



KING STREET RETAIL STRATEGY

*As approved by City Council
June, 2005*

*King Street
Retail Strategy*

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

King Street is one of America's most renowned streets. Travel guides encourage Capital Region tourists to experience Old Town's King Street and its unique historic ambiance. Residents throughout the metropolitan area and tourists alike come to King Street to shop, dine and participate in an authentic American historic town. Old Town is a living example of early American urban planning with a unique retail street surrounded by some of the nation's most desirable vintage residential neighborhoods.

With these positive attributes, King Street is clearly in a strong market position. Given this enviable position, the question remains: Why study King Street's retail sector? This King Street Retail Strategy is not a "plan" in the traditional sense. King Street is generally a built-out area, and given the historic context, major land use or building form changes are not anticipated. Rather the intent is to gain an understanding of the forces that are influencing the future, and based upon this process, identify a vision for King Street. Physical, governmental, economic and management strategies are proposed to assure that King Street will continue its history of revitalization and remain a vital, thriving, commercial area and the preeminent historical "Main Street" in the country. Further, defining the vision for King Street provides an understanding of the future and assurances for the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Old Town has evolved incrementally over the years from a seaport community serving the commercial needs of the region to Alexandria's primary retail area with King Street as its signature tourist attraction. The rebirth of Old Town and King Street began at the Potomac River waterfront, was spurred by the redevelopment and implementation of new civic facilities in the 1970s, anchored at the opposite end by the King Street Metro Station in the early 1980s, and continues today as sections of the street are revitalized with new infill, restoration and commercial life. King Street has always looked forward and evolved according to changing markets and economics, while at the same time

preserving its history and culture. The King Street Retail Strategy is part of a tradition of looking forward while preserving the past.

While King Street is alive and well, its future is by no means assured. The Street's retail vitality is threatened by significant events that affect travel and visitation, as well as by new competition in the region. The events of September 11, 2001 and the temporary closing of Reagan National Airport all significantly reduced visitation to the Capital Region and to Alexandria. At the same time major improvements to Washington, DC's Georgetown district and the development of new retail/entertainment complexes in Shirlington, Clarendon, Ballston, Pentagon City and Bethesda all contribute new competition and challenges for King Street. Indeed, as King Street continues to add new restaurants and retail, it too creates its own competition. For King Street to maintain its edge as a desirable retail district, there must be a thorough understanding of the factors that influence its future and, through creative planning, create a common vision of what must be done to safeguard a continued bright future.

THE VISION FOR KING STREET

The Vision for King Street is one that looks forward and enhances the existing environment to ensure an attractive, vital pedestrian place serving local residents and visitors alike. King Street is the historical, cultural and retail/commercial focus of Alexandria—an inviting, active street that builds upon the traditional small town planning and historic architectural character with its close relationship between the residential and commercial communities.

The key to King Street is its "streetscape," comprised of the physical attributes and the lively activity within the public open space that is physically defined by the buildings, or "streetwall," that line the street and define the "public realm." The elements of the streetscape include the handsome brick sidewalks; the regularly placed street trees and other landscaping; the street

furniture in the form of benches, street lights, bicycle racks, refuse containers; the graphics that identify, direct, control and celebrate activities; the vehicular way; the on-street parking; the public and private buildings and the activities and displays that occur within the street and in the shops with their continuous row of show windows. All of the above elements work together to create a people-oriented, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly place.

Retail uses or other active uses with decorative show windows along the street are required on the ground floor to ensure activity and visual interest for the pedestrian along the street. Full use of the upper floors of the buildings is encouraged to support the vitality of the street. Office uses on the upper levels are encouraged to provide daytime pedestrian activity and support of the retail and restaurants; residential uses are also included to encourage nighttime patronage of the restaurants and retail and provide residential lights on the street at night.

The historic districts, design guidelines and a well-thought-out review process ensure that King Street will continue to capitalize upon its proud history as a waterfront commercial community. The Strategy recommends the preparation and implementation of a new waterfront plan that will anchor the eastern end of King Street and create a people-oriented park that will open the shoreline of the Potomac River for all to experience.

To ensure ease of access, a coordinated parking program is combined with an entertaining, yet efficient, transit system to enhance the visitor experience and minimize impacts on the residential community. The coordinated program will create full utilization of all of the public and private parking garages to ensure maximum availability of the traditional on-street parking. Valet parking will become more prevalent as the process of implementation is made easier. Transit in the form of “fun” type vehicles with a distinct character will provide frequent service from the Metro and the adjacent Carlyle

district to lessen the need for the automobile.

The Vision for King Street is expressed in the Strategy through a series of Guiding Principles that outline what should occur in the physical improvements and operational management of King Street. The Guiding Principles are organized in the following chapters:

- Urban Design
- Land Use
- Parking
- Transit
- Waterfront
- Strategy Implementation

The Strategy also provides Planning Recommendations that outline strategic initiatives designed to implement or achieve the intent of the Guiding Principles. The recommendations will be prioritized and implemented depending on the available manpower and funding over time. The recommendations outlined in this Strategy are to be implemented by the City and through the creation of a management partnership between the community and the City.

The City will be responsible for the prioritizing and implementing of recommendations that fall within its traditional responsibilities for King Street; however, the responsibility for implementing other recommendations will be identified once the determination of the format, scope and role of a new management partnership for King Street has been defined. The new management entity identified in this Strategy is termed the King Street Partnership. The formation of this Partnership and the identification of the potential for supplemental funding should be the next step in the planning process. The attributes and recommendations for the formation of the King Street Partnership are described in Chapter 9 (Strategy Implementation) of this document.

INTRODUCTION

THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Vision for King Street is one that is important to both the residential and the commercial/retail communities. The historic urban pattern of development brings the two communities together and requires both communities to live together in mutual harmony. The Vision for King Street provides a balance for both the residential and the commercial communities.

The Strategy provides the Commercial Community with:

- A long-term Vision for a vibrant, retail King Street that can maintain and grow its competitive position in the region, and thus ensure the vitality and health of the street and the area in spite of the growing competition;
- A roadmap for what King Street will look like in the future, including an enhanced streetscape and additional capital improvements;
- Updated zoning and city regulations that reflect the needs of a successful retail street;
- Guidelines for successful storefronts and streetscape;
- A management/operational structure that will give the private sector a strong voice in the operations, capital improvements and maintenance of the Street; and
- A strategy to coordinate parking and transit resources that will enhance access and keep King Street competitive over time.

The Strategy provides the Residential Community with:

- An enhanced King Street as the historical, cultural and retail focus of Alexandria that can sustain and improve itself during a period of growing competition;
- Assurance that changes to King Street will occur within the established traditional town character, while assuring a synergistic relationship with the residential community;

- An attractive, vital pedestrian place serving locals and visitors alike—an inviting and active street;
- A unique retail environment with retail activity on the ground floor and office and residential uses on the upper floors to provide day and evening activity;
- Additional residential on King Street to provide more balance between the commercial and residential uses;
- A community that will capitalize upon the history in general and the waterfront history in particular;
- An assurance of creative operation and management of the street; and
- A coordinated parking and transportation program that will enhance the visitor experience while minimizing the impact on the residential community.

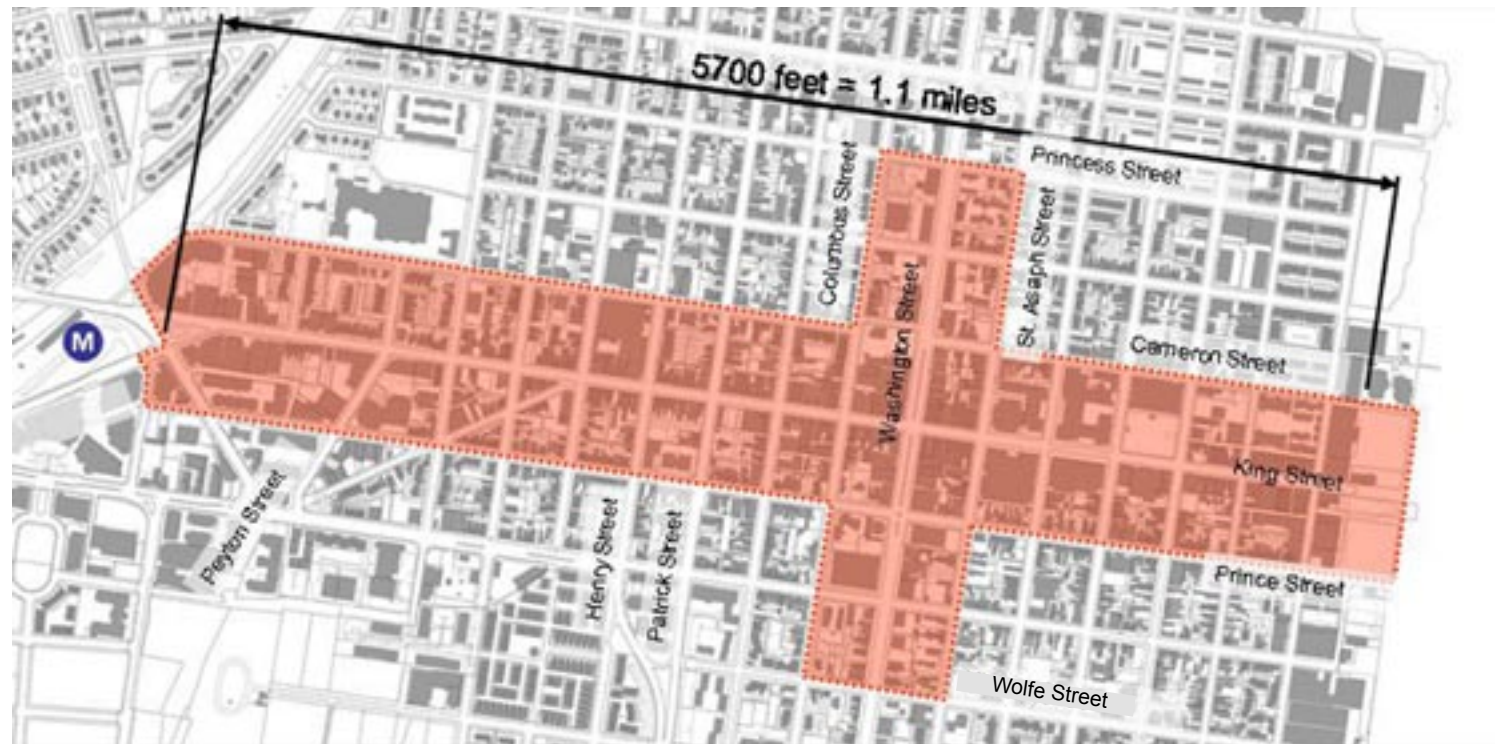


FIGURE I.1 - *Study Boundaries*

PLANNING AREA

Boundaries were established for the Retail Strategy to focus on King Street, and at the same time assure that businesses on the intersecting streets, along Prince and Cameron Streets and the major parking reservoirs are also represented. Figure 1.1 documents the study boundaries that extend from the waterfront to the King Street Metro Station and include all blocks between Prince Street and Cameron Street. In addition, the 100 to 300 blocks of North and South Washington Street are included, due to the importance of Washington Street from both a retail and a traffic standpoint to Old Town's retail vitality.

PLANNING PROCESS

A community-based planning process was designed to involve a broad spectrum of the community in identifying a preferred future for King Street. Because King Street is often regarded as the heart of Alexandria, this planning process needed to be as inclusive as possible; in many ways, all citizens of the City have a stake in King Street's future. A number of experienced consultants were engaged by the City including urban planners, real estate market and economic advisors and transportation/parking consultants. The consultants worked closely with the staff of Planning & Zoning and other City departments to create a planning team.

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To gain community input, City staff and consultants interviewed local businesspeople and property owners, completed on-street intercept questionnaires and surveyed businesses. In addition, valuable input and advice was provided by the King Street Advisory Committee, a 27-member group representing businesses, property owners, residents and community organizations.

