# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JUNE 3, 2011

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

**SUBJECT:** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL ON WATERFRONT PLAN

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On May 23, 2011, I provided a memorandum listing questions and related items which the City Council requested staff to address at the conclusion of the May 14, 2011 City Council Public Hearing on the draft Waterfront Small Area Plan.

In response to your request, I am attaching answers to the questions and also an updated Summary which was among the related items you requested.

In addition to what is provided in this memorandum, you also requested these items: (a) Plan alternatives, including legal ramifications of allowing less than current zoning (b) an economic analysis for each alternative, and (3) an updated copy of the Plan document. The plan alternatives and economic analyses will be included in the staff presentation at the June 11, 2011 worksession. The updated Plan document is in preparation and will be provided following the worksession.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment -1 – Council Questions
Attachment -2 - Responses to Questions
Attachment -3 - Summary

**Attachment 1**

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 23, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL ON WATERFRONT PLAN

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**City Council Questions from May 14 Waterfront Public Hearing**

1. **Parking and Congestion**
   - Where is it clear that we intend to address residential parking? Residential parking restrictions may help create the demand garage owners are looking for.
   - What if we place tighter triggers on parking? One example would be to tie increased development on waterfront to the implementation of additional residential parking protection.
   - How can city owned lots and other parking opportunities in mid-King Street help address waterfront parking needs?
   - Will the parking at Jones Point Park have an impact on the waterfront?
   - Does above grade parking count toward height? FAR?
   - Are we exploring the use of mandates for public/private parking in new garages along the waterfront?
   - How does the plan address pedestrian and vehicle congestion at Union and King and in the plan area?
   - When will we start with attendants at public garages to increase capacity?

2. **Flood Mitigation**
   - Must be a priority, not an option. Staff should come back with options for CIP in October to address nuisance flooding.
   - What are the components of the flood mitigation program? The flood mitigation program should extend from Rivergate to Ford's Landing.

3. **Restaurant and Hotel Policy for SUPs**
   - Should the restaurant policy include more elements from the Old Town Small Area Plan?
   - Vice Mayor Donley requested a digital copy, indicating he will propose edits (in progress).

4. **Revised Cost Analysis**
   - Update to reflect what's been added and removed from plan.

5. **Alternatives**
   - If the proposed plan is not adopted, what can be built (with and without an SUP) and what impacts are associated with these scenarios?
   - If hotels are not included as a permitted use, what would the most likely redevelopment be and what would the sites look like?
   - Provide a matrix of alternatives: (a) existing zoning scenarios; (b) potential scenarios under proposed new zoning; (c) park scenario noting cost of acquisition.
   - Provide a corresponding matrix showing cost/revenue projections for each alternative. Implementation horizon may need to be extended in order to reconcile ideas with costs.
   - There are boutique hotels that are smaller than 150 rooms (Morrison House as an example with 45 rooms). What is the definition of a boutique hotel and what is the smallest size for a new hotel to be economically viable?
   - What if Robinson Terminal North is not given the 66 foot height?

6. **Density, Zoning and Architectural Controls**
   - What are the benefits the City and public are getting from the added increment of density? What assurances do we have that additional density will come with community benefits? For example, is the preservation of the Cummings warehouses tied to zoning?
   - Should the additional density be contingent upon the provision of hotels? If hotels are not a permitted use, should there be an increase in density?
   - What are the legal ramifications of allowing less than current zoning (downzoning)?
   - What legal constraints exist relative to the properties under: (a) current zoning; and (b) new zoning? What are the tradeoffs? What amenities are legally required?
   - What is required in terms of architectural design? How strict can we be? What is the process? What tools are available to provide a sense of scale, place and purpose along the waterfront?
   - What is the impact of not changing the height restrictions?
   - Walk through what the height restrictions are and how they work.

7. **Ownership of RT Piers** – Who owns the concrete piers at RTN and RTS?

8. **Park and Open Space issues**
   - Important to include a linear park with public access along the way.
   - What impact does restoration of the Beachcomber have on the City's Open Space Plan?

9. **History and Art**
   - There is a lot of history associated with the waterfront; how does the plan incorporate as much as possible?
   - How does the plan address historic interpretation (including lighting and signage)?
   - Make sure art walk is included.

**10. New documents**

- Provide a summary document as well as a revised Plan document with all the changes.

**11. Implementation**

- How can we be sure the plan will be implemented? What would that process look like?

**Attachment 2**

# *Responses to City Council Questions From the May 14, 2011 Waterfront Small Area Plan Public Hearing*

# Waterfront Small Area Plan (Plan)

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# Parking and Congestion

**Protecting Residential Parking**

To the extent additional parking demand is created in the waterfront area, it is very important that impacts to parking on residential streets be evaluated and adequate parking supply remaining available for Old Town residents.

The Plan acknowledges the tension between residential and commercial parking demand (Plan, pp. 120-121) and recommends developing a Parking Implementation Plan that specifically addresses protecting Residential Parking (Plan, p. 120, 4.33(d)). In addition, the Old Town Area Parking Work Group specifically discussed additional restrictions in Old Town residential parking districts but, without consensus, deferred action until there could be further study and discussion. (Plan, p. 121, 4.36)

As part of the Parking Implementation Plan work, a group with representatives from affected Old Town residential areas needs to identify options for protection, and recommend implementation steps.

- *Online Visitor Permitting* is one of the final recommendations from the Old Town Area Parking Work Group last summer. The inconvenience of obtaining visitor permits was a significant part of the reason for deferring additional residential district protections. The City has developed an online system and the new program should begin shortly.

- *Additional parking surveys* will provide additional data and provide information as to who is parking in the parking districts at different times. If, for example, we learn that parking spaces are taken by non-residents in the evening hours, then restricting the hours for non-resident parking should make more parking available for residents and provide an incentive for non-residents to use available garage space.

**Congestion at King and Union**

The Plan acknowledges the congestion in the core area, especially at the intersection of King and Union Streets and cites several important ways the Plan elements address that issue:

- *Wayfinding signs* will guide drivers to destinations, especially to parking garages, avoiding the vehicle traffic that results from people circling to find parking and other destinations (Plan, pp.105-120). Don Shoup, parking expert and author of "The High Cost of Free Parking," estimates that a full 30% of drivers in Old Town are circling to find parking spaces.
- *Valet parking* at key locations, including in the mid King Street blocks, will intercept drivers before they get to the core area (Plan, pp.117-120).
- *Much more space for pedestrians at the intersections of King with Union and with The Strand* is proposed by closing the unit block of King and the 100 block of The Strand to most vehicular traffic and creating Fitzgerald Square to give pedestrians more room to

circulate and to readily obtain a physical and visual sense of direction to other points of interest along the waterfront (Plan, p. 107).

