ATTACHMENT II – WATERFRONT SMALL AREA PLAN
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

April 2009 – January 2011: Planning and Public Outreach Process

The **Planning and Public Outreach Process** activities for the Waterfront Small Area Plan and Text Amendment (Draft Plan) began in April 2009. The process has been multifaceted and extensive, with a variety of planning activities including charrettes, and related visioning and topical sessions, which have promoted involvement in the process. Additionally, different outreach and information tools such as over 100 community-wide and stakeholder meetings (i.e., boards, commissions, civic organizations), tours, eNews releases, a website and a Waterfront Comment Board have been utilized to help citizens, groups and other stakeholders keep abreast of activities and stay involved. By May 2010, these planning and outreach activities evolved into a **Concept Plan** for the Waterfront based on:

(1) Ideas and Guiding Concepts capturing a vision for a revitalized Waterfront:

- Celebrate the **Foot of King Street**
- Improve the **Public Realm** of the Waterfront
- Enhance Access and **Connectivity**
- Strengthen **View Corridors**
- **Protect** and Beautify **Founders Park**
- **Strengthen Oronoco Bay Park** with Celebrations,
- Family Activities, Special Events and Concerts
- Preserve and **Celebrate History**
- **Public Art and History** as Unifying Elements
- **Enhance the Strand**
- Expand **Water-related Activities**
- **Improve Shoreline** Treatment
- Expand **Multi-Modal Access**
- Make Economically, Operationally and Environmentally **Sustainable**

(2) **An Activity Map** attaching the Ideas and Guiding Concepts to physical locations along the Waterfront:

- **Daingerfield Island -** Waterfront trail with interpretation and nature
- **Mirant Plant -** Explore long-term opportunities
- **Oronoco Park -** Events, families and nature
- **Robinson Terminal North -** Redevelopment that invites the public and transforms the pier
- **Founder's Park -** Protect and beautify
- **City Marina Plaza -** Waterfront hub
- **Foot of King -** Feelings of celebration, arrival and anticipation
- **The Strand -** A destination; dining; a place to be seen
- **Windmill Hill Park-** Realize the vision of the park plan
- **Jones Point Park -** Work with NPS to implement park plan

(3) **Plan Goals** were honed and objectives specified to reflect a Waterfront that is:

Authentic	**Manageable**
Connected	**Sustainable**
Inclusive	**Compatible**
Dynamic	**Permeable**
Varied	**Creative**

(4) **A May 2010 Concept Plan** was released reflecting the above physical and qualitative features.

February 2011: Release of the Draft Waterfront Small Area Plan and Text Amendment

Following release of the Concept Plan, meetings continued as a means of confirming with the community that information in the Concept Plan accurately reflected the ideas, guiding concepts, goals and objectives expressed by the community during the early outreach activities.

A **Draft Plan** with more detail and recommendations followed the Concept Plan and included key components such as:

- **Development Goals and Design Guidelines** for the three redevelopment sites: (a) Robinson Terminal South, (b) Cumming/Turner Block; and (c) Robinson Terminal North;
- **Expansion and improvement of open and public space**, including new King and Cameron Street piers extending beyond the pierhead line, an expanded Point Lumley Park and along The Strand, and a Public Plaza at the Foot of King Street;
- Inclusion of a **Restaurant Building in Waterfront Park** and restoration of The Beachcombers Restaurant to provide more outdoor dining opportunities along the Waterfront;
- **Marina improvements and expansion**;
- Incorporation of **recommendations from the Art and History Plans** developed through the Commission for the Arts and the Archaeological Commission;
- A F**lood Mitigation Plan** to address nuisance flooding in the planning area;
- A **text amendment to the W-1 Waterfront Mixed Use Zone** to allow hotels as an activity, to change the height of one parcel to be consistent with that allowed in the corresponding height district and allow adjustments in density for the three redevelopment sites; and

