



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

September 11, 2012

Mr. Rashad M. Young
City Manager
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Room 3500
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Young:

At its meeting on August 14, 2012, the Alexandria Waterfront Commission reviewed its priorities for the City of Alexandria Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Operating Budget and FY 2014-FY 2023 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This letter summarizes recommendations of the Waterfront Commission regarding those proposed expenditures. We begin by addressing capital improvements, followed by the operating budget. We conclude with a note regarding the City Marina fee structure.

Capital Improvements

The Waterfront Commission endorses the following capital expenditures for the City's proposed FY14-FY23 CIP, which are organized by lead agency:

Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

- **Windmill Hill Park Improvements:** General improvements to Windmill Hill Park and reconstruction of the bulkhead, which is in a state of advanced deterioration and collapse. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$300,000 in FY16 and \$3.7 million in FY17, in addition to an unallocated balance of \$784,953, a total of \$4.0 million.

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). In the interim, the City is fencing the bulkhead, which the Commission anticipates will be a temporary measure.

The Waterfront Commission continues to urge 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 Commission 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. In addition, the City may realize economies of scale by linking this project to the City Marina Seawall Maintenance project.

Finally, the Commission urges expenditure of unallocated balance for other planned improvements to the park in areas unaffected by the bulkhead project.

- **Flood Mitigation Projects:** Final design and construction services to minimize Waterfront flooding between Duke Street and Queen Street by constructing flood walls and landscaping features and installing flood gates and pumping stations. This flood mitigation will protect to Elevation 6.0, approximately equivalent to a 10-year storm. In addition, this item includes final design and construction services to modify the Unit Block of King Street at The Strand and Union Street to abate flooding from storm drains in this area. This project was initiated in FY13 with the goal of completing final design and construction

services as a new line item in the upcoming CIP in order to finalize the project as another key step in the implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

- **Union Street Corridor Recommendations:** Implementation of approved recommendations of the Union Street Corridor Study, including strategies to promote pedestrian friendly mobility along Union Street by minimizing conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles, including cars, motorcoaches and the King Street trolley. This is a new item for the CIP, and follows on to the Union Street Corridor Study that the Waterfront Commission is advising.
- **Transportation Signage and Wayfinding System:** Comprehensive design and installation of signage, wayfinding, and identity system that will project a consistent image for the City, reduce clutter, promote walking and mass transit, and be sustainable as well as expandable. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$295,00 in FY13, \$225,000 in FY14, \$200,000 in FY15, \$515,000 in FY17, \$316,000 in FY18, \$432,00 in FY19, and \$241,000 in FY20, a total of \$2.27 million. The Commission is interested in the deployment of smart signage (with pricing and changeable messages) to direct motorists to parking, as well as wayfinding and interpretive signage for Waterfront sites.
- **Utility Master Plan:** Development of a master plan, in collaboration with Dominion Virginia Power and other utility companies, to relocate existing overhead utilities underground along The Strand. This is a new item for the CIP, and an essential element for implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.
- **Marina Dredging:** Dredging to provide for open waterways required for continued operation of the City Marina. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$550,000 in FY14 and \$2.55 million in FY15, plus \$100,000 in FY19 and \$3.0 million in FY20, a total of \$6.2 million.

Department of Planning and Zoning

- **Landscape Architectural Plan:** Final design and Construction services to implement new parks, piers and other public space elements of a redeveloped Waterfront. This project was initiated in FY13 with the goal of completing final design and construction services under a new line item in the upcoming CIP in order to finalize the project as another key step in the implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)

- **Public Restrooms:** Final design and construction services to provide public restroom facilities in the City Marina for visitors to the City's Waterfront. The lack of facilities is a significant shortcoming of the Torpedo Plaza area, which has been exacerbated by closure of the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion. This is a new item for the CIP.
- **City Marina Seawall Maintenance:** Repair damage to existing seawalls at the Alexandria City Marina. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$250,000 in FY16 and \$1.0 million in FY17, a total of \$1.25 million. Given the dangerous conditions and the operational impacts on the Marina of this damaged infrastructure, the Waterfront Commission recommends that repair be prioritized and funded earlier than FY16 and FY17. The Commission encourages the City to begin to study methods to preserve the seawalls now, in advance of programmed funds for this project. The City may realize economies of scale by linking this project to the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead repair project.
- **City Marina Utility Upgrade:** Upgrade facilities at the Alexandria City Marina to facilitate utility requirements for modern vessels. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$250,000 in FY16 and \$1.5 million in FY17, a total of \$1.7 million. In order to provide a modern facility for boaters using the Marina, the Waterfront Commission 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.

