

**QUESTIONS FROM THE WATERFRONT PLAN WORK GROUP  
WITH RESPONSES FROM STAFF (11.9.2011)**

Staff provided answers to several WPWG questions in the work group's materials for the November 2, 2011 meeting. These are attached and include:

- Comparing parking and trip generation by land use type. This answer addresses issues raised by the Work Group at the October 26 meeting as well as some questions raised by Bert Ely in an email.
- A map of building heights in the Waterfront core area.

The Work Group also discussed the question of existing underground parking in the Waterfront area.

Additional questions are addressed below.

1. Studies determining the additional costs, if any, of constructing underground parking on fill land. *Staff is unaware of any studies addressing this issue.*
2. Numbers of parking spaces in Alexandria hotels. *The material that staff has available on this issue is included in the discussion comparing parking and trip generation by land use type.*
3. Map of existing buildings showing what would not be allowed under the proposed Waterfront Small Area Plan (i.e., the Strand building). *Staff is preparing this map and it should be ready shortly.*
4. Appraisal values of the redevelopment sites, for a better idea of what the sites would sell for on the open market. *Staff has asked the City's Real Estate staff to look into whether this can be done at a reasonable cost and within a timeframe that is helpful to this plan. The answer expected to be available by the end of the week.*
5. Letter from the Robinson Terminal Corporation updating their position on the Waterfront Plan consistent with their presentation to the Waterfront Plan Work Group. *Staff did not have an opportunity to convey this request to Robinson Terminal until early this week, so they have not had time to respond.*
6. The percentage of parks on other successful Waterfronts. *Staff agrees this would be helpful material but has not had a chance to look into it. We hope to get it to you on or before your next meeting.*
7. Revenue charts showing project costs against revenues for all of the plan alternatives. *Staff will prepare these charts for the WPWG prior to your discussion of the private realm recommendations.*
8. Parking requirements on the Waterfront. The Work Group had several questions about parking requirements. *This material contains a discussion by staff of the issues raised by the Work Group.*

## Parking Requirements for the Waterfront

There are a number of existing provisions of the zoning ordinance that could affect whether or not a property on the Waterfront has parking requirements.

1. Within the Central Business District (between Cameron and Duke), no parking is required for a variety of uses, including restaurants, offices, retail, personal service, schools, and industrial uses, regardless of the age of the building, **provided the lot area involved is small (less than 10,000 sf)**. Section 8-300(B). The Robinson Terminal sites are both larger than the threshold so this exemption does not apply to them. In the case of the Cummings and Turner properties, this exemption applies to the Brandt properties at 10 Prince, and at 204/206 S. Union and means that parking is not required. Nevertheless, the Brandts have informed us that there are 25 parking spaces dedicated to the property at the Solo garage at the corner of S. Union and Duke Street.

This CBD exemption has long been a part of how parking is treated in Old Town. Despite the exemption, if a use is subject to SUP review, the city has the authority and does typically require parking arrangements, despite the technical exemption.

2. Those waterfront properties with settlement agreements prior to 1984, which agreements prohibit parking, are exempt from parking requirements. Section 8-500. Neither of the Robinson Terminal sites' settlement agreements includes a prohibition on parking. The Cummings/Turner site is not subject to a settlement agreement.
3. Buildings and uses in existence in 1963 are allowed to continue without compliance with parking regulations except:
  - If the use changes, then the new use must comply.
  - If a pre-1963 building is renovated to the extent that the cost of improvements exceeds the market value of the building (not land), then the building and use have to comply with parking.

Note that under this rule, even if parking is triggered by a change of use or costly renovation, the exemption under #1 above in the CBD may work to avoid the parking requirement. Thus, except for pre-1963 buildings that continue a long established use, or a building in the CBD under #1 above, any new building or reuse of an old building for a new use will require parking.

