City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 23, 2013

TO: PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: PARK PLANNING, DESIGN & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
BETHANY A. CARTON, ASLA PARK PLANNER
LAURA D. DURHAM, CITY OPEN SPACE COORDINATOR
DAVID H. GHEZZI, AIA RPCA ARCHITECT
JUDY LO, ASLA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
DANA W. WEDELES, PARK PLANNER
RON M. KAGAWA, ASLA LEED AP DIVISION CHIEF

SUBJECT: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
EXTERNAL PROJECT REQUEST – EXERCISE STATION(S) IN PLANNING DISTRICT I

Park Planning District I.
The proposed project requests that the City install at least one chin-up/pull-up bar at any of the city’s parks located in Planning District I, preferably one of the Waterfront Parks. The application describes a common element missing from Alexandria’s parks area exercise stations. With many military families in the area, the applicant notes that pull-ups are a required component of their training requirements. While exercise stations would benefit everyone, they are an invaluable asset to the former and active-duty military.

The applicant also notes that he is willing to personally volunteer to assist with the project and plans to fund raise if necessary. There is potential to incorporate exercise equipment into existing play areas, which would decrease the cost as the correct surfacing is already present. The estimated cost for a complete fitness station, with surface treatment, ranges from $5,000-$10,000. Installing chin-up/pull-up bars only would be substantially less.
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SUBJECT: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
         EXTERNAL PROJECT REQUEST – WINDMILL HILL OFF LEASH DOG
         EXERCISE AREA

Park Planning District I.

A citizen request was received via email (not the standard form) for changes to the off leash dog exercise area at Windmill Hill Park. The submission includes a request to provide a foot bridge across the river end of the drainage area that would connect the Fords Landing path, all along the river side of Windmill Hill Park, to Harborside. In conjunction with the foot bridge, a fence would also be provided along the water’s edge, with a gate to provide dogs with access to the water when it is safe to do so (and separating the dogs from pedestrians using the path when the gate is closed). This fence would run all along the north end of the off leash area, along the drainage area, and continue along Union Street to keep dogs from running in the street. The approved Dog Park Master Plan calls for low shrubbery along Union Street, but does not include fencing.
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SUBJECT:    CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
            EXTERNAL PROJECT REQUEST – COMMONWEALTH MEDIANS
            IMPROVEMENTS

Park Planning District II.
For the past eleven years, the Del Ray Citizens Association Adopt-a-Park Committee has been volunteering to pick up litter on the Commonwealth Avenue medians located between Cliff Street and Mount Vernon Avenue. With this citizen request they are raising concerns about the current condition of the medians. There are twelve medians total, most are 12 feet in width, the largest is approximately 35 feet wide. Each median has turf and trees of varying maturity.

The proposed project requests median improvements that include the re-building of the curbs, renovation of the median soil, more frequent watering and/or new irrigation, turf renovation, plantings, and occasional benches, and trash receptacles. The medians are currently not irrigated and are mowed on 14 day cycle throughout the growing season. Successional tree plantings are done to replace trees in decline and to fill in missing trees, which are typically spaced 40’ apart.

The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (TES) is responsible for maintaining City roads and sidewalks, which includes curbing. Based on an estimated 6,500-7,000 linear feet (approx. 1.6 miles) of curbing, the replacement cost is approximately $100,000. Availability of TES operating and capital funds are not feasible as curb replacement would use 1/3 of their current citywide sidewalk maintenance budget.

Initial cost estimates to irrigate the medians is approximately $27,000 derived in 2009, which excluded power and water source. The cost to supply an appropriate water source for each island can range from $1,150 each, for a ¾ inch meter, to upwards of $15,000-$20,000 each, for a 2” meter. Installation of a new power source to operate the system is estimated to be a minimum of $7,000, provided that power can be pulled from the right-of-way.
Automatic irrigation is generally not recommended on existing island medians due to the invasiveness of the work and impacts to existing trees and right-of-way infrastructure. In addition, operating impacts can be expected from maintaining and repairing the system.

Based on the varying sizes of the median, installing benches and trash receptacles would need to be evaluated and approved by TES who has authority over the right-of-way.

This project could move forward as a future CIP project that would combine the work of TES and RPCA.
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SUBJECT: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
EXTERNAL PROJECT REQUEST – LEE CENTER PLAYGROUND EXPANSION

Park Planning District I.
The proposed project requests an expansion of the existing playground behind the Lee Center to include accessible equipment. Following the successful partnership for fundraising and construction of the Miracle Field, The Miracle League of Alexandria and the Kelley Cares Foundation joined efforts again to pursue this project that would provide additional outdoor recreational opportunities for the Therapeutic Recreation program, based at the Lee Center. Their goal is to raise $70,000 for equipment, rubber surfacing, and an accessible pathway to the playground from the Lee Center. Kelley Cares has already secured $13,000 through fundraising efforts and applied for a $50,000 grant through CVS/Caremark for the remaining funds. If awarded, the grant funds would be available in Fall 2013. If the grant is denied, Kelley Cares would pursue other fundraising efforts.

The proposed playground equipment would be geared towards children with special needs, but could be used by anyone.
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SUBJECT: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
         EXTERNAL PROJECT REQUEST – W&OD GREENWAY OFF LEASH DOG EXERCISE AREA

Park Planning District II.
This proposal requests relocation of the off-leash dog exercise area in the W&OD Greenway. Due to frequent poor drainage, standing water and proximity to traffic, a nearby resident and park user submitted a request to change the area where the off leash exercise for dogs is permitted. The request indicates a better location for the off leash area would be further southeast on the trail in the area currently bordered by a warehouse on one side and high residential fences on the other side. This location has better drainage and dries out much more quickly after rain. The warehouse area includes a dog daycare, so the noise level would be similar. The resident proposes that volunteers could clean the dog area periodically.

There is little to no cost associated with this request other than staff time to relocate the bollards that demarcate the off leash area and an update to the City’s online materials that discuss the location of the area.
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