


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

32  
6-24-08

DATE: JUNE 20, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR 24 EXPRESS AND REPORT AND UPDATE ON EFFORTS TO INSTITUTE VOLUNTARY LIMITATION ON HOURS OF OFF-PREMISE ALCOHOL SALES AND TO IMPLEMENT A PROPOSED TARGETED AREA PLAN FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION/TREATMENT IN ARLANDRIA

---

**ISSUE:** Special Use Permit for 24 Express and Report on Voluntary limitation on hours of off-premises sale of alcohol for non-SUP businesses in Arlandria, SUP required limitation for 24 Express convenience store, and ways in which the City can help address the larger issue of alcohol and substance abuse in the community through a Targeted Area Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council take the following actions:

I. Special Use Permit request:

- Require 24 Express to continue the limitation on the sale of alcohol after 11 p.m. while staff works to obtain voluntary compliance by other businesses on ending alcohol sales at 11 p.m.; or
- If Council wishes to approve alcohol sales until midnight, require 24 Express to provide the added security coverage discussed at the May public hearing meeting.

II. Alcohol Sales and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program

- Request staff to continue to work with local businesses in Arlandria to stop the sale of alcohol at 11 p.m.;
- Work with businesses and the community to address the issue of alcohol abuse through a comprehensive Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse; and
- Authorize staff to seek grant or foundation funds this summer to provide funding to plan the strategy for a Targeted Area Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** On Saturday, May 20, City Council held the public hearing on the 24 Express request to change the time when alcohol sales must stop from 11 p.m. to midnight. Council deferred action on the Special Use Permit to the June 24 legislative meeting.

In May 2008 the 24 Express at 4007 Mt. Vernon requested to allow the sale of alcohol daily until midnight. The request was an amendment to the existing Special Use Permit for 24 Express which limits the sale of alcohol to no later than 11 pm daily. Council previously had asked staff to investigate establishment of a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area for uses such as convenience stores, grocery stores and drugstores that sell alcohol for take out, and once established, require the 24 Express to abide by this policy.

Prior to the public hearing in May, staff from Planning and Zoning and APD met with representatives from Virginia ABC to discuss a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area and to determine the extent to which the Virginia ABC could support such a policy. Staff explained the issues with regard to late night alcohol sales and reports of drunkenness and the City's desire to limit late night sales to address this problem. VABC was asked if they would be willing to work with the City and the businesses that sell off-premises alcohol to limit times of alcohol sales. While VABC seemed to be sympathetic to the problems faced by the City, they were not receptive to the idea of limiting alcohol sales. They indicated that they have the authority and could take enforcement action against a specific business that violated ABC regulations, and that enforcement action may result in a temporary revocation or suspension of an ABC license, however, they would not impose a blanket restriction on hours of alcohol sales in an area.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### Alcohol Sales

At the public hearing meeting, City Council asked staff to approach retail establishments in the Arlandria area that sell alcohol off premises and request a voluntary decrease in the hours for the sale of alcoholic beverages and to develop a plan/strategy to address alcohol use in the area.

On June 3, I sent a letter, co-signed by Police Chief David Baker, to those Arlandria businesses that sell off premise alcohol until midnight on a daily basis (Attachment I) asking that they institute a voluntary program to cease alcohol sales after 11 pm daily. Letters were hand delivered to the 7-11 at 1025 West Glebe Road, the 7-11 at 3412 Mt. Vernon Avenue, the CVS at 3811 Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Giant Food Store at 2901 South Glebe Road. Letters were also mailed to the property owners, district managers and corporate/community relations offices. The letter explained that, while there has been an overall reduction in more serious crimes in the Arlandria area since 2006, the occurrence of nuisance crimes, such as drunkenness, has not declined. A comprehensive approach to address this issue will include not only working with individual businesses on voluntary agreements to reduce hours of alcohol sales, but also developing and implementing a plan that looks at a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and outreach.

In verbal responses to the letters, store and district managers for the businesses have indicated that they are considering the request for a voluntary reduction in hours of alcohol sales, but were

concerned that some of the businesses may not agree to the voluntary restriction. To date, none of the businesses has responded in writing that they would or would not agree to voluntary restrictions. Staff will continue to follow up with these businesses and we will update Council on Tuesday night.

#### Suppression/Enforcement

The evidence to date suggests that late-night alcohol sales in the Arlandria area can be directly correlated with an unacceptable level of alcohol abuse and resulting disruptive conduct and/or criminal behavior. In addition concerns expressed by the community about late night safety and security have led some residents to express a reluctance to patronize all merchants in the area late at night.

Current efforts to address alcohol related crime have also included requesting businesses to hire off duty police or sheriff's deputies to be on site as a deterrent to illegal alcohol sales and other illegal activity. Some businesses have decided on their own to hire off duty police as an additional security measure. Targeted efforts in the Arlandria area are aimed at decreasing alcohol related crime, reducing public drunkenness, enhancing public safety, improving the overall business environment in the area and making people feel safe and secure when patronizing businesses.

