

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: 2012 STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION REPORT RELATED TO
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2003 ARLANDRIA ACTION PLAN

ISSUE: Status of the Arlandria Action Plan implementation activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council: 1) receive the attached “2012 Status of Implementation” Report (Attachment #1 and 2), and direct staff to continue collaborative and community-based implementation of the 2003 Arlandria Action Plan.

DISCUSSION: On April 12, 2011, City Council accepted the first “Status of Implementation” report, documenting the process and accomplishments of the first year of the Arlandria Action Plan implementation activities. That year proved to be a strong start and City Council directed City staff and the community, through the Arlandria Action Plan Implementation Advisory Group (Advisory Group) (Attachment #2), to continue the collaborative implementation strategy. Last year’s report identified recommendations for further implementation - most of which were accomplished during the last 12 months.

Accomplishments

The grand opening of the Four Mile Run Park Community Building was celebrated with a ribbon cutting on May 15, 2011 attended by the Mayor and members of City Council. The building has been renovated to meet basic safety standards but also has attractive amenities such as an outdoor performance stage and roll-up barn door. Since the May 2011 ribbon cutting, the building has been a popular community facility. From July – December 2011, numerous programs have been held at the Four Mile Run Park Building. This includes regular program events such as the Four Mile Run Farmers and Artisans Market and special community events held by Arlandria-Chirilagua Business Association and Casa Chirilagua.

During the prior year’s implementation activities, the Advisory Group recommended that City staff reallocate funds designated for pedestrian improvements at the Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road intersection to fund Phase 1 of the Four Mile Run Park Expansion Project. Preliminary engineering and cost-benefit reviews demonstrated that the results of the proposed

intersection improvements would be negligible and extremely costly. City staff submitted a request to City Council to reallocate the intersection improvement funds in the amount of \$200,000 to complete Phase 1 of the park expansion project. The request was approved and construction of the Four Mile Run Park Expansion Project Phase 1 was complete in May 2012.

Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) committed a great deal of resources and staffing to improving the Arlandria business community. AEDP provided individual counseling and technical assistance to 11 businesses and helped to relocate two businesses within Arlandria. Two Facade Grants were completed (Po – Siam Restaurant, Maid to Clean) and five grants are pending (El Cuzcatleco, Wing Zone, Honduras Express, Feria Latina, and the Waffle Shop). One of the most notable accomplishments is the creation of the Arlandria-Chirilagua Business Association (ACBA) in fall 2011. ACBA is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and has approximately 30 active members, nine board members, and two officers. In collaboration with AEDP, ACBA hosted one educational seminar (“How to improve your retail brand”), one networking event (“Celebrate your Love for Business”), and four community events. ACBA hosts membership meetings every month.

Also during the prior year’s implementation efforts, the Advisory Group recommended that the City proceed with the proposed pedestrian improvements at the Mt. Vernon Avenue and W. Reed Avenue intersection. Improvements included the consolidation of driveways along the west side of Mt. Vernon Ave into a single driveway, a new crosswalk with a shorten walking distance across Mt. Vernon Ave, design modifications to the Wachovia Bank parking lot (to accommodate the driveway consolidation), drainage improvements, and installation of a concrete pad for a future bus shelter. The improvements are complete and the bus shelter was installed in July 2012.

An additional recommendation of the prior year’s Status of Implementation Report was to monitor on-going development; with a particular interest in the redevelopment of the Mt. Vernon Village Center redevelopment concept plan that was submitted to the City. City staff worked with the project applicant and community over many months. In December 2011, City Council approved a development special use permit that allows 53,254 sf of commercial space (existing commercial space is 50,000 sf) and 478 residential units. Of the 478 residential units, 28 units will be designated “affordable housing” to serve households at or below US Department of Housing and Urban Development for Housing Choice Voucher Program limits (approximately 64% of the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Area Median Income in 2011). This equates to \$60,850 for a family of three. As of yet, the applicant has not begun the final site plan process but staff is hopeful that the development project will move forward.

The Four Mile Run Farmers and Artisans Market (market) operated its second season at 4109-4125 Mt. Vernon Avenue adjacent to the Community Building from April 2011 – October 2011. Market management entered into an agreement with the City via a Memorandum of Understanding that granted them access to the site and the Community Building at no cost. During the season, the market had thirteen vendors and continued to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) transactions. The market began its third season in May 2012. The market organizers are collaborating with Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities staff to secure entertainers for weekly live performances during the market.

City staff held a successful code compliance walk in Arlandria on April 27, 2012. Participating staff included representatives from the Department of Code Administration, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and Department of Planning and Zoning. Members of the Advisory Group were encouraged to attend and six representatives participated. Issues of concern included city property in need of maintenance and/repair, private properties with non-compliance fences and parking, park equipment in disrepair, and commercial sign violations. Staff has either resolved or in the process of resolving the issues related to city property. Staff is working with private property owners on issues related to non-compliant fencing and parking. The concerns related to commercial signage will be addressed on a comprehensive level, in partnership with Planning and Zoning, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and the Arlandria-Chirilagua Business Association.

Lastly, during the current implementation period, the Advisory Group met five times to discuss implementation tasks, prioritize the spending of capital dollars, discuss neighborhood concerns, and provide City staff with a vehicle to engage the larger community. Early in the year, the Advisory Group participated in shaping its own governance by establishing an Executive Committee, whose role is to provide more frequent communication access between the Advisory Group and City staff. The Executive Committee met with City staff eleven times over the course of the year and helped guide the implementation process.

FISCAL IMPACT: *Staff Resources.* In order to carry out the work tasks associated with implementing the 2003 Arlandria Action Plan, a great deal of staff resources is required. In addition to – and in the course of – conducting the day-to-day operations of making progress on implementation tasks, staff holds bi-weekly interdepartmental staff meetings, public Arlandria Advisory Group meetings, meetings with the Arlandria Advisory Group Executive Committee, and an annual Code Compliance Walk. Staff drafts a Status of Implementation Report for City Council review. The total number of staff hours anticipated for FY13, based on experience from the two prior implementation years, is over 700 staff hours. This estimate includes up to fifteen staff persons from six departments/agencies over the year for various work tasks. The number of staff hours required for day-to-day operations is not included in this estimate.

STAFF:

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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Status of Implementation Report
Attachment 2: Arlandria Action Plan Implementation Advisory Group Roster