The Office of Historic Alexandria

City Council Strategic Plan

Goal 7
The Office of Historic Alexandria is responsible for the stewardship and promotion of the historic City through the preservation of the City's historic and archaeological sites, artifacts and records, and for the use of these resources in accordance with professional standards, scholarship and museum procedures.
What OHA is doing today (current dept work) that pertains to the goal.

The Office of Historic Alexandria operates seven separate museum/historic sites facilities serving more than 140,000 persons annually. These institutions provide educational and interpretive activities for lifelong learners, including both residents and visitors to the City, through a wide variety of school and lifelong learning programs, changing exhibits, and special event opportunities. OHA also maintains the City’s Archives and Records Center, Archaeological Code requirements, and extensive collections of historic artifacts, furnishings, fine and decorative arts. In addition to day-to-day operational duties, OHA also acts to promote and develop tourism initiatives, public history resources, and assists other City departments with inter-departmental planning and review, as well as providing staff support to four commissions.
Friendship Firehouse
The Lyceum
Alexandria Black History Museum
Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site
Alexandria Archaeology Museum
Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum
Gadsby's Tavern Museum
Exhibits

The Museums offer both permanent and changing exhibits for visitors to enjoy and learn about our community's history.
Collections

The Office of Historic Alexandria maintains and preserves important objects that are acquired by the museums and historic sites. We make these available to the public as often as possible.
Educational Initiatives

The Office of Historic Alexandria offers school and life-long learners the opportunity to participate in educational enrichment, outreach experiences, field trips, lectures, and other media resources.
Museum Shops

Revenues earned from Museum Shops and online shop sales support OHA activities. Each shop offers unique and collectible items, books, etc.

Tickets for special events can also be purchased online.
Rentals and Special Events

Many Office of Historic Alexandria sites are available to rent for weddings, parties, receptions, meetings and other special events. The funds that are earned is used toward the maintenance and preservation of the historic sites and buildings.
The Archives and Records Center manages the records created by the City of Alexandria’s government agencies, preserves the archival or historical documents of these agencies, and ensures that these documents are available for public research. The Archives and Records Center must comply with the Virginia Public Records Act.
Alexandria Archaeology

- Maintains City’s Archaeology Code and site plan development review.
- OHA Archaeology staff and volunteers work with citizens and developers to locate sites important to the City’s past, and excavate them when necessary.
- Professional OHA archaeological practices work to discover, preserve and study the tangible remains of our community’s heritage.
Staff support to four City Commissions

Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Alexandria Historical Restoration & Preservation Commission

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

Public Records Advisory Commission
Contrabands & Freedmen’s Cemetery

Native American site dating to 13,000 years ago

Civil War cemetery from 1864-1869

Buildings demolished, site excavated 2007-2008

Memorial park to open 2011
Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site
Public History Resource
• Cultural and heritage visitors typically stay longer than business or leisure travelers

• Cultural and heritage visitors spend nearly twice the current average expenditure of other travelers
Tourism Initiatives

Ask Alex? Dial 703-229-8632
Reenactments and Living History
On May 12, 1909, a large fire broke out at Smoot Lumber at Union and Cameron streets. Originating at the planing mill near Lee Street, the fire caused an estimated $500,000 in damage. Firefighters drafted water from the Potomac River to help put out the blaze.
Interdepartmental Planning and Review
Priorities and Key Issues for next 3 Years

• Achieve accreditation from the American Association of Museums for all OHA museums, as a municipal “Museum System” and maintain AAM standards of maintenance and staff support at all facilities;

• Complete or continue work on Alexandria Historic Preservation Management Plan, authorized by City Council in 2008, and continue expansion of innovative heritage tourism initiatives, to maintain and enhance economic sustainability throughout the City;

• Develop new (and increase current) grants, retail, incidental and special event revenue programs to provide additional non-City support to supplement City funding while maintaining museum admission affordability and membership programs;
• Develop new museum exhibits and programs to serve Alexandria’s newest and increasingly diverse immigrant populations, and expand base of historical knowledge of all Alexandria neighborhoods and urban villages to generate increased awareness of the heritage of the entire City.

• Develop Civil War Sesquicentennial Programs and Reenactment Events, throughout the City of Alexandria, in conjunction with other regional Civil War committees and Virginia State Commission on the Civil War Sesquicentennial;

• Continue historical research and archaeological investigation at Fort Ward Park and Contrabands and Freedmen’s Cemetery, including Native American, Civil War and African American cultural resources.
• Increase technological abilities through point of sale, collections and fund raising software, and complete redevelopment, enhancement and expansion of content of OHA departmental website;

• Study and develop OHA capital project restoration/preservation needs for long-term planning, and identify space needs for long-term storage at Archives and Records Center/Historical Collections facility.
Thank you for your interest in the Office of Historic Alexandria

www.historicalexandria.org