#### Comprehensive Alcohol Policy

City Council charged staff with developing a Comprehensive Alcohol Policy for the Arlandria Community. In response, staff has developed a Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse, an integrated three-pronged approach which uses a coordinated combination of regulation, suppression/enforcement and prevention/intervention/community engagement strategies. This plan may be replicated in other areas of the City should statistics show an increase in crimes related to alcohol or other substance abuse. This approach is outlined as:

- Regulation – the Department of Planning and Zoning will work with area retailers who sell alcohol in the targeted community to seek voluntary compliance to cease off-premises sales of alcohol at 11:00 p.m.
- Suppression/Enforcement – the Alexandria Police Department will vigorously enforce alcohol and other substance abuse related laws, e.g., public consumption of alcohol, underage drinking, drinking and driving, and the illegal distribution of alcohol and controlled substances.
- Prevention/Intervention/Community Engagement – the City's human service agencies will solicit community input to identify alcohol and substance prevention and intervention services which could be provided directly in the targeted neighborhood, and engage residents, nonprofit agencies and other community stakeholders as partners. Staff will work to identify grant or foundation funding for planning a comprehensive alcohol prevention treatment program.

#### Prevention/Intervention/Community Engagement

The following proposal (Attachment II) addresses the prevention/intervention aspects of the plan, which would consist of the delivery of neighborhood based services and programs. We expect to use some existing resources offered by City and nonprofit agencies and hope eventually to be

able to provide support treatment and preventive efforts for children, families and individuals who are victims, at-risk or current substance abusers.

Alexandria Police statistics continually show a concerning amount of alcohol related crimes in the Arlandria community. Therefore, the Targeted Area Plan will first focus on that community. The substance abuse problems in Arlandria are highly complex. To effectively address this issue staff proposes a thoughtful, well-researched, multi-system, multi-agency strategy. Staff will pursue approaches that take into account the complex economic and cultural factors that affect this community's attitudes towards substance abuse and must be generated in collaboration with the community.

Considerable research data exists on the problem of alcohol and substance abuse in the Hispanic/Latino community, including evidence that Hispanics are less likely to have access to substance abuse treatment. In the development of programming to reduce substance abuse and its related problems in the Arlandria community, additional research and planning will provide greater insight to identifying the scope of the problem and barriers to treatment. Staff will also use information from the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations report, *A Snap Shot of Human Development in Alexandria: A Needs Assessment of the Alexandria Human Services System*, which includes a section on the Arlandria Community.

As the first step towards providing more community-based services and programs, City staff has identified current services which can potentially be delivered in the Arlandria community. The list of preliminary programs and services proposed for implementation in the community is attached (Attachment II). Responses were provided by the Departments of Health, Human Services, Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse, Court Services and the Offices of Housing, and Women. Nonprofits will be critical to provide solutions and services and they will be added to the plan as part of the vetting process. Additionally, staff has identified other evidenced based approaches and best practices for implementation, as funding becomes available.

As noted, these services will be presented to the residents of the Arlandria community for consideration. Their input will be obtained through individual staff contacts. The City will rely on staff, currently working in the community, who have established relationships with residents. This step will engage residents as partners with the City in addressing substance abuse issues in the community.

It is significant to note that while the plan will initially focus on the Arlandria community, staff has developed a replicable model which can be used in other areas of the City which may, in the future, be identified as having significant alcohol and other substance abuse issues.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Staff proposes to seek funding for additional services from grant and foundation sources first for planning of this effort and later to enhance service delivery in Arlandria.



**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment I. Letters to Businesses; Proposed Programs and Services for the Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse

Attachment II. Targeted Area Plan for Substance Abuse Prevention/Intervention/Community Engagement

**STAFF:**

Debra R. Collins, Assistant City Manager for Community and Human Services

David P. Baker, Chief of Police

Richard Josephson, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning

L. Michael Gilmore, Director of Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

301 King Street, Suite 3500  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3211

JAMES K. HARTMANN  
City Manager

(703) 838-4300  
Fax: (703) 838-6343

June 3, 2008

Mr. Timothy Baker  
District Manager  
Giant Food Inc.  
1535 Alabama Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20032

Dear Mr. Baker:

We are writing to request your help in addressing a serious issue in the Arlandria area of Alexandria, close to your Giant Food store at 2901 South Glebe Road in Arlington.

The issue is late night alcohol sales. There are several establishments in the Arlandria area that sell alcoholic beverages for carry out. Some of these establishments allow sales until midnight daily. The evidence to date suggests that late-night alcohol sales in the Arlandria area are directly correlated with an unacceptable level of alcohol abuse and resulting disruptive conduct and/or criminal behavior. In addition, concerns expressed by the community about late night safety and security have led some residents to express a reluctance in patronizing all merchants in the area late at night.

To remedy these problems City Council has asked that there be a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area and that merchants, such as convenience stores, grocery stores and drugstores in Arlandria, that sell alcohol for take out, voluntarily cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m.

Current efforts to address alcohol related crime have also included requesting businesses to hire off duty police or sheriff's deputies to be on site as a deterrent to illegal alcohol sales and other illegal activity. Some businesses have decided on their own to hire off duty police as an additional security measure. We believe that aggressive, targeted efforts in the Arlandria area will result in a decrease in alcohol related crime, will reduce public drunkenness, will enhance public safety and will improve the overall business environment in the area and make people feel safe and secure when patronizing businesses, such as yours, late at night.