- *Enhance trolley headways and hours* have been recommended (Plan, pp. 110-112; 118-119) and Council will consider the issue before the end of June. In addition, the Plan supports and advances ideas to enhance transit for waterfront visitors generally (Plan, pp. 110-112) as well as services for cyclists.

In addition, an active police presence is an effective method of managing pedestrian/vehicular traffic at the King/Union intersection. It will assist with vehicular flow and pedestrian crossing and improves safety at the intersection during peak periods. The City used this approach during the construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the Council has allocated $1 million for police to assist with something similar for BRAC.

**Maximizing Garage Space to Add Capacity and Alleviate Congestion**

The Plan pays special attention to the fact that garages in the waterfront core area are not now filled to capacity, even at peak times (Plan, pp. 116-122).

The goal of the Plan is to maximize existing garage space by installing wayfinding signage and working with the private garage owners to make additional garage space available to the public.

Under the Plan, new waterfront development will provide parking for itself. In addition, hotels will be asked to open their garages to the public, at least at peak times (See also: Restaurant Policy).

Existing garages open to the public could hold even more cars than they do now with certain changes (Plan, pp. 116-121).

- Adding attendants so parking can be stacked can increase the number of spaces by 50%.
- A valet system at multiple locations on King Street can intercept vehicles outside the core area – before drivers reach the most congested streets. Valets can park cars in underutilized private garage spaces, leaving public garages spaces available for others.
- Garages can be more customer-friendly and more attractive: consistent wayfinding and identification signs for both public and privately-operated garages, increased visibility and consistency of hours and (possibly) rates, and interior changes that increase convenience and safety – actual safety as well as the perception of safety).

**Potential Triggers for Adding Parking Capacity**

The Parking Implementation Plan is a post-adoption initiative to solidify, extend and expand the recent Old Town parking initiatives as an outcome of the Plan. The Parking Implementation Plan identifies the appropriate City response to specific triggers, which are Old Town parking *conditions*, or *events* that have the potential to impact parking in the area. The concept of triggers recognizes that parking capacity in Old Town and the waterfront requires active management as well as careful review of individual demand generators (as is required by the

SUP review and the Restaurant/Hotel Policy). It also places a responsibility on the City to monitor capacity and implement solutions (pp. 120-121). Examples of triggers:

- Garage use reaches 85% (it is now at 52% at peak times).
- New demand generators are approved/built on the waterfront.
- Studies confirm reduced capacity for parking for residents on residential streets.

When these types of events or conditions occur, the City would take steps to identify and make available additional garage parking spaces by, among other options:

- Increasing the number of private garages open to the public,
- providing attendants at City public garages (thus increasing capacity), and
- implementing a valet parking system with dedicated parking at private garages, ideally located outside the core area.

# Flood Mitigation

### Flood Mitigation as a Priority

The Flood Mitigation Program is described in the Plan as a priority for implementation. Mitigation measures are to begin for King and Union Streets and The Strand in the first phase of implementation (0-3 years). This would reduce nuisance flooding events from more than 150 per year to 10-15 per year. The floodwall, which would provide additional protection for flooding events that can occur approximately up to the 10-year flood event, would be started in the first phase of implementation and completed before the end of the second phase (year 6). (Plan, pp. 129-130)

### CIP Funding Proposals for Flood Mitigation

As part of the FY 2013-FY 2022 City Capital Improvement Program preparation process, staff will price in greater detail the proposed Flood Mitigation Program.

### Flood Mitigation Program Components and its Length along the Waterfront

The flood mitigation program included in the Plan is based both on recommendations from the *2010 Potomac River Waterfront Flood Mitigation Study* and the desire to balance the need to mitigate nuisance flooding with the desires for active and passive recreation along the waterfront.

The recommended flood mitigation consists of two primary elements as depicted in a Flood Mitigation Systems graphic in the Plan (Plan, p. 30). The first element involves an increase in the roadway and storm drainage elevation in the vicinity of King Street at The Strand and Union Street. This would reduce shallow nuisance flooding at the waterfront from approximately 150 times a year to approximately 10 to 15 times a year. This element can be designed and constructed as a stand-alone project and implemented without regard to the Plan. The estimated cost range of this improvement is $500,000 to $700,000 in 2011 dollars. Special attention will be needed during design to ensure that these changes in roadway elevation do not create adverse drainage impacts on adjacent structures.

The second element of flood mitigation included in the Plan consists of a series of low walls and landscape berms constructed to Elevation 6.0 to eliminate nuisance flooding. This level of protection would be built from approximately King Street to Robinson Terminal South and between Thompsons Alley and Queen Street. Elevation is measured as feet above the North American Vertical Datum, and is generally referred to as feet above sea level. Because much of the waterfront is already at elevation 4.5 feet, another 1.5 feet of protection that is integrated into the landscape would yield a total of 6 feet of protection above sea level, it would not require walls or berms to be constructed 6 feet high. The estimated cost of this improvement is about $5.9 million in 2011 dollars.

The area of the waterfront that is targeted by the flood mitigation program – the area between Duke Street and Queen Street – is the most susceptible to nuisance flooding because the ground elevation is lowest in this area. This proposed mitigation program would protect 43 commercial structures and 23 residential structures that are currently below Elevation 6.0. The ground

elevation adjacent to all of the buildings to the south of Duke Street is already at or above Elevation 6.0. The same situation exists to the north of Queen Street. Therefore, there is no need for nuisance flood mitigation beyond the limits included in the Plan.

Neither the *Flood Mitigation Study* nor the Plan recommends flood mitigation to protect at the 100-year flood level. During the Flood Mitigation Study, members of the community raised concerns about negative impacts of tall walls or levees on aesthetics and the water view shed. The community prioritized reducing the frequency of minor/nuisance flooding. While options were studied to protect against more extreme flooding along a greater length of the waterfront, these options are not recommended. These options are not only significantly more expensive, but would entail physical impacts that City staff waterfront planning team believe are not appropriate as they would create physical and visual barriers to the water.

