



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

31 July 2013

Rashad Young, City Manager
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Mr. Young,

The National Park Service, Cultural Resource GIS Facility (CRGIS) would like to express our continued support of the ongoing city of Alexandria, VA project exploring the use of GIS and mobile technology to foster the cooperation of Federal, State and local governments to improve their ability to incorporate cultural resources into planning efforts. Designated through OMB Circular A-16 as the lead Federal agency for the cultural resource spatial data theme nationwide, CRGIS has been leading efforts through the Federal Geographic Data Committee to create and foster data exchange standards that would allow Federal, State, Tribal and local governments to share critically important cultural resource data since 2002. As part of this effort, the National Park Service has adopted its own cultural resource spatial data transfer standards to assist NPS data exchange, as well as exchange of data between the NPS, States, Tribes and local governments particularly related to managing cultural resources as part of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Alexandria project is taking advantage of new mobile GIS technologies to leverage volunteer support to survey some of the most architecturally significant historic districts in the country, cataloguing important condition and integrity information never before collected and desperately need to improve the overall planning process in the City of Alexandria. This digital collection of descriptive information, coupled with photographs and the power of GIS will provide a powerful tool to analyze and fully integrate cultural resources in the planning process, providing better protection for the resources themselves and giving the City enhanced tools to manage their Nationally and locally significant historic districts more efficiently.

Using the NPS cultural resource spatial data transfer standards in the GIS data creation process in this project allows the City to share information regarding resources contributing to historic districts in the City with the NPS National Register of Historic Places as well as the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Sharing data among all of these agencies will provide expanded public access to the information, potentially assist in emergency management, enhance the ability of the NPS to administer grants and tax credits to resources in the historic districts as well as provide the City with new planning tools.

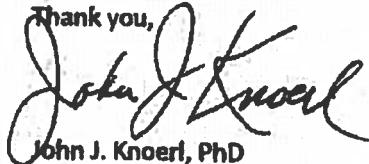
The flexibility of the project and the applications developed to accommodate and customize survey and data collection techniques through GIS mobile technologies serves as a promising example for other local governments, States and Tribes coping with the same challenges as the City of Alexandria as they work to meet similar goals or expand more fully into disaster preparedness. The impact of Hurricane Sandy and other recent incidents demonstrates the need to incorporate cultural resource data quickly

into any disaster response and the critical importance of sharing this data with other responding State and Federal agencies immediately.

Generating the adaptable methodology and tools to carry out these strategies will provide detailed data to the National Register and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, greatly expanding the capabilities of National and State programs to provide information to the public and better manage these unique resources. Other States and jurisdictions already understand the utility of the Alexandria project and want to emulate it for their own use, indicating the definite need for such tools to be made commonplace in the historic preservation planning community. The City of Alexandria project will be a model of efficient data exchange between local, State and Federal agencies leading to improved understanding and stewardship of our resources.

The Cultural Resource GIS Facility looks forward to continuing to participate with the City of Alexandria and the State of Virginia in this ground-breaking project, and in exploring how these technologies can be further applied in coordination with the existing NPS cultural resource spatial data transfer standards.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John J. Knoeri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Knoeri" clearly legible.

John J. Knoeri, PhD

Program Manager, Cultural Resource GIS Facility
National Park Service



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

H36(2256)

July 31, 2013

Mr. Rashad Young
City Manager
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Young:

The National Park Service, Certified Local Government Program, would like to express our continued support for the Survey Alexandria project being undertaken by the Department of Planning & Zoning. As a candidate for the City Manager's Innovation Fund, we feel this project supports the goals of working in partnership with other organizations and providing benefit beyond the City.

The National Park Service (NPS) is proud to be a partner with the City of Alexandria in several ways. First, Alexandria is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and has been since 1994. This means your community has been certified by the NPS and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office as having made a commitment to historic preservation. This partnership provides funding and technical support to your community. It is that funding, in the form of a CLG grant, that is funding phase one of this survey project. In addition, the NPS has provided technical support from our Cultural Resource GIS Facility (CRGIS) and the CLG program.

It is the plan that this survey application will be built in such a way it may be used by municipalities all over the country to survey and document their existing cultural resources. Many CLGs have no baseline survey like Alexandria to build on, so this would be a place for them to start, in a user friendly application that can be used by volunteers and not limited to professional historians. It is also a wonderful way to engage the public in their historic resources and help them understand what makes their community special.

Because this application is being designed by a preservation focused community and ESRI, this will enable it to be used more universally. We have hope that community surveys can assist in disaster preparedness, and later phases could include a post disaster survey element for the application. This would enable multi-user documentation by teams post disaster, and help speed response of Federal agencies and resources to home and business owners.

Finally, because of the partnership with the NPS, this data is being gathered in a common set of data standards that satisfy both Federal and State needs as well as those of Alexandria. This sharing of data is so important in our rapidly advancing information age. We are excited that Alexandria made this step to work with NPS standards, and is the first community in the country to voluntarily pursue this.

We hope you will consider Survey Alexandria for the City Manager's Innovation Fund, and continue to support the work of the Department of Planning & Zoning as they work with us to create a product that can be made readily available to every community in the country, at a price they can afford! Your staff has not only been excellent to work with, but we praise them for thinking outside of the box and to the future preservation of Alexandria's wonderful unique resources.

We appreciate the work that your community is doing for the identification, evaluation, and protection of our historic resources in the City of Alexandria and look forward to our continued partnership on this project and others. If you have any questions about this letter or the project, please feel free to call me at 202-354-2062 or email at megan_brown@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Megan J. Brown".

Megan J. Brown
Certified Local Government National Program Coordinator

cc: Michele Oaks, City of Alexandria (via email)