• Understanding Washington Street
• Purpose of the Project
• Project Area Boundary
• Historical Overview
  Pre-1900
    Parkway Construction
    Roadway Improvements of the 1960’s
  Recent Modifications
• First Impressions of Washington Street
  Positive
  Negative
• Existing Conditions
• Stakeholder Meetings Summary
• Introduction of Concepts
• Next Steps
• Open House
Washington Street’s Key Roles:

- Urban arterial roadway
- Continuation of George Washington Memorial Parkway
- Historic connection between District of Columbia and Mount Vernon
- Key gateways into Alexandria from north and south
- A primary “image” corridor for Alexandria; often the one and only opportunity to present a “best face” to visitors
- Important mixed use thoroughfare, marked by historic structures and open spaces

Presently, Washington Street does not maximize its potential to fulfill these critical roles.
Purpose of the Project

- Preserve and enhance historic character as a key part of George Washington Memorial Parkway and a major thoroughfare for the city.
- Enrich the pedestrian scale.
- Fit changes to the corridor within the context of existing historic structures.
- Define role of the public realm, develop ways to enhance it to achieve a coherent and beautiful corridor.
- Establish streetscape and public space guidelines for future decision-making.
• Existing conditions mapping and analysis
• Historic research
• Focus group meetings: public input
• Conceptual design
• Public meeting: concept selection and development
• Draft streetscape guidelines
• Public meeting: review and comment
• Streetscape guideline revisions
• Streetscape guidelines adopted by City
Hunting Creek  
Slater’s Lane  

Study Area  

Face of Building  
Face of Building  

Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines  
Project Boundary
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

Streetscape Elements

- Sidewalks
- Vegetation
- Lighting
- Signage
- Furniture
- Median/Driving Lanes
- Parking
19th Century: Before the George Washington Memorial Parkway

- Mix of Uses
- Wide Right-Of-Way
- Division of Pedestrian and Vehicular Spaces
- Street Trees
- Industrial Development
- Extensive Open Space
- Large Single Family Residences
1929-1932: Parkway Construction

- On-Street Parking
- Building Facades Close to Street
- Street Lights
- Automobile Traffic

- Concrete Paving along Parking Lane
- Closely Planted Street Trees
- Continuous Planting Strips
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines
1946-1968: Roadway Improvements

- Medians
- Cobra Head Light Fixtures
- Contemporary Style Buildings
- Heavy Commuter Traffic

- Street Tree Infill Plan
- 1946 Historic District Designation
- Removal of Memorial Circle
1969–2007: Recent Modifications

- Board of Architectural Review
- Alexandria Historic District (includes Washington Street)
- Sidewalk Cafes
- Deterioration of Street Trees
- Excessive Curb Cuts
- I-495/Wilson Bridge Improvements
- Historically Sensitive Infill Architecture
- Larger Scale Development
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines
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Some Problems
Existing Streetscape Catalogue
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

1. Planted buffer between local and through lanes.
2. Divided roadway with turf.
3. Continuous right-of-way width with turning lane.
4. Divided roadway with street trees.
5. Continuous right-of-way, all travel lanes.
6. Brick paving in a Herringbone pattern.

7. Brick paving in a Running Bond pattern.

8. Brick paving in a Basketweave pattern.


10. Full-width concrete sidewalk, spanning from the face of building to the back of curb.

11. Unpaved trail.
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

18. "Zero" lot line with historic architecture.

19. "Zero" lot line with new construction.

20. Visual barrier continues building facade across open space.

21. Grade change/wall.

22. Paved, unused space.

23. Parking lot abuts sidewalk.

24. Suburban lawn.
Streetscape Catalogue

Light Types

25. Gadsby lights in Old Town Core.
27. Light pollution from signage.
28. Parking lot lights.

Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

29. Powdercoated aluminum bench placed by adjacent business.

30. Outdoor cafe seating (seasonal).

31. Low wall/retaining wall.

32. Metal bench with wood slats, 3 arms.

33. Metal bench with wood slats, 2 arms.

34. Wooden bench attached to bush shelter.

35. Metal bench with composite slats.

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36. Historic site marker.
37. Historic plaque.
38. Bus stop signage.
39. Welcome to Alexandria gateway sign.
40. Attached retail signage.
41. Free standing retail signage.
42. Traffic signage attached to lights.
43. Directional signage.
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

