

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 7, 2009

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: PRIORITIES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING'S WORK PROGRAM FOR FY2010 AND BEYOND

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of Planning Commission priorities for planning projects in the Department of Planning and Zoning's work program for FY 2010 and beyond.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Planning Commission confirm the following priorities, staffing levels and funding for the Department of Planning and Zoning.

- Complete small area plans for Potomac Yard and the Waterfront.
- Upon adoption of the Potomac Yard plan, begin a small area plan for the rest of the Route 1 Corridor (Braddock Fields/Landbay L or Route 1 West).
- Continue planning efforts on the Beauregard/Alexandria West small area plan, with major work beginning in May 2009 and completion targeted for November 2010.
- Complete design guidelines for the Wayfinding program.
- Begin implementation of the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan.
- Accelerate support for implementation of the Arlandria Action Plan.
- Provide enhanced planning attention to development proposals in Carlyle including Block P and nearby ASA property.
- Embark on Phase II of the Green Building program, addressing existing buildings and outreach.
- Complete Eisenhower West Industrial Use Study in FY 2009. Phase initiation of Eisenhower West small area plan to focus first on parcels identified in industrial use study as having greater near-term redevelopment potential.
- Work with the Office of Housing on the upcoming Housing Master Plan with adoption targeted for January 2011.

The resources required for this work program would require for FY2010:

1. For the new projects added to the work program, a total of:
  - one temporary (contract) staff person (\$80,000) and \$40,000 in consultant funds for the Department of Planning and Zoning;
  - \$80,000 in consultant funds for the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; and
2. Receipt of a federal BRAC grant of approximately \$600,000 to pay for the consultant work on the Beauregard/Alexandria West small area plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Work Program**

Attached to this memorandum is a chart showing the proposed work program for FY2010. Although the FY2010 work program is the focus of our discussion, the chart covers the time period from January 2009 through June of 2012 to give a broader picture of the proposed schedule of major planning projects. In addition, the chart shows work associated with plan implementation, which continues to occur for some years after each plan is adopted.

There are several new projects proposed, either due to Council direction (such as the unfunded Arlandria Action Plan) or because they are logical next steps to a recently completed project (such as Green Buildings Phase II and the Route 1 Corridor). Also, the Potomac Yard plan is currently underway, as a result of development pressure from the owners of Landbay F, even though resources were not allocated in the FY09 budget.

Proposed new projects that were not on the approved FY2009 work program include:

- Potomac Yard (Landbays F and L)
- Route 1 Corridor (either Braddock Fields/Landbay L or Route 1 West)
- Green Buildings Phase II
- Phase I of the Eisenhower West small area plan
- Arlandria Action Plan
- ASA/Carlyle Block P

With these new projects, this proposed work program is not possible with the resources in the proposed FY2010 budget.

The Department has taken some steps to reduce the level of effort in this work program to increase efficiency and make room for new projects. For example, this work program proposed that work on the Arlandria Action Plan not begin until November, after work on the Wayfinding Design Guidelines is completed.

During discussions of the FY2009 budget, the Department pointed out that the budgeted complement of 53.5 FTEs created capacity for 3 major plans and 2 smaller planning projects – if fully staffed. The proposed work program has up to seven projects occurring simultaneously. Resource issues are explored in greater detail later in this memorandum, but as Commissioners read the descriptions of the proposed FY2010 work program, you may wish to be thinking about which projects should be retained by adding resources, and which should be delayed for lack of resources. In staff's estimation, there are no obvious candidates for delay. Interrupting projects that are well underway is counter-productive, especially if the public is already engaged. Other projects (Beauregard, Arlandria) are also time-sensitive.

### Proposed Work Program

1. *Potomac Yard Small Area Plan:* This plan, as well as the associated Metro Feasibility Study, is well under way with completion expected by December 2009. The Department is not proposing a delay in this Plan. However, at a Potomac Yard community workshop held in January, the public raised the possibility of looking at Potomac Yard's Landbay L in combination with the Braddock Fields adjacent to the Braddock Metro Station (although the Rosemont Civic Association has taken a position opposing such a study). Currently staff is engaged in a "threshold analysis" which will help the Commission and the Council determine if a Landbay L/Braddock Fields plan be conducted separately from the Potomac Yard plan.

If a Landbay L/Braddock Fields plan is added to the work program, staff recommends that it should begin immediately after the Potomac Yard plan because the technical studies will still be valid and many members of the public will already be engaged. If it is added to the work program, it will likely require some additional consultant resources.

If Landbay L/Braddock Fields is not added to the work program, staff recommends that planning for the west side of the Route 1 Corridor commence immediately after the Potomac Yard plan. Given the major transportation infrastructure projects that are contemplated for Route 1 – not only the possibility of a new Metro station but the investment in high occupancy transit along Route 1 itself – it seems prudent to continue planning within the watershed of these major investments.

