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Old Town Civic Association
P.O. Box 1213
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

March 12, 2011

Mayor William D. Euille
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

Re: Draft Waterfront Small Area Plan

The OTCA recently conducted a member survey to gauge reaction to the recently released Waterfront Plan. As Old Town is the community most impacted by the plan, it is critical that you are made aware of the key finding from our over 152 responses.

The survey revealed that almost 8 out of 10 (79 percent) of our members have an unfavorable view of the plan. Their top concerns are as follows:

- Unsettled legal issues could dramatically increase costs
- No real plan alternatives have been developed or vetted
- The plan is too ambitious; too much commercial development will create negative impacts on both proximate neighborhoods (traffic/parking), and negative impacts on existing businesses (cannibalization)
- The plan is not revenue-neutral; none of the cost-benefit analyses presented by City staff support this conclusion
- The Waterfront Park building is extremely unpopular
- The plan should do more to feature and lock in sites (and funding mechanisms) for historic/cultural amenities.

Surely, the City's goal should not be to maximize tax revenue potential if by doing so, we destroy the historical nature of the community. OTCA takes the position that the planning goal should be to determine the feasibility and desirability of revenue attraction, and use the feasibility to drive development accordingly. Tourists come to this city first for its history, beauty, and, authenticity and secondarily, its amenities such as restaurants and shops.

Reverse this relationship, and you're not in Alexandria; you are in "Anytown", USA.

Within the OTCA membership, there is significant frustration with the planning process and a belief that an important step has been missed. For a planning study of this importance, there is typically a step where two or three alternative plans (for example; a plan with an emphasis on maximizing commercial development, or an emphasis on more open space and less commercial development), are developed and presented together with their cost/benefit as options for the community to review and evaluate. This step allows constructive and well-informed community input and builds a sense of "community ownership" of the plan.

As this step was not part of the planning process, OTCA extends an invitation to members of the City Council to join our members at a planning workshop where we will develop an alternative planning

concept(s) that balance the objectives of both the 1992 Small Area Plan and this iteration. Notably, the 1992 Plan calls for less development, more open space and nature-based improvements while the latest version envisions massive development and commercial enhancements. There has been no attempt to combine the elements, in our opinion, the missing step in the planning process so far.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Gosling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "G".

OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION.
John Gosling, President

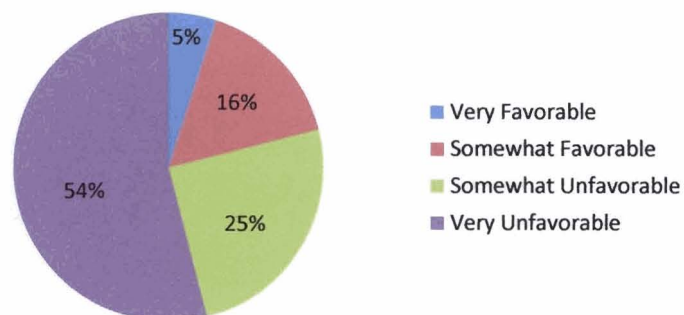
OTCA Waterfront Plan Survey March, 2011

Methodology

- Two data collection approaches – postal mail and email. Email survey used Survey Monkey to post and collect responses.
 - Postal mail used for those members who did not have an email address
- Due to limitations with OTCA database, decision made to send one survey per household
- Sample distribution
 - 103 postal mail - 26 responded
 - 345 email - 140 responded

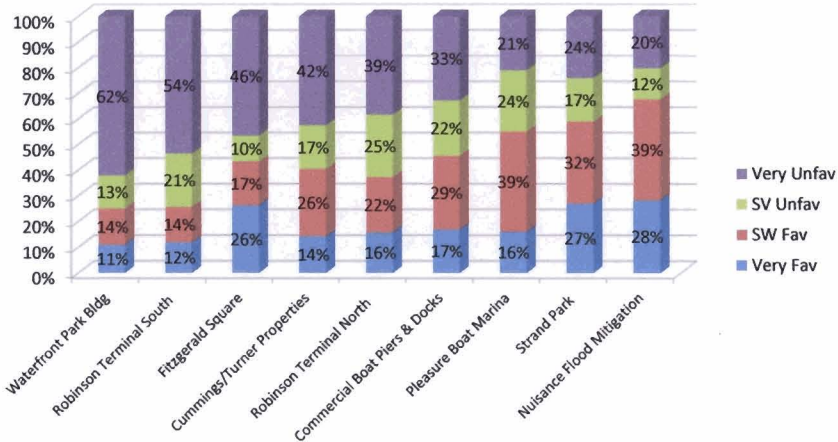
Nearly 8 out of 10 unfavorable toward Waterfront Plan

Overall, how favorable are you toward the Waterfront plan proposed by the City of Alexandria, as it currently stands? This should be based on everything you know about it, including what you have read in the recent OTCA newsletter.



Base: 152

Comparatively, Waterfront Park Building and Robinson Terminal South Unfavorable Aspects of Plan



Base: 152

Note: Land Use Features rotated in email survey to minimize position bias

Confirms previous chart...