# Restaurant and Hotel Policy

Staff proposed a Restaurant/Hotel Policy to be included in the Plan prior to the Planning Commission's final consideration of the Plan. The concept and language is modeled on the Old Town Restaurant Policy, with additions to capture in addition to restaurants, hotels and other commercial uses that require SUP approval. The document has gone through a series of revisions to date, including through the work of Old Town Civic Association. When Council considered the Plan on May 14, it asked staff to work with Vice Mayor Donley on additional potential revisions. The revised Policy document highlights in bold text those changes that the Vice Mayor recommends be added to the document. Staff supports these changes.

WATERFRONT SMALL AREA PLAN
**POLICY FOR RESTAURANT/HOTEL/COMMERCIAL USES**

The cultural and historic ambience of Old Town provides the primary attraction for visitors and for residents**.** Restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues, marinas and other commercial establishments along the waterfront will provide activity and destinations for residents and visitors, allowing enjoyment of the City's Potomac River location. Such uses, however, must be sited in appropriate locations and designed in such a way to ensure that goals of the Plan are achieved, including:

- Enhancing enjoyment of the waterfront for residents and visitors alike;
- Appropriately locating uses consonant with public open spaces, development sites, and the Potomac River; and
- Maintaining compatibility with both the historical and residential character of the adjacent neighborhood.

Restaurants, hotels, farmers' markets, retail, personal service, private recreational facilities, and marinas each require SUP approval in the waterfront area. The SUP process is designed so that each use is reviewed and assessed for its appropriateness at a specific location and for its ability to coexist with adjacent and nearby uses without impacts to the character of the area, the Plan goals as a whole, and the enjoyment of nearby property.

The Small Area Plan for the adjacent area of Old Town states the City's policy that the fragile balance between the residential and commercial areas "must be preserved if both are to remain strong and if the ambience of Old Town is to be preserved. Further, the commercial areas contain a mix of activities that is unique within the metropolitan area, and that mix needs to be protected if the character of Old Town is to be preserved."

The Old Town Small Area Plan (and the King Street Retail Strategy by reference) includes the City's policy with regard to restaurants, establishing guidelines to assist in SUP decision-making. The Old Town Restaurant Policy requires that Council review each restaurant application for its impacts on noise, late night hours, alcohol, parking, litter and the balance of retail and restaurant uses. A similar approach should be taken to

protect the waterfront, King Street and the nearby residential areas as to future uses and SUP review.

Each SUP for a restaurant, hotel, entertainment, or other commercial use on the waterfront must be reviewed, and appropriate findings made, according to the following guidelines:

1. City Council shall not approve an SUP for a use on the waterfront unless it finds that the use does not create ~~significant~~ negative impacts on the vitality and character of King Street or the character and enjoyment of nearby residential neighborhoods
2. City Council shall consider the cumulative effect of the proposal and the number of already established uses in the nearby area.
3. In the case of an expansion or other intensification, the entire operation shall be taken into account in determining the impact on King Street and nearby residential neighborhoods.
4. In making its determination, City Council shall consider the following factors as applied to the proposed use:
   a. *Restaurant*
      i. The potential for undue congestion of pedestrians or vehicles;
      ii. The extent to which the use is open in the late night hours and situated so as to potentially disturb residential areas;
      iii. The extent to which alcohol consumption will predominate over food consumption and situated so as to potentially disturb residential areas;
      iv. The availability of **off-street** parking **for the restaurant's patrons and employees**, **including whether the restaurant has contracted with nearby garages for additional off-street parking for patrons and/or employees.**
      v. The predicted extent of litter generated;
      vi. The potential for loud or otherwise inappropriate noise; and
      vii. The extent to which other restaurants already exist in the same area. Restaurant uses should not located in such proximity as to detract from the character and authenticity of the waterfront by creating a monoculture similar to a food court or "restaurant row" environment.
      viii. **The extent to which the hotel provides incentives for employees who are able to use transit.**
   b. *Hotel*
      i. The potential for undue congestion of pedestrians or vehicles;
      ii. The type and size of hotel, and whether it is designed to attract ~~large~~ conventions, banquets, or other functions (such as trade shows)~~;~~**. Hotels**

**shall be "boutique" hotels: that is, hotels with 150 rooms or less, no ballroom, and meeting rooms for no more than 50[1] people.**

iii. The ability of the hotel to accommodate, and screen all of its service needs on site, including loading and delivery operations.

iv. Parking for visitors, customers and employees must be provided on site. **Additional parking may be provided by contract with a nearby garage for patrons and/or employees.** Although the Plan anticipates low parking ratios, the applied ratio must be consistent with industry standards.

v. **The extent to which garage spaces will be available to the public.** Parking garages must be operated so that they are open to the public at least at peak times.

vi. A restaurant within a hotel that is open to the public shall be the subject of a separate SUP and the same requirements as other restaurants.

vii. The location of the hotel and whether its layout is designed to produce the least impact on nearby residential areas and on the lower King Street area.

viii. **The extent to which the hotel provides incentives for employees who are able to use transit.**

c. *Other commercial uses:* Factors from the above lists shall be applied as relevant to the specific SUP under consideration.

[1] A survey of Alexandria hotels shows a wide range of meeting room space compared to the number of hotel rooms. For a boutique hotel that would rely on business travelers to fill its weekday rooms, at least a meeting room space for 150 for a 150 room hotel appears warranted. And possibly necessary for a boutique hotel to be financed and constructed. For example, the Lorien has 107 rooms and meeting space for 131. It should be noted that due to schedule overlaps and setup/takedown requirements, it is rare for a hotel to have 100% of its meeting space occupied at the same time.

# Current Zoning, Proposed Zoning and Community Benefits

Although current zoning allows less development than the Plan proposes, it also offers less control over development and less opportunity for developer-provided benefits. Current zoning does not permit hotels, which would be a beneficial addition to the waterfront land use mix. The proposed zoning allows the amount of permitted development on the Robinson Terminal sites to return to the levels articulated in the 1982 "settlement agreement" with the landowner, the City, and the National Park Service. The proposed zoning avoids some potential legal ramifications of the other zoning options (see explanation page 16).