49. Brick band around tree well.

50. Precast concrete band around tree well.

51. Vertical brick pavers to form a planting bed.

52. Tree grate.

53. Tree well in concrete sidewalk.

54. Continuous planting strip.
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

55. Bollards.
57. Electric box.
59. Drain cover.
61. Parking meter.
56. Trash receptacle.
58. Newspaper boxes.
60. Confederate statue.
62. Clock.
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

Existing Conditions Documentation

Overall Plan

Aerial Photograph

South Study Area

Old Town Core Study Area

North Study Area
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

North Study Area: Wythe Street to Madison Street
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

Old Town Core Study Area: King Street to Cameron Street
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

South Study Area: Jefferson Street to Green Street
Meetings held between 20 November and 20 December, 2006

• Civic Associations
• Economic Development Groups
• Business Owners
• Historic Preservation Organizations
Positive Aspects of Washington Street

- The remaining historic character
- Its identity as Alexandria’s “main street”
- Its noteworthy scale: a wide avenue with potential to become a grand “boulevard”
- An interesting mix of building types and uses
- A pedestrian scale in some areas (although not throughout)
Issues Related to Washington Street

- Lack of a sense of continuity/corridor-wide character
- Does not evoke a strong, positive image for the City
- Pedestrian amenities are lacking in many areas
  - Walking “comfort” (e.g., sidewalk width, lack of shade, lighting, scale)
- Issues in crossing the street
  - Safety and security concerns
- Unclear availability of convenient parking options
- Visual “clutter”: varied furniture elements, signs, parking meters, etc.
- Inappropriate gateway entries
- Much historic context is lost
- Better balance of cars and pedestrians is needed
- Better streetscape is needed
Concept Overview

Concept 1: Rehabilitate Existing Washington Street Streetscape

Concept 2: Articulate Washington Street’s “Districts”

Concept 3: Strengthen Historic Precedence
Concept 1: Rehabilitate Existing Washington Street Streetscape

- Unify Washington Street through common streetscape elements.
- Create a coherent “Washington Street” boulevard throughout.
- Establish a single Washington Street “image” that would carry through from gateway to gateway.
- Clean, repair or replace existing infrastructure along Washington Street
- This concept can be applied independently, or in conjunction with additional concepts.
Concept 1: Rehabilitate Existing Washington Street Streetscape

- General public space maintenance
- Reduce impact of service stations
- Multi-space parking meters
- Wayfinding signage
- Improve the quality/life span of street trees
Concept 2: Articulate Washington Street’s “Districts”

- Recognize and celebrate Washington Street’s major “districts:”
  - Washington Street North
  - Old Town Core
  - Washington Street South
- Define common streetscape elements to be used throughout.
- Identify streetscape elements specific to each district that will strengthen its character/image.
Concept 2: Articulate Washington Street’s “Districts”

North District
Eclectic mix of building styles, scales and uses

Old Town Core
Urban center of activity; dense development, mixed use

South District
Pedestrian friendly, smaller scale, residential character

Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines
Concept 3: Strengthen Historic Precedence

- Create strong gateways that define the threshold between George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Old Town Core.
- Use Washington Street’s history as a “stepping off point” to inform future design decisions.
- Identify historic elements that can be appropriately applied to Washington Street today.
- Increase public awareness of the historic importance of Washington Street.
- Apply appropriate historic precedents corridor-wide.
Concept 3: Strengthen Historic Precedence

Vibrant Urban Core
Washington Street and King Street, looking north, 1925

Parking and Street Trees
Washington Street and Princess Street, looking south, 1929

Open Space
Christ Church, Washington Street and Cameron Street, west side, 1929
Next Steps:

• Select a Preferred Concept

• Develop a Design Framework and Guidelines

• Meet with Community (Public Meeting #2) to Review Preferred Concept

• Incorporate Community Feedback into Streetscape Guidelines

• Gain Approval from City
Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines

Thank You