The planning was conducted in essentially three phases, Data Gathering and Analysis, Alternative Concepts and Strategy Refinement:

Phase 1 – Data Gathering and Analysis

The first phase focused on understanding the existing conditions and forces that influence King Street, identifying the concerns of the various stakeholders and documenting the issues to be addressed in the study. Through interviews, questionnaires and analyses of economic data, a profile of the health of the King Street businesses was developed, and a market study identified the King Street market potential. Concurrently, an urban design assessment of King Street was conducted and surveys and traffic counts were taken to understand the status of parking within Old Town. During this phase of the study, three workshops were held with the Advisory Committee to review and confirm the data analysis, to identify issues and to draft a King Street mission statement.

Phase 2 – Alternative Concepts

During the second phase, the Design Team drafted a series of Guiding Principles in response to each of the issues raised in the initial workshops. The purpose of the Guiding Principles was to document a Vision for King Street, identifying what “ought” to happen on King Street and providing focused direction for drafting a strategy for initial review. Over the course of two additional workshops the draft Guiding Principles were reviewed. Based upon the feedback, the Design Team refined

the principles. Concurrently, the Advisory Committee drafted a mission statement to guide the preferred future for King Street. Summaries of the findings of the data analyses and the Guiding Principles were presented at a community-wide workshop hosted by the Planning Commission to ensure input from a broader constituency.

Phase 3- Strategy Refinement

During the third phase, the Design Team (based upon the input from the Advisory Committee, the Community, the Planning Commission and the City Council) and City staff prepared a Draft Strategy for formal review by the Alexandria Planning Commission and City Council.

Following public hearings, the Planning Commission and City Council unanimously supported the King Street Retail Strategy and it was adopted as part of the City’s Master Plan.



Background

BACKGROUND

The following is an overview of the physical attributes of the study area as a context for understanding the Guiding Principles and Recommendations.

KING STREET STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The King Street corridor in Old Town extends slightly over one mile from the banks of the Potomac River westward to the King Street Metro Station. Along the way, King Street crosses 19 intersecting streets, borders about 250 separate properties and features buildings constructed over three centuries.

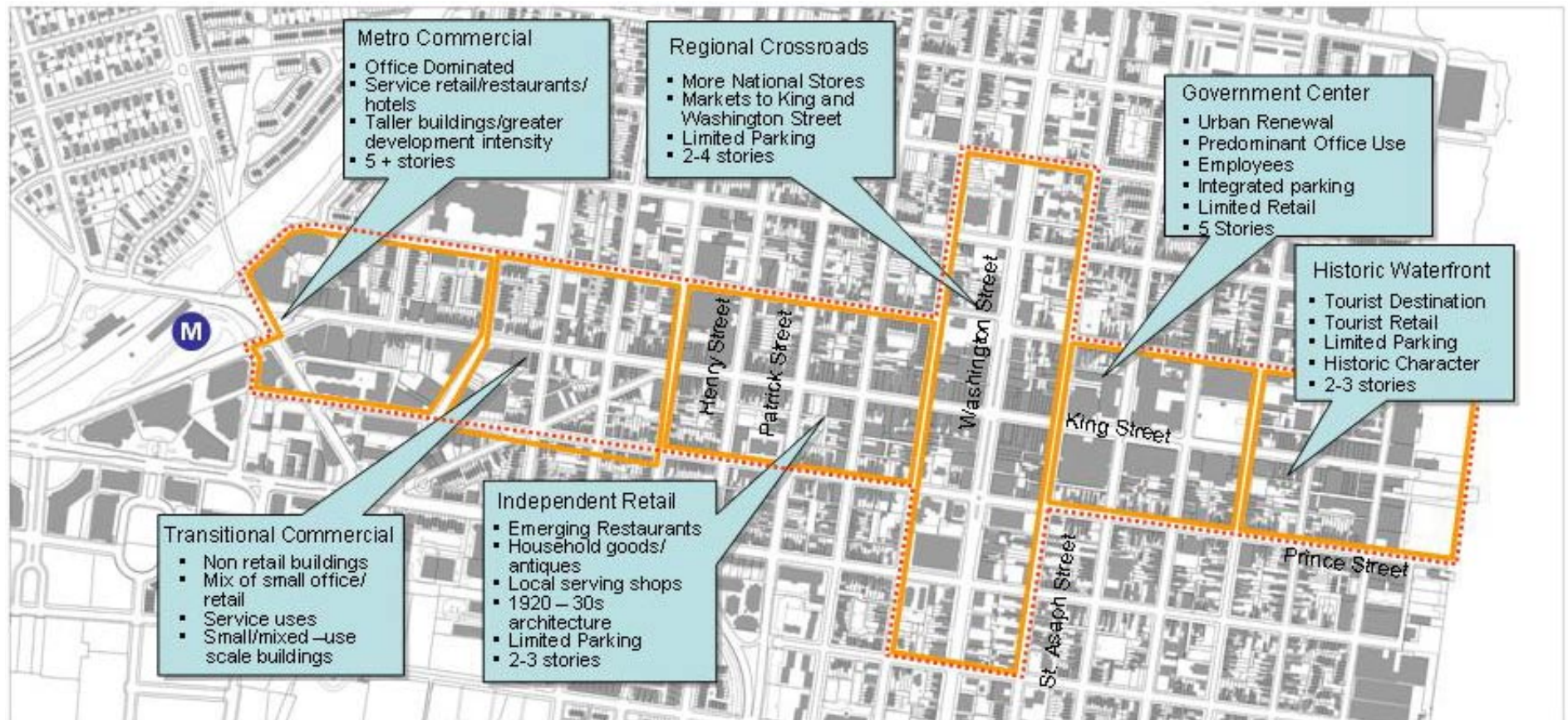
The size and length of the Old Town section of King Street make it one of the largest pedestrian-oriented urban commercial corridors in the region. King Street is several times larger in land area than Pentagon Row, Clarendon Market Common or Shirlington—all popular urban shopping districts in neighboring Arlington County. Georgetown's M Street district is closest to King Street in size, but with different characteristics (see Figure 2.1 – Comparative Analysis). Typically, an active retail street is about 1200 feet in length to provide for easy walking distance, which means that the study area could accommodate the equivalent of four retail districts. The length of King Street therefore creates marketing challenges.

FIGURE 2.1 - *Comparative Analysis*



Fortunately, being a mile-long path through history, King Street is far from uniform; its blocks range from 18th century commercial areas to late 20th century office buildings. In general, King Street can be divided into six sub-areas, each with a unique character, as shown and described below (See Figure 2.2 – King Street sub-areas).

FIGURE 2.2 - King Street sub-areas



BACKGROUND

HISTORIC WATERFRONT SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from the waterfront to Fairfax Street

Blocks: 100 and 200 blocks of King Street.

Attributes: This area, the original 18th century waterfront, was the first area of King Street to be restored through adaptive reuse. It is the premier tourist attraction along King Street, with the waterfront at the east end of the sub-area, and numerous restaurants and art galleries lining the street. Adjoining blocks also contain major tourist attractions, such as the Torpedo Factory Art Center, Carlyle House Historic Park, and the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum. This sub-area, renowned for its historic character, also contains the Ramsay House Visitors Center.

Buildings: Most buildings in the Historic Waterfront sub-area are two or three stories high and were constructed in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Most of the buildings are in retail or restaurant use, with many businesses occupying both the ground floor and upper floors of their respective buildings.

Businesses: These first blocks of King Street are home to numerous restaurants with several more on the nearby side streets. Other retail businesses cater largely to tourists or to occasional visitors, and offer goods such as fine art, antiques and assorted merchandise.

Parking: Parking is limited largely to on-street spaces in this sub-area. Off-street parking is provided in a publicly accessible garage beneath the Torpedo Factory Condominiums on North Lee Street.

GOVERNMENT CENTER SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from Fairfax Street to St. Asaph Street

Blocks: 300, 400 and 500 blocks of King Street.

Attributes: The blocks of King Street within the Government Center sub-area were part of a redevelopment project in

the 1960s and 1970s, and include multistory office and government buildings. Much of Alexandria's municipal government is housed here, with City Hall on the 300 block and the Alexandria Courthouse on the 500 block. The area also contains three multistory office buildings and a 227-room Holiday Inn Select hotel. Market Square is a major attraction, as well as Gadsby's Tavern Museum, located one block off King Street on Royal Street.

Buildings: Alexandria's City Hall with the large Market Square plaza is the mainstay of this sub-area's building stock. Sections of the brick building date to the 1870s, and the one-acre Market Square is the principal public open space along King Street. Most of the other buildings along King Street however are far newer than City Hall, having been built between 1966 and 1975 as part of an urban renewal program. The newer, predominantly brick buildings within the Government Center sub-area stand between four and six stories tall and present a considerably different street-level view than do the older sub-areas to the east and west.

Businesses: This area consists mostly of office uses, with only a handful of retail or restaurant establishments. The three major office buildings along King Street in this sub-area include over 400,000 square feet of leasable office space—this is in addition to the major city government and hotel uses that also occupy space in this area.

Parking: In addition to on-street parking, three buildings (City Hall, Tavern Square and the City Courthouse) contain integrated underground parking garages that are available for public use or for monthly accounts.

REGIONAL CROSSROADS SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from St. Asaph Street to Columbus Street and Washington Street from Princess Street to Wolfe Street.

Blocks: 600 and 700 blocks of King Street and 100, 200 and 300 blocks of both North and South Washington Street.

Attributes: The Regional Crossroads sub-area extends along King Street one block in either direction from the intersection with Washington Street, and also includes three blocks of Washington Street both north and south of King Street. This sub-area is named the Regional Crossroads because it sits at the intersection of two major streets. The area contains a diversity of buildings and uses.

Buildings: The two blocks along King Street contain mostly two-story structures built in the 19th century; these buildings tend to have retail on the ground level and occasionally office uses on the upper floors. The six blocks along Washington Street are much more diverse—ranging from small-scale retail buildings to larger-scale structures such as churches and multistory office buildings.

Businesses: The 700 block of King Street, just west of Washington Street, contains the largest concentration of restaurants along King Street—11 restaurants, accounting for nearly three-quarters of the building frontage on the block. In addition to restaurants, the Regional Crossroads area includes a significant number of national chain retailers on both King Street and Washington Street.

Parking: Parking is extremely limited within this sub-area. On King Street, parking is permitted on the south side of the 600 block and during non-peak hours on the north side of the 700 block—otherwise, parking is prohibited. On Washington Street, parking is not permitted in the peak travel hours; however, it is permitted during off-peak hours along most of the blocks within the Retail Study area, with the exception of the portions of the street closest to the busy King Street intersection.

INDEPENDENT RETAIL SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from Columbus Street to Fayette Street.

Blocks: 800, 900, 1000 and 1100 blocks of King Street.

Attributes: Consisting mainly of smaller, two- or three-story buildings, the Independent Retail sub-area is so named because of a preponderance of independently-owned and -operated businesses—both restaurants and retail stores. This section, which has redeveloped over the past 10 to 15 years, has a “small town” feel, with many local-serving retail establishments, as well as restaurants and office uses. Two new renovation projects have introduced significant non-retail components to this sub-area on the 800 block—the recently reopened Old Town Theater, and the adjoining five-story building that is successfully being marketed for rental apartment use.

Buildings: Structures within this area are typically two-story buildings, though several buildings extend to four or five stories high. Most buildings have retail on the ground floor, although some buildings have ground floor offices. These older buildings coexist with newer structures as well. A few multistory office buildings have been built within the Independent Retail sub-area in recent years, including a 200,000-square foot building at 1101 King Street and a 24,000-square foot building on the 900 block of King Street. The intent has been to integrate these larger buildings into the more traditional streetscape from the 1920s and 1930s.

Businesses: As mentioned, the retail stores along this portion of King Street are largely small, privately-owned businesses. This sub-area of King Street includes far fewer national or regional chains than do the areas to the east. The retail mix is diverse, with local-serving shops and emerging restaurants situated alongside stores selling items such as housewares that have a more regional customer base. Due to the presence of larger office buildings, this sub-area has a considerable number of office businesses as well.

BACKGROUND

Parking: Parking is permitted along most blocks of King Street within this sub-area and along many of the intersecting streets. In addition, two City-owned surface parking lots (one in the 900 block of King Street and the other between Patrick and Henry Streets) and one private garage supplement the available on-street parking resources.

TRANSITIONAL COMMERCIAL SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from Fayette Street to Peyton Street.

Blocks: 1200, 1300 and 1400 blocks of King Street.

