

Implementation and Funding

The recommendations for implementation and funding are not numbered, so page numbers are used here. Staff suggests edits to the “early phasing elements” recommendation (page 137) to reflect WPWG comments and plan statements: adding the Union Street study and more detailed engineering of flood mitigation to the early phasing elements.

WPWG’s Plan Statements on Implementation and Funding

- The revenues from increased economic activity should pay for as great a portion of the costs of the plan as feasible in an effort not to place an undue financial burden on the City.
- The City should pursue federal, state, and other governmental/non-governmental grants and funding programs to support the construction, maintenance and operation of the waterfront.
- Individuals, groups and cultural institutions should play a strong role in implementing the all aspects of a plan.

Plan Recommendations for Implementation and Funding

Pg 122: The Parking Implementation Plan should be created immediately after the adoption of the Plan. It should be led by a multi-agency team and also be assisted by the advice of stakeholders, affected by parking issues in the waterfront area.

WPWG Comments

1. The bike plan should be part of this implementation (Lyle)
2. The Park Implementation Plan needs to be created & implemented now! (p. 122) More cars trying to park on Old Town streets will only add to the current disastrous situation. (Olinger)

Pg 129: Utilize a phased approach for implementation by coordinating short-, mid-, and long-term activities in a manner that is the most economically and physically viable and efficient for the City.

WPWG Comments

1. While implementation is a post adoption item, a more specific framework for the phasing should have a place within the Plan (Ballard)

Pg 136: An Advisory Board for Plan implementation will be established by the City; the model may have multiple committees and will identify roles for the Waterfront Committee and Art and History commissions.

WPWG Comments:

1. Multiple citizen committees will fracture the waterfront implementation process, which in turn will empower City staff too much. Citizen oversight of the implementation of a scaled-down waterfront plan should be provided by just one committee dealing with all aspects of the implementation of the waterfront plan. (Ely)
2. As a starting point, how will the City organize to implement the Plan? Will there be one entity given the lead? How will actions of the various Departments be coordinated? What would be the role of the Advisory Board? Organizational questions should be addressed even before the “early phasing elements” are pursued. (Olinger)
3. While implementation is a post adoption item, a more specific framework for an Advisory Board should have a place within the Plan (Ballard)

Pg 137: The City will pursue early phasing elements outlined in the Plan with immediate attention on predevelopment activities such as tracking, reporting and managing parking; completion of City acquisition of The Strand properties and technical analysis work to convert it to parkland; addressing failing bulkheads; completion of the Union Street study; preparation of ~~CP~~ the next phase of design and engineering for flood mitigation; pursuing reuse of the Beachcomber; completing ODBC negotiations; working with Art and History commissions on early phases of their plans; completing an engineering and permitting plan; and others such as an analysis for a new civic building with a related spatial needs assessment for the Archaeological museum; updating settlement agreements; development of a grants strategy; etc.

WPWG Comments

1. I have numerous comments on this recommendation, as follows: One, eminent domain should not be used to acquire the remaining Strand Street properties across from Chadwicks. Further, the parking spaces on those properties must be replaced with nearby parking spaces. Two, no construction related to flood mitigation should be undertaken until detailed engineering work has been completed and a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis can justify any flood mitigation work that the City undertakes. Third, there should be no threat of eminent domain in the City's negotiations with the ODBC. Further, the ODBC parking lot should stay right where it is. Fourth, there is no need to try to update the settlement agreements, specifically to permit hotels on the Robinson Terminal properties -- the settlement agreements are fine as they now are. (Ely)
2. Yes, but....the traffic and pedestrian safety study on Union and the SE quadrant grid needs to be done immediately, as well. Additionally, the engineering study on cost/benefits for the flood mitigation plan needs to be funded and acted on. More work is also needed early to determine appropriate metrics for traffic mitigation resulting from any traffic initiatives. (Wood)

Pg 139: The Plan supports continued operations of the Art League in a location near the waterfront and the Torpedo Factory.

Pg 141: The City will identify options for park services and operations, including the storage of park equipment and vehicles; public restrooms; and a marina dockmaster office, showers and laundry room.

WPWG Comments

1. Yes, but....It is important that the city recognize and act to correct the weak management structure currently in place for Waterfront activities. The absence of an integrated approach to parks, environmental needs, business enhancements, public activities, and financial planning has created the fraying infrastructure and relative inactivity we currently see. The city's approach to the waterfront is too stove piped and unorganized. No one, and everyone, is "in charge." It is frustrating to our intentions and confounding to our citizens. (Wood)

Pg 69: Relocate the City's fire boat and the Seaport Foundation floating facility - Alexandria Seaport Center- to the foot of Duke Street.

