


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 18, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM:  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE LONG-RANGE MULTI-DEPARTMENT PLANNING WORK PROGRAM FOR FY 2012

ISSUE: Adoption of the long range multi-departmental planning work program for FY 2012.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council adopt the proposed FY 2012 multi-department planning initiatives and work program.

The proposed work program is consistent with the FY 2012 budget in regard to staffing and other budget resources:

- Complete the small area plan for the Beauregard Corridor; and, when that is complete, initiate a small area plan for Eisenhower West;
- Complete the Housing Master Plan;
- Expand school facilities planning work in coordination with Alexandria City Public Schools;
- Complete the Transit Corridor Feasibility Studies for High Capacity Transit Corridors A, B, and C;
- Continue work with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on the Potomac Yard Metro Station Environmental Impact Statement and complete the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway Environmental Assessment;
- Continue implementation of the Arlandria Action Plan;
- Continue implementation of the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan and the King Street retail studies; and
- Complete next phases of Fort Ward studies and plans.

BACKGROUND: The Department of Planning and Zoning, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and the Office of Housing presented a proposed work program to the Planning Commission on November 4, 2010, and to the City Council on November 23, 2010. At the Council work session, staff reviewed potential projects for the work program and noted that it would not be possible to address all of them in FY 2012 without additional resources.

During the work session, Council members indicated that they:

- Place a high priority on completing the Beauregard Corridor small area plan before starting another small area plan; and
- Wish to limit the use of consultant support to subjects that require specialized expertise for a short duration.

Based primarily on the feedback received, a smaller FY 2012 work program was assumed for the preparation of the proposed FY 2012 Operating Budget:

- Schedule the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan for FY 2013; and
- Schedule major implementation of Waterfront Plan infrastructure (CIP-related work) to start in FY 2013.

The proposed work program is consistent with the adopted FY 2012 operating budget, which includes no new staff resources for long range planning and no new expenditures for consultant support of long-range planning initiatives. Budget options to include Waterfront Plan implementation were considered by Council but not funded for FY 2012.

Plan implementation work is closely tied to the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). CIP projects with capital funding in FY 2012 that impact the long range planning work program include: the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS, Four Mile Run Park and Stream Restoration, and Transitway Corridor planning projects. The Arlandria and Braddock plans have funds remaining from previous years. Recently, the City Council approved reallocating the remaining Arlandria funds to be spent on improvements to adjacent Four Mile Run Park.

Neither the adopted CIP, nor the adopted operating budget, contains funds in FY 2012 for the implementation of the Landmark/Van Dorn and Waterfront plans. If the new owners of Landmark Mall, who are currently undertaking studies, signal that they are interested in moving forward, staff will return to the City Council to discuss an amended work program.

The next phases of Fort Ward studies and planning (including stormwater management) will occur in FY 2012 utilizing supplemental funding and stormwater CIP funding approved by Council.

The attached bar chart shows the proposed work program: the projects and the timing of those projects. This is an update of the bar chart presented during the Planning Commission and City Council work sessions on the work program. Overall, the proposed work program elements fully utilize staff resources at current levels.

A. Beauregard and Eisenhower West

Staff concurs with the input received from the Planning Commission and City Council members that West End planning initiatives should be postponed until the Beauregard Corridor Plan is completed. The attached schedule shows the Beauregard Corridor Plan as being completed in FY 2012, sometime between October 2011 and February 2012. The timing of the completion of this plan depends on the pace of progress in developing, completing and considering this Plan.

Staff is proposing the Eisenhower West Plan beginning in July of 2012; that is, FY 2013. If the Beauregard Plan is completed prior to February 2012, it is possible this project could begin sooner. However, early work on this project will require significant traffic analysis with support from transportation engineering consultants prior to the official start of the planning process for Eisenhower West. Also, developing a strategy to coordinate this planning process with Fairfax County and its property adjacent to the Eisenhower West planning area is an objective.

B. Transit Planning

Transit planning, including completion of the High Capacity Transit Corridor feasibility studies and the multi-year Environmental Impact Statement process for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station and the environmental assessment process for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transit line will consume more planning staff time than originally expected. It is now estimated that these projects will require a full work year of Planning & Zoning (P&Z) existing staff time in FY 2012.