Attributes: The Transitional Commercial area features a mixture of styles and building uses, ranging from traditional, smaller-scale commercial buildings to modern office buildings. There are two used-car lots on the 1300 block—among the only parcels along the street without permanent structures. This sub-area is also home to the Alleyne AME Zion Church, the only church structure along King Street.

Buildings: Structures in this sub-area are built to a relatively small scale, with many of the commercial structures built to a height of one story. The north side of the 1400 block contains several former residential buildings that are currently used for commercial purposes. Two 1980s-era office buildings are also located in this sub-area, the 57,000-square foot building at 1420 King Street and the smaller adjoining 20,000-square foot building at 1410 King Street.

Businesses: This area features a combination of retail businesses and smaller offices. Retail offerings include home furnishings, art, antiques, as well as food and apparel. There are four restaurants within the Transitional Commercial sub-area, fewer than in most other areas of King Street.

Parking: Due to the relatively modest scale of development, parking in the Transitional Commercial area is more available than in the other King Street sub-areas.

METRO COMMERCIAL SUB-AREA

Streets: King Street from Peyton Street to the King Street Metro Station.

Blocks: 1500, 1600 and 1700 blocks of King Street.

Attributes: Consistent with its proximity to the Metrorail system and the underlying zoning, this sub-area is built to a greater development intensity than elsewhere along King Street. The Metro Commercial area is the office employment center of King Street, with numerous multistory office buildings and two hotels along King Street itself, and also on nearby Diagonal Road, Daingerfield Road and Prince Street.

Buildings: The buildings within the Metro Commercial sub-area generally fall into two categories—newer multistory hotel/office buildings or older structures that were originally designed as row houses. Two rows of former houses (12 on the 1500 block and six on the 1600 block) are now used mostly as offices but retain their original appearance. In the 1600 and 1700 blocks, most of the buildings are hotel or office buildings that reach to six or seven stories. These buildings are relatively new, having been constructed in the 1980s or 1990s, replacing one-story retail and commercial structures after the Metrorail system became well established.

Businesses: The Metro Commercial sub-area is home predominately to businesses occupying space in multi-tenant office buildings. Retail stores occupy some of the ground-floor space, but retail is less prevalent in this sub-area than it is in other areas along King Street. Also located within this sub-area are an 80-room Hampton Inn, a 241-room Hilton Hotel and the adjoining Fairfield resort condominium.

Parking: Parking within this sub-area is satisfied by both on-street parking and by private garages within the larger office and hotel buildings.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

A journey along King Street is a journey through Alexandria's history. The street was one of Alexandria's main thoroughfares when the City was a major port in Colonial times, and continued to be a commercial street for Alexandria through the next two centuries. Vestiges of every stage of the City's history are found in the street's surviving buildings—from warehouse buildings to former residences.

Older buildings along King Street have typically gone through many uses over their lifetimes. Surviving buildings that were built in the 18th and 19th centuries along the blocks closest to the waterfront were generally constructed for a variety of commercial purposes related to the City's mercantile industries. Most of the buildings have gone through an adaptive reuse process where the basic use of the building has adapted to a new economy, but the exterior remains true to the original architectural styles and materials. For example:

6 King Street (currently Mai Thai and Starbucks) – Constructed in the late 1700s as a marine warehouse.

100 King Street – Built in 1871 as the Corn Exchange Building.

North side of 100 block of King Street – Buildings now used as restaurants built as warehouses in the late 18th or early 19th centuries.

Market Square – First developed in the mid 1700s as the City's main marketplace, around what was then the Fairfax County Courthouse.

Buildings constructed along King Street in later periods (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) were often originally used as restaurants, saloons or stores. Many of these buildings have gone through periodic renovations in different decades. For example:

906 King Street – The Art Deco Firehouse Square building – Built as a department store in the 1930s.

1006 King Street (former Alexandria Furniture building) was originally designed as a food market in the late 19th century.

1314 King Street (currently Pa Dian Accents framing shop) was built as a grocery in the first decade of the 20th century

While most of the buildings east of Washington Street were originally designed as commercial or retail facilities, to the west of Washington Street these commercial buildings mingle with structures originally designed as residences. In some buildings, this residential heritage is easily visible, while in others, successive non-residential uses have substantially altered the original appearance. Many of these buildings were converted to non-residential use as early as a century ago and the storefronts can date to the early 1900s, even if the buildings themselves are older. For example:

815 King Street – (currently apartments) was built as an office building in the 1940s. Noted at the time as the tallest building between Washington and Richmond.

818 King Street was built as a residence in the mid-1800s.

913, 915, and 917 King Street were built as residences in the early and mid 1800s. All three buildings now have retail storefronts on the ground floor.

1020 and 1022 King Street – Built as residences in the 1880s.

1120 and 1122 King Street – Built as residences in early 1800s.

1520, 1522, and 1524 King Street was built as a residential unit in the mid 1800s.

Newer buildings reflect the historical phases that King Street has passed through. The buildings in the 300 through 500 blocks were built during the urban renewal period of the 1960s and 1970s, when whole blocks were razed for newer multistory structures. The scale of these buildings is larger than historically found on King Street, but in their own way reflect history and

BACKGROUND

trends of redevelopment that were occurring in many cities throughout the country at that time. During the same period the upper blocks of King Street were also redeveloped as a part of an economic development initiative. One-story retail and automobile dealerships were replaced with multistory brick office buildings that are vaguely reminiscent of traditional Alexandria architecture. More recently, much of the new construction has reflected an increased veneration for the past, with architecture that consciously emulates earlier styles of commercial buildings.

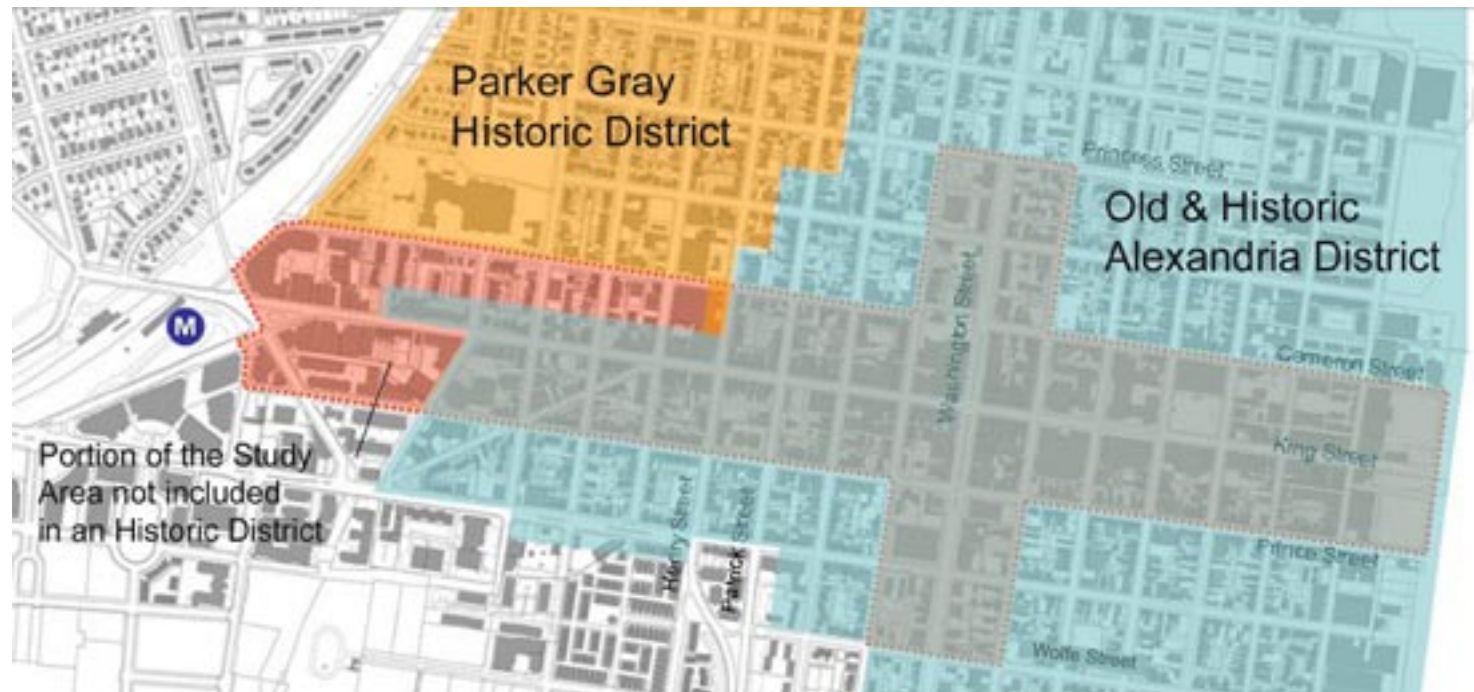
King Street's living history journeys through centuries of Alexandria's past, from a bustling port city to today's retail and office environment. This journey was not always smooth and untroubled. King Street has evolved over a period of many years as the City's economic drivers changed. During this

period King Street experienced a series of economic upturns and downturns that are reflected in the physical and social character of the street. The physical needs of the street also changed as Alexandria moved from a port city to a commercial and tourist economy. At the same time the City has adapted its transportation modes from the ships of the Potomac, to horse-drawn vehicles, to trucks and automobiles. Alexandria today seeks to maintain this successful adaptation to an ever-changing economic climate and community needs, while preserving the cultural past of its historical resources.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The vast majority of the King Street Retail Strategy corridor is included within the long-established Old and Historic Alexandria District. The District is under the jurisdiction of a

FIGURE 2.3 - *Historic District Boundaries*



seven-member Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and all development and most exterior building modifications within the historic district are subject to review by the BAR. The Parker-Gray Historic District is located north of Cameron Street at the west end of the study area and is governed by a separate Board of Architectural Review.

The Old and Historic District includes over one square mile of the City—including the Potomac waterfront, the viewshed from the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Washington Street, and over 100 square blocks of Old Town proper. Along King Street, properties on both sides of the street from the waterfront to Peyton Street are included within the Old and Historic District, as are properties on the north side of King Street between Peyton and Harvard Streets. An additional property on the south side of King Street is officially designated a 100-year-old building by virtue of its age and significance (1520-1524 King Street). This property, while not located within the Historic District, also falls under the purview of the Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review due to its designation as a 100-year-old building. Figure 2.3 shows the Historic District boundaries along King Street.

All development taking place within the City's historic districts must conform to design guidelines crafted to ensure that new development is in keeping with the historic character. Guidelines range from construction techniques, paint colors, window designs, roofing materials, placement of air conditioning systems, exterior light fixtures to signs. The presence of the BARs has had a profound impact on King Street and Old Town. The historic character that has been preserved

as a result of these regulations is the prime reason why King Street enjoys the prominence that it does today. Adherence to historic standards for construction and renovation has enabled Alexandria's Old Town to maintain its historic character even as individual building uses and construction techniques have changed dramatically over the years.

In addition to being the "Main Street" of a retail district, King Street is also historically a major regional route. The subject, mile-long stretch through Old Town is but one component of King Street within the City of Alexandria. In fact, it is one of the City's longest roads. Continuing northwestward after the Metro Station, King Street runs for four more miles, past the interchange with I-395 to the City's boundary with Arlington County. As Virginia Route 7, the road continues west for 80 miles to downtown Winchester. In addition, the Old Town section of King Street is intersected by other major north-south regional routes—Washington Street and U.S. Route 1 (Patrick and Henry Streets).

The status of King Street as both a retail district and a regional thoroughfare has advantages and disadvantages. Beneficially, the retail district's location along major travel routes heightens people's awareness of where King Street is located and makes travel directions simple from most points in the region. However, this same characteristic means that streets in Old Town are at times clogged with traffic.

BACKGROUND

CIRCULATION

King Street extends from Alexandria's waterfront to its western boundary and beyond; however, the scope of this study is from the waterfront to the Metro Station. This section of the street is classified by the Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services as a primary collector street and includes two-way traffic with parallel parking spaces on both sides of the roadway along most of the blocks within Old Town. Of the 19 intersecting streets in the study area, 16 are controlled by traffic lights.

During non-peak hours, traffic flows at reasonable levels of service. However, during peak times, such as rush hour and weekend evening hours, King Street's traffic is congested. The traffic is often intensified because motorists, especially tourists, use King Street as a thoroughfare instead of using paralleling streets that often have less traffic intensity.