We are asking that all businesses in the Arlandria area institute a voluntary program to cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m. daily. We believe that a comprehensive approach to the sale and

Mr. Timothy Baker  
June 3, 2008  
Page 2

availability of alcohol late at night will help reduce alcohol related crime in the area. While we realize that your store is not located in the City of Alexandria, it is an important part of the Arlandria community, where people from the neighborhood go to purchase alcohol late at night.

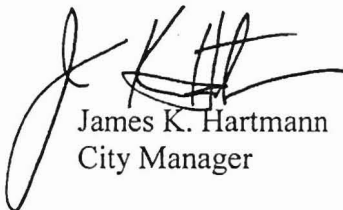
While we have seen an overall reduction in more serious crimes in the Arlandria area since 2006, the occurrence of nuisance crimes, such as drunkenness, has not declined. We believe a comprehensive approach to address alcohol abuse will include not only working with individual businesses such as yours on voluntary agreements to reduce hours of alcohol sales, but also developing and implementing a plan that looks at a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and outreach. We are working with our human services and mental health organizations in the City and community groups in the area to help us develop such a plan and achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life for area residents, and in the business climate for area merchants.

It is our understanding that the Giant Food store at 2901 South Glebe Road allows the sale of beer and wine until 12 a.m. daily. We are respectfully requesting that you institute a voluntary program to cease the off premise sale of alcoholic beverages at your store after 11 p.m. daily. We know that Giant Food places a great deal of importance on working with the community and has as its vision being a leading corporate citizen in the communities it serves. We believe that this small step on your part can have significant impact on the welfare of the Arlandria community.

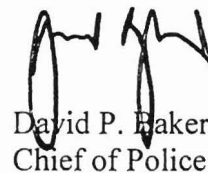
Please let us know if this request is feasible and, if so, when and under what conditions it can be implemented. We need to respond to the Alexandria City Council prior to their June 24 meeting. If you could let us know by June 17, it would be much appreciated.

We would be glad to follow up this letter with a meeting. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

Sincerely,



James K. Hartmann  
City Manager



David P. Baker  
Chief of Police

cc: Teresa Gibson, Store Manager - Giant Food, 2901 South Glebe Road  
Barry Scher, Vice President of Public Affairs, Giant Food Inc.



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

301 King Street, Suite 3500  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3211

JAMES K. HARTMANN  
City Manager

(703) 838-4300  
Fax: (703) 838-6343

June 3, 2008

Mr. Clyde Johnson  
District Manager  
CVS Pharmacy  
7859-A Heritage Drive  
Annandale, Virginia 22003

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We are writing to request your help in addressing a serious issue in the Arlandria area of Alexandria, the area in which your CVS Pharmacy store at 3811 Mt. Vernon Avenue is located.

The issue is late night alcohol sales. There are several establishments in the Arlandria area that sell alcoholic beverages for carry out. Some of these establishments allow sales until midnight daily. The evidence to date suggests that late-night alcohol sales in the Arlandria area are directly correlated with an unacceptable level of alcohol abuse and resulting disruptive conduct and/or criminal behavior. In addition, concerns expressed by the community about late night safety and security have led some residents to express a reluctance in patronizing all merchants in the area late at night.

To remedy these problems City Council has asked that there be a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area and that merchants, such as convenience stores, grocery stores and drugstores in Arlandria, that sell alcohol for take out, voluntarily cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m.

Current efforts to address alcohol related crime have also included requesting businesses to hire off duty police or sheriff's deputies to be on site as a deterrent to illegal alcohol sales and other illegal activity. Some businesses have decided on their own to hire off duty police as an additional security measure. We believe that aggressive, targeted efforts in the Arlandria area will result in a decrease in alcohol related crime, will reduce public drunkenness, will enhance public safety and will improve the overall business environment in the area and make people feel safe and secure when patronizing businesses, such as yours, late at night.

We are asking that all businesses in the Arlandria area institute a voluntary program to cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m. daily. We believe that a comprehensive approach to the sale and

Mr. Clyde Johnson  
June 3, 2008  
Page 2

availability of alcohol late at night will help reduce alcohol related crime in the area. Your store is an important part of the Arlandria community, where people from the neighborhood go to purchase alcohol late at night.

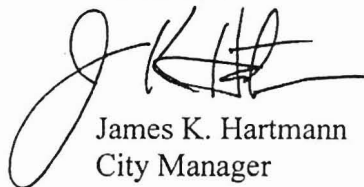
While we have seen an overall reduction in more serious crimes in the Arlandria area since 2006, the occurrence of nuisance crimes, such as drunkenness, has not declined. We believe a comprehensive approach to address alcohol abuse will include not only working with individual businesses such as yours on voluntary agreements to reduce hours of alcohol sales, but also developing and implementing a plan that looks at a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and outreach. We are working with our human services and mental health organizations in the City and community groups in the area to help us develop such a plan and achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life for area residents, and in the business climate for area merchants.

