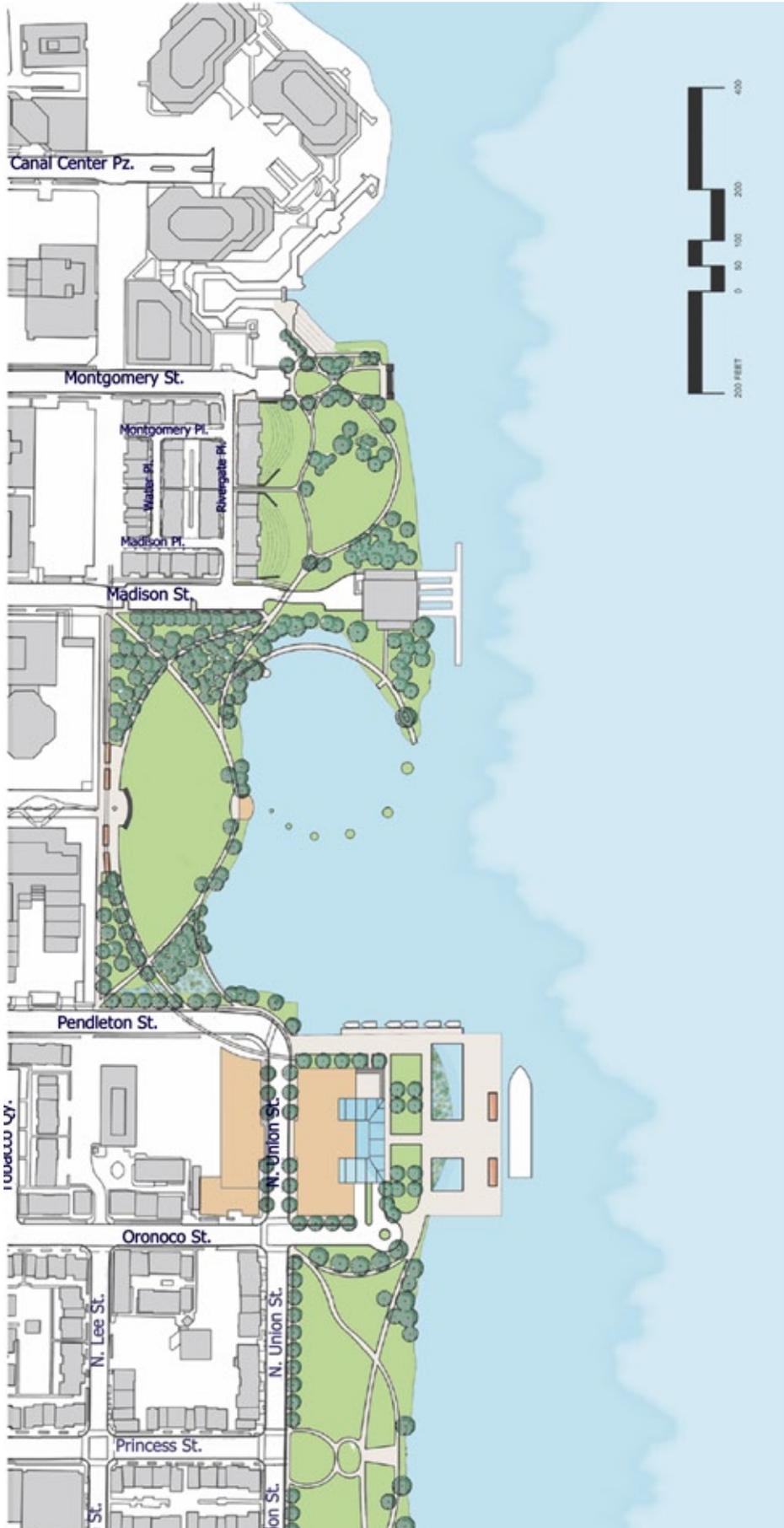




Alexandria Waterfront Small Area Plan Executive Summary

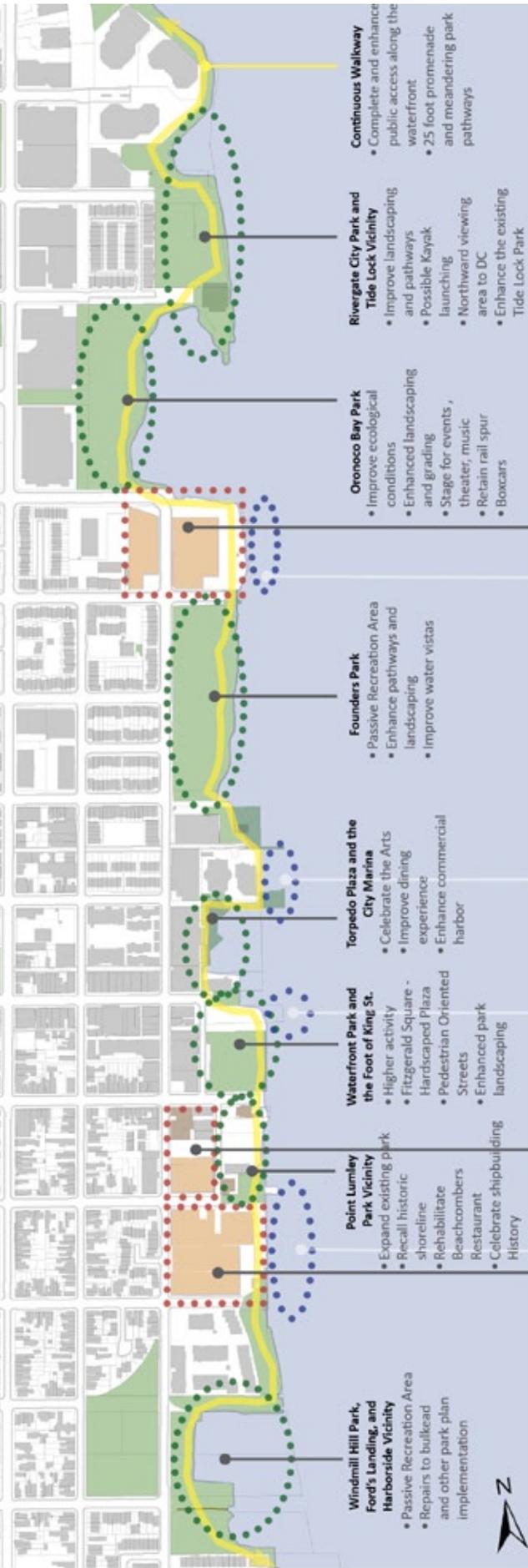


City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
July 2011 Draft





Alexandria Waterfront Plan: Key Sites and Recommendations



Robinson Terminal South Redevelopment

- 50 foot height limit
- Mixed use with emphasis on Hotel and active ground floor uses
- Must maintain access along water's edge
- Subject to BAR approval and Development SUP Process

Robinson Terminal South Private Marina

- Potential location for private marina
- 100+ slips to be commercially viable

Cummings-Turner Redevelopment

- 50 foot height limit
- Mixed use with emphasis on Hotel and active ground floor uses
- Subject to BAR approval and Development SUP Process

King Street Pier

- Public pier set just south of King Street
- Docking for a historic ship or ship of character
- Water taxi embarkation point

Robinson Terminal North Redevelopment

- Heights range from 45 ft. east of Union to 66 ft. west of Union
- Mixed use with emphasis on Hotel and active ground floor uses
- Must maintain access along water's edge
- Subject and Development SUP Process

Robinson Terminal North Pier

- Public Pier/Plaza over water
- Improved as part of Robinson Terminal redevelopment
- Maintain deep water birth for ships

Cameron Street Wharf

- Commercial harbor expansion area
- Docking for existing vessels and potential future vessels
- Improved access around Chart House Restaurant



Executive Summary

Alexandria's waterfront is special.

Alexandria's waterfront is special because of its unique and significant role in the nation's history and because it is a world renowned example of the revitalizing role of art in the community. The waterfront is a source of prosperity, hometown pride and national significance. It is Alexandria's front door; it is where the City was born; it is where we often go to celebrate; and it is where we take our guests from out of town. The waterfront is where we live; it is where we make a living; and it is where we go daily to walk, relax, meet neighbors, and see what's happening.

Weaving art and history into every aspect of the Waterfront

The City is the beneficiary of exceptional efforts by two groups of hardworking Alexandrians that resulted in the Alexandria History Plan – Alexandria, a Living History (History Plan), prepared by the Waterfront History Committee of the Alexandria Archaeology Commission, and the Alexandria Waterfront Art Plan (Art Plan), prepared by the Public Art Committee of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. These efforts recognize the important contributions of history and art to Alexandria, especially at the waterfront. The Waterfront Small Area Plan (Plan) is an opportunity to add back history that's been missing from the waterfront for too long. Moreover, the Art Walk concept is ideally suited to link the series of public spaces that comprise the waterfront, and public art has a limitless potential to interpret the stories, people and places of our past.