Old Town Alexandria was designed with a grid of streets and rectangular blocks. While King Street has two-way traffic, the paralleling streets have one-way traffic for significant portions, with the intent of increasing the traffic capacity (Prince Street is one-way eastbound from its beginning at Reinekers Lane to St. Asaph Street, and Cameron Street is one-way westbound from Washington Street to its termination near the Metro Station).

Motorists coming to Old Town from the north and south tend to enter Old Town on either Route 1 (northbound Patrick Street or southbound Henry Street) or Washington Street. Drivers arriving from points west tend to arrive on Duke Street (Va. Route 236) or along King Street itself.

TRANSIT

King Street and Old Town are accessible from a variety of rail and bus routes. The King Street Metro Station serves both the Blue and Yellow train lines, while nearby Union Station serves Amtrak and the Virginia Railway Express.

Bus service throughout Alexandria is provided by the Alexandria Transit Company's DASH system. The area is also served by Metrobus and Fairfax Connector service, providing regional bus access.

Metro and the DASH bus service offer the greatest potential to augment King Street's retail and restaurant sectors. The King Street Metro Station boards on average over 7,200 passengers during weekdays—more boardings than any other station within Alexandria. The station is used heavily as a commuter station during the week and is within walking distance of millions of square feet of office space within the upper King Street/Duke Street corridors and the Carlyle and Patent and Trademark Office developments. Further, the station provides direct access to King Street for tourists who are staying in Washington, DC or elsewhere in the region.

Following are several issues that are crucial to Metro's usefulness to King Street retail and restaurant patrons:

- *Service Intervals:* During peak retail/restaurant hours (evenings and weekends), Metro trains depart from the King Street Station at intervals between 12 and 20 minutes, meaning that a lengthy wait at the station is often necessary.
- *Station Location:* The Metro station is located within easy walking distance of upper King Street, but is 16 blocks (1 mile) away from Market Square.
- *Connections to Alexandria:* Connections to the Metro station from King Street's activity centers is improving (see DASH bus discussion later), but these connections are still time intensive and may not be conducive to large numbers of retail and restaurant patrons.

The Metrorail system is an integral component of transportation to and from the King Street corridor and holds the possibility of bringing retail and restaurant customers to Old Town efficiently. To maximize the system's use, more frequent headways and more efficient connections to the lower sections of King Street are required.

BACKGROUND

DASH

Alexandria's DASH bus service is the main bus system serving King Street. Five of DASH's six bus routes serve the King Street Metro Station and all but one of the service's bus lines travel along some portion of the King Street retail corridor. In addition, DASH operates a free King Street shuttle, Dash About, on Friday nights and weekends between the King Street Metro Station and Market Square.

The following are select characteristics of DASH bus service related to this retail strategy.

- *Service Intervals:* DASH's seven regular routes have service intervals averaging about 30 minutes on weekdays and one hour on weekends. Service is most frequent during weekday rush hours, with periods of 15-minute headways on most bus routes.
- *Overlapping Routes:* Most DASH routes overlap with one or more other routes within Old Town; therefore, buses at major stops (i.e., Metro Station, King and Washington Sts., etc.) are often more frequent than timetables from single routes would suggest.
- *Dash About:* The Dash About shuttle runs on weekends and on Friday evenings. The shuttle runs down King Street between the Metro Station and Market Square and is unique among DASH routes due to its no-charge service and its orientation to visitors instead of to commuters or other residents.
- *Traffic:* DASH buses face the same problems as do other vehicles traveling on King Street. Namely, at times of peak demand, traffic is slow. Buses can take upwards of 15 minutes to make the trip from Market Square to the Metro Station, which, coupled with time spent waiting for the bus, can make a relatively short one-mile ride take a surprisingly long time.

As Alexandria's transit system, DASH continues to play a vital role along King Street and will be a major component of any transportation plan along the King Street corridor.

FIGURE 2.4 - *Dash About Vehicle*



DASH is planning for increased bus service citywide in the future. The transit agency is constructing an expanded bus maintenance facility that will enable it to operate a larger fleet of buses than is currently possible. DASH hopes to expand service and increase service frequency once the new facility is operational. The current target date for completion of the maintenance facility is 2008.



Market Analysis

MARKET ANALYSIS

The Market Analysis section provides a summary of findings on King Street's existing retail inventory, consumer behavior and market conditions. In addition, the market analysis outlines the economic potentials for retail, restaurants and services along King Street. The findings from this market analysis, including recommendations for strengthening the existing business mix, are provided in this section.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Existing uses and conditions on King Street were examined to determine the overall functionality of the commercial corridor and to identify key issues affecting marketability. Data and information on the existing inventory of commercial space, business operations, consumer behavior and other factors are summarized below.

Existing Inventory

King Street has a total commercial inventory of about 1.4 million square feet of office and retail space, including 833,000 square feet of retail use in more than 300 stores and restaurants. King Street is two-thirds larger than Ballston Common Mall, in terms of gross retail area. Of this total amount, 638,000 square feet is in ground-floor space, with the remaining amount in upper floors. As of the winter of 2004, about 71,000 square feet, or 11 percent of ground-floor retail space, was vacant or otherwise unoccupied. This vacancy included several large spaces being held in transition or for other reasons besides the lack of demand. Nevertheless, vacancy exceeds the target rate of five percent sought in successful shopping centers and districts.

In general, there is a healthy mix of existing retail uses, with 54 percent of the retail area used for establishments selling shoppers' goods (items that involve comparison shopping), 33 percent in restaurants and bars, seven percent in personal services and six percent in convenience goods stores. Given the healthy supply of comparison goods stores, King Street

functions well as a destination shopping district. In fact, King Street may have an under-representation of convenience businesses serving nearby residential neighborhoods. King Street also lacks a significant base of entertainment venues, which often forms an integral part of a main street retail environment, creates return visitors to the street and provides nighttime activity.

Between 1996 and 2003, King Street saw a slight shift (one percent) out of retail and into office use. While negligible in the short-term, such shifts can gradually impact the perceptions of the area as a shopping district. This is particularly true when one or two prominent ground-floor retail spaces are shifted to office use.

Perceptions can also be impacted by shifts in the mix of independent retailers versus chain stores. Between 1996 and 2003, a number of chain businesses opened on King Street. However, many of these new businesses merely replaced other chains that had moved or gone out of businesses. The net "chain gain" was nominal.

King Street has some gaps in terms of a model business mix, and a slight shift towards more office use and chain stores. Overall however, it is clear that King Street has maintained a relatively successful balance in its business mix and overall character over time. It is no wonder that cities throughout the country look to Alexandria's King Street as a successful model of a destination historic retail district.

OVERALL SALES & TOURISM TRENDS

City revenue data on retail and restaurant sales were analyzed to assess recent trends in King Street versus those in the City as a whole. In general, King Street's retail business sales have not increased as rapidly as those in the City as a whole, while restaurant sales are generally consistent with citywide trends.

Retail Sales

Between 1999 and 2002, King Street retail sales remained relatively steady at about \$120 million. During the same period, Alexandria's overall retail sales increased by more than 21 percent.

King Street retailers were no doubt adversely affected by the events of 2001 and the decrease in national tourism that followed, which reduced tourism expenditures at the same time that the nation was entering into an economic recession. However, the primary reason for the difference between citywide and King Street sales is the growth in new retail activity in parts of Alexandria outside of Old Town. The explosion of retail development in the Potomac Yard Shopping Center, for example, has helped boost overall retail sales. Potomac Yard effectively competes with King Street for local Alexandria and Arlington consumer expenditures. Thus, the divergence between citywide and King Street retail sales probably relates more to new retail development than to any economic trend influencing overall retail expenditures.

Restaurant Sales

The addition of new retail space elsewhere in Alexandria might also explain why trends in restaurant sales in the City have not diverged significantly from those within King Street. While new restaurants have been added in Potomac Yard and elsewhere, King Street still generates the largest share of restaurant sales of any one section of Alexandria. However, new restaurants elsewhere in the City have not provided a significant boost to citywide restaurant sales, as compared to the impact of new retail businesses. Total citywide restaurant sales increased by 5.9 percent between 1999 and 2002—far short of the 21.3 percent increase in citywide retail sales over the same period.

Tourism

Tourism trends were also assessed based on overall tourism impact numbers and data on trends in hotel occupancies over time. The economic impact of tourism in Alexandria has gradually increased, particularly since 1995-96. The impact data was only available up to 2001; therefore it is difficult to say exactly what impact the events of September 11, 2001 had on the City's tourism. However, it is clear from hotel occupancy data collected since that time that the City saw a dramatic decrease in occupancies starting in 2001-02, and that the decrease continued at least into 2003. Alexandria's hotel occupancies soared to an exceptionally high rate of almost 75 percent in 2001, only to fall to an annualized rate of about 65 percent in 2003.

Data collected since 2003 clearly indicate a reversal in this trend, with an upswing in hotel occupancies starting in late 2003 and continuing into 2005 to date. Therefore, it can be assumed that overall tourism expenditures have also seen an increase starting in 2003. This is particularly promising because during this period, several new hotels were added to Old Town's hotel inventory. Two hotels on King Street, the Hampton Inn (80 rooms) and the Hilton (241 rooms), plus the Residence Inn on nearby Duke Street (240 rooms), are all recent additions to Old Town's hospitality industry. Alexandria hotels have direct access to the Washington DC Convention Center via the Metro. Increasing occupancy rates, coupled with an expanding inventory, point to favorable conditions in Old Town's tourism and hospitality industries.

Business Operations

In addition to visiting most businesses to assess general conditions, merchandising strategies, product mix and pricing, in-person interviews were conducted with a sample of 25 businesses throughout the King Street corridor in order to discuss business trends and to collect information relevant to this study. Key factors relating to the operations of the interviewed businesses are summarized on the following pages.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Sample Sales Trends

Sample King Street businesses are generating an average volume of \$350 in sales per square foot. This number compares favorably with other older commercial districts and even to many new, high-end shopping centers locally and nationwide. The most comparable commercial district in the region, Georgetown, generates sales of approximately \$400 per square foot, based on interviews with merchants. The Fashion Centre at Pentagon City has average sales of \$700 per square foot and Tysons Corner Center sales average \$600 per square foot, according to mall marketing materials. Both Pentagon City and Tysons Corner rank among the top grossing shopping centers in the country.

Sales among the interviewed King Street businesses have increased at an annual rate of 1.2 percent per year over the last five years. Sales were negatively impacted by the resulting decrease in tourism in 2001, but have been rebounding lately.

Rents

Rents average nearly \$30 per square foot among sample tenants. This is consistent with data supplied by area commercial real estate brokers. As is true in any shopping district with multiple property owners, there are a variety of rent structures for businesses along King Street. Some of the rent structures include common area maintenance charges to be paid by the tenant, which may not be appropriate for small, single-tenant buildings. Most of the leases have built-in escalations over five-year terms. A minority of businesses along King Street own their property.

Hours of Operation

The businesses along King Street lack consistent closing hours. In general, King Street businesses open by 11:00 AM every day. However, various businesses close at different times ranging from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM or later in the evening. As a result, shoppers are often unaware of the best times to shop in order to maximize their shopping efficiency.

Key Issues

The businesses interviewed for this study listed a number of issues that are adversely affecting their operations. The issues most often listed were the lack of overall King Street marketing, the unavailability of visible parking (for customers and employees), and the City's regulatory environment (such as modifying building space, for example).

CONSUMER INTERCEPT SURVEY

Consumer Analysis

A consumer intercept survey was conducted to collect information on the demographics, perceptions and consumer behaviors of King Street shoppers. A total of 200 shoppers were interviewed along the length of King Street at different times, days and locations. While not a scientifically random sample, the survey provides an indication of existing consumer behavior.

Consumer Origin

The survey found that 53 percent of King Street shoppers live in Old Town or elsewhere within Alexandria. Furthermore, 48 percent of consumers walk to King Street for their shopping or dining. The large percentage of local shoppers, especially of those who walk to King Street, indicates the importance of businesses that cater to the convenience and other needs of the local market. Another 32 percent of shoppers live in other areas within the Washington metropolitan area. Thus, King Street, in addition to serving local residents, is a destination for people who come to shop, eat or otherwise visit from throughout the region. Out-of-area tourists account for 15 percent of consumers in this survey. However, it should be noted that the survey was conducted during the late autumn and thus does not reflect the full impact of the summer tourist season.

