

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 5, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MORAN

On January 9, 2006, at 8:00 a.m., Council will hold its annual work session with Congressman James P. Moran to discuss federal issues of concern to the City. The discussion will focus on specific items for which the City would appreciate federal funding. The following is a description of those items. Staff hopes that by recommending a project list larger than that which will ultimately be funded, the Congressman and his staff will be able to select from among the projects those most likely to be approved.

1. Funding for First Responders**A. Emergency Response Vehicles**

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the City received a federal grant to improve its capability to respond to any subsequent terrorist attacks or other emergencies. Among the items purchased with these funds were vehicles to transport police officers and specialized protective clothing, weapons, communications equipment, and other gear to the scene of an emergency incident. These vehicles are now about three years old and will soon be in need of replacement, and the City has no funds programmed to purchase new vehicles. The City estimates that it will cost \$210,000 to purchase 6 multi-passenger vehicles (such as Suburbans) and equip them with appropriate light bars, equipment, storage trunks, and markings.

B. Emergency Generator at the Public Safety Center

The electrical generator at the Public Safety Center (PSC) provides emergency power during electrical outages for: the detention facility (which houses over 150 federal prisoners, some of whom are alleged terrorists); the Office of Sheriff Administrative and Program offices; portions of the Police Department (including the 911 Communications Center, Property and Evidence and Identification sections); emergency fuel storage for first responders; and perimeter security (including cameras, barriers, gates and lighting) for the PSC. In an emergency, this facility may also serve as the command center for law enforcement activities, since it is the most secure facility in the City. The PSC houses over 140 federal prisoners, including alleged terrorists, and is under consideration as a possible site for a new Emergency Operations Center following completion of the PSC slab replacement project in 2008. The current 800 kw generator was

installed twenty years ago when the building opened in 1986 and is nearing the end of its useful, reliable life. The estimated cost for the design, procurement and installation of a replacement generator is \$800,000.

2. Helping Alexandria Residents with Special Needs

A. Alexandria Child Advocacy Facilities

Last year, the City requested federal funding for a Child Advocacy Center in the City. Child Advocacy Centers are community-based programs that provide a safe place for children and families who are victims of child abuse and neglect. Alexandria City staff investigate about 70 reports of abuse and neglect each month. The City was unsuccessful in procuring federal funds to initiate such a Center last year and is therefore resubmitting this request. In addition the Center is now contemplated as a dispersed service model utilizing three sites.

The core component of advocacy services is a multi-disciplinary approach to reports of abuse and neglect and any subsequent prosecutions. The facilities will include a child-friendly, audio-visually-equipped interview room where a child will feel comfortable talking about what has happened to him or her; a family visitation room where families can receive support and counseling; medical examination facilities, where a child can feel less scared when medical procedures must be done; meeting rooms for team members; and offices where staff can work together to best help a child and his family.

The City will be utilizing DHS leased space in Arlandria for some services, and has received a grant from the Virginia Department of Social Services to purchase video taping equipment for child interviews and family visitation. We are seeking foundation grants to help fund other portions of this project, but would also appreciate federal funding. If we are given federal funds to help with the Advocacy facilities, we would use them to outfit a basic medical examination room (cost: \$50,000), and to pay for furnishings, computers, locking cabinets, kitchen equipment, and handbooks and other supplies for parents and children (cost: up to \$250,000).

B. Safety Improvements and Repairs to the Women's Shelter

Alexandria's Battered Women's Shelter, opened in 1981, provides emergency housing and food at a confidential location for Alexandria women and their children who have been abused or who are threatened with abuse. The Shelter is located in a remodeled private residence built many years ago. In addition to providing temporary living quarters, the building also includes office space for several staff members from the Office on Women.

Recently, an addition was built for the Shelter, to provide a bedroom that is accessible to those who are unable to climb the stairs to the second floor, where all the existing bedrooms were. At the time this addition was being planned and built, the City also hired an architectural firm to assess the condition of the existing building. The architectural firm has made a number of

recommendations for high and medium priority safety and other repairs to the building, including the installation of new smoke detectors and sprinkler and fire alarm systems; electrical repairs; installation of a sump pump and water pressure relief systems; repair of the basement slab, stairs, and basement ventilation; repairs to the HVAC and exhaust systems; and upgrades to the plumbing and electrical systems. The projected cost for these repairs is \$161,500. Although the City funded the addition to the Shelter, currently there are no City funds for these repairs and upgrades.

