Art and History Waterfront Report

Art and History Waterfront Plans Implementation Committee
Bird’s Eye View of Alexandria, Virginia

Charles Magnus, publisher, circa 1863
Goals

• Tell the story of the waterfront in art and words.

• Create an authentic waterfront, grounded in the City’s history.

• Make Alexandria widely known as an arts and history destination.

• Preserve the shoreline as a vibrant waterfront that lives in the present and vividly expresses the past.
Key Elements of the Waterfront

1. Pedestrian Path
2. Cultural Areas
3. Thematic Walks
4. Cultural Anchors
5. Living Shoreline
1. Pedestrian Path
Establish the Pedestrian Path as the unifying element of the Waterfront

Confluence Project, Maya Lin, Cape Disappointment, Washington
Inscribe quotations of historic relevance on the Pedestrian Path: Ensure that all aspects along the path-art, architecture, landscaping, signage-tell the story of the waterfront: its history, its inhabitants and its resources

Confluence Project, Maya Lin, Cape Disappointment, Washington
Lighting should be energy-efficient and uniform as to type, size, wattage, and location.

Holmbridge Footbridge to the Hunter Museum, Chattanooga, TN
2. Cultural Areas
Tell the narrative of Alexandria by emphasizing the Cultural Areas along the waterfront.
“The first locomotive belched smoke and cinders and the shrill of its whistle could be heard as it chugged down Union Street to the Wilkes Street tunnel”

*Seaport Saga* by William F. Smith and T. Michael Miller

Workers straightening the rails for the Wilkes Street tunnel, 1856, National Archives
Recall the history of Founders Park by recognizing Fishtown and the lumberyard that were there.
Re-establish the historic Ralph’s Gut in which plants, rocks, and water interact in a natural way.
Design a welcoming symbol for Alexandria for the base of King Street

King Street Ferry Arch, Alexandria Library, William Smith Collection
Alexandria’s Wayfinding System

Furnishings such as benches, tables and trash containers should be of artistic design

Bench by Jeppe Hein
3. Thematic Walks
Example of a Thematic Walk- War Comes to Alexandria
Historic witnesses of war.
Torpedo factory workers and torpedo: Alexandria Library, Special Collections

Using art to interpret history.
Cobblestone-size medallions appropriate to the Thematic Walks on the Pedestrian Path.
Delineate the original Crescent Bay
Eleven Minute Line, Maya Lin, Wanas Foundation, Sweden
4. Cultural Anchors
Establish three cultural anchors along the waterfront-performing arts in Oronoco Bay and Robinson Terminal North, visual arts in the Torpedo Factory and a museum devoted to Alexandria’s history in The Strand area.
Establish an amphitheater in Oronoco Bay Park as the basis for an outdoor cultural anchor
Establish an outdoor cultural anchor in Oronoco Bay Park with a Boxcar Theater
An example of a history and cultural center utilizing traditional warehouses.

Waterfront Art Center, Scandinavia
5. Living Shoreline
Bring people to the water’s edge to interact with the river beside them

Elizabeth Poole, Drawings in the Water, Noosa, Queensland, Australia
Emphasize the river and water in the design of the site and its surroundings

Fountain, WET Design, Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY
Ensure that the waterfront parks provide enjoyment and pleasant surprises for people of all ages
Artistic interpretations along the river’s edge of Alexandria’s history in glass-making.
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