Purpose of Visit. Only 26 percent of consumers are visiting King Street primarily for shopping, according to the survey. Those who are there for work account for another 26 percent of people

on King Street. Another 17 percent are there for lunch or dinner and 12 percent are on King Street primarily to visit friends or family who live in the area. Only 4 percent of those interviewed are there primarily to sightsee as tourists and 15 percent are there for other reasons. Since 15 percent of those interviewed identified themselves as tourists, it can be assumed that many of those visitors are drawn to King Street for purposes other than sightseeing activities, such as to visit friends and family, dine, attend meetings/business or to shop.

Consumer Needs. King Street consumers, again primarily local in origin, identified a need for convenience goods such as groceries. There is an existing natural foods store on King Street and a new Whole Foods supermarket is scheduled to open in 2005 on Duke Street. Nevertheless, consumers identified the need for more groceries.

Similarly, shoppers also listed the need for a hardware store. Consumers in surveys nationwide often mention hardware stores as a convenient use that is no longer easily accessible. However, the retail industry has largely eliminated the once ubiquitous main street hardware store, which has been replaced by large discount lumber and hardware chain “box” stores located near major highways. The larger stores, while lacking convenience, can offer lower prices on lumber and hardware, due to economies of scale.

King Street consumers also identified entertainment venues and “things to do” as existing gaps in King Street’s current offerings.

Likes & Dislikes. Consumers in the survey like King Street’s “charming, historic, walkable, small-town feel.” In general, people are drawn not so much by the history, but by the physical environment. The brick-paved sidewalks were mentioned by a number of consumers, along with the density of small buildings and the “walkability” and small-town character of the commercial district. These are characteristics that set King Street apart from shopping centers and other newer commercial districts.

Not unlike those surveyed in other older commercial districts, consumers dislike the lack of free or visible parking in the King Street area. Despite signs directing people to parking, consumers still identified the need for parking that is easier to find. Those surveyed also identified the need for more “things to do,” such as entertainment, cultural events, bars/clubs and other activities. Younger consumers, many of whom work in Old Town, identified the need for more affordable merchandise or stores that appeal to a more youth-oriented market.

Competition

Consumers identified a number of retail nodes and shopping centers in addition to King Street where they shop or dine. Primarily, this list includes the large malls, “retail boxes” and specialty shopping districts. The Washington region has a huge retail base and consumers are mobile. Thus, competition for King Street consumer dollars is widespread.

MARKET POTENTIALS

A market analysis was prepared for this study to determine the existing and potential demand for retail goods, restaurants and services within the King Street study area. Based on the findings from this economic analysis, recommendations are made to help diversify the business mix in a way that strengthens the long-term economic viability of the corridor. The market analysis is based on an assessment of the three primary market sectors driving demand within the King Street corridor: households within the trade area, Old Town workers and tourists. Each of these three market sectors has been, and will continue to be, important to the overall health and vitality of King Street.

Household-Generated Demand

Based on an analysis of transportation, access, consumer behavior, natural barriers, residential densities and other factors, the King Street household trade area is generally defined as the City of Alexandria and neighboring areas

MARKET ANALYSIS

northwest into Arlington and south along the U.S. Route 1 corridor. The market analysis also determined in-flow from other areas in northern Virginia, suburban Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Demographics

Households within the trade area are characterized by high average incomes. This is especially true for the “primary” trade area defined as Old Town and east Alexandria, closest to the King Street corridor. Within the Old Town area, household incomes average \$122,000, a high figure even for the well-off Washington region. Coupled with high incomes, the trade area is experiencing growth in the number of households, a trend that is likely to continue through 2010 and beyond. Even though Alexandria is one of the oldest cities in the country and is primarily built out, the City has seen continuing redevelopment and development of new housing relatively close to Old Town and King Street (e.g., Carlyle). Demographic forecasts for the trade area (and sub-areas including Old Town) are summarized in Appendix 1.

Expenditure Potentials

The combination of a growing number of households and increasingly high incomes, helps generate a significant annual income base of \$7.4 billion and retail expenditure potentials of \$2.1 billion just within the primary trade area. This retail potential is forecast to increase by \$324 million by 2008, based on projected household and income growth. Inflow from households in southern and western Fairfax County, Arlington County, Washington, DC, and suburban Maryland adds even more to this retail potential.

Worker-Generated Demand

In addition to residents within the trade area who purchase goods and services for their homes, employees working within the Old Town area also generate sales as a “captured market” for certain additional goods and services purchased while they are at work.

Employment Base

Within the King Street area, there are an estimated 14,600 employees working on an annual basis. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) is adding another 8,000 employees nearby, although retail businesses are also a part of the PTO and Carlyle projects and will attract some sales from PTO employees. In addition, there are another 25,400 employees within a short drive of the study area.

Expenditure Potentials

Data from existing consumers, businesses and the Building Owners and Managers Association were analyzed to determine likely average expenditures for Old Town employees on retail goods and services during their work hours. Based on this data, it was determined that employees spend an average of \$13 per trip on food services (eating and drinking) and \$26 per trip on retail goods and services.

As a result, area employees generate the potential for spending approximately \$69 million on retail and restaurants per year, increasing to \$107 million by 2008. The increase of \$38 million represents a 55 percent increase in the potential for employee-generated retail expenditures.

Tourist-Generated Demand

Most of Alexandria’s tourism is generated within the King Street and Old Town area. For purposes of this study, tourists are considered those visitors who do not live in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and are visiting Old Town for sightseeing, to meet with family or friends or for conferences and other business. As with workers, tourists purchase certain types of goods and services that differ from regular household purchases.

Visitor Base

The number of tourists and visitors to Alexandria was calculated based on information from businesses, hotels, meeting facilities and secondary data. Consumer survey data

was also annualized based on monthly hotel occupancy trends to help refine the visitor numbers. Visitor numbers were then forecast through 2008 based on past long-term trends and regional tourism data. Using these calculations, it was determined that there will be approximately 835,300 tourists and other visitors to King Street on an annual basis by 2008. This number would represent approximately 20 percent of the consumer base in King Street at that time.

Expenditure Potentials

Based on data from King Street businesses, hotels, impact data and consumer surveys, it was determined that tourists will spend an average of \$42 per trip (to King Street) on food services and \$59 per trip on retail goods and services. As a result, annual tourist expenditure potentials are estimated at \$48 million, increasing by 20 percent to \$57 million by 2008.

Competitive Framework

As noted in the consumer survey discussion, there is a very large retail base in the Washington, DC region that competes for King Street's trade-area, employee and tourist dollars. There is roughly 16 million square feet of retail space in the most competitive centers and nodes in northern Virginia and Washington, DC.

Competitive shopping malls include the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, the Tysons Corner Center, Springfield Mall, Landmark Mall, Potomac Mills and the remodeled "main street"-inspired Crystal City Shops. Other competitive centers and "big box" stores include the Potomac Yard Shopping Center (which is extremely competitive for local retail sales) and future developments such as the new Whole Foods Market.

Among the most competitive "specialty" retail districts are Georgetown, the planned National Harbor project in Maryland, the Arlington communities of Clarendon, Ballston and Shirlington, and the Reston Town Center. Finally, trade area consumers also shop at smaller neighborhood retail districts and nodes, such as Del Ray/Mt. Vernon Avenue and the Bradlee Shopping Center.

Warranted Demand

Gross retail demand was determined by type of store based on King Street's potential capture of total expenditures for the household trade area, employees and tourists by 2008, given the competitive framework. This captured demand was then compared with the existing inventory and business mix to determine where there is potential warranted demand to support additional retail goods, restaurants, and services. This potential is expressed in square feet of retail space, but could just as easily be expressed in terms of additional sales for existing and future merchants.

The market analysis identified existing gross demand for about 844,000 square feet, increasing to almost 960,000 square feet by 2008. After existing uses are taken into consideration, there is warranted demand for another 280,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, entertainment and personal services space by 2008. Some of this demand might be accommodated in space that is currently vacant or otherwise unoccupied. If all vacant space were occupied, there would still be net demand for an additional 130,000 square feet of space. Warranted demand is detailed by specific type of business in Appendix 2 and summarized by major retail category below.

Figure 3.1 measures the warranted demand—that is, the demand for space that is supported in the marketplace. This demand does not necessarily translate into a measurement of the types of retail that should be introduced to King Street. For example, although the analysis indicates a demand for, among other things, department stores and nightclubs, it is unlikely that King Street could provide an appropriate venue for either type of establishment. Nevertheless, it is crucial in terms of economic planning to gauge what kinds of goods and services are warranted given market realities.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Retail Categories & Selected Uses

The warranted retail demand as outlined in Figure 3.1 is calculated in five primary categories:

- *Convenience Goods* - There is warranted demand for about 78,000 square feet of convenience goods, including 11,900 square feet in convenience or specialty food stores and 40,000 square feet for a mass-market grocery/pharmacy (as opposed to another organic or specialty food market). Demand for a mass-market grocery may not support the floor-plate requirements of the larger chains except in a specialty “urban” store format.
- *Shoppers’ Goods* - The largest share of warranted demand is in shoppers’ goods, especially department stores, shoes, home furnishings and miscellaneous “specialty” goods (music, books, hobbies, gifts, etc.). King Street could support the addition of almost 140,000 square feet of shoppers’ goods by 2008 (some of which could be accommodated in vacant space).

It should be noted that about 33,000 square feet is for department store demand, which is too small in itself to meet the standards required by most department store chains for a new location use. The demand for shoe stores is relatively significant, at 15,000 to 20,000 square feet, signifying an additional unmet sales potential for existing shoe retailers. There is also about 12,000 square feet of demand for home furnishings stores and 23,500 square feet for specialty stores.

- *Restaurants*: There is about 6,000 square feet of warranted demand for eating and drinking establishments. However, there is significant unmet demand for pubs/taverns and an existing over-supply of restaurants that lack bars.
- *Entertainment*: There is demand for about 46,000 square feet of entertainment use, such as an art house cinema, live music venue, nightclub, family entertainment center or other entertainment use. The study area has insufficient demand to support another main-line cinema or multi-screen Cineplex in the near future.
- *Personal Services*: There is demand for about 12,500 square feet of personal services establishments (hair & skin salons, repair services, etc.).

Type or Retail Category	Gross Demand, SF		Existing Uses, SF	Warranted Demand, SF	
	2003	2008		2003	2008
Convenience Goods	124,000	116,300	38,600	85,400	77,700
Shoppers' Goods	435,400	508,900	370,700	64,700	138,200
Restaurants	195,600	230,000	224,300	(28,700)	5,700
Entertainment	38,800	45,600	—	38,800	45,600
Personal Services	50,200	58,700	46,400	3,800	12,300
Total	844,000	959,500	680,000	164,000	279,500
Existing Vacant			152,400		
Net New Demand				11,600	127,100

FIGURE 3.1- Estimated Warranted Demand in Square Feet, 2003-2008

SUMMARY OF MARKET FINDINGS

King Street is a successful commercial district because it benefits from three strong, diverse and growing markets: households, employees and tourists. It is the combination of these three markets that has boosted King Street as an economically viable retail and business location and helped stabilize it during economic downturns. King Street's competitive position is strengthened by its unique "small-town" feel, its many small and local businesses and the character of its historic built environment.

- *Competition:* The biggest challenge to King Street's viability from a market perspective comes not from economic recession or specialty retail in other parts of the Washington region, but from the development of competitive new retail projects nearby and within Alexandria. Despite its reputation as a tourist attraction, business interviews, consumer surveys and market analyses all confirm the importance of the local household and employment base to the viability of King Street. New "big box" retail in Potomac Yard has clearly had an impact on King Street's capture of locally-generated sales.
- *Serving the Local Market:* If loyal, local customers form the backbone of King Street's market, then merchandising must meet the needs of the market for convenience goods, services and entertainment.
- *Entertainment:* Entertainment can not only help fill a gap identified in the local market but also strengthen King Street's overall destination appeal for tourists and other visitors as well.





