


*City of Alexandria, Virginia*MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 3, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CREATION OF A STORMWATER WORKING GROUP

ISSUE: Creation of a Stormwater Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council authorize the City Manager to appoint a Stormwater Working Group with membership as outlined below.

BACKGROUND: In January 2008, Council authorized the Eco-City project that included the development of an Eco-City Environmental Charter that outlines the City's environmental vision and principles and a complementary Environmental Action Plan that implements it. The City's Environmental Action Plan will include specific environmental actions the City will carry out over the next 10 to 20 years.

The draft Eco-City Charter has already been developed and will be considered by the City Council for adoption in June 2008. The Environmental Action Plan will build upon efforts by the City's Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) to develop a new strategic environmental planning process that addresses environmental issues that emerged since the 1998 Environmental/Quality of Life Summit. Since the Quality of Life Summit, the City has made significant progress on Water Quality issues, but, as evident by 2006 flooding, addressing the City's aging stormwater infrastructure and emerging challenges such as flooding as the result of global warming needs to be among the priorities. In addition to addressing the water quality and emerging issues, the Charter addresses transportation, energy, building green, solid waste, and environmental health.

Under the Eco-City Charter and still to be developed Environmental Action Plan, the challenge before the City therefore is going to be to determine how to effectively:

1. Prioritize maintenance of its aging stormwater infrastructure in ways that address pressing environmental needs;
2. Assure the necessary funding to address capital and operating maintenance needs; and

3. Structure the funding to support meeting the need in as fair and equitable a manner as possible.

Current Stormwater Services. The stormwater services provided by the City are delivered by three Divisions of the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services: Engineering, Environmental Quality and Operations. The stormwater-related services include:

- Site plan review
- Development site inspection
- Permitting
- Construction management
- Floodplain management
- Stormwater capital projects
- Stormwater sewer maintenance
- Water quality
- Street sweeping

Other City departments that deliver stormwater-related services that are ancillary to their primary missions include General Services and Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. The Alexandria Public Schools also deliver stormwater related services associated with their facilities. In addition, the City has a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that includes projects for Community Development (e.g., stream assessment and restoration, stream maintenance, and flood damage restoration) and Sewers (e.g., repairs and improvements, capacity analysis, flood damage restoration, and stormwater permit support). However, the current CIP funding for to-be-identified stormwater capital projects is likely far less than what the stormwater capital needs are. In order to address how to fund future stormwater management needs, City staff has been, and will continue to be, undertaking a study of financing alternatives, including the establishment of a stormwater utility fund and studying of potential dedicated funding sources.

Create Stormwater Working Group (SWG). It is recommended that Council authorize the City Manager to appoint a SWG that will:

- Provide input on the City's stormwater program, including capital improvement projects and operations and maintenance programs.
- Provide input on various funding options.
- Serve in a representative capacity for the organizations that each SWG member represents, ensuring stakeholder interests and needs are adequately conveyed to the SWG.
- Serve as a co-convenor with the City of Alexandria for community or stakeholder meetings and facilitate two-way communication as needed.

The membership of the SWG will include:

- One resident from each Planning District (3 participants)
- One Business Representative from each Planning District (3 participants)
- Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (2 participants)
- Environmental Policy Commission (1 participant)

The SWG will assist staff and the City Manager in making a recommendation to City Council on prioritizing stormwater capital projects and corresponding funding for the FY 2010 budget cycle.

FISCAL IMPACT: The SWG will be staffed by T&ES (lead), OMB and consultants at a cost of \$50,000.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES

Emily Baker, P.E., City Engineer, T&ES

Bill Skrabak, Director, Office of Environmental Quality, T&ES