

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 5, 2023

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER *JFP*

FROM: YON LAMBERT, INTERIM DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: PROGRESS UPDATE FOR STREAM RESTORATION COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

ISSUE: At the April 27, 2021, Legislative meeting, the City Council directed staff to pause the Taylor Run and Strawberry Run stream restoration projects to conduct community engagement and collaborate on alternative designs for the streams. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a progress update for that effort.

BACKGROUND: The City contracted with the University of Virginia's Institute for Engagement & Negotiation (IEN) to help facilitate a consensus on an alternative approach to the original stream restoration design. During the first phase of collaboration, IEN formed a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) comprised of Environmental Policy Commission, civic association, and community members and conducted interviews with the SAG and select City staff. Findings were presented to EPC in March 2022 and captured in the Stakeholder Assessment Report for Two Stream Health Improvement Projects in the City of Alexandria.

Phase 2 of the collaboration is to focus on consensus building for a desired alternative approach that was kicked off at a public meeting on September 10, 2022, that included speaking slots from the EPC chair and representatives from the community, and presentations by the City staff, the City's consultant, invited outside technical experts, and Dr. Field (as requested by the community) on potential alternative approaches. At the end of the meeting, people self-selected to join either a Taylor Run or Strawberry Run Consensus Building Group (CBG) to focus individually on alternatives for each stream. The City Manager also spoke at the beginning of the event to kick off this phase.

Additional meetings have been held to further discuss the three different alternatives designs including bioengineering, hard armoring, and a minimal approach, with estimated costs, and potential trees impacts presented by the City's consultant for each alternative.

DISCUSSION: In response to requests from these workgroups, the City has contracted again with Dr. Field (through IEN) to create concept sketches of his “Large Wood Option” as a fourth alternative. Dr. Field will be presenting his alternative to the groups in mid-January. City staff will also be presenting some specific approaches to protecting the sanitary sewer infrastructure in Taylor Run in February.

Following this, IEN will facilitate a process to reach a consensus alternative for each stream. With respect to the engagement process, a final report will be delivered, and Staff will provide an update to City Council around Spring 2023. Staff notes the ‘consensus alternative’ could be a hybrid that includes a combination of techniques found in the alternatives. If the Council supports the ‘consensus alternative’ identified for each stream and directs staff to pursue the ‘consensus alternative,’ City staff will develop a process for the community to remain engaged in the design of the alternatives. This process would include procuring design services to create an engineering design that will take roughly 6-9 months and extend through winter 2023/2024. The procured design consultant would work closely with City staff and the identified stakeholder groups for roughly 10-12 months to allow for input at the 30%, 60%, 90%, and 100% design stages that would be completed winter 2024/2025. After that time, construction procurement would take roughly 4-6 months and completion of the work would take roughly 7 months and be completed around the end of fall/winter 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT: The state Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) matching reimbursement grants awarded for the [Taylor Run Stream Restoration \(\\$2,255,000\)](#) and [Strawberry Run Stream Restoration \(\\$800,000\)](#) projects require that the City execute grant agreements prior to December 31, 2022 to remain eligible. Given the extended outreach and that the grant agreement requires that a construction contractor has been procured by the December 31, 2022 deadline, the grant funding will no longer be available. While the City can reapply for future SLAF grants, the alternatives being considered for Taylor Run and Strawberry Run will most likely not meet the eligibility requirements for SLAF funding. Therefore, the City will need to fund implementation of the chosen design alternative unless other grant sources can be identified.

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