

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 123: UNFUNDED PROJECTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING'S WORK PROGRAM FOR FY 2010 – REVISION TO BUDGET MEMO #115

This memo is in response to a request from Councilman Krupicka for information about unfunded projects in the Department of Planning and Zoning's Work Program for FY 2010. It has been revised based upon City Council's discussion at the April 20 Add/Delete work session.

On April 7, 2009, the Department of Planning and Zoning presented a proposed draft FY 2010 work program to the Planning Commission. That work program includes some projects that are not funded in the City Manager's proposed FY 2010 budget because the need for them was identified after the proposed budget was released. The memorandum explaining the proposed work program was provided to the Mayor and Councilmembers on April 7, 2009, and the Council is scheduled to have a work session on the FY 2010 work program in May.

At the Add/Delete work session on April 20, Council Members indicated a desire to see a revised proposal that reduces the requested funds. In addition, some Council Members suggested that hiring staff may be a preferred alternative to engaging a consultant for ongoing tasks, particularly if the additional staff provides a new skill set that has multiple applications. The Council also requested that separate expenditure requirements be calculated for the two Potomac Yard small area plan options: the Braddock Fields/Landbay L plan, and the Route 1 West plan.

The original request for the not funded projects totaled \$570,000. They were:

- Upon adoption of the Potomac Yard plan (estimated to occur in December of 2009), begin a small area plan for the rest of the Route 1 Corridor (either Braddock Fields/Landbay L or Route 1 West)(total \$340,000);
- Embark on Phase II of the Green Building program, addressing incentives, existing buildings and outreach (total \$150,000); and
- Accelerate support for implementation of the Arlandria Action Plan (total \$80,000).

- The new, revised budget options are reduced to \$290,000 if the Route 1 West plan is chosen, or reduced to \$270,000 if the Braddock Fields/Landbay L plan is pursued: Follow up plan to the Potomac Yard Small Area Plan:
 - Either a small area plan for the Braddock Fields/Landbay L area: a total of \$170,000, with \$80,000 to Planning and Zoning for real estate economic analysis and models/renderings, \$50,000 to Transportation and Environmental Services for transit coordination, and \$40,000 to Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities for one-half FTE (contract staff) for park/field design support;
 - Or a small area plan for Route 1 West: a total of \$180,000 in consulting services, with \$80,000 to Planning and Zoning for real estate economic analysis and models/renderings, and \$100,000 to Transportation and Environmental Services for transportation modeling and transit coordination.
- Green Buildings Phase II: The revised plan is to identify existing City staff to lead this project (no additional funds required).
- Arlandria Action Plan: A total of \$100,000 with \$80,000 to Planning and Zoning for one new staff person as an implementation specialist and \$20,000 in consultant funds for development economic analysis.
- Project Descriptions and Resource Requirements:
 1. ***Braddock Fields/Landbay L Small Area Plan (total \$170,000):*** The Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, as well as the associated Metro Rail Station Feasibility Study, is well under way with completion expected by December 2009. At a Potomac Yard community workshop held in January, the public raised the possibility of looking at Potomac Yard's Landbay L in combination with the Braddock Fields adjacent to the Braddock Metro Station. Currently staff is engaged in a "threshold analysis" which will help the Commission and the Council determine if a Landbay L/Braddock Fields plan should be conducted separately from the Potomac Yard plan. (The Braddock Road 7-11 can be looked at as it relates to the small area plan, understanding that redevelopment of the 7-11 site should not be unduly postponed by the planning effort.)

If a Landbay L/Braddock Fields plan is added to the work program, staff recommends that it should begin immediately after the Potomac Yard plan because the technical studies will still be valid and many members of the public will already be engaged.