**Density and uses**

*Current:* The redevelopment parcels are zoned W-1, which permits residential, office, and retail development at an FAR of up to 2.0 with a Special Use Permit. Because of development limits imposed by the 1982 settlement agreements, however, Robinson Terminal North can achieve only a 1.39 FAR.

*Proposed*: The W-1 zone would be amended to permit boutique hotels as a land use and densities to increase to:

- Robinson Terminal North would still be limited to densities lower than currently permitted by the W-1 zone.
- Robinson Terminal South would be permitted to densities up to 2.32 FAR.
- Properties in the Cummings/Turner block could achieve up to a 3.0 FAR.
- Proposed densities would be permitted only if proposed projects meet height, open space, and public amenity requirements, as well as the detailed development guidelines in the Plan. The development guidelines encourage hotels and contain requirements that ensure that the new development is welcoming to the public, especially on the ground floor and outdoors.
- The effects of these increases in square feet on a site-by-site basis will be provided at the worksession on June 11, 2011 as part of the alternatives discussion.

| Site | Currently Allowed (sf) | FAR | Proposed (sf) | FAR | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Robinson Terminal North | 195,296 | 1.38 | 238,816 | 1.69 | 43,520 |
| Robinson Terminal South | 327,393 | 2.0 | 380,529 | 2.32 | 53,136 |
| Cummings – Turner Block | 124,760 | 2.0 | 187,140 | 3.0 | 62,380 |
| Totals | 647,449 | | 806,485 | | 159,036 |

**Heights**

*Current:* Robinson Terminal South and the Cummings/Turner block are limited to heights of 30 feet (50 feet with an SUP). Robinson Terminal North is divided into three parcels with ascending height limits: 30, 45, and 55 feet.

*Proposed:* No change except that the western parcel of Robinson Terminal North would be subject to the height district limit of 66 feet instead of the 55 foot limit imposed by the W-1 zone (Plan, page 85).

**Compatibility with a public waterfront**

*Current:* The current zone and small area plan offer no guidance for ensuring that new development is compatible with the activities that Alexandrians enjoy at the water. Residential development, which thrives on privacy, is encouraged. Residential density may increase with the provision of retail, but there is no guidance as to where retail is desirable.

*Proposed:* The Waterfront Plan contains strong guidance to ensure that Alexandrians will feel welcome on their waterfront, including in the vicinity of the redevelopment projects. Land uses that welcome the public – such as hotels and ground floor restaurants, retail, or cultural uses – are required. Further, the Plan provides guidance to ensure that residential uses, where they do occur, are compatible with waterfront activity.

**Architectural review**

*Current:* Robinson Terminal South and the Cummings/Turner block are in the Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) and are subject to OHAD Design Guidelines and to Board of Architectural Review (BAR) review.

Any new building or alteration to the exterior of an existing building within the Old and Historic Alexandria District requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review. In addition to the normal OHAD standards, the BAR must also apply additional standards for waterfront parcels, which require highly articulated facades expressing 20 to 30 foot bay widths, fenestration patterns recalling traditional load bearing masonry buildings and the use of local materials which recall the simple, vernacular style of historic waterfront warehouses. There are further architectural standards and guidelines for projects requiring an SUP, and these require public access to and views of the waterfront, building setbacks on the street face above the basic 30 foot height, and compatibility with the traditional height, bulk and mass of buildings along the waterfront. All of these design standards are described in the BAR Design Guidelines' specific chapter on *Buildings Along the Waterfront.*

Projects in the historic district requiring approval of an SUP by City Council first go to the BAR for Concept Approval of the scale, mass and general architectural character. After approval of the SUP, they go back to the BAR for review of final design details and finish materials.

*Proposed:* All of the existing elements of architectural review would continue and would be enhanced by the development goals and guidelines in the Waterfront Small Area Plan, which provide more detailed and site specific guidance for architecture, compatible building scale and site design, and requirements for historic interpretation in every aspect of the design of the new development, even if not in the historic district (Plan, pp. 88-100). The Waterfront Plan's development guidelines also ensure that streetscapes are attractive and pedestrian friendly.

**Parking**

*Current:* Underground or below-grade parking is not currently required or encouraged by the existing small area plan or current zoning. Above grade parking structures are counted towards the overall building height; parking structures also count towards FAR, unless the ceiling height within the parking structure is less than 7'6".

*Proposed:* The amended W-1 zone incorporates the Waterfront Plan development goals and guidelines that require the parking for new development to be on-site and below-grade.

**Community Benefits**

*Current:* The current zoning and small area plans are silent on the public amenities expected to be provided by the developer, except that a 25' public access way along the river is required. An SUP allows more negotiation.

*Proposed:* The revised zoning, which incorporates the new development requirements in the Waterfront Plan, provides a clearer and much greater expectation of developer contributions toward on and off-site improvements that benefit the general public.

***Robinson Terminal North***: The community benefits expected from the developer include:

- Additions to the waterfront linear park system of more than 1.8 acres. While an increase in public access to riverfront land is required by the settlement agreement, the Plan goes further:
    - Improvement of dedicated of land along the river to public use – which will be about 50 feet wide along Oronoco Bay and about 80 wide along the Potomac River. More than a public walkway, the area should function as high quality public space that will be maintained and programmed by the landowner.
    - Improvements to, repair of, and dedication of the large pier to public use. The pier is currently almost an acre; the plan shows an expanded pier that visually extends Pendleton Street and better connects the pier to the waterfront park system. The developer would be expected to create a quality public space on the pier, program and maintain it, and keep it open for visiting ships, including historic ships and ships of character.
- Restoration of a more natural shoreline, including indigenous plants.

- Improvements to the Union Street streetscape, including undergrounding of utilities, street trees and light fixtures, and other improvements to make that block of Union Street a welcoming connection between Founders Park and Oronoco Bay Park.
- The buildings and open spaces will reflect and interpret the site's key role in the history of the City of Alexandria.
- Public art must be a prominent feature as the site is an important location on the Art Walk.

