

Dear Old Town Civic Association Member:

As you are probably aware, the City plans to take about a year, commencing in March, to plan for a "World Class Waterfront". Our OTCA Waterfront Planning Committee has put together a very comprehensive waterfront survey. Most likely it is the most important survey you will ever fill out regarding how our waterfront should look in the future. Please take the time to answer the questions and return to us at your earliest convenience prior to 9 February.

Many Thanks.

**OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
Waterfront Planning Committee  
Member Questionnaire**

Alexandria city officials will begin a waterfront planning process in February, therefore, the OTCA board of directors decided to begin a parallel study. A newly formed OTCA Waterfront Planning Committee held its first meeting to brainstorm and discuss salient issues and also define the committee's process. It was readily agreed that OTCA members' opinions are vital to the integrity of OTCA's final waterfront plan. To that end, attached is a questionnaire, and you are encouraged to weigh in now and make your preferences known. The committee agrees on some items, which are covered below; however, no plan has been predetermined and everything is on the table. Please respond by Friday, February 9, 2007; this survey can either be mailed to the OTCA post office box or emailed.

**OTCA COMMITTEE INITIAL DETERMINATIONS**

While the committee determined there are many elements of concern, we included the most essential issues in this questionnaire. Therefore, please feel free to make comments on any concern at the end, if you like.

- ? For planning purposes, the committee decided that the area under OTCA study begins at the north end of Alexandria, but for obvious reasons does not include the Mirant Plant, and ends at the bike path that separates Fords Landing and Jones Point Park. This does include all property east of Union Street and east of Fairfax Street on the northern end of Old Town, as well as the portion of Windmill Hill Park that is west of Union Street.
- ? Additional safety patrols, garbage pickup and frequent shoreline trash removal, as required, to keep the improved waterfront areas clean, safe and inviting.
- ? The City needs to prepare a comprehensive Old Town pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle study to ensure the new plan does not cause additional traffic or safety problems.
- ? Any final waterfront plan could be affected by federal government approvals of Potomac River waterfront uses, and also the findings of the City's flood-control task force. OTCA will be mindful when these issues emerge and will adjust OTCA's plan in accordance with any requirements.
- ? Request City undertake parking plan east of Fairfax Street to ensure there will be sufficient parking for residents and additional tourists without affecting residents' current parking.

- ? City funding for waterfront signage so visitors are instantly aware of historic buildings, walkways and significant sights, such as gardens and other natural resources.
- ? The OTCA committee does not envision major changes to Oronoco Bay Park or Founders Park at this time. A Windmill Hill Park Plan (new bulk heading for river's edge and other park improvements) is in play, and OTCA is actively promoting its realization.

### **OTCA WATERFRONT PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Several years ago City Council voted to dedicate one cent (now reduced to one percent of tax revenue) of the annual property tax to buy open space citywide. An open space study identified desirable waterfront properties for purchase. Do you think City Council should enact a legal requirement that open space purchased with this money cannot then be resold to developers?
  - Yes
  - No
  - No Opinion
  
2. Another option the committee discussed was the adaptive reuse of “appropriate” existing buildings in the planning area. These buildings will be identified by OTCA’s waterfront committee for restoration and remodeling as required for new uses. Do you support this option?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Would prefer \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. An item under consideration is the importance of public access to the waterfront, which includes being able to see the waterfront from all possible locations. How important is this to you?
  - Very important
  - Somewhat important
  - Not at all important
  
4. Do you favor the City using eminent domain to gain control of existing properties and buildings on the waterfront that it cannot otherwise purchase?
  - Yes
  - No
  - If yes, which properties? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Since Alexandria’s waterfront lies in the heart of its distinguished historic district that is known worldwide, it is highly desirable for development and redevelopment. This means it is susceptible to any type of development that is economically feasible. On the other hand, placing certain restrictions to make the development fit into the fabric of the

community essentially lowers the amount and level of development allowed. Given these possibilities, should we try to