2. *Waterfront Small Area Plan:* The initial public meetings are now scheduled for April; the goal is to have work on the Plan completed in 14 months (June 2010), shorter than the original estimate of 18 months. This Plan is now fully under way and in staff's estimation, is not a good candidate for delay because of the critical role the waterfront plays in the City's economy and quality-of-life.
3. *Beauregard Small Area Plan:* Although staff has been conducting preliminary work throughout the spring, efforts on this Plan will accelerate in July as consultants are brought on board in preparation for a likely first community meeting in September. There are several factors creating a sense of urgency for this Plan's completion, the primary of which is the relocation of 6,400

Department of Defense jobs to the Mark Center. Others include the redevelopment intentions of more than one major residential landowner, and the planning for high occupancy transit along the Beauregard corridor, as well as the Columbia Pike streetcar project being planned by Arlington and Fairfax Counties. Completion is targeted for December 2011, or 18 months from commencement. The Department is pursuing BRAC grant funding to support this planning effort.

4. *Eisenhower West Small Area Plan:* The Eisenhower West Industrial Study will be completed in June and this report will shed significant light on the readiness of the Eisenhower West industrial area for redevelopment. An option for this proposed work program is to institute a two-phase small area plan, focusing initial planning work on the properties identified by the study as having the greatest near-term development potential. This approach will allow the Beauregard Plan to be completed before the balance of the Eisenhower West Plan begins; staff believes that having two major West End plans occurring simultaneously strains not only City staff but also residents and businesses who wish to participate fully in both planning processes. In addition, the Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan has just been adopted and a redevelopment proposal in the Pickett Place area has just been approved. At a recent community meeting on the Industrial Uses study, some members of the public expressed concern about this initiative diverting attention from Landmark/Van Dorn's redevelopment. Upon receipt of the study's findings, the Planning Commission and City Council may conclude that it is not urgent to initiate Eisenhower West planning in FY2010. If that is the case, the Department recommends devoting those resources to the Green Building Phase II project instead.
5. *Green Building Phase II:* The April 2 *Green Building Policy for Alexandria* staff report calls for the continuation of the Work Group to pursue issues such as: standards for existing buildings, incentives for high levels of sustainability, outreach and education for the community, and enforcement strategies. Staff recommends pursuing this project in FY2010 if the Industrial Uses Study's findings indicate that it is not urgent to initiate Eisenhower West planning in FY2010.
6. *Wayfinding:* This project has been under way for some time and has reached the stage where stakeholders are in the final rounds of design review. This project is scheduled for delivery of design guidelines in October 2008, and is subject to a City Council funding decision (the Wayfinding program is not funded in the FY2010 CIP, but possibly could be funded if the City Council raises the real estate tax rate above that reflected in the proposed FY2010 budget).
7. *Arlandria Action Plan:* In February, the City Council added work on the Arlandria Action Plan to the work program, and this effort will involve multiple departments. The proposed work program shows this project following completion of the Wayfinding design guidelines because even if the necessary additional resources are provided, the Department as a whole cannot absorb another project until Wayfinding reaches that milestone. The proposed work program for Arlandria consists of:

- Establishing an Implementation Advisory Group (IAG)
  - With the IAG, reviewing the 2003 Action Plan, the progress in implementing the Action Plan, and developing the IAG's priorities for moving forward
  - Coordinating with the IAG on issues related to public facilities, infrastructure and other improvements such as intersections, traffic control and signaling, parking, streetscape improvements (including bulbouts, crosswalk enhancements, and gateway enhancements), park design and development, and public art
  - Assessing redevelopment market potential by engaging landowners in an assessment of the factors that have inhibited redevelopment and by issuing a Request for Expressions of Interest for redevelopment of key parcels that permits respondents to propose projects that may require changes to the current set of development constraints (zoning, height, land use mix, other requirements)
  - Continuing to explore the potential benefits and implications of an arts district and other options for pursuing community development in cooperation with arts organizations.
  - Empowering community residents and businesses by identifying improvements and other projects they can do themselves, such as supporting tree planting/care and other beautification projects, implementing the wayfinding program, through raising money and direct action.
8. *ASA/Carlyle Block P*: Development proposals for these key parcels are being prepared by landowners and there are a number of issues that will require a higher-than-normal level of planning attention. Among these issues: the role of retail on these sites and desirability of and mechanism for transferring density.
  9. *King Street Retail*: This spring's King Street Retail study offered several strategies to support and strengthen retailers in the King Street corridor. These recommendations are, of course, only useful if they are implemented. However, given the priority of some other projects, and the fact that the proposed work program already requires more resources than budgeted, the proposed work program does not schedule King Street Retail implementation until FY2011, after the Waterfront Plan is completed. The King Street Retail strategy would build on the Waterfront Plan, the parking study now underway, and the Wayfinding plan.
  10. *Housing Master Plan*: Staff is engaged in the preliminary work on this planning effort, which will be led by the Office of Housing with support by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Final scheduling is still under consideration, but significant staff time will be devoted to the project throughout FY2010.

