific industries, and benchmarking policies against neighboring jurisdictions.

- › placing a focus on developing large capacity event space somewhere in the City so organizations that call Alexandria home can host events within the city limits.
- › developing a short- and long-term strategy for development in Potomac Yard to reflect and continue the heavy investment the City and local businesses have made toward redeveloping that neighborhood as a vibrant, transit-enabled, mixed-use destination.
 - › This includes supporting continued investment in National IQ and the Potomac Yard Innovation Lab to advance Alexandria's position as a regional hub for emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, and business innovation.
- › supporting investment in arts infrastructure as a driver of economic activity, placemaking, and commercial corridor activation, ensuring the long-term viability of arts organizations and the businesses that benefit from their presence.
- › the timely completion of Transformative Development Projects such as Robinson Terminal North, WestEnd [new Inova Hospital], and the former Potomac River Generating Station site.
- › advocating for increased state investment in tourism, sports tourism, and economic development initiatives that strengthen Northern Virginia's competitiveness, attract visitors, and generate new economic opportunities.
- › continuing to monitor changes/shifts at the Federal level and assess their implications for Alexandria, ensuring the City is prepared to respond strategically and adaptively to emerging challenges and opportunities.
- › promoting regular dialogue between business leaders and state officials to improve understanding of the operational challenges facing businesses and support policies that foster economic growth and competitiveness.
- › recognizing placemaking as a critical component of economic development by supporting investments that enhance community vitality, including parks, recreation facilities, public spaces, and other neighborhood activations that attract businesses, residents, and visitors.
- › While data center development is not currently a significant issue for Alexandria, ensure any future regulatory framework is developed thoughtfully, with meaningful input from the broader business community.

SECTION 02

COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS SUPPORT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

To retain and attract businesses, support long-term investment, and foster economic growth, the Chamber advocates for policies that strengthen Alexandria's position as a premier place to start, grow, and sustain a business.

By creating an environment where businesses can thrive and talent can flourish, we can ensure Alexandria remains a vibrant and competitive community where people and businesses choose to live, work, and succeed. As a result, The Chamber:



Resources and Support

encourages the City to implement the recommendations contained in the ALX Forward framework that would create a clear and streamlined list of processes and resources available to those looking to start or grow their business in the City.

This includes:

- › updating the City's website to help those looking for resources be able to access a comprehensive list all in one, easy to find place.
- › continuing to support updates and policies that promote administrative efficiency and friendliness when it comes to zoning, business licenses, permitting, etc.
- › partnering with the Chamber and other business organizations to ensure we're all working in tandem and not duplicating efforts.



Parking

advocates for policies that maintain existing public parking and identify opportunities to increase parking availability for employees, customers, visitors, and businesses.

This includes:

- › supporting the preservation of strategically located parking facilities, such as 206 The Strand, that serve Old Town businesses.
- › supporting existing and expanded valet operations.
- › opposing the unnecessary loss of parking without viable replacement solutions.



Workforce Development

supports the creation and implementation of a comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy for the City of Alexandria.

A strategy that includes:

- › preparing the local job force for the jobs that are currently available in the region and that will be coming to Alexandria as a result of major economic development projects. This includes equipping workers with the skills to effectively use emerging technologies like AI, while also recognizing that many roles will not rely on AI and require other forms of training and support.
- › ensuring all our local schools (from preschool to college) offer career readiness skills and pathways to professions.
- › engaging the business community on how the Chamber and Alexandria businesses can partner with the City to ensure these suggestions are implemented.



Crime

believes safe neighborhoods are critical to economic vitality and encourages the police department to include businesses from all neighborhoods in conversations surrounding the new Alexandria Police Department Public Safety Plan.



Childcare

acknowledges that Virginia took several steps forward in 2026 to expand childcare affordability and access, including creating a new employer-supported childcare assistance program. While these initiatives represent forward progress, continued investment will be needed to address the ongoing childcare shortages and affordability challenges facing Alexandria's workforce and families.



Housing

supports efforts to increase the supply of housing at all income levels, including making housing attainable for Alexandria's workforce. Maintaining a range of housing options and price points in the City of Alexandria helps provide opportunity for Alexandria's workforce, across income levels, to live closer to their place of employment and to participate fully in our community.

