PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF WATERFRONT COMMISSION RESPONSES ON TOP 5 PRIORITIES

Nine Waterfront Commission members responded to the Chair's request to identify top 5 Plan Implementation priorities for the Waterfront Commission. Some had a one line response for each topic, others explained at length the components of their priorities. Responses were arrayed on a spreadsheet and summarized into 5 broad topics. The discussion topic for the Waterfront Commission is 1) whether there is broad agreement these are the 5 priority areas; and 2) whether one or two specific items within each area should be selected for emphasis in 2027.

1. Water access, boating and the maritime waterfront

Approximately 11 comments

Respondents want the waterfront to be a place where people can interact directly with the river, not simply view it.

Improve piers, bulkheads, shoreline access and marina facilities.

Expand opportunities for kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and small-boat rentals.

Accommodate larger vessels, recreational slips and commercial boats.

Offer varied shoreline treatments, including natural areas where people can wade.

Connect physical improvements to Alexandria's maritime heritage.

Underlying message: Make the river more accessible and usable while preserving its historic identity.

2. Parks, green space and visitor amenities

Approximately 10 comments

Respondents favor attractive, comfortable parks that support a range of activities and make the waterfront enjoyable throughout the year.

Expand park and landscaped areas; add large-canopy trees, seating and shade.

Improve amenities, including restrooms and food and beverage options.

Consider attractions such as a fountain, winter skating rink and public gathering spaces.

Ensure new development, including the Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) project, provides welcoming green areas and public access.

Preserve quieter spaces, particularly Founders Park, rather than activating every part of the waterfront equally.

Underlying message: Improve the quality and variety of public spaces, balancing active destinations with peaceful green areas.

3. Arts, history and cultural interpretation

Approximately 10–11 comments

Respondents see culture and history as defining features of the waterfront, with opportunities to make them more visible and engaging.

Complete and extend the Art Walk, including toward Windmill Hill Park.

Install permanent public art and artwork at transitions between parks.

Interpret maritime history, archaeological discoveries and Point Lumley's shipbuilding history.

Add historic signage and consider a waterfront location for a Maritime Museum.

Distinguish art from history as separate priorities, while allowing them to complement each other.

Underlying message: Make the waterfront's cultural identity more visible, coherent and accessible—not just through individual attractions, but across the public realm.

4. Connectivity, walkability and continuous public access

Approximately 7 comments

The most prominent element is the explicit call for a continuous public walkway, with priority at Robinson Terminal North.

Create a continuous waterfront walking route from Jones Point to Daingerfield Island.

Improve connections between the waterfront, Old Town North and PRGS.

Repair walkway structures at Oronoco Bay.

Improve pedestrian safety at the King and Union Street crosswalk.

Complete the north-to-south Art Walk and create appealing connections between parks.

Underlying message: The waterfront should function as one connected public destination, rather than a series of separate parks and attractions.

5. Torpedo Factory Art Center

4 comments

Although fewer comments address it directly, the Torpedo Factory is a distinct recurring priority.

Renovate, repair and upgrade the building.

Improve management and reactivate the facility.

Explore revenue-generating commercial uses while maintaining its artistic role.

Underlying message: Respondents want the Torpedo Factory to be a successful, well-maintained and financially sustainable cultural destination.

Other important findings

Parking and visitor congestion remain a meaningful secondary concern. Comments call both for better parking management and for removing the parking lot at Point Lumley. Residents also raise overcrowding and quality of life.

These views are not necessarily contradictory. Together, they suggest that the concern is how to accommodate visitors without allowing vehicles and visitor volume to overwhelm the waterfront experience.

Robinson Terminal North also deserves attention: two comments specifically address its development, and identify the site as a priority for continuous public access.

Connectivity and water access have broad support**.** Kayak, canoe and paddleboard access and a marina accommodating larger watercraft reinforce the demand for a more usable riverfront.

Public art is being considered as part of the connections between parks**.** The suggestion to add artwork at transition points expands the idea of the Art Walk beyond a series of installations.

Waterfront Park and Point Lumley Park were the two areas most specifically highlighted as needing the Commission's focus.

Overall conclusion

The initial responses point toward a waterfront that is more accessible from the river, better connected on land, greener and more comfortable, and richer in art and history. They also call for a viable Torpedo Factory and better management of parking and crowding.

The central challenge is not simply whether to add activity. It is where to concentrate activity, how to connect the destinations, and how to preserve quieter public spaces and residential quality of life.