



City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia

Alexandria Waterfront Committee
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



February 27, 2012

The Honorable William D. Euille
Mayor of Alexandria
City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille:

At its meeting on February 21, 2012, the Alexandria Waterfront Committee reviewed items in the City Manager's proposed Fiscal Year 2013 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that specifically impact the Waterfront. This letter summarizes recommendations of the Waterfront Committee regarding those proposed expenditures. We begin by addressing the proposed operating budget, followed by capital improvements.

Proposed Operating Budget Items

The Waterfront Committee strongly endorses the following expenditures as outlined in the City Manager's proposed FY13 General Fund Operating Budget:

- **Office of Project Implementation:** The Waterfront Committee strongly supports the creation of this office to facilitate implementation of high-priority capital projects, including the Waterfront Plan. We are eager to see capital improvements to the Alexandria Waterfront in the near-term horizon, and appointing an office tasked with implementing these changes is critical to accomplishing the goals and objectives of the recently-adopted Waterfront Small Area Plan. As noted below, however, this office should not serve as a substitute for centralized City management of Waterfront operations.
- **Union Street Traffic Study:** One-time operating funding of \$300,000. This study is a crucial element of Waterfront Plan implementation, and is urgently required prior to Council consideration of any redevelopment proposals for the Waterfront area.
- **Valet Parking Pilot Program:** One-time operating funding of \$25,000. The Waterfront Committee has long advocated for applying new and innovative concepts to alleviate parking concerns in the core area of the Waterfront. The valet parking pilot program will provide an important test case to address this issue.
- **Waterfront Plan Study/Implementation Contingency:** One-time operating funding of \$100,000. This is an important set-aside to ensure smooth implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

The Waterfront Committee recommends that staff and Council reexamine two budget issues that remain concerns of the Committee:

- **Centralized Management of Waterfront Operations:** Currently, responsibility for Waterfront maintenance and Operations is fractured across several City departments including the departments of

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities; Transportation and Environmental Services; and General Services. A central recommendation of the Waterfront Plan Work Group, endorsed by the Waterfront Committee and by City Council in its adoption of the Waterfront Small Area Plan, is the appointment of a senior director within City government accountable for integrated management of the Waterfront, coordination of the activities of City agencies, public entities, and commercial interests, and achievement of the Waterfront Plan vision. According to page 20 of the Final Report of the Work Group, this senior director should be tasked with preparing and defending an integrated budget for Waterfront needs. Other responsibilities may include coordination of operation of the Marina, programming, maintenance of parks and public space, security, facilities maintenance, budget and funds administration, and planning of future needs. These roles are distinct from the implementation of capital improvement projects, to be led by the newly-proposed Office of Project Implementation.

The Waterfront Committee recommends that staff to develop a plan to implement centralized management of Waterfront operations during the next fiscal year, for implementation in FY14.

- **Marina Security Improvements:** The Waterfront Committee recommends reinstatement of a second Marina security guard as funding permits. The Committee further recommends that the City consider staffing Marina security with Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs (RPCA) staff directly employed by City in lieu of a private contractor. This would shift responsibility for overnight Marina security from the Department of General Services to RPCA, the entity responsible for management of the Marina and daytime operations. This arrangement would facilitate interaction between existing Dockmaster staff and overnight security and provide continuity of operations around the clock.

Proposed Capital Improvements

As described in a November 16, 2012 letter to Council, on September 20, 2011 the Alexandria Waterfront Committee voted to prioritize several capital improvement projects, including Windmill Hill Park bulkhead repairs, City Marina seawall maintenance, and a City Marina utility upgrade. We note that all of these issues are addressed in the City Manager's proposed FY13-FY22 CIP; however, the Waterfront Committee recommends advancing the scheduled timeframe of these proposed improvements:

- **Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead Repairs:** This \$4.0 million project consists of renovation and construction work on the bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park, which is in a state of advanced deterioration and collapse. A January 2009 inspection by the City's engineering consultants found the bulkhead to be in "critical" condition, and was noted as a significant safety hazard to the public (RK&K 2009). *We strongly encourage members of Council to visit Windmill Hill Park and inspect the deleterious condition of the bulkhead first-hand.*

The Waterfront Committee urges the City to continue to identify Commonwealth or Federal funding for bulkhead repairs that could expedite the timeframe for completion of this project. The Waterfront Committee also urges consideration of less-costly yet aesthetically-appropriate approaches to replacing the existing bulkhead, which may make the project more affordable and able to be implemented earlier than the currently-programmed FY16/FY17 project delivery timeframe.

- **City Marina Seawall Maintenance:** This \$1.7 million project would repair damage to existing seawalls at the Alexandria City Marina. Given the dangerous conditions and the operational impacts on the Marina of this damaged infrastructure, the Waterfront Committee recommends that repair be prioritized and funded earlier than FY16 and FY17.
- **City Marina Utility Upgrade:** This \$1.25 million project would upgrade facilities at the Alexandria City Marina to facilitate utility requirements for modern vessels. In order to provide a modern facility for boaters using the Marina, the Waterfront Committee recommends prioritization of improvements as funding

permits, preferably earlier than the FY16 and FY17 timeframe currently proposed, and in coordination with the City Marina Seawall Maintenance project.

In addition, the Committee supports expenditures for the following projects as outlined in the City Manager's proposed FY13-FY22 CIP:

- **Waterfront Small Area Plan implementation:** Capital funding of \$750,000 in FY13 for design and engineering for flood mitigation and a Waterfront Small Area Plan Preliminary Design and Engineering plan, two critical elements to kick off plan implementation.
- **Marina Dredging:** Capital funding of \$3.1 million in FY14/ FY15 and \$3.1 million again FY19/FY20. Regular dredging provides for open waterways required for continued operation of the City Marina.
- **City Marina Maintenance:** Capital funding of \$90,000 annually through FY22. This provides basic funding for routine repairs and other expenditures to maintain the infrastructure of the City Marina.

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We appreciate the opportunity to comment on Alexandria's FY13 budget priorities. On behalf of the Alexandria Waterfront Committee and the broad Citywide constituencies that we represent, thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan M. Macek, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Committee

- CC: Alexandria City Council
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Bruce Johnson, Chief of Staff
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