Urban Design

URBAN DESIGN

The Planning Team working with the Advisory Committee has identified a series of Guiding Principles. These Guiding Principles cover a wide array of topics, ranging from improving King Street's appearance to addressing concerns about parking to suggesting the need for a management organization to help make these goals a reality. The Guiding Principles were identified with an eye towards improving King Street's retail and restaurant marketability while maintaining a positive balance between the business activities and the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

STREETScape – THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

The Streetscape is defined as the space and physical elements located within the public street/sidewalk right-of-way, or those elements that reside within the public realm. These are the elements that are key to establishing a lively, vibrant pedestrian environment. King Street follows a typical historic townscape pattern of development where the buildings are generally located adjacent to the “front” property line or the street right-of-way. The facades of the buildings, the streetwall, form and define the street. The streetscape elements may include street furniture (benches, waste containers); light fixtures; street trees or other landscaping; art or other structures; infrastructure elements (traffic signals, controller boxes, poles); and graphics or signage.

The quality of the streetscape is vitally important to King Street's retail ambiance. People generally shop and dine along King Street because they want to. The streetscape and the defining adjacent buildings are the most significant overall elements in providing a dynamic visual environment.

Over the years the development of both public and private buildings that form and define the public right-of-way have been shaped by the City's planning ordinances, historic district controls, design guidelines and the design review process. Alexandrians can point with pride to the preservation of historic buildings and new buildings that are compatible with and add to the historic fabric. Over the years Alexandria has been more successful in assuring a high level of design quality in the private buildings than it has in the public streetscape. No process similar to that utilized for the buildings exists to guide and control development within the public streetscape. Currently, a number of City departments (including Transportation and Environmental Services; Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; and Planning and Zoning) have responsibility for approving or implementing elements of

the streetscape. No overall urban design plan exists to ensure that physical and procedural actions are consistent and in keeping with the historic character of the street. The result is that the streetscape appears to be cluttered with a mixture of uncoordinated elements.

The following streetscape issues were identified during the course of the planning process:

- Lack of consistency in streetscape elements leading to visual clutter on the street;
- Concern about low levels of pedestrian light on the sidewalk;
- Lack of consistency in the street furniture along the length of King Street;
- Lack of sitting areas; and
- Lack of coordinated support facilities, such as bus shelters.

STREETSCAPE PRINCIPLES/RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the Guiding Principles and Recommendations to improve the quality of the King Street streetscape and the pedestrian realm.

VISTAS

The streetscape is an important part of the open space pattern along King Street. Views up and down the street are important assets to be preserved. The view to the west is visually terminated by the George Washington Masonic National Memorial situated on a low hill just beyond the Metro station. A similar terminating element is important to end the eastern view to more prominently identify the location of the waterfront.

Guiding Principles

Maintain and enhance the visual elements that terminate the views at the east/west ends of King Street and provide visual boundaries for the street

Minimize the streetscape elements that block the vistas

Add a visual element at the foot of King Street at the waterfront to terminate the view and draw visitors toward the waterfront

Work with the City to continue the undergrounding of power lines and removal of poles through the Capital Improvements Program

Planning Recommendations

- Develop a program to open the vistas by replacing the mast arm traffic signals with traditional pole-mounted signals over time. Replace the existing yellow traffic signals with traditional traffic signals painted a dark color. Incorporate the program within the Capital Improvements Program;
- Ensure the continued priority for the removal of the overhead power lines in the Old Town area; and

FIGURE 4.1C - Overhead power lines remaining within the study area



FIGURE 4.1A - Existing yellow traffic signal



FIGURE 4.1B - Traditional dark painted traffic signal

FIGURE 4.2A -
Existing mast arm traffic signals in place



FIGURE 4.2B -
Existing mast arm traffic signals removed and replaced with pole-mounted signals



FIGURE 4.3 -
Ship's mast as visual termination element



- As part of the proposed waterfront planning process identify an opportunity for an appropriate vertical element that will “anchor” the vista to the east down King Street. For example, a nautical element such as a tall mast from a sailing ship would provide a heightened visual identity for both the eastern terminus of King Street and Alexandria’s waterfront.

SIDEWALKS

The sidewalk is an important visual element of the King Street streetscape and defines its urban character; its public right-of-way provides functional circulation space for pedestrians, as well as a carpet of color and texture for the street. It is the ground plane on which most of the street furniture and landscaping reside, in addition to providing space for stoops and stairs to access buildings in the older areas of the City.

Guiding Principles

Adopt standards and guidelines as outlined in this Strategy for the design of the King Street sidewalk

Establish zones for stoops/landscaping, pedestrians and trees

Require all sidewalks to be paved in brick, but allow the pattern to vary

Require landscaped tree wells or tree grates

Establish standards for trees and tree planting/maintenance

FIGURE 4.4 – Sidewalk Zones



URBAN DESIGN

Planning Recommendations

- Apply three general sidewalk zones (see Figure 4.4)—tree, pedestrian/stoop and landscape. Maintain a minimum 7-8 foot-wide pedestrian way between the tree zone and the stoop/landscape zone. See Outdoor Dining (page 4-7) for exceptions and standards for each of the zones;
- Require all sidewalk paving to be red brick, but allow a variety of brick patterns. The sidewalks must be constructed and maintained at a high standard to ensure accessibility; and
- Establish a minimum size of tree wells with an edge detail that will contain mulch or cast-iron tree grates. Require plantings within planters to be maintained by adjacent businesses or the King Street Partnership. Encourage cast-iron tree grates where the sidewalks are narrow to expand the pedestrian way.



FIGURE 4.6 A & B - *Tree grates*



FIGURE 4.7 A & B - *Tree well planting*



FIGURE 4.5 - *Sidewalk brick patterns*

OUTDOOR DINING

Sidewalk dining during the milder seasons of the year provides for additional pedestrian activity and vibrancy along the retail street.

Guiding Principle

Establish standards and an expedited approval process that will encourage outdoor dining along King Street



FIGURE 4.8 - *Outdoor dining criteria*



FIGURE 4.9 - *Outdoor dining illustration*

Planning Recommendations

- Establish sidewalk zones in which outdoor dining may occur. Dining should only occur in front of established and approved restaurants;
- Create standards for outdoor dining;
- Work with the business owners to assure that standards can be met while complying with State requirements;
- Require a low wall, landscape container or open metal railing, not to exceed three feet high to separate the sidewalk dining area from the sidewalk pedestrian zone and to prohibit the dining area from “creeping” into the pedestrian zone;

- Limit the length of the dining area along the sidewalk to the width of the restaurant or 30 feet whichever is less (excluding restaurant entry);
- At the time of approval, provide inconspicuous markers in the sidewalk to define the extent of the outdoor dining area;
- The sidewalk and dining improvements should not be stored on the sidewalk during the winter season when there is no outdoor dining. However, outdoor dining may be restored to the street during periods of good weather; and
- Initiate a pilot program to assess the impact of an outdoor dining program. If the pilot program proves successful, initiate an administrative approval process that is based upon the applicant meeting identified standards.

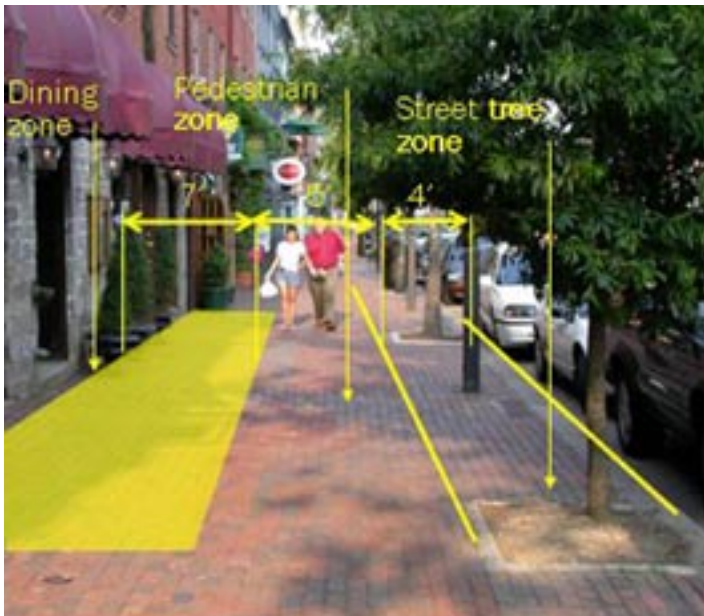


FIGURE 4.10 - *Outdoor dining criteria*



FIGURE 4.11 - *Outdoor dining illustration*



SIDEWALK SEATING

King Street is more than one mile in length; therefore to encourage pedestrian travel along its length, periodic seating areas are recommended to provide for resting and relaxation.

Guiding Principle

Create seating opportunities for pedestrians along the length of King Street

Planning Recommendations

- Establish seating areas along King Street at approximately three-block intervals in the locations suggested in Figure 4.12;
- At each seating area install directories and maps to provide orientation and directions; and
- In the Government Center sub-area work with the private property owners to provide enhanced landscaping and seating areas along the length of the sub-area.

FIGURE 4.12 – Sidewalk seating plan



FIGURE 4.13 – Plaza at King Street and Commerce Street – before

FIGURE 4.14 – Plaza at King Street and Commerce Street – after



FIGURE 4.17 – Seating along sidewalk



FIGURE 4.15 A & B – Seating at widened sidewalk

FIGURE 4.16 A & B – Enhanced landscaping at sidewalk



URBAN DESIGN

TRANSIT SHELTERS

To identify the bus stops at the interface between the Washington Street long-line bus routes and King Street, to maintain an orderly streetscape and to provide weather protection for the transit patrons, bus shelters should be provided.

Guiding Principle

Establish bus shelters and seating for DASH and Metrobus routes at the intersection of Washington and King streets

Planning Recommendations

- Provide transit shelters at the four bus stops at the intersection of Washington and King Streets. Locate the bus shelters on the building side of the sidewalk to optimize the pedestrian flow. Use a cantilevered or wall-braced shelter to minimize the supports in the sidewalk. The structure should be designed and constructed to coordinate with the architecture of the adjacent buildings.



FIGURE 4.19 AND FIGURE 4.20 – Clutter of sidewalk vending racks on King Street

FIGURE 4.21 – Organized newspaper racks



FIGURE 4.18 – Cantilevered bus shelter at Washington Street



STREET FURNITURE

King Street should present a consistent streetscape throughout the study area.

Guiding Principle

Establish common standards for all street furniture throughout the King Street Retail Strategy study area.

Planning Recommendations

- The Department of Planning and Zoning, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, the Old and Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review and the new King Street Partnership, should create standards for street furniture elements and their location; and
- The street furniture standards should be compiled in a specifications document, including model numbers, options, colors, etc. for all street furniture elements to assure compatibility and consistency in future ordering and replacement.

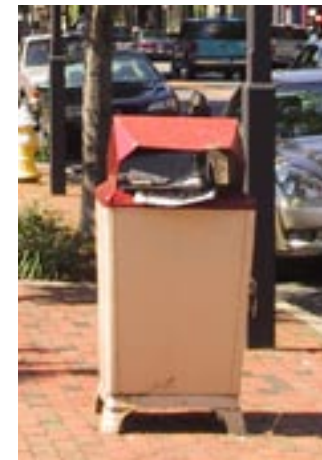


FIGURE 4.23 A, B, C - Variety of trash containers



FIGURE 4.22 A - Quality newspaper rack



FIGURE 4.25 A, B - Bicycle rack as streetscape art



FIGURE 4.24 - City standard bicycle rack



STREET INFRASTRUCTURE

Guiding Principle

Infrastructure elements such as transformers, poles, standards and meters are prominent visual elements in the streetscape and should be designed to provide compatibility with the street.

Planning Recommendations

- The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, in cooperation with the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Old and Historic Alexandria BAR, should create standards and guidelines for the King Street infrastructure elements that are located within the streetscape with emphases on the following:
 - Removing the long traffic signal arms and replacing them with more traditional traffic signals on vertical standards;
 - Creating prototypes and locational guidelines for control boxes and other utility features;

FIGURE 4.27 - Pole out of scale with the size of the sidewalk
 FIGURE 4.28 - Inappropriate mix of pole infrastructure



- Establishing standards for other infrastructure poles;
- Establishing a process for review and approval of new infrastructure elements in the public right-of-way to ensure compatibility with the historic character;
- Considering alternatives to the traditional parking meters, such as multi-bay meters, to reduce the number of visual elements in the streetscape;
- Establishing standards for lighting, including the provision for powering holiday tree lights, etc.;
- Coordinating the design of the traffic and parking control graphics with other informational and wayfinding graphics; and
- Creating color and paint standards for all infrastructure elements.



