

To the Mayor and City Council:

I am writing to urge a **pause** before the City Council considers the City's proposal to build a massive pumping station in Waterfront Park.

As a ten-year resident of Alexandria, I am appalled at the proposed destruction of a key element in the City's special quality of life. More importantly, as a professional urban economist, I am shocked by the **inadequate analyses** of alternatives to the in-park location presented to the City Council in January 2025 and continuing to be presented in public outreach.

The City's project lead, Mr. Matt Landes, has publicly stated that, in deciding to recommend siting the pump station in the park, his team was authorized to analyze **only construction and acquisition costs** for the park site and its alternatives, and that he has no intention of providing any broader analyses unless directed to do so.

To reach an informed decision, the Council needs a **comprehensive** comparison of not just costs but also the **value to the City** of locational alternatives. Currently, the City's analysis places a **value of zero** on the park's benefits to the City including: **recreation, tourist attraction**, protection of **scenic river views, preservation of the Old and Historic District** and **historic buildings**, sustaining **wildlife**, and mitigation of **public health effects** of heat and noise. State-of-the-art techniques can establish a dollar value for each of these elements so that they can be included in a balanced analysis.

The analysis presented to the Council in January also fails to include possible **cost-reducing private financing** for alternatives outside the park, especially a potential public private partnership for the One Prince Street site. It also fails to account for increases or decreases in **revenue-generating commercial space**, disruptions or displacement of **local small businesses**, increased or reduced **costs for city services**, and increases or decreases in **City tax revenues**.

My back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that these omissions misrepresent the true benefits and costs of alternatives to the Waterfront Park by **substantially more than \$10 million every year in the future** (not just during construction, when the currently-ignored costs would be very much higher). These omissions systematically "**load the dice**" against any site other than in the park.

The Council needs accurate, comprehensive information before making a major, irreversible decision. Certainly the people and taxpayers of Alexandria deserve such information before the Council acts. I therefore urge the Council to **postpone** consideration of the proposal to place the pumping station in the park and instead instruct City staff to prepare a **correct, comprehensive valuation** of alternatives.

I have **volunteered** to Mr. Landes to advise the City on how to prepare the needed analysis, but to date I have received no response.

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