***Cummings/Turner block***: The community benefits expected from the developers include:

- Restoration and adaptive reuse of the historic warehouses, with an emphasis on uses that are open to the public, especially civic and cultural uses.
- In addition to restoration of historic structures, the new buildings and open spaces will reflect and interpret the site's key role in the history of the City of Alexandria. Redevelopment must include a series of east-west alleyways between Unions Street and The Strand, for example, and buildings should reflect the City's maritime history.
- The streetscape and pedestrian experience along all four sides of the block must be enhanced with such elements as undergounding utilities, street trees, special pavement, and lighting.
- Contribute significantly to the new park across The Strand from the block.
- Include public art as a prominent feature.

***Robinson Terminal South***: The community benefits expected from the developers include:

- Additions to the waterfront linear park system of more than 1 acre, not including internal open space requirements. While an increase in public access to riverfront land is required by the settlement agreement, the Plan goes further:
    - Improvement and dedication of land along the river to public use – about 25 feet wide along the Potomac River, connecting Point Lumley Park to Roberdeau Park.
    - Improvements to, repair of, and dedication of the large pier to public use. The pier is currently almost ½ acre; the plan shows an expanded pier with pedestrian connections at each end to integrate the pier into the waterfront park system. The developer would be expected to create a quality public space on the pier, provide activities for families and children, program and maintain it, and keep it open for visiting ships, including historic ships and ships of character.
    - Conversion of the Duke and Wolfe street-ends into green public spaces.
    - A new kayak launching area at the foot of Duke Street.
- The developer will either develop a new private marina accessed from the pier or cooperate with the City to allow the development of the marina by others. The pier should continue to be able to accommodate large visiting ships, possibly even after a marina is constructed, if a marina design can accommodate them.

- Significant contributions to the interpretation of Alexandria's history at this key site, to include preservation and restoration of the historic building on the site at 2 Duke Street.
- The Marine Supply building site to be used for civic or cultural purposes, possibly related to the City's shipbuilding history, such as the Seaport Foundation or a maritime museum.
- New internal streets including east-west connections through the site from Union Street to the river and possibly a southern extension of The Strand. Improvements to all streetscapes, including undergrounding of utilities, street trees and light fixtures.
- Naturalize the shoreline with native plantings.
- Public art should be a prominent feature and the development should contribute to implementation of the Art Walk.

## Legal ramifications of zoning alternatives

### *Downzoning in general*

While the City does have the ability to consider lowering the allowable density within the W-1 Zone, there are legal restrictions on the City's ability to downzone. For example, if the City were to lower the FAR for office development on the Robinson Terminal sites, or allow only public parks or civic uses, either example would constitute a downzoning of the property.

Whether a downzoning is legally permissible depends on whether the zoning action is considered by the Court to be part of a "comprehensive" or "piecemeal" zoning action. There is no bright line test in the case law as to whether a rezoning is comprehensive or piecemeal; however, downzonings are often considered to be piecemeal and many are not upheld by the courts. If the downzoning action is considered to be part of a comprehensive plan, then the action will likely be upheld if the Court finds that the locality's reasonableness in making the decision is fairly debatable (the evidence would lead objective and reasonable persons to reach different conclusions). In Alexandria, for example, in the 1992, properties across the city were downzoned at the same time in what was considered a comprehensive rezoning of the entire city. On the other hand, when a downzoning is considered to be piecemeal, the locality has a much higher burden to meet; the new, lower zoning will be upheld only if there was fraud, a change in circumstances or a mistake in the prior zoning.

In the hypothetical case of a "downzoning" of private development sites as part of the pending Waterfront Plan, the action would be taken as part of an overall master plan discussion of the entire area. It would still likely be considered a piecemeal rezoning because most of the area is built, so only a few undeveloped sites would be affected. Zoning efforts that appear to affect a large area but effectively only apply to a small number of parcels have been considered by the courts to be a piecemeal downzoning and deemed illegal.

The Old Dominion Boat Club has asserted that the Waterfront Plan will effectively downzone their parking lot as a result of recommending a park in that location. However, the parking lot is already zoned as WPR – Waterfront Park and Recreation, which is the zone appropriate for a waterfront park. The Waterfront Plan does not recommend changing the zoning designation for the parking lot, or any elements of the WPR zone.

***Robinson Terminal Settlement Agreement***

The Waterfront Plan proposes densities that are equal to the density ceilings for the Robinson Terminal sites in the 1983 Settlement Agreement between the Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation, the City, and the Federal Government. If approved, this action would increase the densities currently permitted in the W-1 by about 90,000 square feet.

In 1992, the City Council adopted revisions to the W-1 zone that reduced potential densities to current levels and added the requirement for an SUP to maximize density. The City believes it had the right to lower the zoning (density) in 1992 as long as it remained within the Settlement Agreement cap. The Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation believes development rights for its properties are governed by the settlement agreement rather than the 1992 zoning. A court action was filed by Robinson Terminal asserting these rights, but the lawsuit was withdrawn while the Waterfront Plan process is underway. There is the possibility that a similar suit will be re-filed if an agreement cannot be reached.

# Including Hotels in the Redevelopment Options

The Waterfront Plan shows redevelopment taking place on just three sites: Robinson Terminal North, Robinson Terminal South, and the Cummings/Turner properties in the 200 block of South Union Street. These properties are already zoned for redevelopment that can include restaurants, retail, offices, housing and more.

The redevelopment sites have had the current zoning since 1992 and have not redeveloped. Redevelopment (of the terminal properties especially) is key to opening access to the river to the public and to financing desired improvements to parks and public spaces. The sites will be expensive to redevelop, in part because of their waterfront location and in part because of the high level of quality that is desired.

The Waterfront Plan's redevelopment strategy is to add guidance so that redevelopment provides the maximum benefit to the City – through direct improvements to the Waterfront and through ongoing financial (tax) support – while ensuring compatibility with our historic identity and our existing neighborhoods.

The Waterfront Plan allows a mix of uses, and a likely redevelopment scenario would see the predominant uses as residential and hotel, with about the same square footage for both (about 40-45 percent), with the remaining square footage in other uses, including restaurant, retail, and cultural. On both Robinson Terminal properties, hotel will not be the predominant use, since hotels would be capped to 150 rooms.

The Waterfront Plan does not *require* hotels. The Plan would *permit* hotels, and through design guidelines strongly encourages hotels in locations where the public should feel welcome.

