

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

23  
9-24-02

DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF ENDORSEMENT BY CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
STATEWIDE GENERAL OBLIGATION PARKS AND RECREATIONAL  
FACILITIES BOND REFERENDUM

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**ISSUE:** At the request of City Council, consideration of the endorsement by City Council of a resolution to endorse a general obligation parks and recreation facilities bond referendum to fund capital projects for parks and recreational facilities throughout the Commonwealth.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council adopt the general obligation bond resolution (Attachment 1).

**DISCUSSION:** The 2002 Virginia General Assembly passed legislation to include a referendum on the November 5, 2002, ballot to allow voters to decide if the Commonwealth should issue \$119 million in general obligation bonds to provide funding for capital projects for parks and recreation facilities. Passage of the \$119 million bond referendum will provide \$30 million to purchase new park and natural area land, \$6.5 million to add additional land to existing parks, and \$4.5 million to protect park land from severe shoreline erosion. The remaining \$78 million will be for construction, improvement and repair projects, such as cabins, campgrounds and other offerings throughout Virginia's 34 state parks. Bond funds will be used for specific projects, not operating costs. Included on the list of projects to be funded are capital improvements at Mason Neck and Leesylvania State Parks in Northern Virginia.

Since the financing for these project will be issued in the form of general obligation bonds, it will be incorporated into the overall debt for the Commonwealth and will increase its debt service payments slightly. This referendum represents the fourth time in Virginia history in which a general obligation bond has been placed on the ballot, and the first time in ten years. This bond referendum is in addition to the \$845.9 million higher education bond referendum that Council endorsed at its September 10, 2002, legislative session. The Commonwealth is taking advantage of current low interest rates, its triple-A bond rating, and available debt capacity to invest in parks and natural areas throughout the Commonwealth.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None to the City government

**ATTACHMENT:** General Obligation Bond Resolution

**STAFF:** Mark Jinks, Assistant City Manager  
Bernie Caton, Legislative Director  
Kendel Taylor, Budget Analyst

## **GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ENDORSEMENT RESOLUTION**

**Whereas**, the opportunity for Virginia citizens to have continued access to Virginia's recreation facilities and natural resources is dependent upon the Commonwealth's ability to preserve land and fund recreational capital projects;

**Whereas**, Virginia voters will have the opportunity to approve a bond referendum on November 5, 2002, that will provide \$119 million to purchase land for three new state parks, 11 existing parks, 10 new natural area preserves and eight existing preserves and to fund construction and improvement projects throughout Virginia's 34 state parks;

**Whereas**, in November 2001, the Virginia state park system was recognized for excellence in park management and presented with the National Gold Medal and State Park Award as the best state park system in the nation by the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation;

**Whereas**, Virginia ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in the country in percentage of the state budget spent on parks and 49<sup>th</sup> in per capita state park spending;

**Whereas**, visitation in Virginia state parks increased from 3.8 million visitors in 1991 to 7.1 million visitors in 2001 and park visitors, nearly 40 percent of whom are from outside the Commonwealth, contributed \$144 million to its economy in 2001;

**Whereas**, taxes will not have to be raised to pay for this bond, and it will not jeopardize Virginia's AAA bond rating;

**Whereas**, passage of this referendum will protect Virginia's unique and threatened land resources for future parks and natural area preserves and improve recreational offerings throughout Virginia;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alexandria City Council endorses the passage of the referendum on the November 5, 2002, ballot authorizing the issuance of a general obligation bond of the Commonwealth of Virginia for \$119 million.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alexandria City Council encourages the voters of Virginia to vote "YES" on the question of whether the referendum should take effect.

ADOPTED: September 24, 2002

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KERRY J. DONLEY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BEVERLY L. JETT, CITY CLERK

**RESOLUTION NO. 2043**

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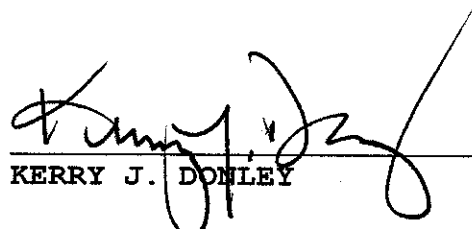
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KERRY J. DONLEY

MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
Beverly I. Jett, CMC City Clerk