The proposed work program would result in six plans being delivered to the City Council in FY2010 and another four plans being delivered to the Council in the first half of

FY2011. From January 2010 through January 2011, eight plans would come before the Council.

Last September, the City Council reviewed and approved a modified work program for the Department of Planning and Zoning. Recognizing the capacity limitations of the Department's staffing and consultant resources, the Council (1) directed staff to begin work a Small Area Plan for Potomac Yard this fall, to be completed by the end of calendar year 2009; and (2) agreed that no items shall be added to the Special Studies and Projects category of the work program until the completion of the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, which is scheduled for December 2009.

In the proposed work program, a Route 1 plan would follow adoption of a Potomac Yard plan, which means that the staff resources allocated to Potomac Yard would remain allocated throughout FY2010.

### **Staffing and Consultant Resources**

The capacity of the Department to complete work program initiatives comes in two forms: staffing levels and funds for consultant resources. In order to meet expenditure targets, the City Manager's proposed FY2010 budget reduces both types of resources for the Department.

Last fall, staff hypothesized that the economic slowdown would result in a slowdown of regulatory activity. Less regulatory work would mitigate the impact of staff reductions and allow some development review staff to work on neighborhood planning projects.

This has happened to an extent: there is a reduced caseload of SUPs, DSUPs, and other regulatory work, and some development staff are now working on neighborhood planning projects, including the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan and the Industrial Uses study. However, unless development activity falls still further, there is no staff capacity that can be reallocated from regulatory cases to support an increased planning work program.

We cannot be certain that the regulatory caseload will not increase during the next fiscal year. While some development-related activity levels – such as building permit reviews – increase and decrease along with economic conditions, it is also true that landowners continue to pursue development approvals during slow economic times. As there is no “reserve” of staff or consultant resources in this budget, unexpected increases in the caseload could result in slower-than-average review times or delays in some planning projects.

### **Resource Requirements**

The proposed work program represents an increased level of activity over FY2009 and requires a commensurate level of staffing and consultant resources. Successful completion of this work program would require:

1. For the new projects added to the work program – specifically the Arlandria Action Plan and *either* Phase I of the Eisenhower West small area plan *or* Green Buildings Phase II, a total of:

- one temporary (contract) staff person (\$80,000) and \$40,000 in consultant funds for the Department of Planning and Zoning;
  - \$80,000 in consultant funds for the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; and
2. Receipt of a federal BRAC grant of approximately \$600,000 to pay for the consultant work on the Beauregard/Alexandria West small area plan. City staff is currently engaged in the grant process and our submission of the initial round of required information is now under review by the BRAC office.

cc: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council  
James K. Hartmann, City Manager  
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

**Planning & Zoning Highlights and Accomplishments**  
**July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009**

- completed/approved Braddock East Plan
- initiated implementation phase of the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan
- completed/approved Landmark/Van Dorn Plan
- initiated Potomac Yard planning process
- initiated the Waterfront Plan
- completed/approved Wayfinding Program Phase I Signs Concept
- completed a King Street Retail Study
- enacted temporary portable sign program to assist side street businesses on King Street
- completed/approved changes to the zoning ordinance to assist small businesses
- revised the outdoor dining ordinance
- completed Eisenhower East Industrial Uses Study (June)
- BRAC133/WHS review
- adopted zoning regulations to allow covered open porches in required front yards by special exception
- improved the City's GIS with updated software and systems architecture; initiated program to expand use of GIS in land use planning
- created and staffed the joint City Permit Center with Code Administration and T&ES.
- GIS division supported multiple projects for City departments including the Computerized Maintenance Monitoring System for T&ES, an SRS Viewer for Police, and Automated Vehicle Location monitoring (several applications, including King Street Trolley).
- developed a draft green building policy to be considered by City Council
- participated in Four Mile Run Restoration Project and development of Design Guidelines
- provided technical support to ACPS regarding demographic and forecasting analysis
- completed/approved text amendment to extend the validity period of site plans and DSUPs from 18 months to 36 months
- approved the James Bland redevelopment project
- approved Landbays G and I & J East in Potomac Yard

- approved Landmark Gateway project
- reviewed ATA and IDA projects for June 2009 docket
- regulatory caseload:
  - development approved: 5,489,488 square feet
  - development cases: 61
  - SUPs: 44
  - zoning complaints and SUP compliance cases: 610
  - permits/BZA applications/plot plans: 3,416
  - historic preservation applications/permits: 853
- achieved State approval of the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District for Listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register
- initiated Census Complete Count Committee
- implemented new Infill Regulations to protect single-family and two-family neighborhoods outside the historic districts
- made significant progress on a Citywide Wayfinding program (for October 2009 approval)