- The Planning Commission's recommendations could result in a maximum of 450 hotel rooms spread over the three sites: 150 rooms at Robinson Terminal South, 150 rooms at Robinson North, and 150 rooms in the Cummings/Turner block.
    - The actual number of hotel rooms constructed will depend on many factors, including market conditions, developer interest, and public participation in the development review process.
    - If built, the hotels could yield fewer rooms than anticipated or involve smaller hotels.
- To help illustrate a potential hotel: a 150-room hotel on Robinson Terminal South would be about 90 rooms smaller than the Hotel Monaco near Market Square. The Lorien, on upper King Street, has 107 rooms.

  The Hotel Monaco and the Lorien are good neighbord: while there is cab activity at the entrance – since many hotel guests arrive and depart by cab or multi-passenger shuttle –

King Street is not congested; hotel activity does not congest the nearby sidewalks; the hotels are quiet; loading is on a side street and is unobtrusive; and the hotels appear to accommodate the parking demand it generates.

- Hotel uses have reduced impacts on traffic and parking. Hotels generate fewer trips than many other non-residential uses (such as office and retail) and these trips are spread out over the day, rather than concentrated during rush hours. Hotels also demand fewer parking spaces, as a large share of guests arrive by means other than driving a car that needs to be parked.
- If 450 hotel rooms are built, it would increase the supply of hotels in eastern Alexandria by 16 percent. Although there are 2,780 hotel rooms in Alexandria east of the Metrorail lines (including Carlyle and Eisenhower East), there are no hotels directly on the water and just one hotel within two blocks of the Potomac River.
- The recent hotel market study by W-ZHA shows that there is sufficient market to sustain existing and planned hotels in the area.
- The hotel rooms, if any, will not be built all at once, or in the same location. There is a 6-block distance between Robinson North and Robinson South, and Robinson North is likely to redevelop much earlier than Robinson South.

To build a hotel on any of the sites would require going through the DSUP process for approval, so there will be opportunities for the public to shape any specific hotel development proposal.

# Ownership of Robinson Piers

**Ownership of the Robinson Terminal Piers**

The concrete piers off of the Robinson Terminal North and Robinson Terminal South properties are owned by Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation as structures that are built within their riparian rights in the Potomac River.

# Parks and Open Space

**Completing Alexandria's waterfront linear park system**

The major focus of the Waterfront Plan is to expand, improve, and complete Alexandria's waterfront park system. The Plan achieves this goal in many ways, including:

- expansion and enhancement of existing parks
- achieving the goal of continuous public access to the water
- adding new parks, including a major new park at Point Lumley
- creating a new signature plaza at the foot of King Street ("Fitzgerald Square")
- extending public piers further into the Potomac River
- opening alley ways for enhanced physical and visual access of the river
- and converting street ends to public space. (Plan, pp. 17-19).

Chapter 3 of the Plan describes each of these public amenities in terms of their locations and features (Plan, pp. 35-82), including improvements to:

- Tide Lock Park: *adding public art, historic interpretation, and a kayak launch*
- Rivergate Park: *new landscaping, public art, and path;, a naturalized shoreline; and an enhanced location to enjoy the view*
- Oronoco Bay Park: *activities for families and children, a natural shoreline and re-creation of the historic "Ralph's Gut," historic interpretation, public art, a new boardwalk*
- Robinson Terminal North: *new public spaces along the water and on the pier, with activities, history, and art*
- Founders Park: *landscaping and shoreline improvement in keeping with its current character, historic interpretation*
- Torpedo Plaza and the Chart House/Food Court public areas: *repaired bulkhead, greatly improved pedestrian connection and visitor experience, an outdoor expression of the Torpedo Factory Art Center.*
- The foot of King Street: *a new public plaza – "Fitzgerald Square."*
- Waterfront Park: *activities for families and children, a stage, and a restored Beachcomber.*
- Point Lumley Park: *Greatly expanded and designed to highlight the City's shipbuilding history*
- Robinson Terminal South: *new public spaces along the water and on the pier, with activities, history, and art*

- Windmill Hill Park: *completion of the adopted park plan, including shoreline improvements and bulkhead repair.*

Expanding the public realm is not only a key principle of the Plan, but it is also one that builds on past planning efforts for the waterfront. A central theme of those initiatives, and this current one, is to complete the last missing pieces in the long-planned linear park that provides three miles of continuous public access to the water from Daingerfield Island to Jones Point.

Redevelopment of Robinson Terminal North and South will eliminate the two greatest physical barriers to completing the linear park system. Completing the City's purchase of the parking lot in the 200 block of The Strand and converting it into a park will eliminate the third major gap.

The initiative to expand, improve and complete the City's waterfront park system has multiple dimensions:

- Increasing Alexandria's connection to the water and to nature, by naturalizing the shoreline and other park improvements inspired by environmental sustainability and by creating new ways to get into and out over the water.
- Increasing Alexandria's connection to its history all along the waterfront, highlighting key eras, stories and people through a variety of interpretation approaches as well as a new history/culture anchor in The Strand.
- Increasing Alexandria's connection to art by implementing the multi-faceted Art Walk proposal.

**Beachcomber Restoration and the Open Space Plan**

In furtherance of the City's Open Space Plan, the City Council adopted a list of priority sites for acquisition in 2004, with immediate priority assigned to those properties that would help complete the Open Space Plan's goal of providing continuous open space/park access along the waterfront – a goal shared by the Plan. The Beachcomber/Potomac Arms building is a 3,660 square foot former restaurant building built in 1950's at the corner of The Strand and Prince Streets; it was acquired in 2005, along with one-third of The Strand parking lot to its south, from dedicated Open Space Fund monies as one of the priority acquisition sites. Later in 2006, the City acquired another property on The Strand to help complete more of the waterfront corridor. The remaining adjacent properties in the 200 block of The Strand are on the City's priority list to be acquired for this purpose (middle and far south end of The Strand parking lot).

During the waterfront planning process, interest has been expressed in the public and by the private sector in restoring the Beachcomber/Potomac Arms building as a restaurant or other use if found to be economically viable (Plan, pp. 73-74). Because the City utilized Open Space Fund monies to acquire this building, the revenues to the City from the use of the property for non-open space or related uses should accrue to the Open Space Fund. Page 74 of the Plan currently states that revenues to the City from a commercial use purchased with Open Space Fund should contribute toward the acquisition of additional waterfront public space and/or toward maintenance of waterfront public spaces. The language will be amended to delete the reference to maintenance as that is not an allowed use of Open Space Fund monies.

