



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

March 11, 2019

Honorable Mayor & members of City Council
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor:

RE: Waterfront Commission Comments on the FY 2020 Proposed Budget

The Waterfront Commission has consistently supported implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan capital improvements, including flood mitigation, as well as long-term funding of maintenance and activation of the new and improved waterfront. The Commission was pleased to see in the City Manager's proposed FY 2020 Budget funding to continue the implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

This letter presents the position of the Waterfront Commission's support of the City Manager's FY2020 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program as proposed. We recognize the City faces many other financial pressures. However, we believe the implementation of the Waterfront Plan is integral to the continued financial health of the City.

Capital Improvements

The Waterfront Commission supports the City Manager's recommendation to consolidate \$50,140,000 in funding for flood mitigation and other waterfront capital improvements in FY 2021. Consolidating the funding upfront will enable greater speed, and perhaps savings, as dollars, materials, and labor are presumably cheaper now than they will be in the future. By performing multiple elements of the project at once, the City may realize savings of substantial millions of dollars.

The implementation of the public portions of the approved Waterfront Plan is a high priority of the Waterfront Commission. Along with implementation of the flood mitigation plan, completion of continuous waterfront access and improvements to the public parks along the core waterfront were among the priorities expressed by the public for plan implementation.

Operating Budget

The Waterfront Commission supports the City Manager's recommendation to provide \$50,000 to fund the clean-up of accumulated debris along the waterfront from the City Marina to Windmill Hill Park. In addition, we encourage City Council to provide funding for other high priority Waterfront operations and maintenance functions, including the marina, parks, policing, security, public restrooms, debris removal, and special events and to commit to provide additional funding as the Waterfront Plan is fully implemented. This recommendation extends to related services such as consistent and reliable transit access to the waterfront via the King Street Trolley, and high quality historic and artistic interpretation and programming from the Office of Historic Alexandria and the Office of the Arts.

Alternative Funding

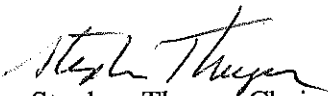
The Waterfront Commission recommends that City Council reinvigorate plans to explore alternative means to directly sustain public improvements, such as public/private partnerships, bonding, or application of incremental revenue from the waterfront's new private development.

In FY 2019, City Council established the King Street Enhanced Maintenance Initiative, to improve the day-to-day appearance of King Street, support special events, and create a destination. The effort has sought to provide additional trash and recycling can service and daily sidewalk mechanical sweeping. This effort is a high priority and should be sustained to support the competitiveness of King Street as a clean and safe destination befitting its designation as a "Great Street."

Conclusion

We ask City Council to reaffirm that the City has a commitment to maintain funding for planned capital expenditures, operations, and maintenance to ensure the future and continued success of the implementation of the Waterfront Plan with the approval of the City Manager's budget. City Council must provide the political will to complete the plan to allow for an economically viable waterfront for the benefit of the entire City.

Sincerely,


Stephen Thayer, Chair
Waterfront Commission

cc: Alexandria Waterfront Commission members
Mark Jinks, City Manager
Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Anthony Gammon, Acting Director, Department of Project Implementation
Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Staff Liaison to the Waterfront Commission