- **City Marina Maintenance:** Basic funding for routine repairs and other expenditures to maintain the infrastructure of the City Marina. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$90,000 annually through FY22, a total of \$900,000.
- **Public Art Acquisition Program:** Annual funding for the purchase or commission of art in public areas. The FY13-FY22 CIP programs capital funding of \$50,000 in FY13, \$100,000 in FY14, \$150,000 in FY15, \$200,000 in FY16, \$250,000 in FY17, \$300,000 in FY18, \$350,000 in FY19, \$400,000 in FY20, \$450,000 in FY21, and \$500,000 in FY22, a total of \$2.75 million. Additional public art is one of the many objectives of the recently enacted Waterfront Small Area Plan.
- **Waterfront Civic Building:** Funding for planning, engineering, and construction of the Waterfront civic building on The Strand recommended by the Waterfront Small Area Plan. This building may serve multiple purposes, housing visitor services, historical exhibits or programs, restrooms, park maintenance, and other civic, institutional, and park support functions. Space for storage of park maintenance equipment near the Waterfront will help to maintain the enhanced Waterfront parks anticipated under the Waterfront Small Area Plan. The functions proposed for the Waterfront Civic Building could also be housed in separate facilities, as appropriate. This is a new item for the CIP.

Operating Budget Items

The Waterfront Commission endorses the following budget expenditures for the City's FY14 General Fund Operating Budget:

- **Establishment of the Office of Implementation:** 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 Waterfront Plan Work Group Final Report, this senior director shall 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 Commission recommends that staff develop a plan for centralized management of Waterfront operations for implementation in FY14.

- **Public Restrooms Operation:** Operational support (staff and supplies) for the operation of new or expanded public restrooms in City Marina, dependent on CIP approval for restroom construction.
- **King Street Trolley Expansion:** Reduction in headways of King Street trolley service and extension of service along Union Street as development and demand warrant.
- **Lower King Street Pedestrian Traffic Study:** Study of alternate traffic patterns and capital improvements along the Unit and 100 blocks of King Street to maximize pedestrian accessibility. The Commission understands that funding may be identified to complete this study yet in FY13, but if not, this should be a high priority follow-on to the Union Street Corridor Study in FY14.

- **Historic Interpretation and Programming:** Implementation of historic elements of the Waterfront Small Area Plan, including interpretive signage, programming, and other history-related operating expenditures in the vicinity of the Alexandria Waterfront.
- **Marina Security Improvements:** The Waterfront Commission recommends reinstatement of a second Marina security guard as funding permits. The Commission further recommends that the City reexamine its use of private contractor to provide this service. Options include shifting responsibility for overnight Marina security from the Department of General Services to RPCA or the Police Department. RPCA is the entity responsible for management of the Marina and daytime operations. RPCA management would facilitate interaction between existing Dockmaster staff and overnight security and provide continuity of operations around the clock. The Police Department is responsible for safety and security Citywide, has staff on duty during the overnight hours, and already routinely patrols the City Marina.

Marina Fee Structure

The Waterfront Commission encourages staff to use the budgeting process to examine the fee structure of the City Marina. In March 2012 the [Waterfront Committee endorsed](#) an RPCA staff proposal to create a City Marina fee category for historic vessels. It would provide a predictable rate structure for commercial and non-profit historic vessels and streamline the approvals process for non-profit vessels. At the time we raised several important questions regarding the proposal and would like to work with staff to revisit this issue. As any changes to the Marina fee policy affect City revenues, we believe this is appropriate to consider during the budget process.

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We appreciate the opportunity to provide early input into Alexandria’s FY14 budget process. On behalf of the Alexandria Waterfront Commission and the broad Citywide constituencies that we represent, thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan M. Macek, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Commission

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