Most Favored Land Use Feature

Nuisance Flood Mitigation	30%
Strand Park	18%
Fitzgerald Square	14%
Pleasure Boat Marina	14%
Robinson Terminal South	7%
Cummings/Turner Properties	6%
Robinson Terminal North	6%
Waterfront Park Building	3%
Commercial Boat Piers&Docks	3%

Least Favored Land Use Feature

Waterfront Park Building	29%
Robinson Terminal South	26%
Fitzgerald Square	12%
Robinson Terminal North	10%
Cummings/Turner Properties	8%
Pleasure Boat Marina	6%
Nuisance Flood Mitigation	5%
Commercial Boat Piers & Docks	5%
Strand Park	1%

Note: Statements rotated in email survey to minimize position bias

Solving legal/regulatory issues, financial structure, congestion and preservation of community key concerns

	Strongly Agree	Swbat Agree	Swbat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am comfortable that the financial structure of the current plan is complete and pays for itself over a reasonable period of time.	3%	9%	18%	70%
In general, a plan is a safeguard against ad hoc development of the waterfront	19%	36%	21%	24%
The current plan for the waterfront places too much emphasis on commercial development	66%	16%	8%	10%
I believe that any potential legal and/or regulatory issues that may be involved in executing the plan should be resolved before it is adopted.	76%	9%	8%	8%
The April 5th and 16th schedule for Planning Commission and City Council action on the plan provides a reasonable time period for additional public comment.	9%	20%	23%	48%
An increase in density of approximately 40% above present zoning is justified to pay for the public improvements to the waterfront including public access and amenities.	8%	6%	20%	66%
Stimulating economic development of the waterfront is and should be a key goal of the plan	8%	20%	17%	56%
The current plan has the right mix of commercial, hotel, restaurant, recreational, open space, residential and cultural uses	6%	7%	25%	63%
I am comfortable that the current plan has an effective strategy to manage increased parking, visitors, traffic and pedestrian congestion	5%	5%	18%	70%
I am comfortable that the current plan preserves the unique, historic ambiance of our waterfront and community.	6%	11%	14%	69%

Note: Statements rotated in email survey to minimize position bias

Most feel Plan will negatively impact the character and historic integrity of Old Town – more than their personal lifestyle and home

Again, based on what you know about the plan, for each of the statements below, please indicate whether you feel the plan will either make a very positive or very negative impact or somewhere in between. You may select any button along the scale.

	Positive Impact					Negative Impact
Property value of my home	7%	6%	22%	15%	15%	36%
Appeal and attraction of the waterfront	10%	11%	15%	13%	19%	32%
Appeal of Old Town as a tourist destination	10%	15%	16%	12%	22%	26%
Commercial businesses in my neighborhood and along King Street	6%	12%	16%	16%	18%	32%
My quality of life	4%	5%	11%	12%	22%	46%
Character of Old Town	4%	6%	10%	7%	19%	55%
The economic wellbeing of Alexandria overall	6%	11%	17%	16%	19%	31%
Historical integrity of the waterfront	6%	3%	7%	11%	19%	54%

Note: Statements rotated in email survey to minimize position bias

Overall, 53% of respondents live within 2-3 blocks of the waterfront. They tend to be:

- Not as 'very unfavorable' toward the Waterfront plan – 50% very unfavorable – compared to those further away (60%)
- Less unfavorable toward bottom of King Street land use features – Waterfront Building and Fitzgerald Square but more unfavorable toward Robinson Terminal South than counterparts (see chart on next page)
- Express greater concern about emphasis on commercial development (74% strongly agree vs 57%) and somewhat greater concern over the financial reality (74% strongly disagree vs 65%)
- Not surprisingly, they believe that the currently plan will negatively impact their quality of life (54% compared to 38%), the property value of their home (50% compared to 19%) and the appeal and attraction of the waterfront (37% compared to 27%)

Note: relatively small sample sizes – differences of 10% or greater used to determine differences

Residency makes a difference – not expected...

% Very Unfavorable

Live closest

Robinson Terminal South	59%
Waterfront Building	55%
Cummings/Turner Properties	46%
Fitzgerald Square	41%
Robinson Terminal North	37%
Commercial Boat Piers & Docks	31%
Pleasure Boat Marina	26%
Strand Park	24%
Nuisance Flood Mitigation	22%

Live further

Robinson Terminal South	47%
Waterfront Building	70%
Cummings/Turner Properties	38%
Fitzgerald Square	53%
Robinson Terminal North	40%
Commercial Boat Piers & Docks	36%
Pleasure Boat Marina	16%
Strand Park	24%
Nuisance Flood Mitigation	18%

Note: Statements rotated in email survey to minimize position bias

2h
OPEN MIKE, spoke

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM**

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

- 1. NAME: JOHN GOSLING
- 2. ADDRESS: 208 S. FAYETTE ST, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
TELEPHONE NO: 702 367 6798 E-MAIL ADDRESS: john.gosling@verizon.net
- 3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION
- 4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER: _____
- 5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):

- 6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO _____

This form shall be kept as a part of the permanent record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for your presentation, except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard on a docket item shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the Clerk.

Additional time not to exceed 15 minutes may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the council present; provided notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at public hearing meetings, and not at regular legislative meetings. Public hearing meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; regular legislative meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item at a legislative meeting can be waived by a majority vote of council members present but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply. If an item is docketed *for public hearing* at a regular legislative meeting, the public may speak to that item, and the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at public hearing meetings. The mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a public hearing meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular legislative meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

- (a) All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the city clerk.
- (b) No speaker will be allowed more than three minutes; except that one officer or other designated member speaking on behalf of each *bona fide* neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association desiring to be heard during the public discussion period shall be allowed five minutes. In order to obtain five minutes, you must identify yourself as a designated speaker, and identify the neighborhood civic association or unit owners' association you represent, at the start of your presentation.
- (c) If more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the mayor will organize speaker requests by subject or position, and allocated appropriate times, trying to ensure that speakers on unrelated subjects will also be allowed to speak during the 30 minute public discussion period.
- (d) If speakers seeking to address council on the same subject cannot agree on a particular order or method that they would like the speakers to be called on, the speakers shall be called in the chronological order of their request forms' submission.
- (e) Any speakers not called during the public discussion period will have the option to speak at the conclusion of the meeting, after all docketed items have been heard.