It is our understanding that the CVS Pharmacy store at 3811 Mt. Vernon Avenue allows the sale of beer and wine until 12 a.m. daily. We are respectfully requesting that you institute a voluntary program to cease the off premise sale of alcoholic beverages at your store after 11 p.m. daily. We know that CVS places a great deal of importance on working with the community. Your mission is to strive to improve the quality of human life. As the largest pharmacy health care provider in the United States, we know you are aware of the debilitating impact that alcohol abuse can have on a community. We believe that this small step on your part can have significant impact on the welfare of the Arlandria community.

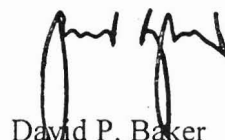
Please let us know if this request is feasible and, if so, when and under what conditions it can be implemented. We need to respond to the Alexandria City Council prior to their June 24 meeting. If you could let us know by June 17, it would be much appreciated.

We would be glad to follow up this letter with a meeting. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

Sincerely,



James K. Hartmann  
City Manager



David P. Baker  
Chief of Police

cc: Mr. Ramon Veliz, Store Manager, 3811 Mt. Vernon Ave.  
CVS Corporation, Corporate Headquarters, One CVS Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895  
Arlandria Center LLC, 4733 Bethesda Ave #650, C/O Finmarc Mgt Inc., Bethesda, MD  
20814





OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

301 King Street, Suite 3500  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3211

JAMES K. HARTMANN  
City Manager

(703) 838-4300  
Fax: (703) 838-6343

June 3, 2008

Mr. Shiekh M. Farooq, Owner  
7-11 Convenience Store  
1025 West Glebe Road  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305

Dear Mr. Farooq:

We are writing to request your help in addressing a serious issue in the Arlandria area of Alexandria, the area in which your 7-11 store at 1025 West Glebe Road is located.

The issue is late night alcohol sales. There are several establishments in the Arlandria area that sell alcoholic beverages for carry out. Some of these establishments allow sales until midnight daily. The evidence to date suggests that late-night alcohol sales in the Arlandria area are directly correlated with an unacceptable level of alcohol abuse and resulting disruptive conduct and/or criminal behavior. In addition, concerns expressed by the community about late night safety and security have led some residents to express a reluctance in patronizing all merchants in the area late at night.

To remedy these problems City Council has asked that there be a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area and that merchants, such as convenience stores, grocery stores and drugstores in Arlandria, that sell alcohol for take out voluntarily cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m.

Current efforts to address alcohol related crime have also included requesting businesses to hire off duty police or sheriff's deputies to be on site as a deterrent to illegal alcohol sales and other illegal activity. Some businesses have decided on their own to hire off duty police as an additional security measure. We believe that aggressive, targeted efforts in the Arlandria area will result in a decrease in alcohol related crime, will reduce public drunkenness, will enhance public safety and will improve the overall business environment in the area and make people feel safe and secure when patronizing businesses, such as yours, late at night.

We are asking that all businesses in the Arlandria area institute a voluntary program to cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m. daily. We believe that a comprehensive approach to the sale and availability of alcohol late at night will help reduce alcohol related crime in the area. Your store

Mr. Shiekh M. Farooq

June 3, 2008

Page 2

is an important part of the Arlandria community, where people from the neighborhood go to purchase alcohol late at night.

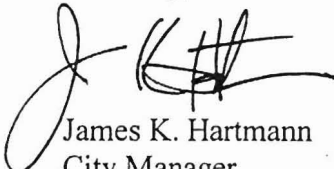
While we have seen an overall reduction in more serious crimes in the Arlandria area since 2006, the occurrence of nuisance crimes, such as drunkenness, has not declined. We believe a comprehensive approach to address alcohol abuse will include not only working with individual businesses such as yours on voluntary agreements to reduce hours of alcohol sales, but also developing and implementing a plan that looks at a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and outreach. We are working with our human services and mental health organizations in the City and community groups in the area to help us develop such a plan and achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life for area residents, and in the business climate for area merchants.

It is our understanding that the 7-11 at 1025 West Glebe Road allows the sale of beer and wine until 12 a.m. daily. We are respectfully requesting that you institute a voluntary program to cease the off premise sale of alcoholic beverages at your store after 11 p.m. daily. We know that 7-11 prides itself on being a good neighbor and corporate citizen and is proud of its long history of supporting neighborhoods in meaningful ways. We applaud your mission statement and its goal to "support causes that are aligned with community and customer interests and enhance the overall quality of life in neighborhoods where our customers, franchisees and employees live, work and play." We believe that this small step on your part can have significant impact on the welfare of the Arlandria community.

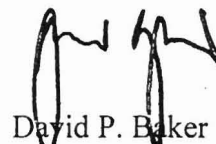
Please let us know if this request is feasible and, if so, when and under what conditions it can be implemented. We need to respond to the Alexandria City Council prior to their June 24 meeting. If you could let us know by June 17, it would be much appreciated.

We would be glad to follow up this letter with a meeting. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

Sincerely,



James K. Hartmann  
City Manager



David P. Baker  
Chief of Police

cc: 7-Eleven, Inc.  
Community Relations Department  
P.O. Box 711  
Dallas, TX 75221



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

301 King Street, Suite 3500  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3211

JAMES K. HARTMANN  
City Manager

(703) 838-4300  
Fax: (703) 838-6343

June 3, 2008

Ms. Eneye Yigzaw  
Owner, 7-11 Convenience Store  
3412 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305

Dear Mr. Yigzaw:

We are writing to request your help in addressing a serious issue in the Arlandria area of Alexandria, the area in which your 7-11 store at 3412 Mt. Vernon Avenue is located.