Based on recommendations in the History Plan and the Art Plan, six Art and Culture Theme Areas are utilized as guiding elements for each of the character areas of the Plan. The Art and Culture Theme Areas, like the Plan's character areas, are linked by the proposed Art Walk designed to help unify them and other elements of the waterfront together. These Art and Culture Theme Areas are reflected in Figure 1. As one moves from one Art and Culture Theme Area to another, one will be introduced to the rich history of that given area through interpretation, art, architecture, activities and more. Additionally, a History Center in the vicinity of the 200 block of The Strand is proposed. There, one would be able to learn not only about the waterfront's maritime history but also about other cultural resources, along the waterfront, and throughout the City. The History Center would be the history counterpart to the Torpedo Arts Center a few blocks north. This Plan not only incorporates these concepts and ideals contained in the History Plan and Art Plan but it also includes each plan in its entirety as Appendices 5 and 6, respectively.

Planning Area Boundaries

- ◆ The waterfront planning area is approximately 3 miles long and extends between the Potomac River on the east, North Fairfax Street and South Union Street on the west, Daingerfield Island on the north and Jones Point Park on the south.

Planning Process

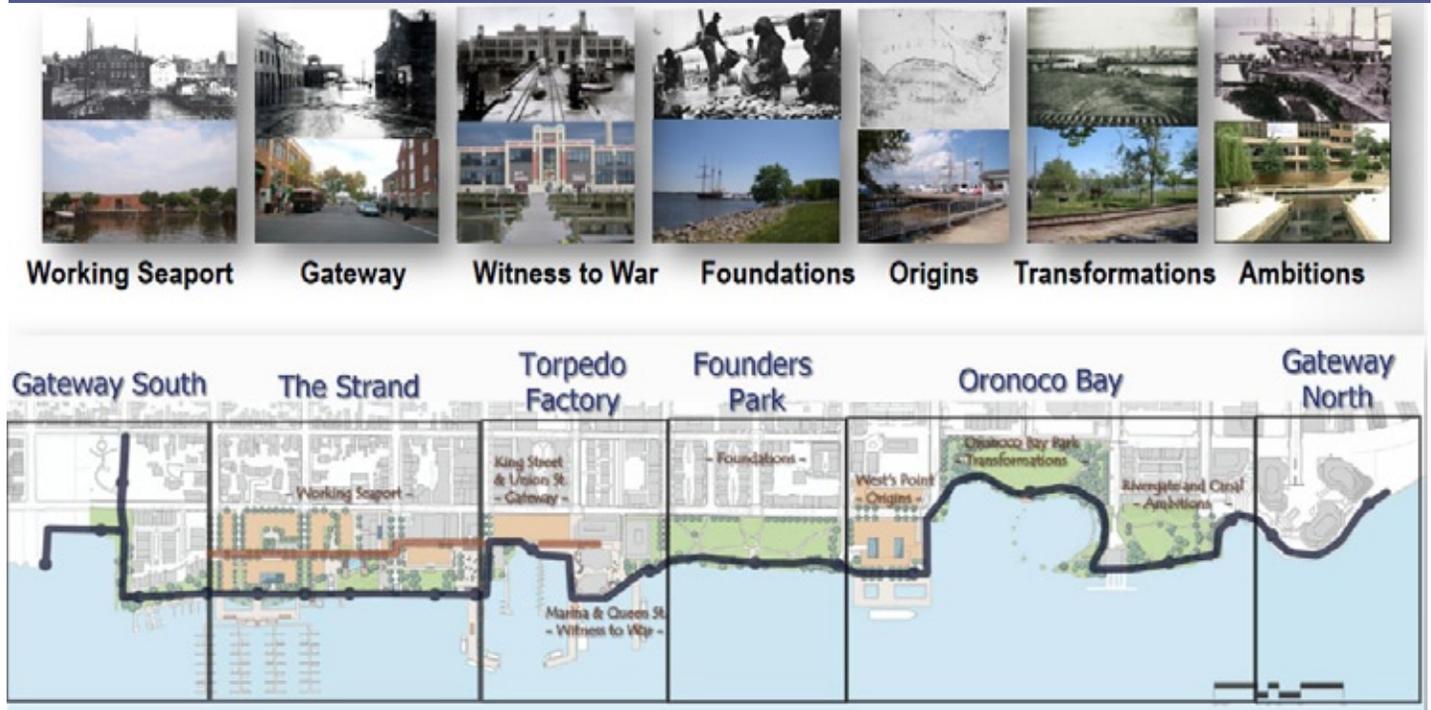
- ◆ Community Participation Process: community and group meetings, charettes, topical meetings, website, video, comment board and more - April 2009 to present
- ◆ Concept Plan Released – June 2010
- ◆ Draft Small Area Plan Released – February 2011
- ◆ Planning Commission Public Meetings and Approval – April/May 2011
- ◆ City Council Public Meeting – May 2011
- ◆ City Council Work Session – June 11, 2011

