

KING STREET PARK AT THE WATERFRONT: TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART EXHIBITION

PROJECT PLAN FOR PILOT PROJECT

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I. Introduction

The City of Alexandria’s Public Art Implementation Plan outlined a vision and goals for the public art program and established three Creative Directions: Time and Place, Neighborhood Identity, and Urban and Natural Systems.

The Plan also sets out a process for the commissioning of new public art. For each project approved in the Annual Public Art Work Plan, the Commission for the Arts appoints a Public Art Project Task Force to advise on the entire project development process. The staff and the Project Task Force develop a Project Plan that sets out the project goals, artist selection process, budget, timeline and communications strategy. The Project Task Force then selects an artist, through a process set out in the Project Plan. The artist develops a concept, which is then approved by the Project Task Force and the Commission for the Arts.

This document is the Project Plan for the first, or pilot, temporary sculpture exhibition at King Street Park at the Waterfront.

II. Site and Context

King Street Park at the Waterfront is the working name for a new public plaza at the foot of King Street, which was called out in the City’s Waterfront Plan. The plaza encompasses 1 & 2 King Street, and the existing King Street Park, totaling about one acre of land. It is adjacent to, but does not include, Waterfront Park.

The overall concept for King Street Park at the Waterfront and other waterfront public spaces was approved in 2014, but it may be a decade or more before the planned flood mitigation infrastructure is in place and the permanent plaza can be constructed. When the Old Dominion Boat Club relocates to a new facility at the foot of Prince Street, the City will create an “interim” public space that can be enjoyed until construction begins on the permanent plaza. The project is being led by the City’s Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, along with the City’s Department of Project Implementation. The Commission for the Arts and the Waterfront Commission serve as advisory bodies.

The interim King Street Park at the Waterfront design calls for a Promenade walkway of crushed granite that runs along the Potomac River, connecting walkways to the north and south of the park; the Marina Terrace, with a large shade structure, movable tables and chairs, and crushed granite surface; the Center Green, an open lawn space; the River Terrace area closer to the Potomac with synthetic turf; and an asphalt plaza with trees in planter boxes. It is anticipated that the plaza will be used both for passive enjoyment and for programming with performance, festivals, food trucks and, potentially, an ice skating rink in the winter.

King Street Park at the Waterfront is sited at the base of King Street, the main commercial street in historic Old Town Alexandria, with popular shops, restaurants, hotels and other destinations. The creation of the plaza will create new views from King Street to the Potomac River, and with that the potential for a work of art that serves as a visual focal point. According to City staff, restaurateurs plan to take advantage of the plaza by creating outdoor seating and otherwise opening up their facades to address the new public space.

III. Goals

The Alexandria Public Art Program is interested in commissioning artists to create a site-specific, temporary work of art for King Street Park at the Waterfront that will be on display for up to twelve months.

The program goals of the King Street Park at the Waterfront Temporary Exhibition are to:

- Amplify Alexandria’s reputation as an of-the-moment arts destination on the water with a new work of art that captures the public’s imagination and is unlike anything else you can experience in the region.
- Highlight King Street Park at the Waterfront as a new civic space that gives prominence to the location where the mercantile city meets the river.
- Bring a new work of art to Alexandria that is informed by the context of the site.
- Foster engagement and interaction with a contemporary work of art on Alexandria’s historic waterfront.
- Attract visitors to experience a dramatic, visually compelling and unique work of art.
- Encourage repeat visits with work that changes between day and night or through the seasons.

In addition, the Public Art Program has identified the following internal goals related to the project:

- Take advantage of the interim nature of the site to test out different approaches to public art for this location.
- Create a signature exhibition that raises awareness of the City’s public art program.
- Accommodate plaza programming and other plaza uses.

IV. Selection Process

For the *King Street Park at the Waterfront Temporary Exhibition* pilot project, the Office of the Arts has engaged Meridith McKinley of the consulting firm Via Partnership, working with Todd W. Bressi, to facilitate artist selection and manage the overall project.

King Street Park at the Waterfront Task Force

The *King Street Park at the Waterfront* Task Force helps shape the Project Plan for the exhibition and recommends selection of artist(s) and approval of concept(s).

