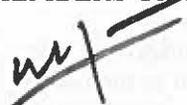


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 14, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER 

FROM: MORGAN ROUTT, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #5: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW COMMUNITY MATCHING FUND CAPITAL FUNDRAISING PROGRAM FOR PARKS

This memorandum provides background information concerning the proposed establishment of a new Community Matching Fund to raise capital funds to improve the City's parks.

The FY 2017 – FY 2026 Proposed Capital Improvement Program reflects an initiative proposed by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) to establish a new Community Matching Fund (the "Fund") through the City Manager's FY 2017 – FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This new Fund will encourage collaborative community partnership opportunities with the City. The results of the 2015 Alexandria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment conducted by Leisure Vision/ETC Institute confirmed the need for this program by reporting that 50% of Alexandria households have a desire for partnership and volunteer opportunities, ranking fourth highest among all unmet needs as measured by the 2015 survey.

The Fund, if included in the CIP adopted by Council, will promote collaborative partnerships among Alexandria community organizations by providing matching dollars for groups that propose fundraising for park improvement projects. Staff envisions the Fund as a way to foster public/private partnerships and cultivate innovative ways for residents to have a greater stake in improving the park and recreation facilities that they use. These partnerships will also provide opportunities for developing positive relationships between the City and the community.

In recent years, RPCA collaborated with many organizations who monetarily supplemented planned CIP projects. Some of these include:

- Building of the Miracle Field
- Simpson Dog Park Improvements
- Del Ray Plaza
- Hume Springs Park

However, in the past there has not been a systematic approach to awarding funds to these community groups or promoting community involvement. The creation of a matching program will encourage non-governmental fund raising in order to improve City parks.

The Fund will provide an opportunity for neighborhood-based groups, community-based organizations, and small business groups to build stronger connections in their neighborhood and the City community by providing funding for park projects. The City will rate community group proposals that need to demonstrate capacity to build a stronger and healthier community. The way the Fund program has been planned, proposals will need to show that a project will:

- Provide a public benefit, free and open to all members of the public;
- Emphasize self-help, with project ideas initiated, planned and implemented by the neighbors and community members impacted by the project;
- Demonstrate the ability to raise the community match (minimum 50%); and
- Occur on City park property and be consistent with park master plans accepted by City Council.

Funding will be awarded annually following City Council adoption of the City's 10-year Capital Improvement Program. As proposed in the budget, starting in FY 2017, community groups interested in receiving matching funds will annually compete for grant aid amounts up to \$25,000. In FY 2017, the Proposed CIP includes \$100,000 total (\$50,000 City Funding and \$50,000 Community Match), and beginning in FY 2018 through FY 2026, \$200,000 annually (\$100,000 City Funding and \$100,000 Community Match).

RPCA staff will evaluate and rate the applications and make recommendations either to the Director of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities or to the Parks and Recreation Commission. It has not been determined at this stage who will make the awards. A successful proposal should include completed and detailed sections that demonstrate the group has planned well, is able to organize broad community support, and knows how to secure resources needed to complete the project. However, we will ensure that this is not a burdensome process and that potential partners of all levels of application sophistication are able to apply.

Rating criteria will include:

- **Proposed Idea (30 points)**
Applicants must demonstrate the project's effectiveness in creating a stronger, connected and vibrant neighborhoods and communities. The proposal must include a detailed work plan, including a maintenance plan, and include how the project will benefit the broader community, and why they want to do this project.
- **Neighborhood Involvement/Community Building (30 Points)**
Applicants must demonstrate the project's effectiveness by including as many diverse groups and individuals as possible and should reflect the demographics of the neighborhood/community, including youth, seniors, renters, homeowners, and business organizations.
- **Project Resources & Readiness (30 points)**
Applicants must demonstrate the ability to obtain widespread and diverse match contributions of cash, volunteer labor, donated professional services, and donated materials are indicators of community support. Community groups must show that they can raise their matching funds and have the project started within 18 months.
- **Outcomes (10 points)**
Applicants must identify how they will measure project success with specific outcomes, both tangible and/or intangible results.

If City Council approves the Community Matching Fund as part of the FY 2017 – FY 2026 CIP adoption, RPCA staff will post information online and market the application process to an existing database of partners and stakeholders.

STAFF:

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

James B. Spengler, Director, RPCA

Jack Browand, Division Chief, RPCA Park Planning

Dana Wedeles, Urban Planner III, RPCA Park Planning

Lucresha Murphy, PARKnership Manager