C. Alexandria Seaport Foundation

The Alexandria Seaport Foundation has entered into a partnership with the Carpenter's Union to design a pre-apprenticeship program which teaches beginning carpentry skills, work ethics and GED classes. The Court Service Unit intends to use this program for older probationers and parolees (ages 16 and up) who can learn the carpentry trade and prepare for the GED test at the same time. The Seaport Foundation also provides mentors and job placement opportunities for these individuals. Participants are paid while they learn the trade and prepare for a career in carpentry.

The program has been most effective with those who are vulnerable to joining gangs. The Court Service Unit considers this program one of the "best practice" gang prevention programs available in the community. The Foundation would appreciate up to \$200,000 in federal funding to help pay for a portion of its current costs, and to expand the program if sufficient funds are made available.

3. Projects to Make the City More Transit and Pedestrian-Friendly

During 2005, Congressman Moran arranged for significant federal funding for several important transportation projects in the City: pedestrian and transit improvements in the Eisenhower Valley; transit improvements in Potomac Yard; funding to help in the relocation of WMATA's Royal Street bus garage; design money for a Mill Road slip ramp; and money for improvements to the DASH bus system and other Citywide transit improvements.

The City is very appreciative of this funding, and is requesting additional funds to expand on two of these transit projects: Eisenhower Valley and Potomac Yard.

The federal SAFETEA-LU legislation (the transportation funding authorization passed in 2005) includes over \$3 million, allocated over four years, for Eisenhower Valley pedestrian and transit improvements. Additional funding is needed to develop a new north entrance to the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station, and make other improvements to encourage greater transit use in this developing area of the City.

Arlington and Alexandria are working together to plan Bus Rapid Transit for the Potomac Yard corridor. While SAFETEA-LU includes \$1 million to assist with this project, additional funds

are needed so that the City can make the needed improvements to Route 1 (design and construct a dedicated transit way) for its portion of the new BRT.

4. Funding for Bicycle and Multi-Use Trails, and Environmental Restoration

The City is requesting additional federal funding to develop the following bicycle and multi-use trails.

A. Improvements to Potomac Riverfront Access and Stabilization of the Shoreline

An estimated \$3.0 million is needed to create wetlands, replace failing riverfront bulkhead and provide pedestrian and bicycle access along the Potomac River. This funding will provide resources to design and build the planned elements. These will include: a trail connection along the river, north of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, and a segment of trail and boardwalk along the river and shoreline behind Hunting Towers, as well as bulkhead improvements further upstream. The Hunting Towers connection will provide linkage to the National Park Service's Mount Vernon Trail.

B. City Bike Trail System (West End)

Improvements are needed for portions of the bike trail system in the City's west end, including the Chambliss Connector, the Tarleton Trail, and the Holmes Run Trail. More specifically, the City needs to construct an in-stream crossing for the Chambliss Connector; and restore the trail and make drainage improvements in and around the Holmes Run trail at the Van Dorn crossing and the Tarleton trail intersection. The estimated cost of this project is \$538,000.

C. Dora Kelley Trail (extension of Holmes Run Trail)

Drainage and edging improvements are needed for the Dora Kelley Trail, as well as the realignment of portions of this trail. This work is expected to cost \$75,000.

D. Four Mile Run Master Plan

For several years, Alexandria and Arlington have worked jointly to develop an environmental restoration plan for Four Mile Run. We are ready now to begin the design and implementation of a Master Plan for the project, and we request that \$1.5 million to be provided to Alexandria and Arlington for this purpose.

5. Maintaining and Restoring Our Cultural Resources

A. Restoration of the Lloyd House Garden

Lloyd House, an historic structure built in 1795, now houses the Office of Historic Alexandria

and also hosts a number of public and private functions. Since it ceased being used to house special collections of the Alexandria Library in the late 90's, it has undergone significant renovation to return it to its historic origins. A remaining area in need of renovation is the garden, which sits primarily in the rear of the house. Needed are new or repaired fences and gates along Washington, Queen, and Columbus Streets. A garden plan has been prepared but not yet implemented. The projected cost of the project is \$100,000.

Private contributions will pay for a portion of this work; \$35,000 is on hand or committed. Federal Save Our Treasures funding (\$50,000) would allow this project to proceed more quickly.