WPWG Comments

1. The City has yet to develop a coherent overall plan for docking facilities along the waterfront, so it is premature to say that the fireboat and the Seaport Foundation's floating facility should be relocated to the bottom of Duke Street. (Ely)
2. It seems that the commercial activities are shifting upriver. The city's fireboat may belong nearer the concentration of waterfront activity. There is equal worth in shifting this boat to the north terminal site or simply leaving it where it is. (Wood)
3. Pending the ultimate location of docks if moved to Waterfront Park (Ballard)

Implementation and Funding (additional material)

Below are points identified as Implementation items during the WPWG discussion on 11-30-2011. To be discussed by the WPWG when they address Implementation and Funding on 12-8-2011

1. Proposed but deferred: related to the dedication of new revenues to Waterfront-area amenities.

Text for the Draft Waterfront Plan: *The application of net additional City revenues generated by redevelopment of the Waterfront should be dedicated to Waterfront-area amenities, including parks, programming, and other public uses.*

Summary of WPWG Discussion of proposed new recommendation: General consensus to table until Work Group discusses funding recommendations.

WPWG Comments on new recommendation: Supports considering revenues west of Lee Street (Ely). Suggests this be tabled until the funding discussion (Ballard). Would oppose this statement if it implies that only revenues generated within the Waterfront core area should support waterfront amenities (Olinger). Would oppose setting a precedent that a neighborhood could ask that revenues generated by activities within their neighborhood be earmarked for use only within their neighborhood. A reference to waterfront maintenance needs to be added to the draft recommendation (Wood).

2. Related to how an interim use of ODBC parking lot should be reconfigured.

Planning recommendation agreed to by WPWG: At a minimum, improvements to this site reached through negotiation with the ODBC should include public access along the waterfront and preserve public access at King Street Park.

WPWG proposed implementation recommendation: During implementation of improvements to the ODBC parking lot, the existing chain-link fencing should be removed or, if replaced, constructed of materials consistent with the architectural fabric of Old Town. Art and historic interpretation should be incorporated into the reconfigured site.

3. Related to implementation of pier recommendations.

WPWG proposed implementation recommendation: Pier designs shown in this Plan are illustrative; the engineering and design will be determined during the implementation phase and may be of a different length, width or location from that shown in the Plan. Pier location and design should be compatible with interim or ultimate agreements with ODBC.

4. Related to implementation of parks recommendations.

Planning recommendation agreed to by WPWG: The parks and public spaces of the Waterfront should be considered an integrated system and should have a holistic design vision.

WPWG proposed implementation recommendation: Waterfront public spaces should be actively managed – both maintenance and programming – as an integrated system. City staff should be organized in a manner to ensure this integrated approach occurs.

WPWG proposed implementation recommendation: add improvements to Waterfront Park to the list of early action items.

From: David Olinger [mailto:dsolinger@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2011 8:05 PM

To: Faroll Hamer; Karl Moritz; Nancy Williams; Paul Smedberg; Sherry Schiller

Subject: A question

For the "**Implementation & Funding Recommendations**" discussion tomorrow it would be helpful to know (roughly) what the total estimated revenue would be at build-out (1) under present zoning and (2) under present zoning with hotels as a permitted use.

Private Realm

Redevelopment Sites

Increased Density: Congestion (vehicular, pedestrian & parking) is presently a major issue in the area. Proposed parking solutions are nothing more than “smoke & mirrors”. The Plan does nothing to improve the existing situation and will only make things much worse. Under existing zoning some 651,000 sf. can be built. Increasing density to add another 161,000 of development is totally unacceptable. **(It amazes me that after all these meetings we still haven't discussed re-zoning & density. This should be our first topic Thursday!)**

Olinger Comments (Cont.)

Robinson Terminal lawyer's May 13th letter to the Mayor: The letter requested amendments to the "Development Goals and Guidelines" to further loosen restrictions (for example parking requirements). Was there a response to this letter? Does the letter have any status and were any changes made as a result?

Hotels: The number of hotels and rooms has yet to be fully discussed. A 150 room is just too big. Once "hotels" is an accepted land use in the W-1 Zone, how can the number of hotels or rooms be enforced? Would it stand up against a law suit from a property owner wanting to build a 4th or 5th hotel? On the other hand, we know that the plan cannot require hotels. Where does this leave us?

Restaurants: 50,000 sf. equals 7 restaurants the size of "Virtue". Are we trying to reinforce the "restaurant row" image? How would the s.f. limit be enforced and would it stand up to a law suit? In any case, the Restaurant/Hotel/Commercial Policy needs to include specific criteria for restaurants (examples: no more than 25% of the street frontage of any block; or a total predetermined retail/restaurant space ratio).