The two Commission for the Arts representatives on the *King Street Park at the Waterfront* Task Force are:

- Alison Nance
- Susan Cohen

The Community Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Claire Mouledoux, Visit Alexandria

- Clint Mansell, Principle Gallery

Project Stakeholders from the Department of Project Implementation and the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities for the Task Force include:

- Jack Browand, Division Chief, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Anthony Gammon, Deputy Director, Department of Project Implementation

Artist Selection Process and Concept Approval

An invitational process will be used to select artists for the *King Street Park at the Waterfront Temporary Exhibition* Pilot Project.

Based upon the approved Project Plan, the Office of the Arts, working with its project consultants, will draft a Call to Artists. This call will be sent to a short-list of artists developed by the Office of the Arts, the project consultants, and the Task Force. Interested artists will be invited to submit a letter of interest and qualifications.

The Task Force will review the letters of interest and qualifications and recommend an artist for the project. The Task Force will have the option of selecting two artists, one for an installation in 2019 and one for an installation in 2020. The selected artist/s will be approved by the Commission for the Arts.

The selected artist/s will develop Concept Proposal/s in collaboration with the Office of the Arts staff, consultants and other partners. The Concept Proposal/s will include a rendering, narrative description, fabrication methods, budget and timeline. The Concept Proposal/s will be reviewed for feedback by the Task Force. The Concept Proposal/s will be approved by Commission for the Arts prior to execution.

V. Timeline

November 2017	Task Force reviews and approves Project Plan.
December 2017	Project Plan submitted to Commission for the Arts for approval. Task Force members recommend names for artist invitation. Final list submitted to Task Force for review.
January 2018	Issue Call for Artists to invited list.
March 2018	Review qualifications and select artist.
April 2018	Artist contract.
May 2018	Artist site visit.
August 2018	Selected artist presents proposal.
August 2018	Proposals approved by Task Force, Commission for the Arts.
Sept 2018	Anticipated opening of King Street Park at the Waterfront
Nov 2018	Artist submits final design for technical review
March – Nov 2019	Exhibition

VI. Budget

From Public Art Fund	
Artist design, fabrication & installation	\$80,000
Contingency	\$8,000
Programming & communications (specific to the public art project)	\$12,000
Total	\$100,000

VII. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications

Community engagement, marketing and communications should be geared toward engaging with existing stakeholders as well as bringing new audiences to experience the artwork.

Stakeholders

Community engagement, marketing and communications should build upon the existing stakeholder base for art and tourism in Alexandria and the stakeholders in Old Town and along the waterfront. These will include, but may not be limited to, representatives from:

- *King Street Park at the Waterfront* Task Force members
- Commission for the Arts
- Visit Alexandria
- The Torpedo Factory
- Waterfront Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
- Old Town Civic Association

Marketing and Communications

The Office of the Arts staff will develop a marketing and communications strategy that will include:

- Web-based information about the exhibition.
- Social media announcements about specific events.
- Print materials about the exhibition to be distributed at local tourist information areas.
- Media releases to local and national publications and blogs.
- Print and/or online advertising in local and regional publications.
- Micro-targeted online / social media advertising.

VIII. Evaluation

The Office of the Arts should conduct an evaluation to learn more about the audience for the project and their reaction to it. The primary purpose of the evaluation should be to help the Office of the Arts plan future projects and marketing. The secondary purpose, to the extent the data allows, should be to determine if public art drives tourism to the waterfront. The evaluation should not consider economic impact as those studies involve data collection and analysis techniques that require far more resources than available for this project.

These issues should be considered in an evaluation:

- Audience demographics.
- How did visitors learn about the project?
- First time or repeat visitor to the project? To the site?
- What is their impression of the installation?
- How does public art impact their experience of the waterfront?
- Previous awareness of Alexandria's public art program?
- Would they like to follow the public art program?
- Did they come specifically to see the art on the waterfront?
- Would they attend future public art projects in this location?
- Would they attend future public art projects elsewhere in the city?

Given the resources available, a partnership with a university, such as Virginia Tech architecture and planning faculty, will be sought for assistance in developing and implementing the evaluation.

In addition, a questionnaire should solicit feedback from the Task Force and the artist on the overall project development process.