The issue is late night alcohol sales. There are several establishments in the Arlandria area that sell alcoholic beverages for carry out. Some of these establishments allow sales until midnight daily. The evidence to date suggests that late-night alcohol sales in the Arlandria area are directly correlated with an unacceptable level of alcohol abuse and resulting disruptive conduct and/or criminal behavior. In addition, concerns expressed by the community about late night safety and security have led some residents to express a reluctance in patronizing all merchants in the area late at night.

To remedy these problems City Council has asked that there be a comprehensive alcohol policy for the Arlandria area and that merchants, such as convenience stores, grocery stores and drugstores in Arlandria, that sell alcohol for take out, voluntarily cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m.

Current efforts to address alcohol related crime have also included requesting businesses to hire off duty police or sheriff's deputies to be on site as a deterrent to illegal alcohol sales and other illegal activity. Some businesses have decided on their own to hire off duty police as an additional security measure. We believe that aggressive, targeted efforts in the Arlandria area will result in a decrease in alcohol related crime, will reduce public drunkenness, will enhance public safety and will improve the overall business environment in the area and make people feel safe and secure when patronizing businesses, such as yours, late at night.

We are asking that all businesses in the Arlandria area institute a voluntary program to cease alcohol sales after 11 p.m. daily. We believe that a comprehensive approach to the sale and availability of alcohol late at night will help reduce alcohol related crime in the area. Your store

Ms. Eneye Yigzaw

June 3, 2008

Page 2

is an important part of the Arlandria community, where people from the neighborhood go to purchase alcohol late at night.

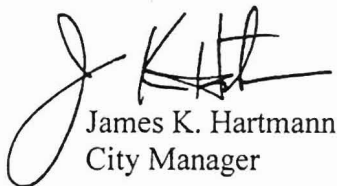
While we have seen an overall reduction in more serious crimes in the Arlandria area since 2006, the occurrence of nuisance crimes, such as drunkenness, has not declined. We believe a comprehensive approach to address alcohol abuse will include not only working with individual businesses such as yours on voluntary agreements to reduce hours of alcohol sales, but also developing and implementing a plan that looks at a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and outreach. We are working with our human services and mental health organizations in the City and community groups in the area to help us develop such a plan and achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life for area residents, and in the business climate for area merchants.

It is our understanding that the 7-11 at 3412 Mt. Vernon Avenue allows the sale of beer and wine until 12 a.m. daily. We are respectfully requesting that you institute a voluntary program to cease the off premise sale of alcoholic beverages at your store after 11 p.m. daily. We know that 7-11 prides itself on being a good neighbor and corporate citizen and is proud of its long history of supporting neighborhoods in meaningful ways. We applaud your mission statement and its goal to "support causes that are aligned with community and customer interests and enhance the overall quality of life in neighborhoods where our customers, franchisees and employees live, work and play." We believe that this small step on your part can have significant impact on the welfare of the Arlandria community.

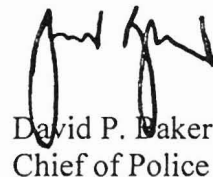
Please let us know if this request is feasible and, if so, when and under what conditions it can be implemented. We need to respond to the Alexandria City Council prior to their June 24 meeting. If you could let us know by June 17, it would be much appreciated.

We would be glad to follow up this letter with a meeting. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

Sincerely,



James K. Hartmann  
City Manager



David P. Baker  
Chief of Police

cc: 7-Eleven, Inc., Community Relations Department, P.O. Box 711, Dallas, Texas 75221  
Oshinsky Arlandria LP, 1499 Chain Bridge Rd #201, Winfield Group, Mclean, Virginia  
22101-5704

## TARGETED AREA PLAN FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION/INTERVENTION/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Issue:

The Alexandria City Council asked staff to develop a Comprehensive Alcohol Policy for the Arlandria community. The following is a draft framework of existing resources City agencies offer and may be able to extend to support treatment and preventive efforts for children, families and individuals who are victims, at-risk or current substance abusers. A further recommendation will be to take this draft plan into the Arlandria community and solicit input from the residents on what they think will work best and the best venues to create opportunities to access services.

### Background:

The substance abuse problems in Arlandria are highly complex. To effectively address them will require a thoughtful, well-researched, multi-system, multi-agency approach. Approaches must take into account the complex economic and cultural factors that affect this community's attitudes towards substance abuse and must be generated in collaboration with the community.

There is a significant amount of data and research on the problem of alcohol and other substance abuse in the Hispanic/Latino community, including evidence that Hispanics are less likely to have access to substance abuse treatment. In the development of programming to reduce substance abuse and its related problems in the Arlandria community, considerable research and planning will be required to identify the scope of the problem and barriers to treatment.

This summary is an initial draft of what staff from the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (MHMRSA) recommends as an effective strategy to address the substance abuse prevention and treatment needs of the Arlandria community.

