

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 1, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 39 : UPDATE ON THE WAYFINDING PROGRAM

At the March 23, 2010, work session on the Department of Planning and Zoning's (P&Z) work program, City Council asked for an update on the status of the Wayfinding Program, as well as information about the program's maintenance and operation costs.

BACKGROUND: The Wayfinding Plan is proposed to be a coordinated system of sign elements that serves to identify, direct and inform visitors and residents. The estimated capital cost for the entire Wayfinding Program is \$2.3 million, none of which is funded in the proposed CIP. The City Manager is proposing the commercial add-on tax be used to fund transportation improvements and a portion of the Wayfinding Program. The cost of the first phase of the Wayfinding Program is estimated at \$250,000 to include fabrication and installation of signs in Old Town (of which \$80,600 is for parking-related signage) as detailed in the attached table.

The Wayfinding Program's origin was a visitors center study completed in 2003 which indicated that the Wayfinding Program would be one of the most cost effective methods of enhancing tourism in the City. A Wayfinding Program also has major transportation and residents and business benefits. The public process for the Wayfinding Plan commenced in February 2008 with the first of a series of Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meetings. The SAG is comprised of representatives from civic organizations, business associations, Alexandria Ped/Bike, National Park Service, ACVA, AEDP, Chamber of Commerce, WMATA, DASH and City commissions (Arts, ACDP, Aging, HARC). In tandem, a City Work Group has been meeting regularly with the consultants (Sasaki) to follow up and revise the program based on feedback received from the SAG and community meetings. Staff has also presented the program to and received input from civic associations, business groups, and the National Park Service.

Several work sessions have been held with the City Council, Planning Commission and both Boards of Architectural Review. P&Z staff continues to refine and are finalizing the program based on comments received from the SAG, community meetings and work sessions.

The draft Design Guidelines Manual will be released on May 4, 2010 for six weeks of public comment. Field mock-ups of some sign types for public, Council, Planning Commission and

BAR review will be conducted on May 13-18, 2010. P&Z Staff will take the Manual to both Boards of Architectural Review (BARs) at a joint work session on May 19, 2010, and will reach out to the SAG and other community/business groups from May 20-June 15, 2010. Staff will take the program to both BARs for final review and approval in concept of the building mounted signs in June 2010, followed by public hearing and adoption by the Planning Commission in July or September 2010.

Development of the design guidelines has been a two-year process (albeit with some periods when work was suspended). The process is nearly complete. Continuing the staff work on the design guidelines until they are complete will safeguard this investment and create a “shovel-ready” program that needs only funding to be implemented.

A hallmark of this Wayfinding Program is that it is both comprehensive and cost effective in terms of both design and implementation. The City consultant Sasaki, has developed a system that features changeable information on modular panels for easy updating; shared components across multiple sign types; straightforward, industry standard fabrication techniques; standard, readily available materials and parts; and phasing for maximum economic impact and production run pricing.

The attached table identifies the elements and associated costs of implementing Phase I. The total funding required to implement Phase I is \$250,360. The proposed implementation budget for Phase I includes unit costs for fabrication, assembly and installation (by contractor) of the approximately 114 proposed signs. Department of Transportation and Environmental Services staff also estimates a cost of approximately \$20,000 in operations for parts, supplies, maintenance and electricity for illuminated signs for Phase I.

Future implementation of the Wayfinding Program will include the following sign types: Vehicular Directionals, City Gateways, Heritage-Interpretive signs, Bicycle trail signs (off road only), District Gateways, Destination ID Signs (Civic, Park, Historic Attractions), and Neighborhood signs.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment I: Phase I costs for Wayfinding Program

City of Alexandria Wayfinding System
PHASE 1 STRATEGY
OLD TOWN ONLY

DM.1 Commercial District District identity sign (ex. Carlyle, Del Ray, Arlandria) non-illuminated	2	\$1,300.00	\$450.00	\$3,500.00
PK.1 Parking Identity: Structure Parking lot identity, mounted to building facade internally illuminated	6	\$3,000.00	\$760.00	\$22,560.00
PK.2 Parking Identity: Surface lot Parking lot identity, freestanding for surface lot	5	\$2,800.00	\$600.00	\$17,000.00
PK.3b Parking Trailblazer: small vertical Panel attached to lightpoles	50	\$350.00	\$95.00	\$22,250.00
PK.3a Parking Trailblazer: large horizontal Panel attached to signal crossarms	20	\$680.00	\$260.00	\$18,800.00
PD.1 Pedestrian Directional: pointer	5	\$2,400.00	\$770.00	\$15,850.00
PD.2 Pedestrian Directional: mini kiosk Pedestrian corridor orientation	20	\$1,500.00	\$300.00	\$36,000.00
IK.1 Visitor Kiosk (freestanding) Pedestrian information display	2	\$15,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$36,000.00
IK.2 Visitor Kiosk (wall mounted) Pedestrian information display	6	\$5,500.00	\$900.00	\$38,400.00
SUB-TOTAL PHASE 1 ESTIMATE				\$219,560.00
Project Management, Shop Drwgs, Structural Engineering, etc				\$40,000.00
TOTAL PHASE 1 ESTIMATE				\$259,560.00

NOTES:

* Average cost is based on three vendor quotes.