Additionally, The Chamber:

- › supports efforts by the city to increase efficiency in the residential development process through zoning reforms and reducing regulatory barriers for the development and preservation of housing.
- › recognizes that housing affordability in Alexandria continues to be a challenge but does not believe that legislative or regulatory action limiting a housing provider's ability to set rents according to market conditions or critiquing a housing provider's rent changes in response to the market will relieve affordability pressures and could be a deterrent to future development that would add affordable units to the available housing stock.
- › recognizes that Alexandria has been a leader in converting obsolete office buildings into residential and other uses and encourages the City to continue to be creative and forward thinking when it comes to repurposing space.
- › recognizes the need to attract private investment for housing creation and encourages avoiding policies that will deter such investment by creating uncertainty around the value and future use of properties, or by placing demands on developers that exceed expected revenues which are necessary to offset the costs.
- › encourages the City, as work continues on the Housing 2040 Master Plan, to continue engaging with housing providers as valued constituents and necessary participants in a successful housing market, and to consider business perspectives thoughtfully alongside resident feedback.
- › encourages the City to advocate in Richmond with the business community for legislation that respects both the rights and responsibilities of both residents and housing providers.
- › supports the City continuing to advance the planning and zoning reform conversation with innovative, market-responsive ideas that add housing supply, both rental and homeownership options,

across all income levels, and encourages Alexandria to follow through on its plans to examine a Phase 2 of reforms under the Zoning for Housing initiative.



Transportation

supports multi-modal solutions that reduce congestion, increase mobility and helps the city reach its safety and sustainability goals. It remains critical that transportation options are available at times workers need them – including nontraditional work hours (nights and weekends).

› **Regional Transportation:** The Chamber supports:

- providing funding necessary for the continued safe and reliable operation of **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)** with appropriate accountability and oversight to ensure the long-term sustainability of our region's primary transit system.
- completing the planned **Regional Express Lanes Network** along the Maryland Beltway from the American Legion Bridge to I-270 and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to I-95, the Virginia Beltway from Springfield to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, Virginia I-95 reverse-peak direction, and I-270 to Frederick. All express lanes should be free for HOV and public transit vehicles.
- the continued safe and reliable operation of **VRE and local transit** agencies in Northern Virginia.
- the expansion of rail service (Amtrak and VRE) to the city, including additional off-peak and weekend trips to allow more options for workers and tourists.
- promoting public transportation and bike/pedestrian as smart, sustainable options that ease congestion on area roadways, as many workers in the region rely on them to get to and from their places of employment.

› **Local Transportation:** the Chamber understands the importance of efficiently connecting the City from east to west and north to south and encourages the City to use available technology to mitigate congestion on the City's main thoroughfares.

- **Autonomous Vehicles:** As Alexandria and the greater metropolitan region begin exploring the future of autonomous (driverless) vehicles, ensure the business community has a seat at the table in shaping policies that balance innovation, economic development, accessibility, and public safety. Proactive planning today will help the City maximize opportunities while addressing potential challenges as this technology evolves.



Education

recognizes that a high-quality education system is a key factor influencing decisions by families and businesses to live, work, and invest in Alexandria. As Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) navigates a period of transition, the Chamber stands ready to serve as a partner and support efforts that strengthen educational outcomes and better connect students with future opportunities.

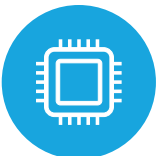
Therefore, the Chamber:

- › supports a robust K-12 education system that prepares students for work or higher education with strong critical thinking skills and sufficient math, technology and reading skills.
- › urges more collaboration between the Chamber and Alexandria City Public Schools, School Board, and other relevant stakeholders to leverage opportunities to expose students to varied work and career opportunities.
- › encourages engagement with the Career Technical Education (CTE) program to help connect students with local businesses.
- › supports the continued offering and growth of broader pathways for students to discover their interests in trade professions and beyond.



Healthcare

in response to substantial changes in health policy at the federal level, the Chamber is particularly sensitive to the downstream impact on employers, providers, patients, and the overall health of our community. The Chamber asks that the Commonwealth invest in strategies to safeguard access to health care and safety net services to protect Virginia's health care ecosystem.