The following critical factors must be addressed when planning how best to serve this population:

- Attitudes regarding alcohol use are culturally biased. New immigrants from the South and Central American cultures may not have the same standards regarding what constitutes problem drinking.
- Many from the Arlandria community have recently emigrated from countries where the types of social services offered in the United States do not exist. Many are unaccustomed to accepting this type of assistance.
- Some persons living in this community have limited formal education and may have limited literacy skills in their native language.
- Immigrants without legal status inaccurately fear their status will be investigated if they seek services.
- There is a strong link between alcohol, domestic violence and crime.
- While the abuse of alcohol is by far the largest substance abuse problem seen by MRMRSA workers, staff is beginning to see an increased use of cocaine in persons who live in Arlandria.



- Many Arlandria residents report dissatisfaction with current AA and NA programs in the community, finding them too confrontational.
- Substance abuse prevention and treatment services must be part of a larger, community-supported effort that includes the support of key community leaders, (Eddie Reyes, Ricardo Drummond, Tenants and Workers, business owners, etc.)

## **DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (MH/MR/SA) provides a wide range of prevention, early intervention and treatment programs that address the needs of youth at-risk and their families. Mental health and substance abuse treatment for youth and families is available in a variety of settings and can be accessed by calling intake services at 703-838-6400.

### **Prevention**

#### Current Services

MHMRSA currently provides a variety of substance abuse and mental health prevention services to youth in the Arlandria area. Services are delivered throughout the City, including at Cora Kelly, Minnie Howard, TC Williams, Mt. Vernon Recreation Center and at the Tenants and Workers United site. Prevention Therapists provide substance abuse screening, short term individual or group prevention counseling, education and referral services to youth/parents/school staff/other providers in response to community/school need. Staff also provides community presentations and informational displays on a variety of prevention and parenting topics.

Adult prevention services were provided by the Department in the past. However, funding for those positions was gradually cut over the years. Currently, no staff is funded to conduct community forums, educational classes, screenings, groups, and work collaboratively with other agencies, participate in community meetings, etc.

#### Prevention Program Design

A successful adult substance abuse prevention program in Arlandria would require at least one FTE to provide the following services:

- organize the Arlandria community around the problem (similar to the efforts of the youth-focused Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition);
- determine the extent and specifics of the problem;
- assess risk and protective factors specific to the Arlandria community;
- identify best practices in substance abuse prevention in Hispanic communities;
- engage community members and key City staff in strategic planning around the problem;
- develop culturally sensitive messaging;
- develop and market a speakers bureau on the topics of stigma reduction, access to treatment, risk factors, and laws related to alcohol and substance abuse;
- increase access to and develop community-based groups that bolster protective factors, e.g., communication skills, anger management, access to resources, acculturation, etc;
- identify problems that community members are experiencing and make referrals to treatment and other needed resources via active outreach in Arlandria.

## Treatment

### Current Services

Although MHMRSA currently provides substance treatment services at all of its main sites, the majority of the treatment services are provided at its Mill Road location. Services provided at Mill Road include a 24 hour Detox Unit, an outpatient substance abuse treatment program, and an Opioid Treatment Program. The Department also provides intensive substance abuse services to inmates in the Alexandria Detention Center, and residential treatment programs for persons with substance use problems. Staff has found that engaging Spanish-speaking persons in current programming at Mill Road has been challenging for a number of reasons.

- There is a lack of information regarding alcohol use in the Hispanic immigrant community; many people do not define alcohol abuse as a problem and are not aware that alcoholism is an addiction that can be treated.
- MHMRSA treatment staff report that almost 100% of the Hispanic/Latino persons receiving services are doing so at the direction of an outside mandated referral source (P&P, ACJS, etc). Almost no consumers come to treatment services voluntarily. This is highly related to the point above.
- Most of the people admitted to the Detox Unit as Jail Diversion cases are Spanish-speaking males; almost none of them stay beyond a few hours. Very few accept the treatment services offered. Staff report that this is often due to the fact that these persons need to return to work to support their families here, as well as their families in their countries of origin. In addition, the Detox Unit has just one staff person who speaks Spanish.
- The lack of legal documentation often prevents people from accessing services. People are afraid of what seeking services may do their immigration status.
- The location of the treatment services (Mill Road) presents a logistical challenge to many who lives in Arlandria; for many, the programs are simply too difficult to get to.
- There is a severe lack of Spanish speaking staff in MHMRSA treatment programs, making it very difficult to engage and treat Spanish-speaking persons in need of services. For example, of the 20 staff who work in the Detox program, only one speaks Spanish. Of the 17 staff who work in the outpatient substance abuse program, only 2 speak Spanish. It is extraordinarily difficult to recruit and retain Spanish-speaking treatment professionals, particularly given the City's current inability to offer stipends and other enticements.
- There is no capacity within the outpatient substance abuse treatment programs to treat additional consumers; staff is all carrying very full caseloads. Indeed, the two Spanish-speaking therapists each carry caseloads 20-30% higher than their English-speaking colleagues due to heavy demand.

### Treatment Program Design

Best practice research in the field of substance abuse is clear: a combination of individual and group counseling is the most effective treatment protocol. Additionally, support from self-help groups such as AA and NA is also part of an effective treatment program. The most effective outcomes are realized by programs that are intensive, structured, and designed to meet a person's individual needs.