Olinger Comments - Funding

Project Specific Funding: The Waterfront serves the whole City and beyond. Its uniqueness is part of what attracts tourists (and their money) to Alexandria. While I have no problem with tax revenue being generated from the waterfront, there is no basis to require that any public improvement in the area be directly related to internal (8 blocks) revenue generation. Some waterfront improvements have long standing in the CIP (Windmill Hill Park) and others (Nuisance Flood Mitigation) should have been included as well.

"Nexus" Issue: The discussion as to whether the so-called "goodies" in the Plan are worth the attributed costs and the resultant net increase in density has never taken place. Improvements requiring increased density to throw off more revenue to pay for benefits just aren't worth the damage that will be inflicted on the area & the city. We need to look carefully at the trade-offs.

Environmental Issues

The recommendations for implementation and funding are not numbered, so page numbers are used here. The WPWG has reviewed the plan's recommendations related to the environment, but in the context of other categories, primarily the public realm recommendations.

WPWG's Plan Statements on Environmental Issues

- Environmental issues should be addressed in the design and engineering of shoreline improvements. Where possible, rip-rap should be replaced with a more natural shoreline treatment.
- A plan should promote the use of Best Practices that lead to more effective Storm Water Management and enhanced Resource Protection Area (RPA) buffers for improved water quality in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.
- A plan should support City efforts to remediate sources of contamination from current and past industrial uses found along the waterfront.
- A plan should encourage the use of the highest levels of Green Building standards in areas such as water conservation, emissions reduction, recycling of building materials and environmentally sensitive building design.

Plan Recommendations on Environmental Issues

Many environmental issues are already addressed by City and other environmental policies, ordinances, regulations and guidelines. The Plan reviews these on page 28-32, These include shoreline protection; flood plain, flood mitigation, and sea-level rise; Resource Protection Areas; the combined sewer system; and the green building policy.

- 3.17 At the end of Montgomery Street, consider low impact hardscape options...
- 3.20 [In Rivergate Park] Provide additional plantings featuring native plants in the western half of the park, in part to subtly orient visitors toward the more public, eastern section of the park.
- 3.28 [In Oronoco Bay Park] Erect a large shade structure at water's edge to provide an overlook, picnic shelter, or stage. This structure would become the focal point of the park and should be a significant work of garden architecture. It may be fitted with solar panels on the roof to provide power for small events or ceiling fans.
- 3.29 [In Oronoco Bay Park] Create a series of terraced wetlands on the south side of the park that recapture the historic drainage swale called Ralph's Gutt. These terraces would be graded into the current ground and planted with aquatic plants which will naturally cleanse the storm water before it enters the river. Boardwalks can cross the wetlands to connect pedestrian desire lines and create opportunities for interpretive education.

These wetland enhancements could involve day-lighting the storm water pipes that currently convey the water under the park to the bay.

- 3.30 [In Oronoco Bay Park] Explore opportunities to reduce the impact of the combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfall that discharges at the foot of Pendleton Street. Options include installing a retention basin to reduce the volume of combined sewage discharged into the river during rain events and incorporating features into the proposed extension of Pendleton Street that would direct CSOs away from Oronoco Bay.
- 3.31 [In Oronoco Bay Park] Allow a successional forest to emerge on the north side of the park, extending the natural landscape of the tidal flats to the adjoining uplands. The intent is to plant a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, and to end the practice of mowing in a small area, allowing that area to evolve naturally. This could be an excellent interpretive and research opportunity for city school children to discover the restorative power of nature.
- 3.34 Replace the existing rip rap with a more natural and inviting shoreline treatment, to include native plants.
- 3.44 Where possible, replace existing large diameter rip-rap with appropriate (native and/or historic) plantings, using an engineered shoreline restoration system where necessary, in order to achieve the naturalized shoreline envisioned by the Plan. Consider interpretive signage or other means to explain the system to passersby, and to encourage ecologically friendly use and a “tread lightly” mentality in this sensitive area.
- 3.45 If rip-rap is retained in some locations, incorporate larger, flatter boulders to provide informal seating areas along the water’s edge.
- 3.58 Rebuild the bulkhead in areas where it is failing.
- 3.89 Complete the acquisition of the waterside properties between Prince and Duke Streets and develop them as a public park showcasing shipbuilding, and other important elements of the City’s past.

In addition:

- The development guidelines for Robinson Terminal North say that “Redevelopment should be compatible with any biosparging technology, or other bioremediation, being employed by the City in treatment of the Oronoco Outfall-Alexandria Town Gas site located at the eastern end of Oronoco Street.”
- There are several Traffic and Circulation recommendations that encourage mobility by means other than the automobile.

- There are several public realm recommendations that encourage the conversion of pavement, including street ends and surface parking lots, to parks. In the case of privately-owner paved surfaces, conversion to park is accomplished through City purchase, through a negotiated agreement with property owners, or through the redevelopment approval process.