This last provision grandfathering pre-1963 buildings is a city wide rule applied extensively throughout for the last 30+ years. It represents a City policy long part of the zoning scheme to recognize that buildings built without a parking requirement often have no ability to supply parking and should not be penalized for simply being in existence prior to the enactment of a later rule. Hundreds, if not thousands, of property owners and tenants have used this rule and staff cannot support changing it, especially for just one part of the City, without a significant study of the consequences on existing uses and property owners.

## Comparing Parking and Trip Generation by Land Use Type

During the October 26 meeting and afterwards, Work Group members requested additional information related to parking and trip generation of different land use types, including more information about:

- The actual space-per-room utilization of hotels.
- The parking and trip generation of various land use options.

### Hotel Parking Ratios – Actual Spaces-Per Room Utilization

Staff has peak parking utilization rates for several hotels in the Waterfront/Old Town area. With the exception of Morrison House, these hotel garages are available for non-guest use, including in most cases: hotel employees, restaurant patrons, the general public, and monthly parkers. Peak period space utilization per room averages 0.44 for the five hotels, within the 0.5 spaces per room suggested in the Waterfront Plan.

	Rooms	Total Spaces	Peak Utilization	Spaces Used Per Room at Peak
Hotel Monaco	241	174	51%	0.37
Morrison House	45	54	35%	0.42
The Lorien	107	75	95%	0.67
Crowne Plaza - Old Town North	254	380	25%	0.37
Hilton Alexandria Old Town	246	288	40%	0.47

*Lorien Hotel utilization is a self-reported "guesstimate."*

### Parking and Trip Generation by Land Use Type

To more easily compare different land uses, staff prepared three scenarios (hotel, residential, and mixed use) for a one-acre site on the Cummings/Turner block (the Art League site is a little less than one acre). The scenarios conform to proposed zoning requirements: a maximum of 30 dwelling units per acre for residential and a 3.0 FAR for the other scenarios.

#### Parking

- Assuming a 120-room hotel, parking spaces would total 85, including 0.5 spaces per room for guests; 1 space per 4 seats for a small restaurant; and 1 space per 10 rooms for employees.
- Thirty dwelling units, assuming large units (Townhouses or 3 bedroom condos), parking spaces would total 70-75, including 60-66 for residents and 10 for visitors.
- Mixed use would total 220 spaces, including 38 spaces for 15 dwelling units, 95 spaces for approximately 22,000 square feet of retail, and 88 spaces for 43,500 square feet of office.

## **Trip Generation**

- Peak hour/peak direction trip generation for a room in the standard hotel is 44% of that for a housing unit. This is based on average trip generation for a hotel which overstates trip generation because it does not take into account reduced trip generation due to:
  - An urban infill location
  - Proximity to high quality transit (albeit not within walking distance of the Metro station)
  - The fact that Alexandria waterfront hotels are within a reasonable taxicab fare from a major airport.
- Peak hour/peak direction trip generation for a 120-room hotel is 26 trips and for a 30-unit residential development is 15 trips.
- Peak hour/peak direction trip generation for the mixed use scenario is 80 trips.

## **Heights of Buildings in the Waterfront Core**

Work Group members requested a map of the Waterfront core area with building heights shown. That map is attached.

- A range of heights is shown for the Strand Building at 110 South Union. The 60 foot height is shown in the construction documents and the project's architect recalls a post-construction measurement that was within 1 inch of 60 feet. A City surveyor measured the height from Union Street earlier this year and his reading was 52 feet.
- A range of heights is shown for Harborside. The City surveyor found a height of 50 feet to the ridge line of a roof of one of the housing units from Wolfe Street. A measurement of the height of a housing unit facing the water from the ground to the mid-point of the roof was 60 feet.

103  
Pendleton St: 68 Ft  
Robinson Terminal  
North: 32 Ft

Torpedo Factory: 52 Ft

110 S. Union:  
52-60 Ft

206 S. Union: 43 Ft

Robinson Terminal  
South: 30 Ft

Harborside: 50-60 Ft