FIGURE 4.26 A, B – *Visually inappropriate infrastructure elements*



FIGURE 4.29A, B, C - *Clutter of traditional parking meters*

FIGURE 4.30 A, B - *Multi-bay parking meter to reduce visual impact of parking meters*

STREET GRAPHICS

The graphic systems for King Street are both functional and aesthetic elements of the streetscape and should receive the highest level of design attention.

Guiding Principles

Create a comprehensive graphics program that integrates identity signs, banners, identity monuments, wayfinding signs, directories, parking location signs, historic interpretation plaques, transit signs and traffic control signs.

Integrate the King Street graphics program with a citywide program.

Planning Recommendations

- The Department of Planning and Zoning in consultation with Transportation and Environmental Services, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs, Historic Alexandria and the new

King Street Partnership should design an integrated graphics program to include the following:

- Identity – Monuments, signs or banners that define the location of King Street/Old Town should be located at the approaches to King Street on Washington Street and Patrick and Henry Streets. Another key location to identify is the western end of King Street as seen from the Metro Station. Designs should be considered that modify the King Street Gardens structure to create a King Street identity or, perhaps vertical elements that could be seen from the Metro station. It should be noted that King Street Gardens is designated as public art. Changes to the existing facility require approval or cooperation of the artist. Other options include pole-mounted banners along the street or banners over the street on wires;



FIGURE 4.31A – Close-up of identity monument on Washington Street

FIGURE 4.31B – Identity monument on Washington Street

URBAN DESIGN

- Wayfinding – Directories should be located at either end of King Street and at the intervening seating areas. One face of the directory could provide an overall map of the length of King Street and the other side an enlarged map and a directory of the goods and services located in the immediate vicinity. Wayfinding may also include street signs;



FIGURE 4.33 - Seasonal Banner



FIGURE 4.34 - Directory in Chicago

FIGURE 4.32 A - Directory in Chicago



FIGURE 4.32 B - Directory in Park City



FIGURE 4.35 - Directory in Carlyle
Alexandria King Street Retail Strategy



▪ Parking Location Signage – Signs should be located that clearly direct visitors to the major parking resources in the King Street vicinity. These signs should lead motorists from the initial entrance into Old Town directly to the parking garages. Likewise, there should be a common signage system for all public and private garages that are available for public parking. Hours of operation and pricing should be clearly visible from the street entrance to the garage;



FIGURE 4.36 A, B, C - Variety of parking signs



FIGURE 4.37 A, B – Coordinated parking signage



Alexandria King Street Retail Strategy

▪ Historic/Interpretation Signage – Directories showing the location of the major historic buildings (especially those open to the public) should be designed and strategically placed on King Street. The directories should be linked through common design elements with appropriate signs or plaques located at the historic resource. The directories could also show recommended routes of walks that would enhance the experience, such as the creation of The Alexandria Walk;



FIGURE 4.38 A – Existing historic sign



FIGURE 4.38 B – Existing visitor sign



- Transit Signage – Appropriate transit signs should be designed to be compatible with the character of King Street and convey the “fun” aspect of riding a shuttle through Old Town. The signs should clearly show the days and time of operation, the route and the anticipated headways; and



FIGURE 4.39 A, B, C – Chicago transit signs

- Traffic/Parking Control – A sign program should be initiated that accommodates the legally mandated traffic movement and parking requirements. However, emphasis should be on eliminating as many signs as possible and incorporating more than one message on each sign. Where possible, the signs should convey a positive message with a friendly, inviting tone.



FIGURE 4.40 A – Clutter of control signs



FIGURE 4.40 B – Clutter of control signs



FIGURE 4.40 C – Clutter of control signs



FIGURE 4.41 – Example of control signs coordinated with community character



FIGURE 4.42 – Example of sign with multiple messages

- The sign and the method for mounting the sign should be designed together as a unified element;
- Signs should be designed so that they can be easily replicated and allow for changes over time (especially directories); and
- Options should be explored for banners or other graphic features that celebrate seasons, holidays and/or events.



FIGURE 4.43 A, B, C - Street banners



Alexandria King Street Retail Strategy

STREET LIGHTING

It is important to create an appropriate ambient light level on the pedestrian ways consistent with the King Street “gas lamp” environment to encourage strolling, shopping and a sense of security.

Guiding Principle

Explore options for increasing the lighting level in the pedestrian areas

Planning Recommendations

- The City Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in cooperation with Planning and Zoning and the King Street Partnership should undertake a study to evaluate the options for increasing the level of lighting on the street. Options may include:

- Increasing the sidewalk ambient light level by requiring or encouraging merchants to illuminate show windows until a designated hour such as 10:00 PM;
- Modifying the existing light fixtures to provide light directed to the sidewalk without modifying the balance of the light on the street; and
- Extending the illumination of lights in the trees throughout the year.

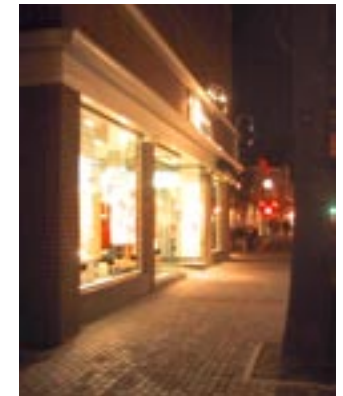


FIGURE 4.44 A – Sidewalk illumination from show windows

FIGURE 4.44 B – Sidewalk illumination from show windows.



FIGURE 4.45 – Modify existing light fixtures to illuminate the sidewalk

STREET USES

Members of the community have expressed the desire to vitalize the public spaces along King Street during the day and portions of the evening.

Guiding Principles

Explore options for closing portions of King Street for activities and pedestrian circulation

Explore options for Market Square

Explore the use of seasonal merchandizing carts

Planning Recommendations

- The Department of Planning and Zoning should coordinate an interdepartmental taskforce to initiate a pilot program to close the 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic during specific periods of the day, week or season, including:
 - Establishing measuring standards to determine the positive and negative impacts, e.g., attraction of new customers, traffic congestion and parking impacts;
 - Developing guidelines for allowing street dining and other activities within the street right-of-way; and
 - Developing programs to minimize impact on residential neighborhoods.
- If the pilot program is deemed successful, develop standards

for administrative approval for street closure;

- In conjunction with the repair of the Market Square fountain, explore opportunities to create a more active public space that better accommodates public events, musical concerts, informal public seating and perhaps kiosks or street vending; and
- Explore options through a pilot program for street vending (seasonal carts) at key locations that would not impede pedestrian circulation and would add to the vitality of the street.

STREETWALL

The Streetwall is defined as the building walls that generally are located along the property line and “front” the street right-of-way line. These buildings are the “walls” that define the open space of the street. The height, form and continuity of the walls are important in defining the quality of the street. In traditional towns and cities that are laid out on a grid, the street forms a major part of the open space system.

The ratio of the width of the streets to the height of the streetwall is an important urban design factor. The street with its sidewalk provides space for landscaping both in the form of street trees (providing shade, color and space definition) and in-ground and potted landscaping (softening and providing contrast to the physical elements).

Within the street, pedestrians share the space with vehicles. While in the modern era the automobile has generally dominated the street, the intent for King Street and its adjacent streets is to have a “pedestrian preferred” environment, where pedestrians are generally given preference over vehicles. On King Street the streetwall is generally well established. The historic blocks, such as the Historic Waterfront sub-area, typically have lower (2-3 story high) walls and the redevelopment areas (Government Center and Metro Commercial sub-area) have streetwalls that are five or six stories in height.

Guiding Principles

Establish the general heights of buildings (range) on a block-by-block basis to ensure that new buildings maintain the appropriate streetwall.

Planning Recommendations

▪ The Department of Planning and Zoning should, as part of the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and the Small Area Plan (See Chapter 5 for detailed recommendations), develop overlay standards for the height and configuration of buildings on King Street that are not currently included in the historic districts and for undeveloped parcels where the existing context is not well defined.

- The area along King Street that contains historic buildings (1500-1600 block) and is not currently included in the Old and Historic Alexandria District; and
- The used-car lots should be identified as a non-conforming use and given a designated time certain to abate.



Land Use

LAND USE

King Street’s architectural character and building form are fairly well established by the City’s historic preservation principles, and through the Board of Architectural Review’s regulation of new development and changes to building facades. Further, the Zoning Ordinance, based on the Old Town Small Area Plan, regulates allowable types of uses, as well as elements such as height, setbacks, open space and parking that, in turn, control the intensity of development. In order to strengthen King Street as a retail market and activity center for residents, tourists and businesses, and to ensure that new development in the study area complements the existing street, this Strategy includes the following Guiding Principles as policy statements. The Strategy also includes Planning Recommendations for changes to the City’s zoning ordinance, development guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the form of the street, and storefront guidelines to enhance the streetscape experience.

LAND USE PRINCIPLES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Guiding Principles

Vital Retail Environment

To create a vital retail environment, land uses should be supported and/or restricted, depending on their ability to assist in achieving the Vision for King Street, including:

Encouraging continuous retail uses along the street to support optimum market conditions and the pedestrian experience

Encouraging active uses during much of the day and the evening

Limiting office uses on the ground floor where they create dead space and disrupt the continuity of the pedestrian experience

Encouraging full utilization of the upper floors and eliminating unused space

Encouraging office uses on upper floors to provide daytime patrons for the retail and restaurant businesses

Encouraging residential uses on upper floors to provide 16-hour activity and lights on the street in the evening

Limiting the number/type of fast food establishments to assure that there are adequate, moderately priced, quick-service establishments to serve employees and visitors, while at the same time limiting establishments that may impact the diversity and unique business environment of the street

Residential Land Use Incentives

The current regulatory structure favors commercial development over residential in both new development and redevelopment. The goal is to have a mix of uses. Residential use creates life on the street after dark and provides a market for businesses; therefore the amount of residential floor area and the parking requirements for residential uses should be modified to make residential a more attractive King Street use and a more competitive market choice.

Regulatory Environment

To encourage small, independent retailers and restaurateurs to locate on King Street, the City should consider the use of design standards and an Administrative Use Permit process for appropriate uses and locations to simplify and streamline the approval process.

Development Guidelines

To assure compatible development on the few remaining King Street development sites, guidelines should be established to suggest the appropriate form of new buildings and ensure that they are compatible with the context of the street and their historic neighbors.

Storefront Guidelines

Design guidelines should be developed to identify design strategies that create an active, vital pedestrian, retail environment along the length of King Street. The guidelines should outline strategies to enhance retail merchandising and create a lively, vibrant pedestrian environment, while maintaining the integrity of the historic character of King Street. The guidelines should apply to both new development and renovated buildings and be coordinated with the historic design guidelines established by the BAR.

*Planning Recommendations***Vital Retail Environment**

The City should create a King Street Overlay Zone for those properties in the CD & OCH zoning districts that abut King Street to assure that new development and redevelopment is consistent with the Vision. Provisions within the Overlay Zone should include:



FIGURE 5.1 – King Street Overlay Zone

- Eliminating from the allowable uses in the current zoning those uses that are incompatible with the vision for King Street: single-family dwellings, cemeteries, public schools, hospitals and automobile service stations;
- Requiring ground floors to have a retail use (or other permitted ground floor use) that is appropriate to enhancing and energizing the pedestrian environment. To achieve quality retail space, the ground floor of all new or significantly renovated buildings should have a minimum store depth of 50

feet measured from the King Street property line or the depth of an existing building's ground floor (defined as the floor within 4 vertical feet of the existing sidewalk grade), whichever is less. Existing buildings with a ground floor that is more than 4 vertical feet above the sidewalk grade may be exempted from the requirement to have a ground floor retail use. The desirability of locating retail uses on the ground floor was confirmed in a recent article in the newspaper:

“A British bank testing responses to its window displays put up a sign offering a £5 note to anyone who would step inside to collect it, the BBC reported. After two hours, no one had taken up the offer. A spokeswoman told the BBC, “The basic conclusion that we came to was that people would much rather look at shops that are selling dresses than financial services.”