C. Implementation of Plans

An increasing share of the long-range planning work program involves the implementation of approved plans – some of which are more urgent and important than others, but none of which can be dropped entirely. They include completion and implementation of the Housing Master Plan, implementation of the Arlandria Action Plan, and Braddock Plan implementation. The City has made important implementation progress in 2010 – both in furthering specific project goals, as well as building community support. With an active and engaged community come expectations for continued progress in implementing plans that the community has worked diligently developing. The proposed work program is staff's best estimate of the appropriate allocation of resources to each of these projects. Many of these projects could easily merit additional staff time, if there were not other projects that are even more pressing.

A rebounding economy increases developer activity; welcome news that must be supported with staff resources. Plan implementation work is linked to developer activity; for example, important elements of the Braddock Plan are dependent upon developer contributions. The pace of development in Braddock appears to be accelerating, and that will prompt more frequent meetings with the public and more staff resources devoted to implementation projects, such as the park.

An improving economy may also accelerate implementation of the Landmark/Van Dorn and will likely accelerate implementation of Potomac Yard plans.

1. Waterfront Plan Implementation

The proposed FY 2012 adopted budget reflects a work program for Waterfront Plan Implementation (assuming Council adoption in June 2011) that involves relatively limited levels of staff resources through FY 2012 (0.5 FTE for Planning & Zoning and Transportation & Environmental Services; less for Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities). CIP related design and engineering work, including engineering work on flood mitigation, would not start until FY 2013.

The Waterfront project description in the proposed FY 2013 to FY 2021 CIP noted that additional staff resources will be required to manage the Waterfront CIP projects – which are all infrastructure-related – along with some consultant services for more highly technical engineering tasks.

The proposed Waterfront Plan also calls for the City to continue work on Waterfront parking issues, with immediate attention on a parking implementation plan.

In recent months it has become clear that the private sector may be interested in moving forward with Waterfront projects in the near term. Of particular developer interest is the 200 block of South Union Street, with potential projects including a small hotel and restoration of the two historic warehouses.

Redevelopment of a large component of this block is key to creating a more lively and active Strand. The draft Waterfront Plan suggests that public sector improvements – particularly in the area from King Street to Wolfe Street – be coordinated with private development activity to maximize mutual benefit. If the discussed private sector redevelopment concepts convert to reality, then the City will need to re-think how it will utilize its staff resources in FY 2012. If Council does not adopt the Waterfront Plan in June, but requests that additional work be done, then some modification of the work program described in this memorandum may be necessary.

2. *School Facilities Planning*

At the recent work session on the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) CIP, both City and ACPS staff proposed a joint long-range planning project for school facilities. A joint planning process, which is likely to require a substantial staff commitment, would recognize:

- The enormity of the potential cost to meet demand for school capacity;
- The lack of clarity about the exact nature of the demographic trends underlying recent enrollment increase – and whether they will continue;
- The very limited number of options for new school sites, which may inspire new thinking about how school buildings relate to the community that surrounds them; and
- The many interwoven issues – from educational programs and policies, land use to transportation to human services to parks and recreations – for which both ACPS and the City have a strong role.

To be useful in the next budget round for the future FY 2013 to FY 2022 CIP, some progress and some conclusions will have to be reached by November of this year. It is not likely that all of the critical elements will be addressed by then, and additional planning may well extend throughout FY 2012, with updates to the CIP considered in the FY 2014- FY 2023 CIP cycle.

3. *Beyond FY 2012*

Along with the Eisenhower West plan and plan implementation, future planning projects may include:

- **Landmark Mall:** Once the new owners are fully re-engaged in the project, there will be considerable work involved in moving from the concepts articulated in the Plan to a detailed proposal for the site itself as well as adjacent off-site infrastructure.
- **Route 1 West/Oakville Triangle:** This area of the City, just across Route 1 from Potomac Yard, is primarily industrial in use. Redevelopment pressure on this parcel will increase along with construction of phases of Potomac Yard.
- **Duke Street Corridor:** By FY 2013, Duke Street will be the only transit corridor that does not have a corresponding update of its land use plan. The corridor has a number of parcels, both large and small, that will likely face redevelopment pressure over the next ten years. Duke Street status as a high capacity transit corridor makes a Duke Street land use study needed.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1: Long Range Planning Work Program Bar Chart

STAFF:

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