B. The Lyceum

In 1839, a group of gentlemen calling themselves The Alexandria Lyceum joined with the Alexandria Library Company to build a grand hall to provide a place for lectures, scientific experiments and quiet reading. Eventually, the building became known as the Lyceum. In 1985, it became Alexandria's History Museum, providing exhibitions, school programs, lectures and concerts. Like any old building, the Lyceum is in need of constant upkeep. At this time, the City would like to make the building more accessible to those with disabilities. In order to make it accessible, it needs a new entrance, a new elevator, and upgrades to its bathrooms. If Save Our Treasures money were available for this purpose (\$50,000), the City would provide the necessary match for this project.

C. Gadsby's Tavern Museum

Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of two buildings, a tavern and a hotel, both built in the late 18th Century. The buildings are named for Englishman John Gadsby, who operated them from 1796 to 1808. Mr. Gadsby's establishment was a center of political, business, and social life in early Alexandria. The tavern was the setting for dancing assemblies, theatrical and musical performances, and meetings of local organizations. George Washington twice attended the annual Birthnight Ball held in his honor. Other prominent patrons included John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the Marquis de Lafayette.

Like any building of its age, Gadsby's is in constant need of repair and improvements. Projects in need of funding currently include replacement of the heating and air conditioning system, and improvements to the rear courtyard area and the historic ice well. In addition, the Museum, which includes a full-service restaurant, needs a new elevator, upgraded restrooms, renovations to the historic ballroom, and improvements to make the facilities more ADA-accessible.

The cost of these improvements is expected to be approximately \$500,000. The City received \$50,000 in Save America's Treasures funding in the most recent federal budget. Additional funding would be appreciated for this project.

6. Developing Job Skills for the Community--Automobile Training Institute of Alexandria

The Automobile Training Institute of Alexandria (ATIA) is a new program being developed by to help meet the need for an increasing number of reliable and skilled workers in the automobile industry. Prior to initiating this program, the City surveyed managers at local auto dealerships, who cited the need for additional trained workers available to fill vacancies. This initiative complements the federal/state/local welfare-to-work programs, by providing unskilled workers with the training needed to enter and stay in the work force earning more than subsistence wages.

Operating as a business, ATIA is designed to replicate an automobile dealership with a curriculum that includes many of the job skills and functions found in a typical dealership or repair shop. Student workers will learn not only how to fix cars, but other necessary skills such as how to write service orders; and order and stock parts. The curriculum will also teach communication skills, team building, and other human relation skills required to provide excellent customer service. The ATIA is a collaborative effort of the City, local automobile dealerships and repair shops(including Land Rover of Alexandria, Koon's Collision Repair Center, Lindsay Cadillac, Brown's Mazda, Passport Nissan, and Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota), the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, the Alexandria City Public Schools, and Northern Virginia Community College.

Startup costs for the program, to rent space and purchase the necessary equipment and furnishings, are estimated to be \$3 million. We would appreciate federal assistance to pay for a portion of these costs.

7. Protecting the Community's Health

In spite of an overall decrease in the incidence of tuberculosis in the state of Virginia and nationwide, Alexandria has been struggling with dramatic increases in its caseloads. While Arlington's rate has stabilized in 2005, the number of cases in Alexandria continue to increase. The rate of TB disease in the City was over 13 per 100,000 population in 2004, compared to a statewide rate of 4.4 and a Northern Virginia regional rate of 8.5. The rate of latent (non-active) TB infection is also very high in these jurisdictions. It is important to treat latent TB infection in order to prevent future cases of active tuberculosis in a high risk population.

The Centers for Disease Control used to provide funding for TB outreach programs, but these grants were terminated at the end of 2003. Since then, the rates of TB in Alexandria has continued to increase. The Alexandria Health Department has struggled to meet the increased demand for services with a smaller staff, since the terminated grant paid for staff members who can no longer be supported. This means that outreach into the community is nearly impossible. Outreach is needed into Hispanic and other ethnic community groups, refugee assistance groups, English as a Foreign Language training centers, and other places.

Finding cases of latent and active tuberculosis is just the beginning. Each case requires six to

nine months or more of treatment. In order to undertake this outreach and treatment, the Alexandria Health Department needs an additional public health nurse, and an additional outreach worker (total estimated cost: \$150,000 annually) to do the following:

- identify high risk population groups for testing;
- provide tuberculin skin tests, chest x-rays, and treatment of those with latent tuberculosis;
- identify cases of active tuberculosis in the community and initiate treatment before they spread the disease to others; and
- provide education to community groups about tuberculosis and its treatment.

STAFF: Bernard Caton, Legislative Director