



Park & Recreation Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

April 18, 2024

Mr. James Parajon
City Manager
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Waterfront Small Area Plan Implementation

Dear Jim,

The Commission received an update on the Alexandria Waterfront Implementation Plan in March. Given that the proposals to improve our stormwater management and address flooding in Old Town has changed significantly since the letter we sent to City Council nearly two years ago (June 16, 2022), wanted to memorialize and share our current feedback with you.

The waterfront is one of Alexandria's most prominent and important gathering places for residents and tourists alike. As we said in 2022, the economic and social costs caused frequent and severe flooding requires aggressive action.

In general, the Commission supports the plan as recently presented. We were disappointed at the elimination of the passive, underground stormwater storage which we supported in our previous letter. However, we support moving forward and recognize that changes may still be made as the process moves forward. A few points to consider:


1. **This project is urgent.** We commend the City and its team for their continued efforts to move this project forward within the budget available and we recognize that, given its scope, the project cannot all be accomplished with the current CIP allocation. However, any delays in the project will increase the both scope of the problems and the total costs, therefore we believe the current design build strategy that is being proposed will result in doing *something* to start improving the flooding which is desperately needed.
2. **The City should plan for and prioritize park improvements in Waterfront Park.** We would like to see an analysis of the costs of the long-awaited park improvements to Waterfront Park as envisioned in the Waterfront Small Area Plan. The update we received indicated that these improvements had to be removed due to budgetary constraints and that there was currently no


pathway to complete this work, which would leave the Park in a permanent interim stage. While we agree to prioritize flood mitigation efforts, these should be coupled with a plan to complete already approved Park improvements. The funds allocated to this project are to facilitate implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan, and while we agree to prioritize flood mitigation efforts, these should be coupled with a plan to complete the needed Park improvements.

3. **We encourage the bathrooms to be added to the Waterfront Park pumping station.** We understand efforts are already underway to include these facilities in current the project – amenities very much needed on the Waterfront - and support the efforts to add them in the initial phase of this project as opposed to in a subsequent phase.
4. **We are concerned about the size, scope, scale, design and potential noise of the singular pump station in waterfront park.** We understand that the plans are far from final but urge the City to carefully consider the plans and look to minimize the size of the above ground portion of the planned facility. As currently envisioned, the project will eliminate approximately 4,600 square feet of park space with a 30-foot-tall building. We hope that after this project is completed, the remaining space will continue to be space for the public to use and enjoy.

Please reach out to us if you would like to discuss any of these points. We also invite you to join us at a upcoming Commission meeting sometime in 2024.

Sincerely,


[Dana Colarulli \(Apr 18, 2024 15:01 EDT\)](#)
Dana Robert Colarulli, Acting Chair
Park & Recreation Commission


[Stuart Fox \(Apr 19, 2024 09:14 GMT+12\)](#)
Stuart Fox, Member
Park & Recreation Commission

cc: Honorable Mayor & Members of the Alexandria City Council
Park & Recreation Commission members
Waterfront Commission members
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
Jack Browand, Deputy Director, Staff Liaison to the Parks & Recreation Commission
Terry Suehr, Director, Department of Project Implementation
Matthew Landes, Portfolio Manager, Department of Project Implementation