



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

301 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

December 31, 2019

Re: City Marina Water Taxi Operations Recommendations

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council:

At its November 19, 2019 meeting, the Alexandria Waterfront Commission received an update from city staff on the evaluation and staff recommendations on the Water Taxi. The Commission had several questions and provided comments on the Water Taxi commuter pilot. In response to the closing of the metro as part of the Platform Improvement Project (PIP), the City Manager temporarily waived section 9(a) of the lease for Spirit Cruises, which restricts PRC operations before 9:30am. By waiving the provision, the City Manager allowed the water taxi to enter the commuter market as part of the PIP mitigation efforts.

The Commission is mindful of the concern of residents and the city regarding the parking impact on the waterfront area should water taxi service be allowed. However, city staff's analysis of water taxi commuters showed minimal parking impacts. Specifically, staff found that 85 percent of commuters surveyed said they either walked or biked to the water taxi, and 90 percent of these commuters were former Metrorail riders. Staff noted these former Metrorail riders did not stop riding Metrorail altogether, but simply boarded Metrorail at L'Enfant Plaza, which is a short shuttle bus ride away from the District's Wharf.

The Waterfront Commission was nearly unanimous in its desire to permit the Potomac Riverboat Company to continue early morning commuting hours. The Commission therefore endorses the following two recommendations, (1) that City Council approve a lease modification to amend section 9(a) of the lease and permit water taxi operations as early as 6:30 a.m.; and (2) that staff continue to pursue a water taxi user reimbursement program, subject to Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation approval.

Sincerely,

Stephen Thayer

Chair, Alexandria Waterfront Commission

cc: Alexandria Waterfront Commission
James Spengler, Director, RPCA
Yon Lambert, Director, T&ES
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Liaison to the Waterfront Commission