Website Address and Key

Content: www.alexandriava.gov/Waterfront

- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Draft Small Area Plan
- ◆ Concept Plan
- ◆ Materials from Public Meetings (April 2009 to Present)
- ◆ Public Comment Board

Figure 1: Arts and Culture: Theme Areas



A Strand that is lively, fun and uniquely Alexandrian

Throughout the planning process, Alexandrians asked for more “things to do” on the waterfront and they identified The Strand, from King Street to Robinson Terminal South, as the place for activities. That makes historic sense – Alexandria once was a working waterfront, bustling with activity, and the Plan returns some of that level of activity to The Strand.

At the hub of the waterfront is a new public space connecting King Street to the Potomac River, and The Strand to the Torpedo Factory, Chart House and beyond. Dubbed “Fitzgerald Square,” the new plaza will be almost the size of Market Square. When amassed with Waterfront Park, the combined public space will total 2.3 acres (100,000 sq. ft.), or approximately 64% larger than the existing 1.4 acre Waterfront Park. In the summer there will be food carts, tables and chairs, fountains, and other activities; in the winter there is plenty of room for an ice skating rink.

With Fitzgerald Square, Waterfront Park and a new, expanded Point Lumley Park, The Strand will comprise three distinct outdoor “rooms,” each with its own character. Waterfront Park will continue to include a broad lawn shaded by mature willow oaks. The restored Beachcomber’s Restaurant activates the park to the south and creates two doorways – one along the Potomac River – to a new Point Lumley Park, created out of the existing surface parking lot. In the new park, there are multiple opportunities for fun and culture with strong themes of history (especially shipbuilding and maritime history) and public art.

Among the first requests from Alexandrians participating in the Plan: more options for outdoor, waterfront dining. The Plan identifies the few places where this request can be addressed and actually enhance the public spaces nearby.

At the heart of the Waterfront, a new gateway to the City

During its earliest days and for long afterward, Alexandria recognized its waterfront as the front door to the City. Pictures of the ferry terminal that was once located at the foot of King Street remind us that for many visitors and residents, this location was the gateway to the City. As waterfront uses became more industrial, the daily life of Alexandrians moved away from the water's edge and new waterfront buildings often faced away rather than toward the river.

Early in the public process for this Plan, Alexandrians expressed a strong wish to see the foot of King Street once again become a gateway to the City. The hundred or so participants in an early public meeting identified "extending King Street as a pier" as a highly desired element of the Plan and so it was included in the Waterfront Concept Plan released in the summer of 2010. With the advice of residents, the pier concept has been refined and would provide:

- ◆ a dramatically improved arrival experience, with water taxis delivering new visitors and returning residents to a pier with "natural" wayfinding: a clear view of the entire waterfront core area and of King Street to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial as well as easy access to the King Street Trolley;
- ◆ a docking location for a historic ship or other "ship of character" as requested by residents to be visible as one walks down King Street toward the Potomac River;
- ◆ a connection to Alexandria's past, since long piers characterized Alexandria's waterfront for more than 100 years;
- ◆ a way to let people do what they really wish when they come to a river: get out over the water and enjoy the view; and
- ◆ a clear marker that this spot, where one of America's great streets meets one of America's great rivers, is the "center" of the waterfront.