Technology

believes that the use of emerging technologies related to smart cities can position the City to be a leader of systems that lower costs, improve services, and drive innovation. Allowing for the investment in high-speed broadband fiber and wireless networks will allow these new technologies to be utilized. We particularly support innovative partnerships with the business community.



SECTION 03

KEY ACTION ITEMS

KEY ACTION ITEMS FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The Chamber offers the following checklist of detailed action items for the City. The Chamber remains ready to partner with the City to enact these policies.

Economic Resilience and Growth

- Ensure the timely completion of Transformative Development Projects such as Robinson Terminal North, WestEnd [new Inova Hospital], and the former Potomac River Generating Station site.
- Support continued investment in National IQ and the Potomac Yard Innovation Lab to advance Alexandria's position as a regional hub for emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, and business innovation.
- Support investments that enhance community vitality, including parks, recreation facilities, public spaces, and other neighborhood activations that attract businesses, residents, and visitors.
- Place a focus on developing large capacity event space somewhere in the City so organizations that call Alexandria home can host events within the city limits.
- Work collaboratively with the business community to identify opportunities to apply for competitive federal/state grant programs.
- Ensure any future regulatory framework related to Data Centers is developed thoughtfully, with meaningful input from the broader business community.

Business Resources/Business Friendliness

- Implement the recommendations contained in the ALX Forward framework that would create a clear and streamlined list of processes and resources available to those looking to start or grow their business in the City.

This includes:

- › updating the City’s website to help those looking for resources be able to access a comprehensive list all in one, easy to find place.
 - › continuing to support updates and policies that promote administrative efficiency and friendliness when it comes to zoning, business licenses, permitting, etc.
 - › partnering with the Chamber and other business organizations to ensure we’re all working in tandem and not duplicating efforts.
- Create and provide resources for micro and small creative businesses. These businesses are the heart of the City and provide creative and cultural enrichment to the communities they serve. Ongoing discussion and planning for an Arts District would enable these businesses to thrive and offer more extensive services as well as sustain creative businesses which do not fit the current criteria for existing support and services.
 - Eliminate or combine multiple reviews of major projects by different boards and commissions.

Parking

- Support the preservation of strategically located parking facilities, such as 206 The Strand, that serve Old Town businesses.
- Support existing and expanded valet operations.
- Oppose the unnecessary loss of parking without viable replacement solutions.

Crime

- Continue to support a fully staffed and fully funded public safety system in Alexandria.
- Continue to increase patrols near retail businesses in order to deter retail theft.
- Encourage the continued open dialogue between the Alexandria Police Department and the business community.
- Explore best practices in emergency communications networks.

Invest in Workforce Training and Continuing Education Resources

- Support the creation and implementation of a comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy for Alexandria, focused on preparing job seekers

for current and future opportunities tied to major economic development projects. This includes expanding career readiness in local schools, investing in reskilling—particularly for former federal workers—supporting emerging technologies like AI, and actively engaging the business community as implementation partners.

Childcare

- Design City regulations for Childcare businesses more in line with State regulations in order to streamline the process particularly when it comes to the co-location of daycares with other businesses.

Technology

- Research smart city technologies that can be utilized by the City to enhance public services, improve public safety communication, solve modern challenges, and reduce costs. Alexandria should be a leader in utilizing smart city technology.
- Implement expedited or streamlined review of zoning and permitting applications that facilitate wireless and fiber deployment.
- Empower next generation connectivity by allowing the use of innovative deployment processes and construction techniques.
- Ensure smart city technologies can be utilized by the City to enhance public services, public safety, solve modern challenges, and reduce costs.
- Recruit technology focused companies to locate in Alexandria.

Transportation

- Support multi-modal transportation projects that will increase the City's connectivity from east to west and north to south.
- Adopt specific policies and initiatives to ensure that vulnerable communities, such as low-income households and persons with disabilities, benefit from and are not burdened by transportation investments.
- Seek solutions to congestion on City roads, including re-examining traffic flow, considering the effect (if any) of closing selected streets to through traffic, limiting use of turn lanes, resetting the timing of traffic lights, and increasing multi-modal connectivity that encourages people to use methods other than automobiles to traverse the city.
- Engage with and receive feedback from any businesses located along a street that is being considered for changes (traffic pattern updates, lane reductions, etc.). Whether or not a project supports commercial activity should be a metric in the evaluation of a project. I.E. Duke Street Land Use Plan.

