

## Synopsis

# ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT Public Art Proposal

### INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2010, the City's Planning Department asked the Alexandria Commission for the Arts through the Public Art Committee to provide a vision and design framework for public art on the waterfront. In response, a small group from the Public Art Committee consolidated concepts developed over the course of the previous two years and made recommendations based on its research, design and community outreach efforts.

### PUBLIC ART POLICY

Guidance for the Waterfront Public Art Proposal was found in the preamble to the City's 2008 revised Policy on Acquired Art. The Policy encourages private and public entities:

- to promote public awareness and interest in art and cultural activities;
- to integrate art into the City of Alexandria;
- to promote Alexandria's cultural heritage and strengthen community pride;
- to enhance Alexandria's reputation as a national leader in the arts;
- to foster tourism and encourage economic development; and
- to provide for future artistic endeavors.

### ART ON THE WATERFRONT PROPOSAL

From the City's public art policy, concepts were developed:

- to unify the waterfront experience for visitors and residents by linking the public parks adjacent to the Potomac in a meaningful way that expresses each area's unique qualities and histories;
- to establish an Art Walk along the Potomac River centered around public art inspired by Alexandria's arts, culture, history and natural beauty;
- to reinforce existing cultural assets on the waterfront and help establish new ones;
- to encourage economic development and foster tourism on the waterfront by enhancing Alexandria's reputation as an arts destination and national leader in the arts; and
- to establish a long term vision for public art on the waterfront, serving Alexandria for the next 25 years.

### THE ART WALK

The proposed Art Walk stretches for about 1.5 miles, from Tide Lock Park in the north to Pomander Park in the south. It links 18 City parks plus the two Robinson Terminal properties. The path meanders, straddling the Potomac shoreline and, for safety concerns, is kept separate and distinct from the Mount Vernon Trail bike path. Historical quotes describing Alexandria are inscribed directly onto the Art Walk pathway. Paving includes materials that are native to the Potomac River, as well as ballast stones - symbolically transplanted from ports throughout the world. Where appropriate, to

reflect the planning concepts and recommendations for specific parks in this proposal, glass, oyster shells, coral, fish bones, river stones, etc. are added to the pathway's exposed aggregate paving. Also incorporated in the pathway is in-pavement lighting set along the entire length of the art Walk.

### **WATERFRONT PARKS AND PUBLIC ART**

The public art plan takes each of the parks linked by the Art Walk and proposes concepts and recommendations for public art based on their unique character, history, use and natural beauty. For example:

- the two end parks, Tide Lock (north) and Pomander, each have a light-sculpture garden, inspired by Alexandria's historic streetlamps, that act as gateways to the Art Walk;
- Oronoco Bay Park is the performing arts park with an amphitheater set into the landscape as land art;
- Also at Oronoco Bay Park, a water-cleansing sculpture contributes to the ecological restoration of Ralph's Gutt;
- Fishtown is remembered at Founders Park with sculptural wind indicators representing schools of shad and herring that were once commercially fished in the Potomac River during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and
- A public art piece representing the masts, sails and riggings of George Washington's brig FARMER are at Point Lumley were one can "learn their ropes".

### **CONCLUSION**

To see the full **ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT Public Art Proposal**, go to the City's Planning and Zoning website at:

<http://alexandriava.gov/Waterfront>

Scroll down and under the heading "Related Documents"; click on "Waterfront Public Art Proposal". For a full historic interpretation of the waterfront, see the Alexandria Waterfront History Plan by the Archaeology Commission at the same website.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Public Art Committee, Alexandria Commission for the Arts or Office of the Arts.

