

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** DECEMBER 6, 2013

**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE ARLANDRIA ACTION PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

**FROM:** JOEL K. MARCUSON, P.E., DEPUTY DIRECTOR, TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** OVERNIGHT PARKING AT CITY-OWNED PUBLIC PARKING LOT AT 3700 AND 3612 MOUNT VERNON AVENUE (REVISION TO OCTOBER 30, 2013 MEMORANDUM)

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### Issue

In recent years, staff has received a number of concerns from Arlandria residents regarding a shortage of overnight parking in the neighborhood. In response to these concerns, staff has investigated a number of potential solutions, one of which is to open the public parking lot at 3700 and 3612 Mount Vernon Avenue for overnight parking. The two parcels are owned by the City of Alexandria and 3600 Mt. Vernon LLC, respectively. The City leases the privately-owned lot at 3612 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

### Background

The public parking lot was constructed in 2004 to provide public parking for patrons of area businesses. Ultimate build-out of the site envisions a mixed-use building with retail and office on the street and a screened parking structure on the rear, timed with future development of nearby parcels. Allowing overnight parking until such point that development occurs does not preclude said development. Currently, the surface parking lot has 66 spaces with a 2-hr parking restriction and a prohibition on overnight parking.

A portion of the public parking lot was previously the site of the vacant Datatel office building, located at 3700 Mt. Vernon Avenue. The City purchased the parcel, demolished the building, and combined the lot with two adjacent parcels (3704 and 3612 Mt. Vernon Avenue) to construct a parking lot in fall of 2004 (see Exhibit 1). The public parking lot use was proposed to address nearby business owner concerns that insufficient public parking was negatively affecting economic development in the area.

At the November 7, 2002 public hearing to approve the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) to allow the parking lot, the Planning Commission chairman noted that, as staff continues to work with the community on parking restrictions for the lot, consideration should be given for longer parking periods in the evening in order to accommodate patrons of the Birchmere. In addition, three of the four neighbors who spoke at the hearing requested that overnight parking be permitted at the lot.

The parcel north of the City-owned parcel, 3704 Mt Vernon, has continuously operated as a parking lot with 18 spaces, and is owned by Thomas J. Welsh, Bishop of Arlington. Per DSUP #2002-0037, these spaces shall be reserved for use by St. Rita's church which abuts the property across the alley to the rear. Those spaces are marked as reserved with pavement markings. Parking signs will exempt these spaces from overnight parking.



### Community Feedback

Staff initially shared the proposal with members of the Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group Executive Committee, some of whom expressed concern that the change could negatively impact local businesses or preclude future redevelopment. There was also concern among the Executive Committee that staff did not vet the proposal with other members of the Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group. The memorandum was then sent to the whole Advisory Group on October 6 for review. During that time, one person commented that the hours for overnight parking should end at 6AM instead of 8AM. Staff incorporated this change and then on October 30, extended the comment period through November 30 so that members of the Advisory Group could review and provide comments on the revised memorandum. During that time period, two comments were received, one supporting the proposal, and one suggesting clarification of the parcel ownership. This memorandum incorporates responses to comments received. Staff believes that the change will not have an adverse effect on local businesses, and will contact business owners in the ensuing months to follow up and determine what if any negative impacts they may have experienced.

### Recommendation

Staff carefully considered the feasibility of lifting the overnight parking restriction to allow overnight residential parking. In order to address a neighborhood need using existing city resources, the public parking lot is the best site to be made available for overnight residential parking for Arlandria residents. Based on observation of occupancy over different days of the week and times of day, it has been determined that the lot can be made available for overnight residential parking without negatively impacting daytime and early evening parking for area businesses.

**Beginning in December 2013, the overnight parking prohibition will be removed and the 2-hr parking restriction will remain in place from 6 AM – 10 PM.** The existing daytime two-hour parking restriction will remain in effect until 10 PM to ensure adequate capacity and turnover of parking spaces during business hours. The daytime restriction will be strictly enforced. Staff informed the Alexandria Police Department of the proposal and the lot will be patrolled on a daily basis for parking violations. Staff will consult local businesses and neighboring property owners to determine if the change has had any adverse impacts.

It should be emphasized that this change does not preclude the City from moving forward in the future with the long-term vision for the site. Staff remains committed to supporting redevelopment of the site per the conditions of CDD #12 and the Arlandria Action Plan. The

immediate proposal is an interim use to provide parking relief for existing residents. At such time that a redevelopment project is proposed - and that meets the community's vision as set forth in the Arlandria Plan - the site will become part of that redevelopment scheme.

cc: Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services  
Alfred Coleman, Deputy Director, General Services  
Sandra Marks, Division Chief, Transportation and Environmental Services  
Carrie Beach, Division Chief, Planning & Zoning  
Faye Dastgheib, Principal Parking Planner, Transportation and Environmental Services  
Shirl Mammarella, Lieutenant, Alexandria Police Department  
Brandi Collins, Urban Planner III, Planning & Zoning  
Maya Contreras, Urban Planner III, Planning & Zoning