- Get as much development as possible
- Compromise, being flexible
- Adhere to a strict policy that ensures new developments be similar to and compatible with existing historic buildings and the area's scale
- Prefer \_\_\_\_\_

6. Committee members concur on need for adequate parking in Old Town. Which of the following do you support?

- Retain existing surface parking lots on waterfront (Old Dominion Boat Club, across The Strand from Chadwick's and small lot on South Union between Duke and Prince Streets)
- Add additional surface parking lots
- Remove all surface parking lots and find alternative sites
- Add underground parking, where possible
- No new parking lots or garages
- Other options that should be considered \_\_\_\_\_

7. Committee members discussed a vision of an improved waterfront with no new buildings. How do you feel about this?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Would prefer \_\_\_\_\_

8. Committee members talked about a height limit of not more than 35 feet mid-roofline in the defined waterfront area, excluding existing buildings. Do you agree with this limit?

- Yes
- No
- If no, what limit is preferred, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Following is a list of items brainstormed by the OTCA committee. Please check those you support. At the end, please add any additional items you would like.

- Larger art and cultural presence with the Torpedo Factory remaining the crown jewel
- Small beach area (if technically feasible); or at least a quiet, passive haven on the southern end for reading, picnicking, sunning, etc.
- Marine museum and historic interpretation
- Natural gardens that encourage and protect wildlife
- Visitors center and museum
- As much green grass and soft vista as possible
- Tasteful streetscape design, including outdoors furniture and public art
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

10. When choices (*e.g.*, parking requirements) have to be made among residents' businesses' and visitors' needs and wants, which should take precedence?
- Alexandria residents
  - Businesses
  - Tourists
  - None should take precedence
11. A popular land-use model is mixed-use zoning, and it is noted that some of Alexandria's waterfront parcels are already in this category. Assuming you support this model, which of the following appeals to you?
- Retail (restaurants, small shops) with residential on upper floors
  - Small European-style hotel with attendant restaurants and shops
  - Small office building with residential floors
  - Don't support mixed use; prefer \_\_\_\_\_
12. Currently the City docks accommodate both commercial and private boats. What other public uses of the waterfront would you support?
- Small marina with sailboats and kayaks for rent
  - Water taxis
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
13. The committee is researching the impact on the waterfront area for festivals and rentals to private parties for receptions and other events. There appears to be committee support to deny private rentals and to limit large-scale events that seriously strain the area with traffic. Do you support cutting back on these events?
- Yes
  - No
  - If No, what amount of activity appeals to you? \_\_\_\_\_
  - If No, what kinds of activities appeal to you? \_\_\_\_\_
14. The OTCA committee talked about having as much open vista from one end of the waterfront to the other as possible. When new properties become available, the committee proposes dedicating the first 75 to 100 feet from the water's edge for open space and walkways. Do you support this goal?
- Yes
  - No
  - If No, why not? \_\_\_\_\_
  - My preferred distance is \_\_\_\_\_ feet

15. The following are additional items the committee would also like you to consider. Please check those you support.

- The final plan should not be driven by the City's desire to maximize tax revenues or to primarily benefit commercial interests
- All food and beverage deliveries should be made during the night
- The final plan design should be refined and in keeping with good taste; uncluttered and unfettered as much as possible
- TE&S to change Old Town's garbage pickup back to Thursdays
- No additional motorcycles or large buses (small jitneys may be a traffic solution)
- No outdoors smoking allowed
- Public drinking fountains
- Picnic tables
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

The final word is yours. Please use the remaining space to write about some of your goals and ideas for the waterfront that are not covered by the topics above.

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Thank you for taking the time to fill this out—we need our members' input to add validity to this planning process. Once we collate your ideas with others', the committee will prepare a draft plan and brief you on it at an OTCA membership meeting for final input. All responses are due no later than Friday, February 9, 2007. Please email or mail hard copy back to OTCA, P.O. Box 21333, Alexandria, VA 22320-2333.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this important process, please do not hesitate to call me at 703-299-9215. Please leave message, as required. Thank you.

Linda Couture  
OTCA Waterfront Planning Committee Chair