April-May 2011: Planning Commission Public Hearing

On April 5 and May 3, 2011, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Draft Plan hearing testimony from nearly 35 persons both in favor and against. Concerns from those speaking against the Draft Plan focused on the amount of new restaurant space, need for stronger controls for new restaurants space, size of hotels, feasibility of extending the marinas beyond the pierhead line, and more. The Planning Commission approved the Plan with the following recommended changes:

- **A Waterfront Small Area Plan Policy for Restaurant/Hotel/Commercial Uses** – This policy details how these uses would be reviewed during the SUP process to determine if they have unacceptable off-site impacts.
- **Elimination of the Waterfront Park Restaurant Building** – This proposed building was eliminated. The Draft Plan continues to support park elements such as kiosks, food movable tables and chairs and event programming for the park.
- **Restaurant Square Footage** – The square footage of new development assumed to be restaurant use has been decreased from 109,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet;
- **Boutique Hotel Clarifying Language** – The Draft Plan now recommends boutique hotels that is hotels of 150 rooms or less with no ballrooms and meeting space for no more than 50 people;
- **Hotel Parking Ratio** – Language was added to the development guidelines that would allow low parking ratios for hotels as long as the ratios are consistent with industry norms for similar hotels.
- **Pier Design Flexibility** – Language was added clarifying that the proposed piers can be of a different length, design or location recognizing that their ultimate design will be determined following further engineering and design analyses.
- **Stronger History Text** – A series of editorial changes to strengthen the connection of the Draft Plan to the History Plan was made and the Draft Plan also now states that the $3.6 million in the Draft Plan for a civic building can be utilized for other art and history related components in the Draft Plan.
- **Rivergate/Oronoco Bay Parks** – Minor changes were made regarding the description of the observation deck proposed for the Foot of Montgomery Street and to add flexibility for the location of the small children's play area planned for Oronoco Bay Park.
- **Costs and Revenues** – Costs were increased by adding the remaining improvements at Windmill Hill Park and decreased to reflect the lower cost of shorter piers: revenues were decreased due to reduced amount of restaurant and hotel space. The total cost is now is $51 million and the Draft Plan pays for itself in 25 years.

These Planning Commission's changes were forwarded on to the City Council in memorandum format and in anticipation of a May 14, 2011 City Council Public Hearing. These changes were later incorporated in a July 2011 Draft Updated Plan. Approximately 50 people provided testimony at the City Council Public Hearing, again both in favor and against the Draft Plan. Following the testimony, the City Council generated a list of questions for staff to address. The questions with staff responses are contained in a memorandum dated June 3, 2011 (Attachment III). They relate to the following issues raised during the public hearing:

(1) Parking and Congestion

(2) Flood Mitigation

(3) The Restaurant and Hotel Policy

(4) Costs Analysis

(5) Density, zoning and Architectural Controls

(6) Park and Open Space, including ownership of the Robinson Terminal Piers

(7) History and Art

(8) Summary Document

(9) Implementation Process

June 2011: City Council Resolution establishing the Waterfront Plan Work Group

Following receipt and review of the June 3, 2011 staff memorandum, the City Council met on June 28, 2011, and voted on Resolution 2467 to establish a 7-member citizens-based Waterfront Plan Work Group (Work Group) with Councilman Paul Smedberg as the 8th member and convener. The Mayor appointed five persons, with backgrounds in planning, urban design, landscape and architecture, to five at-large positions on the Work Group and the Waterfront Committee and Old Town Civic Association selected representatives to two positions, pursuant to the resolution. The members were:

- Councilman Paul Smedberg as Convener
- Christopher Ballard, Member-at-large and Principal, McWilliams/Ballard
- Bert Ely, Member-at-large and Principal, Ely and Company
- Melinda Lyle, Member-at-large and vice President, Client Development, Haley & Aldrich, Inc.
- Nathan Macek, Chair, Alexandria Waterfront Committee
- David Olinger, Board Member, Old Town Civic Association
- Elliot Rhodeside, Member-at-large and Principal, Rhodeside & Harwell
- Lt. General Bob Wood (Retired), Member-at-large and Principal, Star Strategies Group

The Work Group was given the following charge and was directed to report back to the City Council by fall 2011:

(1) identify elements of the Draft Plan for which there is agreement; and

(2) to attempt to clarify, define and narrow areas of disagreement.