Many persons in need of substance abuse treatment have a co-occurring diagnosis; that is, they are experiencing both substance abuse and mental health symptoms. In addition, most persons have

significant psychosocial problems (financial, housing, health, family, vocational, etc). Treatment services must be designed so that these issues can be addressed. That is to say, a program that is designed to treat substance abuse only will fail to effectively address the substance abuse problems in Arlandria.

A successful treatment program will:

- Work closely with police and the court system. Because our experience is that almost all Spanish-speaking persons enter substance abuse treatment at the direction of an outside source, we envision a heavy police/judicial component to a treatment program.
- Work closely with the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program.
- Be offered in the Arlandria community and at times that are reasonably convenient to the population (evenings, weekends, etc);
- Be intensive. Consumers would participate in at least 4 groups per week, plus one individual session per week, to begin. As the individual progresses through treatment, the intensity lessens.
- Include social service supports (case management staff to address housing, financial, family and other needs)
- Include a mental health treatment component
- Include a family treatment component
- Be staffed by bilingual therapists. Current rough estimate would be three FTEs who could treat approximately 70-80 persons at a time (600-700 annually).

#### Detox Capacity

Many persons in need of substance abuse treatment services enter the treatment system through the Detox Unit. As noted however, almost no Spanish-speaking persons remain in the Detox Unit beyond just a few hours. To change this pattern will require that the program itself change. More Spanish-speaking staff must be available, and Spanish language programming must be implemented.

Police staff report using a very high threshold for picking-up persons in Arlandria for public intoxication. Ideally, if they used a lower threshold and brought more persons to Detox, this would allow the program to develop a more robust Spanish-speaking population.

The Detox Unit is able and willing to take more consumers; however, changes to the facility's design must be made so that the space can be better utilized (architectural plans have been finalized to accomplish this; approval to move forward is pending). Current physical plant limitations would not allow the program to admit many more consumers than it currently admits. However, with some relatively minor changes, bed capacity in the program could expand.

In sum, prevention and treatment programming must:

- Be located within the community itself;
- Be organized and coordinated in collaboration with City departments and key leadership from the Arlandria community;
- Be designed to address the unique needs, barriers and experiences of the Hispanic/Latino cultures within the Arlandria community;
- Include active outreach efforts; and
- Include mental health and social service supports.

A total of four FTE's will be necessary to fully administer the proposed services in the Arlandria area.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**Community Engagement**

Steps to engage the Arlandria community/neighborhood in the development of efforts to address the issues of Alcohol/Drug usage and Family Violence include;

- Invite and meet with representatives of the Arlandria Community/neighborhood
- Discuss the notion of building a community coalition and explore their willingness to host a “Town Hall “ meeting to discuss the issues of alcohol/drug and family violence
- Listen to hear the concerns and ideas of the residents and other community stakeholders
- Determine the strengths of the Arlandria community/neighborhood
- Determine community perceptions on issues of alcohol/drug and family violence
- Identify the indigenous leadership in the Arlandria community/neighborhood
- Engage all community stakeholders and obtain “buy-in” for any proposed strategies
- Develop partnerships with residents, law enforcement and social services to determine specific services to be offered
- Recognize and understand that the Arlandria community/ neighborhood may have different perceptions/understandings of the issues of alcohol/drug and family violence in their neighborhood
- Build and nurture relationships with the Arlandria community/neighborhood leadership
- Follow through and deliver (no false promises)
- Recognize that differences among partners may occur at times
- Seek out other groups/entities in the Arlandria community/neighborhood, i.e., faith community, small business owners
- Recognize and utilize the strengths of the Arlandria community/neighborhood by working with existing resources; culturally specific alcohol/drug and family violence services, community organizations or cultural centers
- Determine where information is disseminated and who is listened to

## **Hispanic Orientation Education Program**

The purpose of the Hispanic Orientation Education Program is to assist Alexandria Hispanic residents integrate into the American mainstream through sensitive acculturation and self-sufficiency.

Services provided include:

- Basic English literacy classes
- Citizenship classes

In a cooperative effort with private and public agencies, orientation workshops are provided on a variety of life skills topics such as:

- HIV/AIDS prevention
- Cardiovascular disorders
- Domestic Violence
- Becoming an American citizen
- Crime prevention
- Employment

Ricardo Drumond, Program Coordinator, currently provides a basic English Literary class at the Tenants and Workers United (TWU) facility. The program can be expanded to incorporate the life skills orientation workshops into the ESL class held at TWU, Saturday mornings. The program can also expand the orientation workshops provided at the GW site. About 90 percent of the students, who attend the classes held at the George Washington Middle School, reside in the Arlandria community.