The Department has determined that a total of \$170,000 will be needed for this plan, about one-quarter of the current Potomac Yard small Area Plan. The consultant services would include \$80,000 to Planning and Zoning for real estate economic analysis and models/renderings, which are used during the planning process to communicate concepts to stakeholders and to help residents and decision-makers select preferred options. Consultant funds would also include \$50,000 to

Transportation and Environmental Services for transit coordination support. In addition, because of the significant open space/playing field element, the Department of Parks and Recreation would need \$40,000 for a one-half time contract staff person.

2. **Route 1 West (\$180,000):** If Landbay L/Braddock Fields is not added to the work program, staff recommends that planning for the west side of the Route 1 Corridor commence immediately after the Potomac Yard plan. Given the major transportation infrastructure projects that are contemplated for Route 1 – not only the possibility of a new Metro station but the investment in high occupancy transit along Route 1 itself – it seems prudent to continue planning within the watershed of these major investments.

The Department has determined that \$180,000 in consultant services would be required for this Plan. The main differences from the Braddock Fields/Landbay L option: transportation modeling funds (\$100,000) are included to test development scenarios against the capacity of the planned transportation network, and no funds are included for additional RPCA staff.

3. **Green Building Phase II (total no new \$):** The April 2 *Green Building Policy for Alexandria* staff report calls for the continuation of the Work Group to pursue issues such as: standards for existing buildings, incentives for high levels of sustainability, outreach and education for the community, and enforcement strategies. Staff recommends pursuing this project in FY 2010 if the Industrial Uses Study's findings indicate that it is not urgent to initiate Eisenhower West planning in FY 2010.

The Department has determined that this project can likely be undertaken without consultant funds. The City is looking to existing staff to take the lead on this project.

4. **Arlandria Action Plan (total \$100,000):** In February, the City Council added work on the Arlandria Action Plan to the work program, and this effort will involve multiple departments. The proposed work program shows this project following completion of the Wayfinding design guidelines because even if the necessary additional resources are provided, the Department as a whole cannot absorb another project until Wayfinding reaches that milestone. The proposed work program for Arlandria consists of:

- Establishing an Implementation Advisory Group (IAG)
- With the IAG, reviewing the 2003 Action Plan, the progress in implementing the Action Plan, and developing the IAG's priorities for moving forward
- Coordinating with the IAG on issues related to public facilities, infrastructure and other improvements such as intersections, traffic control and signaling, parking, streetscape improvements (including bulbouts, crosswalk enhancements, and gateway enhancements), park design and development, and public art

- Assessing redevelopment market potential by engaging landowners in an assessment of the factors that have inhibited redevelopment and by issuing a Request for Expressions of Interest for redevelopment of key parcels that permits respondents to propose projects that may require changes to the current set of development constraints (zoning, height, land use mix, other requirements)
- Continuing to explore the potential benefits and implications of an arts district and other options for pursuing community development in cooperation with arts organizations.
- Empowering community residents and businesses by identifying improvements and other projects they can do themselves, such as supporting tree planting/care and other beautification projects, implementing the wayfinding program, through raising money and direct action.

The Department had previously calculated that this project would require one-half FTE in staff support over the next year. In light of Council's guidance regarding the staffing of ongoing responsibilities, the Department recognized that Plan implementation is an important and growing responsibility for the Department. As staff has indicated previously, there is no additional capacity within the Department for additional work. As a result, the Department is now recommending the addition of one new staff person to be a hands-on implementation specialist, working on implementation and small business problem resolution and focused on Arlandria, King Street, Mount Vernon Avenue, Carlyle, and Cameron Station and addressing such issues as signs, complaints, enforcement, SUP conditions, Carlyle funds and parks, coordinating implementation advisory groups and more. This position would have worked on recent issues as A-frames, bike signs, Cameron station signs and administrative SUP issues, for example. This position will free up some work capacity among the neighborhood planning staff, which is stretched very thin in the proposed work program, and it will improve the department's ability to address urgent issues that arise without in our commercial corridors and districts. Indirectly, the position will reduce the need for consultant support, although the Arlandria project will require \$20,000 for real estate economic analysis.