- Ensure the business community has a seat at the table in shaping Autonomous (driverless) vehicle policies that balance innovation, economic development, accessibility, and public safety. Proactive planning today will help the City maximize opportunities while addressing potential challenges as this technology evolves.

Education

- Urge more collaboration between the Chamber and Alexandria City Public Schools, School Board, and other relevant stakeholders to leverage opportunities to expose students to varied work and career opportunities.

Housing

- Support efforts by the city to increase efficiency in the residential development process through zoning reforms and reducing regulatory barriers for the development and preservation of housing.
- As work continues on the Housing 2040 Master Plan, continue engaging with housing providers as valued constituents and necessary participants in a successful housing market, and to consider business perspectives thoughtfully alongside resident feedback.

Minority Business Support

- Streamline internal business certification processes to remove barriers and facilitate business development.
- Advocate for partnerships (Minority-and/or Women-Owned Business Enterprise [MWBE] and Non-MWBE firms) when responding to the government RFPs.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Chamber offers the following checklist of action items for the General Assembly.

Economic Resilience & Growth

- Support increased state investment in tourism, sports tourism, and economic development initiatives that strengthen Northern Virginia's competitiveness, attract visitors, and generate new economic opportunities.
- Promote regular dialogue between business leaders and state officials to improve understanding of the operational challenges facing businesses and support policies that foster economic growth and competitiveness.
- Review economic development incentive programs to ensure applicability and equity across the Commonwealth, including Northern Virginia, and across industry/business types.

Examples include:

- › Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) reforms – Site development grant program aimed at increasing the state’s inventory of commercial sites, VBRSP is one of the few programs where both public and private entities are eligible applicants. Eligible sites must be 100+ acres under current law with exemptions for brownfield sites. Proposal: Expand eligibility to smaller sites and other commercial uses (i.e. sports and entertainment) to appropriately match site development incentives to urban and suburban jurisdictions and current market demand.
- › Virginia Economic Development Incentive Grant (VEDIG) – Discretionary grant program with minimum capex, job, and wage thresholds. Funds are not granted until the third year after the investment/job creation is achieved. Proposal: Accelerate timeline for fund availability to catalyze projects in higher-cost jurisdictions; include claw back provisions as necessary to protect taxpayer investment.

Housing

- Support legislation that respects both the rights and responsibilities of both residents and housing providers.
- Support policies that facilitate the creation of more housing units, at all price points, in Alexandria and throughout the Commonwealth, including streamlining approval processes and encouraging zoning reforms to allow for more housing creation.
- Oppose policies that would interfere with the rental housing market, such as allowing localities to regulate rents or lengthen the eviction process for residents who have violated their leases.
- Respect the long-term nature of housing investments by not allowing the addition of new conditions after the end of a previously agreed affordability commitment.
- Establish a Commonwealth rental assistance fund and housing vouchers to supplement, or replace, federal programs like Housing Choice Vouchers to help more Virginia residents afford and remain in their housing.

Workforce Development

- Continue funding for initiatives such as the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, Virginia Jobs Investment Program, and the G3 community college grant program.
- Support ongoing efforts to align and simplify the state’s workforce development programs to improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and

maximize impact. Prioritize a demand-driven approach by actively engaging employers in the design and delivery of training programs to ensure they reflect the real-time needs of Virginia's labor market.

Childcare

- Support continued investment to address the ongoing childcare shortages and affordability challenges facing Alexandria's workforce and families.

Education

- Prioritize funding for public education so that local school districts can attract and retain educators.
- Consider the standards of quality recommendations from the Board of Education which calls for appropriate funding to address support services (e.g., counselors, social workers) in schools.

Healthcare

- Invest in strategies to safeguard access to health care and safety net services to protect Virginia's health care ecosystem.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Chamber offers the following checklist of action items for the Federal Government.

Transportation

- The Chamber continues to believe the Federal Government and its workforce play a major role in the long-term viability of the WMATA system and has an obligation to contribute funding commensurate with federal workforce usage.
- The Chamber opposes any change to the High Density (slot) and perimeter rules at Reagan National Airport (DCA).



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