

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 25, 2003
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 47 : CITY COUNCIL SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

During the past two years, the emphasis of the Department of Planning and Zoning has been to move the development and residential communities of Alexandria into a process of consensus building in both development review and the small area planning process. As a result of this effort, a series of major development projects, such as Mill Race, and major area plans, such as Eisenhower East, have been presented over the course of the past year to Council with the general support of the business and residential communities. The approval of such major projects and plans greatly assists the City in managing and directing its long-term economic course, defining its urban character, and protecting the quality of life for its citizens.

Two significant budget-related matters have enabled City staff to deliver these quality projects and plans, with fairly broad consensus, to Council and the community: an enlarged and strengthened internal Planning Department staff, and a substantially expanded use of professional services from experienced consulting firms.

These two expanded resources, staffing and professional expertise, are very important to the continuation of the City's new pro-active planning efforts and, we believe, to the Council in its review of proposed development projects and small area plans. The continuation of these efforts and related initiatives is predicated upon the continued use of professional consultant services.

The Proposed FY 2004 Budget

With the funding provided in the proposed FY 2004 budget, the Department can carry out the following activities in the upcoming next fiscal year:

1. Implementation Activities

Arlandria: Implementation. Provide expertise to the business community to undertake marketing and promotional initiatives, and identify a mechanism for funding capital improvements and addressing retail area management issues.

Eisenhower East: Implementation. Structure an implementation strategy with land owners to create a retail town center; identify and organize an appropriate district management structure; develop alternative approaches for funding new infrastructure and for allocating private vs. public responsibility for implementation; develop an approach for coordinating and phasing new development and improvements; and finalize design guidelines incorporating standards and incentives.

Development Review: Implementation. Continue working in a consensus building process with developers and citizens to ensure a higher quality of review for proposed projects, including an assessment of the project's compatibility with adjacent areas and its ability to enhance the urban context (such as was carried out for Mill Race and Fresh Fields). This coming budget year, we will need this level of professional and technical review for a series of potential new large scale projects that are being proposed for several blocks of residential development in Carlyle, for the Braddock Metro area, for the western portion of the City, including Park Center, and for the historic district on South Washington Street.

Final Elements of New Development Review: Implementation. Continue working with the development community to complete the *Development Guide* and implement final changes to the review process. Improvement has been accomplished in the final site plan review area where emphasis has been placed on instituting a two-tiered, expedited approach for fast tracking selected large development projects. As all the pieces of the new process are completed, emphasis will shift toward assisting and expediting the smaller application permits, including SUPs.

2. **Planning Initiatives**

Mount Vernon Avenue. Continue recently initiated analysis of the market for retail and possibly other uses, of shared parking strategies, and of design and other requirements to ensure in-fill redevelopment that is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods and the surrounding community in general. This activity is funded by grant monies.

King Street Retail. Continue recently initiated assessment of the retail market and community expectations; address issues such as parking and office displacement of retail; and develop business/marketing strategy for the area. Part of the initial funding for this activity is grant monies.

Additional Planning Initiative. In terms of additional planning activities to be started in the next fiscal year with funds provided in the proposed FY 2004 budget, the Department will undertake one of the following:

- Initiate the first phase of work on a major planning study of the Eisenhower West area, or

- Undertake and complete a smaller study either for a small area plan area or for a critical issue area such as “in-fill development” throughout the City.

**The Budget “Add”/Supplemental:**

The budget “add”/supplemental would enable the Department to undertake one of the following activities in FY 2004:

- A planning study of the waterfront from Duke Street to the Marina
- A planning study of the Braddock Metro area
- A City-wide “in-fill development” analysis and guidelines (if not undertaken with proposed FY 2004 funding)
- A Duke Street corridor redevelopment analysis
- A City-wide retail analysis and strategy, or
- A planning study of the Route One corridor

While these are meaningful activities, I would prefer, and hence recommend, that the Council use these proposed “add”/supplemental moneys to lessen any reduction, from the amount in the proposed FY 2004 budget, that Council might apply to overall City personnel and/or non-personnel expenditures.