## Activity Indicators - Department of Planning and Zoning

### Development Activity Since 2000: Completions in Square Feet

Year	Resid Units	Resid Sq.Ft.*	Commercial Sq.Ft.**	Institutional Sq.Ft.***	Total**** Sq. Ft.
2000	1,240	1,364,000	1,077,470	145,397	2,441,470
2001	1,589	1,747,900	593,048	50,412	2,340,948
2002	1,464	1,610,400	498,416	82,661	2,108,816
2003	351	386,100	821,597	86,346	1,207,697
2004	116	127,600	1,483,533	62,364	1,611,133
2005	540	594,000	482,429	181,704	1,076,429
2006	427	469,700	117,480	5,180	587,180
2007	1,919	2,110,900	541,308	355,000	2,652,208
2008	531	584,100	521,456	4,000	1,105,556
2009					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,177</b>	<b>8,994,700</b>	<b>6,136,737</b>	<b>973,064</b>	<b>15,131,437</b>

\* Computed, using 1,100 square feet per unit average.

\*\* Includes offices, retail, hotels and entertainment, warehousing, wholesale.

\*\*\* Includes schools, hospitals, fire stations, churches, recreation centers. Often not taxed.

\*\*\*\* Total of private square footage only (excludes institutional)

### Assessed Value of New Construction, FY2000 to FY2009 YTD

Year	Value at Completion			Value in 2009		
	Resid	Comm.	Total	Resid	Comm.	Total
2000	212.5	294.4	506.9	512.7	638.7	1,151.4
2001	169.8	251.6	421.4	374.5	521.6	896.1
2002	105.5	209.8	315.3	201.8	420.1	621.9
2003	89.6	416.3	505.9	137.6	773.0	910.6
2004	144.6	436.0	580.6	190.2	714.8	905.0
2005	206.0	489.5	695.5	223.3	699.8	923.1
2006	393.2	191.2	584.4	356.8	232.4	589.2
2007	424.1	291.7	715.8	396.2	320.1	716.3
2008	155.3	276.2	431.5	148.0	275.6	423.6
2009	64.5	204.0	268.5	64.5	204.0	268.5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>2,605.6</b>	<b>4,800.1</b>	<b>7,405.7</b>

In hundreds of millions of dollars. Includes value of land and improvement

### Development Potential of Small Area Plans Approved FY1999-FY2009

Fiscal Year	Plan Name	Add'l Development
1999	Potomac Yard CDD	3,871,300
2000		
2001	Upper Potomac West Task Force Report (June)	388,200
2002		
2003	A Long Term Vision and Action Plan for Arlandria Neighborhood (May 2003)**	1,718,446
2003	Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (Spring 2003)***	8,931,761
2004		
2005	Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan (May 2005)**	214,313
2006	Hunting Creek Area Plan (October 2005)	256,000
2007		
2008	Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan (March 2008)	2,343,500
2008	Braddock East Master Plan (October 2008)	1,301,000
2009	Landmark/Van Dorn Corridor Plan (February 2009)	12,112,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>31,136,520</b>

\* Not a small area plan but contains significant added development potential

\*\* Estimated using maximum permitted FAR and acreage.

\*\*\* Includes development potential approved in previous CDDs.

### Development Approvals - New Construction, FY2008 and FY2009

Fiscal Year	Resid Sq. Ft.	Non-Resid Sq. Ft.	Total Sq. Ft.	Number of Cases New Construction (Total)
2008	299,750	293,125	592,875	6 (14)
2009	2,162,800	3,326,688	5,489,488	20 (22)

**Development Cases, FY2008 and FY2009**

	FY2008	FY2009	FY09 Annualized
Number of projects under review	75	51	61
Number of reviews*	151	103	124
Design reviews	536		455
Other plan and permit reviews**	1344	722	866

*FY2009: through April 2009*

*\* Concept, Completeness, Preliminary, Final site plan review, Mylar review*

*\*\* As built, Site plan revisions, Wall checks, COs, Building, Trade, Sign permits, and Plot or Grading plans*

**Non-Development Cases, FY 2008 and FY2009**

Fiscal Year	Subdivisions	Encroachments	Administrative	SUPs	Total
2008	5	4	45	51	105
2009	2	1	18	44	65

*FY2009: Hearing cases through June. Administrative cases from July to April 2*

**Land Use Activity Levels, FY2008 and FY2009**

	FY2008	FY2009
Zoning complaints and SUP compliance	1,239	610
Permits/BZA applications/plot plans	5,748	3,416
Historic Preservation applications/permits	1,256	853