The Work Group held 15 meetings, assisted by City staff, with a website at www.alexandriava.gov/waterfrontworkgroup to help keep the public informed of meetings and outcomes. Further, the Work Group devoted one of its meetings entirely to community input. Also, time for public comment was allocated at each meeting. Additionally, both developers and/or landowners of the three redevelopment sites and the Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan (CAAWP) were invited to make presentations to the Work Group.

The Executive Summary from the Work Group's report, issued on December 20, 2011 is a good distillation of the Work Group's discussions and findings and can be found as part of the Report itself and also it is included as part of Attachment III (January 6, 2012 Work Session Staff Memorandum).

Key elements of the Work Group's discussions and findings include:

Vision Statement. The Work Group endorsed the goals in the July 2011 Updated Draft Plan and created an overall vision statement to precede them: The Work Group's vision of the Waterfront is *"A vibrant waterfront that celebrates our historic and cultural legacy, expands and supports public uses, yet retains and preserves the special charm and ambiance of our community for future generations."*

Plan Statements. The Work Group agreed to 62 "plan statements" – general principles adopted by the Work Group to guide its evaluation of Plan recommendations. Through their plan statements, the Work Group endorsed:

- The need for a new plan. (vote: 6 agreed, 0 disagreed, 1 abstention)
- Additional development on the Waterfront. (6-1-0)
- Boutique hotels, as defined by the Planning Commission. (4-2-1)
- The height limits in the proposed Plan. (4-2-1)
- Having revenues from new development pay for "as great a portion" of Waterfront plan costs "as feasible." (7-0)
- A "significant public space" where King Street meets the river. (6-1-0)
- A new pier in the vicinity of King Street/Waterfront Park. (6-1-0)
- The principle that the public should have access to the entire shoreline. (5-2-0)
- Limiting vehicle access to the unit block of King Street and The Strand and creating a pedestrian-focused area there. (6-0-1)
- A study of Union Street to improve vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle circulation. (7-0-0)
- Flood mitigation, as generally described in the Plan, albeit with concerns that should be addressed the next phase of engineering. (7-0-0)
- A majority of Work Group members (4-3) support the increase in density recommended by the draft Plan.

Recommendations. With the use of these plan statements, the Work Group methodically evaluated each of the recommendations in the July 2011 Updated Draft Plan. The Work Group suggested changes to 71 recommendations– ranging from significant new recommendations to minor editorial changes and updates. The Work Group's changes are summarized in a staff memorandum dated January 6, 2012 to the City Council and Planning Commission in preparation for a Joint Work Session to discuss the Work Group's findings. (Attachment VI).

An attached Errata Sheet with each of the Work Group's changes listed and identified by page number in the July 2011 Updated Draft Plan is also included. (Attachment V). The Work Group's changes make the July 2011 Updated Draft Plan stronger and improve how it addresses issues of concern to many Alexandrians.

Related Matter – CAAWP Report. As mentioned above, one of the groups which made a presentation to the Work Group was CAAWP following issuance of its Report outlining alternative scenarios to the Waterfront Plan. As the CAAWP Report was issued, the Office of the City Manager directed staff to review and analyze it which it did in a memorandum dated November 21, 2011. In addition, an attached Comparison Matrix which compares the similarities and differences between the proposals in the CAAWP Report and the Draft Plan is included. (Attachment VI)

ATTACHMENT VI – DRAFT PLAN AND CAAWP REPORT COMPARISON MATRIX