More and better public spaces of all kinds

The essence of Alexandria's waterfront is public space and the Plan not only increases the amount of space for the public, it also adds to the variety of public spaces. The redesign of Waterfront Park, combined with the new Fitzgerald Square, adds 40,000 square feet (approximately an acre) of park at the heart of the waterfront. Overall the Plan adds nearly six acres, or 250,000 square feet, of new public spaces of all kinds, including new public piers, streets that are converted to pedestrian-oriented spaces, and more. Over 5 acres of public space will be located between Thompsons Alley and Wilkes Street (Table 1).

The Plan completes the long-standing goal of "where land meets water, the public is welcome" by planning for continuous access and accessibility along the river. The Plan calls for continued investment in our existing parks, inspired by art, history, and the environment, and adding small scale active recreation in many locations along the waterfront.

Table 1: Public Space Summary

Total Current Public Space	2.3 Acres
Plan Implemented Public Space	1.8 Acres
Other New Public Spcae	1.2 Acres
Public Space from Private Redevelopment	2.5 Acres
Total Net Gain	5.5 Acres
Total Public Space	7.8 Acres

Table 2: Private Redevelopment Sites: Density and Height Analysis

Private Development Sites	Settlement (1983)				Current Zoning (1992)			Proposed (2011 Plan)			Change	
	Site	Land Area	Existing Development	Development	FAR	Max Height	Development	FAR	Max Height	Development		FAR
Robinson Terminal North	141,181	91,814	238,816	1.69	30/45/66	195,296	1.38	30/45/55	238,816	1.69	30/45/66	43,520
Robinson Terminal South	163,696	NA	380,528	2.32	50	327,393	2.0	50	380,529	2.32	50	53,136
Cummings/ Turner Block (Total)	64,180	70,732				128,360	2.0	50	192,540	3.0	50	64,180
214-220 S. Union St.	21,299	21,240				42,598	2.0	50	63,897	3.0	50	21,299
2XX, 203, 205, 211 The Strand	27,948	19,232				55,896	2.0	50	83,844	3.0	50	27,948
204-206 S. Union St., 2, 10 Prince St.	14,933	30,260				29,866	2.0	50	44,799	3.0	50	14,933
Total	369,057					651,049			811,885			160,836

Guides redevelopment to achieve Plan goals

With just three redevelopment sites in the Plan area, each have an important role to play in achieving the multiple goals of the Plan. The recommendations for redevelopment are fine-tuned to ensure authentic, welcoming and accessible development that reflects Alexandria' history and showcases public art. Care has been taken to balance neighborhood compatibility – in architecture, land use, and impacts such as noise, traffic and parking – with financial feasibility and long-term economic success. Equally important, the guidelines steer development toward uses that would pay for the new infrastructure and public amenities in the Plan. The Plan also identifies public amenities that new development would be expected to contribute.

Non-residential development, including boutique hotels, would be encouraged on parcels immediately adjacent to the water or to high activity public spaces. Residential would be encouraged to locate in quieter locations near existing housing. Hotels yield significant potential benefit to residents and other waterfront visitors and are among the land uses with the lowest impacts on nearby neighborhoods.

As reflected in Table 2 (Private Redevelopment Sites – Density and Height Analysis), the net increase in development potential (compared to what the current zoning allows), spread over a distance of just over one mile, is about 160,000 square feet). New buildings are limited to 50 feet in height, except for the western half of Robinson Terminal North, where one building would be permitted to be built as tall as the office building next door (66 feet).

Table 3: Garage Spaces and Utilization

	Current Conditions			
	Spaces	Friday Evening Utilization	Spaces Available	Spaces Available
Waterfront Core Parking Area		(7-8 PM)	(Self - Park)	(Valet)
The Strand Parking Lot	85	118%	0	0
Altman’s Lot*	87	11%	77	121
Solo Garage	25	84%	4	17
115 S. Union Garage	68	51%	33	67
Torpedo Plant Condo Garage	361	64%	130	310
Thompson’s Alley Garage	43	58%	18	40
N. Union Street Garage	174	33%	117	204
Market Square Garage	196	79%	41	139
Tavern Square Garage	164	17%	136	218
Altman’s Garage*	62	24%	47	78
Total:	1265	52%	604	1194

Resolving the parking problem

Parking has been a front burner issue in Old Town for many years. The Plan addresses parking comprehensively, aided by the City’s renewed focus on Old Town parking with detailed analysis, renewed enforcement, and investments in improved meters and signage.