# History and Art

**Incorporating Alexandria's History into the Waterfront**

History is the foundation of the Waterfront Plan. Alexandria's history is incorporated extensively in the Plan – beginning with the broad policy goals that guide the plan, extending throughout the Plan with individual recommendations for historic interpretation, and concluding with the comprehensive *Alexandria Waterfront History Plan* prepared by the Alexandria Archaeology Commission.

Specific ways the Plan adopts the recommendation of the *Alexandria Waterfront History Plan* for historic interpretation in nearly every location along the waterfront:

- Adding historic ships and emphasizing the City's maritime history, making shipbuilding the key theme of an expanded Point Lumley Park,
- Expressing the City's historic shoreline in multiple and creative ways,
- Re-creating historic alleyways,
- Greater use of historic names,
- Restoring all the historic buildings and opening them to the public,
- Identifying locations for a history center and other cultural anchors and identifying funds for implementation,
- Using a variety of approaches including public art "to connect Alexandrians with the people, stories and events of our past." (Plan, p. 27).

Guidance for the use of signage in support of historic interpretation is on pages 33 – 34 of the Alexandria Waterfront History Plan. This section states *"The History Plan simplifies and minimizes signage. Displays should be enough to give the interested reader a familiarity with the City, its unique story and its connection to the American Experience through a combination of wayside interpretive signs, markers, text, graphics, quotes and artwork."*

While the Plan adopts virtually all of the *Alexandria Waterfront History Plan* recommendations, City staff also requested that the history community review the draft plan and offer suggestions for making the Plan's support of history even stronger. The Alexandria Archaeology Commission proposed additional language, which was incorporated into the Plan by the Planning Commission.

One key change is to strengthen the commitment of the Plan to a History/Cultural Anchor in the southern part of the waterfront whereby a history center or museum would be located along with other historic amenities. The original draft Plan unequivocally supported the history center/cultural anchor concept; the revisions strengthen that support by clarifying that the $3.6 million contemplated for a civic building could be used for the history center or museum or applied in other ways to implement the history center/cultural anchor concept.

## Incorporating Public Art into the Waterfront

The Waterfront Plan endorses the Art Walk proposal (Plan, page 27) and finds opportunities to strengthen that endorsement thought the Plan. The Waterfront Plan, in concert with the Art Walk concept, designates the area north of Canal Center as *Gateway North*, where the Art Walk will begin. The theme for this area is *Illumination* which inspires the use of light as art that also evokes the history of this area in the generation of electricity. Lighting is repeatedly used for artistic expression and historic interpretation in the Art Walk and History Plan proposals.

# Plan Implementation

**Certainty of Plan Implementation**

The Plan contains numerous recommendations for waterfront improvements, including addressing frequent flooding, bringing the City's history back to the waterfront, repairing failing bulkheads, filling in the remaining gaps in the linear park system and adding an Art Walk, creating new parks and open spaces, restoring historic buildings and improving the marina area.

The Plan's recommendations come in two forms:

- Benefits realized through the development process – paid for by private development, and
- Improvements implemented by the City.

The Waterfront Plan adds certainty to the implementation process by (1) making it clear what developers need to contribute in public benefits, (2) ensuring that the development review process gives the City the ability to require significant public benefits from new developments, (3) establishing development densities and uses with low neighborhood impacts and high potential for significant development contributions, and (4) ensuring that the City has the long term resources to complete the waterfront improvements and maintain them.

1. Clearly identifying public benefits expected from private development:
    - Major investments in new open space, including two new major public spaces out over the water on the Robinson Terminal piers
    - Contributions to the new parks and buildings that will showcase Alexandria's history and culture.
    - Contribute to the implementation of the Waterfront History Plan, including preservation and restoration of all historic buildings
    - Contribute to the implementation of the Art Walk.
    - Requirements for exceptional site and building design that reflect Alexandria's history and are in harmony with Old Town's character.
2. Ensuring that the development review process gives the City the ability to require significant public benefits from new developments.
    - The revised language for the W-1 zone requires new development to meet the Plan's requirements – the development goals and guidelines – including those for contributions to on- and off-site improvements.
    - Virtually all development would be required to go through multiple reviews, including BAR review and the Special Use Permit process. The Special Use Permit process allows for considerable public involvement and gives the City a strong position when negotiating with developers.

- The Plan greatly strengthens the existing SUP process for proposed waterfront development and when new uses, such as restaurants or hotels, are proposed. The proposed Policy for Restaurant/Hotel/Commercial Uses details all of the reviews that must be conducted before a project can be approved. These ensure neighborhood compatibility and consistency with the adopted plan.

3. Establishing development densities and uses with low neighborhood impacts and high potential for significant development contributions:
    - The Plan changes densities on the Robinson Terminal sites to the ceilings in the 1982 agreement with the National Park Service and the City with the expectation that much of the value of the additional density will go toward implementing the Plan.
    - The settlement agreement densities add 160,000 square feet of development to what is permitted now. That 160,000 square feet is very valuable, and a portion of that value should come back to the City in the form of contributions toward implementing the Plan.
    - The City now has a record of seeking developer contributions by examining a project's financial considerations to calculate a contribution that is as large as possible but still financially feasible and fair to all parties. The North Potomac Yard plan, with its very high level of developer contributions to public benefits (including a new Metro station) is a recent example.
4. Ensuring that the City has the long term resources to complete the waterfront improvements and maintain them:
    - The Plan limits the list of publicly funded improvements – as well as annual maintenance – so that the total cost is affordable over the 25 year life of the Plan.
    - The Plan balances expected costs with a net increase in tax revenue from new development. This is over and above any contributions made by private development that are a condition of approval.
    - At buildout, new development would contribute about $3.8 million (in 2011 dollars) per year in new tax revenues to the City. Some or all of the increment of new taxes generated by development could be set aside by the City, if directed by Council, to help pay for community benefits. This has been done in the Braddock Road and Potomac Yard Plans.

**Public Involvement in Plan Implementation**

The many stakeholders who have been active in developing the Waterfront Plan will have many opportunities to stay involved after the Plan is adopted.

Public involvement is an integral element of the reviews of proposed development or land use, as well as the planning for any major public project. In addition, successful Plan implementation will be sustained through one or more implementation advisory groups. It has been the City's practice to establish advisory groups to help guide plan implementation, prioritize CIP improvements, and to keep stakeholders involved even after a plan is adopted.

