

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 7, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMAN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 73: BUDGET QUESTIONS & ANSWERS #1

Please find attached Budget Questions & Answers #1. These Questions and Answers are in response to questions that arose from Councilman Krupicka regarding the FY 2009 – FY 2014 Capital Improvement Program.

Attachment 1: FY 2009 Budget Questions & Answers:

a) What are the current plans for the \$500K in CIP funds not yet used for Arlandria redevelopment?

The \$500,000 in unallocated prior year balance is to be used to complete additional improvements in the area including pedestrian bulb-outs and crosswalks along Mt. Vernon Ave. and West Glebe Rd., and other to-be-determined items. A feasibility study has been completed for the Plan-recommended improvements to the gateway into the City of Alexandria, connections to Four Mile Run Park, and pedestrian safety improvements. For parks-related improvements on the four recently purchased City parcels on Four Mile Run, Open Space capital funds can be utilized. Staff expects in the next few months to catalogue Arlandria plan capital improvements not yet completed, to set completion priorities, and to develop an implementation plan.

b) Have Council consider moving the neighborhood sign program to the Commission for the Arts as a start to a project to add public art to every Alexandria neighborhood. What is required to make this change?

There is currently \$24,000 in prior year unallocated funds budgeted for the residential sign program. These funds were originally included in the FY 2006 Approved CIP. In order to facilitate this request, Council would need to propose and approve an “add” of \$24,000 to the FY 2009 Arts Commission operating budget. Staff would then facilitate a transfer of funds from the capital projects fund balance to the general fund operating fund in the FY 2009 Approved budget.

c) Is the Courthouse garage project completed? There is \$12,300 in CIP funds remaining for this. What is the remaining money intended for?

The Courthouse garage project has been completed. There is currently \$12,300 remaining in prior year unallocated funds for this project. These funds are planned to be used as a contingency for the replacement of the Judge’s elevator at the Courthouse, which is currently underway and expected to be completed by Summer 2008. The Department of General Services believes it is necessary to retain these funds in case of unforeseen expenditures related to this project. No additional funding is available for the replacement of the Judge’s elevator.

d) \$100K for Chinquapin phase zero analysis. Given the likely delay in Chinquapin redevelopment, why do we have phase zero analysis money being held here instead of going towards projects that can immediately help the community?

The FY 2008 Approved CIP included \$100,000 to begin design for the planned expansion and renovation of the Chinquapin Park and Recreation Center. Specifically, these funds were intended for preliminary community meetings, bubble diagrams, concept development, and site review. In the FY 2009 Proposed CIP, this project has been rescheduled to begin in FY 2012. As a result, these funds will not be

used for design purposes until then. As discussed below, RPCA proposes to use these funds to replace equipment at the end of its useful life.

Replacing aging and worn out equipment at Chinquapin Park and Recreation Center has been delayed in recent years in anticipation of the facility’s renovation and expansion project. Much of the facilities equipment is original, purchased when the building opened 23 years ago in 1985. The future renovation/expansion project is expected to include FF&E funding to replace and purchase needed furniture and equipment.

Previously, when center participants/residents questioned the condition of specific items staff explained that the replacement would coincide with the upcoming construction project. Capital equipment replacement cannot be postponed for four more years if the facility is expected to operate in an effective and safe manner. Current needs include, but are not limited to, the following items:

Program and Exercise Replacement Equipment	
Replace facility-wide PA system (purchase and installation)	8,000
2 Comm. Systems, flat screens, sound systems	6500
Replacement Maintenance Equipment and Furniture	
Benches for restrooms and saunas	26,000
Lift	13,000
Sport Systems Replacement	
1 Tennis re-bound backboard, commercial grade	20,000
2 pumps	30,000
TOTAL	103,500

- e) **\$25K for Ben Brenman Park & \$10K for a Youth Center. Given the on-going discussions to develop a multi-generational recreation center as part of the Van Dorn-Landmark area planning project, I'd like to suggest the Council consider moving these funds to a project for a multi-generational West End Recreation Center in the Van Dorn area. I don't think it is wise to use valuable open space at Ben Brenman to build a rec facility. A multi-generational rec facility is needed on the West end. Make sure we have an item identified in the CIP for Van Dorn Rec. Center so as to have a place to accept any contributions that may come out of the Van Dorn planning efforts. What do we need to do in order to facilitate that outcome? What is the status of a rec center as a part of the Van Dorn planning efforts?**

There is currently a \$25,000 placeholder in prior year unallocated funds in the Cameron Station project. In addition, there is \$10,000 listed as a placeholder in FY 2014 for a possible Teen Center at a redeveloped Landmark Mall site. To facilitate the request above, Council would need to propose and approve a new project for a Multi-generational West End Recreation Center. Funds from the Cameron Station and Teen Center projects would then be reprogrammed to the new project. This

would result in the elimination of the Cameron Station and the Teen Center projects. If Council wanted to add additional funds to the West End Recreation Center, it would require an “add” to the CIP.

A recreation center has not yet been considered, but will be as part of the on-going Landmark/Van Dorn planning study.

f) Are there any on-going efforts to use the \$295K for Visitors center? Are there short term projects that could improve tourism in Old Town that this money could be allocated to?

There is currently \$259,000 in prior year unallocated funds included in the CIP for the City’s Visitor Center. These funds are budgeted to undertake studies analyzing (1) improvements to Ramsay House, as well as review of 132 North Royal Street as a possible visitor’s center location; and (2) improving the King Street Metro Station area visitor information. It was intended to get another study underway in FY 2008, but National Harbor Initiatives took priority. It is now planned that this study would be initiated in FY 2009. Looking at ways to expand Ramsey House (in keeping with its historical context), improving use of its interior space, as well as creating ADA access to the main floor of the Visitors Center (now inaccessible) are the priorities.