## **Drug Court**

Celebrating Families is a curriculum we are trying to implement for our families in drug court because it works with the entire family to address the substance abuse and other issues that impact families of addiction. It is a 16-week curriculum, designed to help families where one or both parents are involved with drugs and alcohol, and are at risk for things like domestic violence and certainly whose kids are at risk for abuse/neglect. The family drug court in Santa Clara, CA was the first to use it and it is designed for families involved in the drug court process, but could also be applied to families where addiction is an issue. Each session starts out with a family meal, followed by breakout sessions for the parents and children (based on age and developmental level), and then all come back together at the end to process. DHS can eventually open it up to other families in the community as a parenting and family resource, regardless of whether they are involved in drug court. DHS is seeking funding to cover the total cost of the program and all materials, \$3700. The website if you want more info is [www.celebratingfamilies.net](http://www.celebratingfamilies.net)

DHS staff have been talking with the Sheriff's Office regarding the possibility of starting an adult drug court here in Alexandria. Given the alcohol and other substance abuse problems in Arlandria, an adult drug court could certainly help the community as well as the offenders who clearly need treatment over incarceration. DHS staff are willing to provide technical assistance if the Sheriff's Office is interested in establishing an Adult Drug Court.

## **OFFICE ON WOMEN**



The Office on Women currently employs two full-time, grant-funded Hispanic Outreach/Prevention Specialists whose primary responsibilities are to provide crisis intervention, supportive counseling and advocacy services to Latino victims of sexual and domestic violence. Soffia Fraser works specifically with the Domestic Violence Program (DVP) and Lorena Escalante is with the Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program (SARA).

Both employees frequently do presentations for the community and Soffia sees clients at the Arlandria Neighborhood Health Clinic on a regular basis. We also participate in all neighborhood health and community fairs. Federico Gutierrez of Arlandria Mental Health and Family Services is supervising a 10-week women's group which Soffia and Lorena have helped plan and have facilitated several of the meetings.

The SARA Program has recently been awarded funding to implement a new Sexual Assault Prevention Education initiative in Alexandria. The primary target population is middle and high school age Latino youth, ages 10-17. The goal is to increase knowledge and change attitudes of middle and high school age youth regarding sexual violence by providing sexual violence prevention education presentations utilizing the Unequal Partners: Teaching about Power and Consent in Adult-Teen and Other Relationships curriculum. The goal of the program is for youth will understand the characteristics of healthy relationships, and avoid, change or end relationships that are unhealthy. Additionally, young people will avoid life-limiting problems, including unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The SARA Program is partnering with Community Lodgings, Inc. and the City's recreation centers. Groups are scheduled to begin in July.

Women's Support Group: Currently, there is a need for a weekly women's support group for Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence in the Arlandria neighborhood. We have the staffing resource at present to conduct a women's support group, however we need space. Usually up to 10 women participate in group.

Batterer's Intervention Services: There is also a need for batterer's intervention programs for Latino men. According to calendar year 2007 AJIS (court) statistics, in domestic violence cases where a warrant was issued, 29.79 percent of the defendants were Hispanic. From 1-1-08 to 5-31-08, the number increased slightly to 30.10 percent. There are currently no batterer's intervention services offered in the City, however, the Domestic Violence Intervention Project is working with a certified program run out of Richmond who may be able to provide services here in the City. It is our strong recommendation to expand services in Arlandria in Spanish and also provide counseling and intervention to batterers on a regular basis. Sexual and domestic violence prevention targeted specifically to Latino youth is also a need. The Office on Women could provide these services if additional staffing resources (1.0 FTE) are identified.

## **COURT SERVICES UNIT**

The Court Service Unit can team with other agencies for the purposes of the substance abuse plan by providing substance abuse services for juveniles charged with offenses, supervision and services for Children in Need of Supervision (i.e. runaway, truancy, acting out in other ways), protective orders connected to domestic violence matters, prevention and intervention services for those at-risk or gang

involved, and mentoring consultation on a case by case basis. CSU also has a community-based probation officer in the Arlandria community.

If more resources, funding and staff were available, CSU could provide more crime and substance abuse prevention in the community, more gang prevention/intervention direct services (Gang Intervention Prevention Education program experiencing funding), and more mentoring services (staff needed to expand Alexandria Mentoring Partnership). The Space of Her Own prevention program also serves youth from the Arlandria community.

### **ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

The Alexandria Health Department serves the Arlandria community through various medical and health programs. The prenatal program at Casey Clinic provides prenatal care which includes nutritional and health education and depression screening and referral as indicated to both the CSB and ANSHI's Mental Health and Family Support Services located at 3802 Executive Dr. where we also provide WIC services 3 days a week.

The Adolescent Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs (ATPPP) currently provides programming to youth and their families in three centers in the Arlandria area. Programs for youth are located at Community Lodgings, Bruce St. Apartment complex and at the Tenants and Workers United where with financial support from the grant they have incorporated health curriculum to include substance abuse prevention in their program which serves 45 youth. The programs focus on developing life skills, values, negotiating decision making skills to delay early sexual intercourse, make healthy decisions and incorporate substance abuse prevention woven into the curriculums. This year the Department has also sent health newsletters to the parents of enrolled children 2 of which have focused on alcohol and substance abuse prevention and how to talk to your children about these issues. In the summer, children served by the Department participate with the Community Services Board in the K.A.T. Camp.

### **OFFICE OF HOUSING**

The Office of Housing maintains contact information for rental property owners and managers that can be used to establish contact for the purpose of eliciting perceptions of residents' needs with regard to alcohol-related services, and also to solicit cooperation in making appropriate referrals. The Office of Housing staff will also work with the Department of Human Services to set up community meetings.