On page 134, the Plan notes: *"An important implementation step is developing an effective model that continues to marshal the high level of interest and expertise of waterfront stakeholders, and identifies additional leadership and financial resources to support the Plan's objectives. Both the history and art communities, through the papers attached to this Plan as appendices, call for establishment of a non-profit entity with the mission of implementing the Plan. While their suggestion focuses on the implementation of the history and art elements of the Plan, there will be an equivalent need for leadership in supporting the parks and waterside elements of the Plan."*

The history and arts communities signaled their intention to continue work on implementing the Public Art Proposal and the Waterfront History Plan, and have requested that the Plan formally endorse that effort, which the Plan now does.

Page 134 further notes: "*. . . that an implementation advisory model be explored, including the potential establishment of one or more committees charged with elements of the Plan implementation and/or operations. The Waterfront Committee will be part of any implementation equation*."

The Plan also calls for an advisory group to be established to develop the Parking Implementation Plan and monitor the progress of the elements of the parking strategy. In that regard, the Plan notes that *Old Town residents have suggested that an oversight body be established to manage parking and traffic initiatives and to manage public spaces and programming*. (Plan, pp. 120-121; p. 134).

**Attachment 3**

# Alexandria Waterfront
## *DRAFT* Small Area Plan

# Summary

City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
703.746.4666

***Waterfront Core Illustrative Plan (North Section)***

***Waterfront Core Illustrative Plan (South Section)***

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 Waterfront History Plan – Alexandria, a Living History (Waterfront History Plan),* prepared by the Waterfront History Committee of the Alexandria Archaeology Commission, and the *Alexandria Waterfront Public Art Proposal (Public Art Proposal),* 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.

**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.

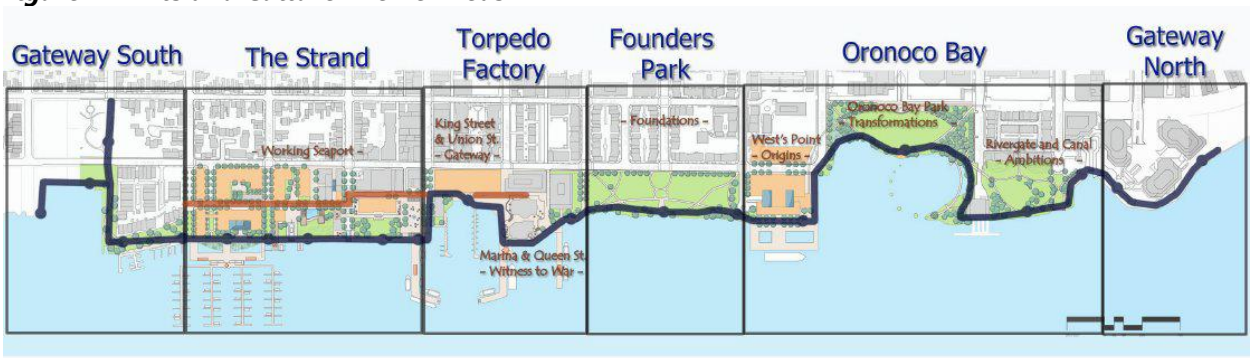
**Planning Process**

- 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***




Based on recommendations in the Waterfront History Plan and the Public Art Proposal, 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 Waterfront History Plan and Public Art Proposal but it also includes each plan in its entirety as Appendices 5 and 6, respectively.

***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 a redesigned Waterfront Park, the combined public space will total 1.8 acres (78,500 sq. ft.), or approximately 29% 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, and will be enlivened with active uses along its western edge. A restored Beachcomber 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 in the Core Area***

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Current Public Space | 2.3 acres |
| Plan Implemented Public Space | 1.8 acres |
| Other New Public Space | 1.2 acres |
| Public Space from Private Redevelopment | 2.5 acres |
| Total Net Gain | 5.5 acres |
| Total Public Space | 7.8 acres |

***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 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).

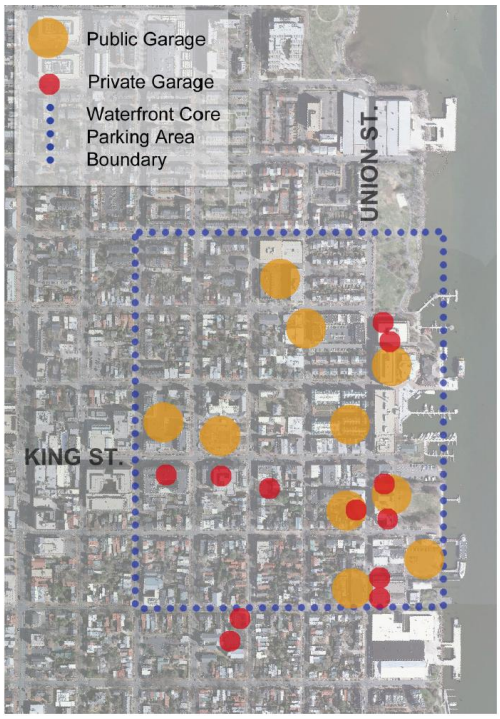
***Table 2 – Private Redevelopment Sites – Density and Height Analysis***

| Private Development Sites | | | Settlement (1983) | | | Currently Allowed | | | Proposed (2011 Plan) | | | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Site | Land Area | Existing Development | Development | FAR | Max Height | Development | FAR | Max Height | Development | FAR | Max Height | Currently Allowed vs Proposed |
| | sq. ft. | sq. ft. | sq. ft. | | ft. | sq. ft. | | | sq. ft. | | ft. | sq. ft. |
| **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)** | **62,380** | **70,732** | | | | **124,760** | **2.0** | **50** | **187,140** | **3.0** | **50** | **62,380** |
| **Total** | **367,257** | | | | | **647,449** | | | **806,485** | | | **159,036** |

***Table 3 – Off Street Parking***

| | 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*** |

***Figure 2 – Off Street Parking Locations***




***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 (Off Street Parking) reflects the existing off street parking capacity and potential capacity. For the waterfront, the most important finding of the recent Old Town 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.

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.

***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.

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 $50 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."

Additional work is under way to detail strategies for phasing revenues and expenditures in an optimal way. 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.*