With those tools, Table 3 (Garage Spaces and Utilization) reflects the existing off street parking capacity and potential capacity. For the waterfront, the most important finding of the recent Old Town Area Parking Study is that during periods of peak demand, there are about 700 unused parking spaces within 3-4 blocks of the intersection of King Street and Union Street. So the challenge is not that there are not enough spaces – the challenge is directing visitors (especially those planning to park for more than 2 hours) to the parking garages. Moreover, through the use of valet parking and by opening private garages to the public, there is potential for parking as many as 1,400 additional vehicles in that “core” area of the waterfront.

Plan implementation includes initiatives to fully use and to increase parking garage capacity with wayfinding, pricing and technology. Parking implementation will involve regular monitoring of parking and set “triggers” for actions – for example, when public garages approach capacity, the City would increase capacity through valets and private garages.

The Plan also balances parking supply and demand by encouraging land uses that minimize parking demand (such as hotels) and by encouraging visitors to arrive by means other than the automobile: trolley, bike, or boat.

Residential areas will be protected by increased enforcement (which has already begun), regular monitoring, and potentially a resident-only parking program.

Public and Private Parking Locations (please see Figure 40 on page 121 for full size image)



Improving environmental conditions

Alexandria's industrial past has left a legacy that includes pollutants in the soil and in the riverbed. In addition, as in many of the country's oldest cities, Old Town has combined sanitary and storm sewers that have the potential to overflow into the river during rain events. Flooding is a recurring issue in The Strand area; a two-phased solution to the most frequent flooding is included in the Plan.

The City is addressing in-soil contaminants near the foot of Oronoco Street through the use of biosparging technology, while the separation of the sanitary and storm sewers is expensive and long-term. The Plan recognizes these efforts and also addresses flooding by integrating mitigation measures into structures and landscaping. The Plan recommends replacing rip-rap with a more natural shoreline including native plants wherever possible.

Practical and educational initiatives include a series of floating "islands" of water-cleansing plants in Oronoco Bay, as well as the re-creation of a marsh once known as "Ralph's Gutt" that will also assist in cleansing stormwater runoff.

Practical, cost-conscious, and pays for itself

Throughout the planning process, concerns were raised that the Plan would call for public expenditures that the City could not afford. The Plan addresses this concern by keeping proposed expenditures well within what can be supported by net revenues from new development.

The recommendations in the Plan are estimated to cost \$51 million, of which \$6.5 million is for flood mitigation. Improved or new bulkheads, along with completing the waterside esplanade, are estimated at \$4 to \$6 million, with the remainder for improvements to the harbor area and to parks and public spaces from Windmill Hill Park to the Tide Lock.

Revenue estimates were based upon four potential sources of new revenues: the real property taxes on new development, the meals taxes from new restaurants, the lodging taxes from new hotel rooms, and the sales taxes on both the restaurants and hotels. Waterfront improvements are likely to spin off additional economic benefits but these were not included in the analysis and summary, which shows that the Plan could "pay for itself."

Public spending on parks, flood mitigation, and other benefits can occur after private development (to ensure that tax revenues precede public expenditures - emphasizing fiscal discipline), or they can proceed before private development to ensure that the public benefits come in a timely manner and to encourage higher quality private development. A key aspect of the Plan is that there is significant flexibility as to when the public investments are made.

A plan to complete the final chapter of the Waterfront's transformation

The Plan reaffirms Alexandria's commitment to this precious resource. It seeks to continue the remarkable achievement of reclaiming the City's waterfront for itself and for the country. Not so many decades ago, it took people of tremendous vision to imagine a waterfront dedicated to public enjoyment instead of industrial production. Today, the results of their efforts are clearly evident, enjoyed daily, and the source of great pride.

The transformation of the waterfront over the past four decades was the result of Alexandrians making great plans and working together to achieve them. At each step, the plans aimed high, and it was never certain that every goal could or would be achieved. That's always true, to some extent, of any long-range plan. So it is clear that the heroes of waterfront's decades-long transformation were more than visionary.

This Plan continues that tradition since it is the collective product of Alexandrians applying their knowledge, understanding, experience, history, and ideas toward the goal of completing the final chapter in the transformation of the waterfront. This Plan is Alexandrian because the key elements of the Plan come from Alexandrians.

Note

The illustrative figures in this summary as well as the illustrative figures throughout the Plan should not be construed as final development schemes. They communicate intent. Further design, engineering and planning, and construction-related study will be required for each sub-area design as part of the implementation process.