- Modifying the land use provisions to facilitate the addition of upper floor uses, such as retail, residential and office, that are appropriate to enhancing and energizing King Street. Currently, the amount of retail on the upper floors of King Street is equivalent to the area of office use on the ground floors. Upper level retail uses supplement the ground floor retail, upper level office provides daytime customers for retail and restaurants and upper floor residential provides evening customers, as well as residential lights and eyes on the street;
- Requiring storefront windows or show windows to create pedestrian interest for a minimum of 75 percent of the King Street frontage, except where the preservation of an historic building would preclude meeting these criteria;

LAND USE

- Requiring the ground floor of all new buildings to have a floor-to-floor height of no less than 14 feet to ensure the potential for a quality retail environment;
- Requiring existing used car lots fronting King Street to be deemed non-conforming and encouraging the owners to redevelop the property consistent with the new zoning within the seven-year abatement period; and
- Requiring all new development where it abuts a residential use in the rear yard to be contained within a building envelope described by a 1.5 to 1.0 sloping plane beginning at a point 5 feet above grade at the common rear property line. The intent is to limit the impact of commercial development on existing residential uses.

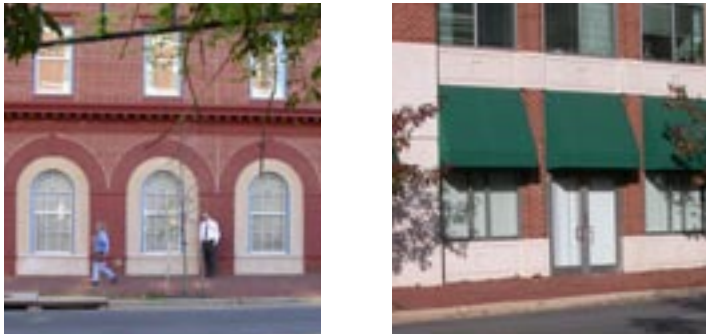


FIGURE 5.2 A, B, C – Pedestrian dead zone with office at ground floor

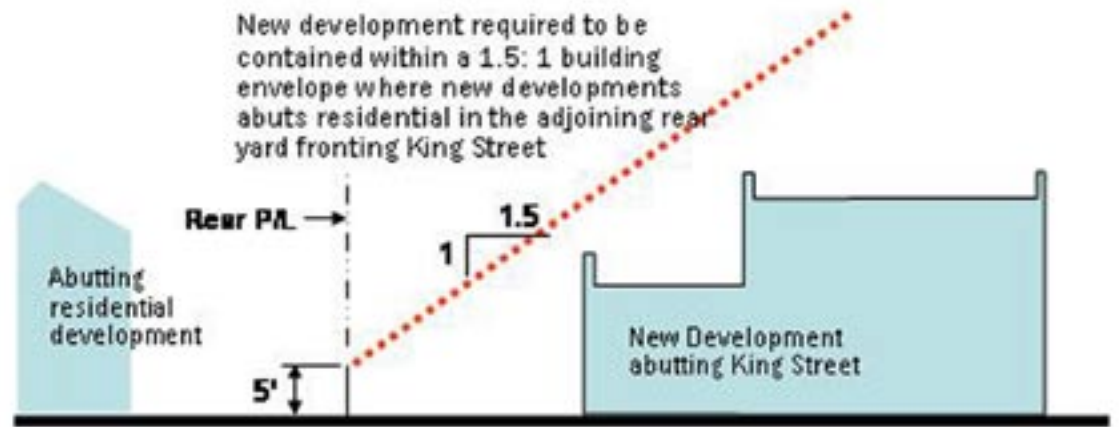


FIGURE 5.4 – Rear Yard Building Plane



FIGURE 5.3 – Active pedestrian retail at ground floor

Residential Incentives

Within the King Street Overlay Zone incentives should be provided for upper level residential uses by modifying the Zoning Ordinance. Currently, residential uses do not include incentives such as limited setbacks, parking exemptions and other provisions that are available to office and other commercial uses. Residential uses should benefit from the same incentives. The following modifications to the Zoning Ordinance should be made, including:

- Eliminating existing frontage and yard requirements for residential uses. The current requirements for front and side yards are inappropriate to the urban development patterns found along King Street;
- Providing an open space requirement for residential use on a per unit basis to ensure that all residential units have adequate open space appropriate to the urban residential setting;
- Allowing the residential use to have the same FAR as allowed for office or commercial use within the zone. The FAR should be a measure of the bulk of the building. The “use” should not be a defining criteria for the building bulk;
- Modifying the parking requirements to allow a parking reduction to a minimum of one parking space per new residential dwelling unit from the current 1.3 to 1.75 parking spaces per dwelling unit. This parking reduction is consistent with new residential parking requirements in higher density areas of the City where transit alternatives are available. In existing buildings, where parking cannot be provided for new residential use on upper floors, consider parking reduction SUPs similar to those that have been utilized in the past on King Street to reduce the required number of parking stalls; and
- Modifying Section 4-508 of the City Zoning Ordinance to permit an increase in the number of units for which open space, bulk and parking regulations may be modified from four

residential dwelling units to eight residential dwelling units. The code currently includes a cap of four residential units as part of a mixed-use building where the City can modify various zoning provisions to encourage additional residential. This modification provides the City with greater flexibility to add residential uses along King Street.

Regulatory Environment

The City should encourage small business by initiating an administrative review process to expedite permit processing, including:

- Considering the preparation of design standards and an Administrative Permit Process for the following uses based upon the approval of detailed standards and guidelines for each permit type:
 - Outdoor dining at existing restaurants (See 4. Urban Design – Outdoor Dining)
 - Valet parking for individual businesses (See 6. Parking)

Restaurants

Restaurants, music venues and other entertainment should be encouraged to promote activity throughout the extended day. In the past these uses have at times been problematic for Old Town with concerns relating to noise, litter, and nuisance behavior for nearby residents. To mitigate the concerns, the City has required Special Use Permit approval for these types of uses. The intent of the Strategy is to maintain the Old Town Restaurant Policy (part of the Old Town Small Area Plan) that directs the City to carefully scrutinize new restaurants for their impact on the neighboring residential community.

Old Town is unique in that it maintains a very fine residential area in close proximity to the commercial establishments on King and Washington streets. While both the residential and commercial areas are currently strong, there is a fragile

balance that 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. However, the City may want to consider additional policies relating to restaurants and other active uses to add to the vitality of the area by encouraging entrepreneurs.

The City should strike a balance and promote those restaurants that add to the health of the street without creating problems for their residential neighbors. Also, the City should address the expressed concern that restaurants have the ability to generate rents higher than the typical independent retail store, and could, over time, replace more traditional retail shops. The City should ensure the maintenance of King Street's unique character when considering requests for Special Use Permit approval for fast food restaurants.

Development Guidelines

To ensure that the new or major redevelopment along all of King Street is accomplished in a manner that is consistent with the historic context, the City should establish additional standards and guidelines for new development and redevelopment that is not located within an historic district or where the current zoning may allow building heights and bulk that are not consistent with the existing development context, including:

- Requiring the preservation of buildings that are currently not included in the Historic District. The City should require the preservation of the following structures:
 - *1520, 1522, 1524 King Street* – This property consists of one brick commercial building that was originally built as three separate residential units in the mid 1800s. Although outside of the Old and Historic Alexandria District, this building is a designated 100-year-old building falling under the purview of the Board of Architectural Review. Because of the building's age this Strategy strongly supports the structure's preservation; and
 - *1604-1614 King Street* – This row of six former townhouses sits just east of the Hampton Inn; all six buildings are currently in commercial use. The townhouses date from the 1920s and are in the "Wardman style"—reminiscent of residences built by noted Washington developer Harry Wardman. While not as old as other significant structures in Old Town, these buildings reflect the residential development of King Street and serve as an important link to the region's architectural past. This Strategy recommends preserving at least five contiguous buildings within this row in order to keep the historical element of the row intact.



FIGURE 5.6 A, B – Buildings to preserve



- Establishing limitations on the height of the King Street facades and controlling building volume by defining a building envelope to ensure that the floor area allowed through the SUP bonuses are visually mitigated from King Street. The building envelope would control the mass of new buildings that are taller than the allowable King Street façades. The building envelope would be defined by a 30 degree building control plane (the origin of the plane to be established at a point 5 feet above the curb on the far side of the street). The intent of the building envelope is to minimize the visual impact of the taller building elements and limit the shadow cast by taller building elements on King Street. It should be noted that the building envelope requirements relate only to planning considerations, and that these requirements must be considered in conjunction with fire and life safety requirements that may call for differing access requirements depending on the height and configuration of the proposed building. All proposed development must meet the fire/emergency vehicle access requirements as described in the City’s publication *Exterior Fire Department Operations and Supplemental Fire Protection and Rescue Features in Mid-Rise and High-Rise Structures*.

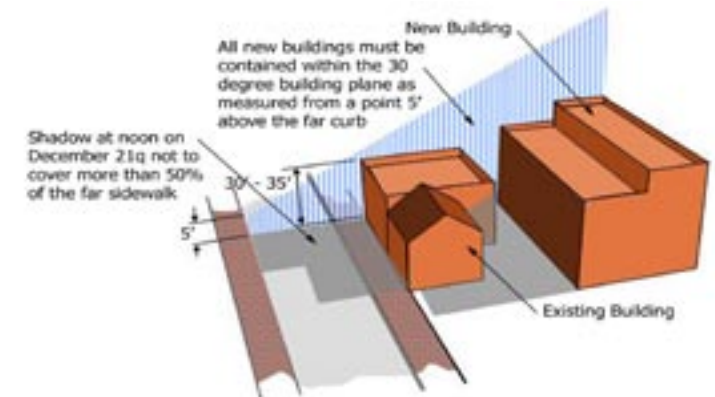


FIGURE 5.5 – Building envelope diagram

Storefront Design Guidelines

The following are recommended storefront guidelines for new or renovated buildings that are coordinated with the BAR building and signage guidelines, including:

- Requiring individual storefronts to follow the small-scale property pattern of King Street to add to the interest and richness of the pedestrian experience. Storefronts are encouraged to introduce architectural variation at the pedestrian level in order to create a diverse building edge between the public and private realms;
- Creating an enjoyable and varied visual experience while moving along the street;
- Encouraging changes in storefront and façade treatment (e.g., the use of porticos, setbacks, architectural elements, landscape treatments, etc.) within the guidelines. Particular attention should be given to the craftsmanship and detailing within the pedestrian's range of touch and view. The use of high quality materials (e.g., stone, brass, bronze, terra cotta, ceramic, wood) for storefront ornamentation is strongly encouraged, particularly around windows and entries and at the base of building walls;



FIGURE 5.7 C, D – *Quality King Street storefront*



FIGURE 5.7 A, B – *Quality King Street storefront*

- Encouraging unique, well-detailed storefronts and discouraging standard, off-the-shelf, aluminum storefront components that tend to result in repetitive storefront designs;
- Prohibiting tinted, reflective or colored glass that restricts the pedestrian's view into ground-floor windows;
- Permitting storefront window bays to project up to 12 inches into the public right-of-way, if such windows maintain glazing on all projecting faces, and if the windows do not exceed 15 feet in width;
- Permitting entry porticos to project up to 12 inches into the public right-of-way;
- Permitting entry setbacks up to 48 inches from the property line;
- Encouraging permanent marquee structures or canopies that project from the buildings, however, entry structures should be confined to entry lobbies leading to upper-level residential or office uses, or to public-oriented passages that provide for pedestrian access through the block. Entry canopies should be designed as an attractive and integral part of the overall facade

design. They should project no more than 6 feet from the face of the building, take up no more than 10 feet of frontage width, and maintain a clearance of at least 8 feet above the sidewalk surface. Column supports for the marquee that fall within the public right-of-way are generally discouraged, but may be permitted with a public right-of-way encroachment permit;

- Permitting awnings overhanging the sidewalk to enhance the life and variety of the street when they are consistent with the architectural style of the building. The preferred material for awnings is canvas, but other materials will be considered if they are light in character and can be architecturally integrated with the building facade. Awnings must be maintained at least eight feet above the sidewalk surface, and should be carefully designed to complement the overall facade design. Under normal conditions storefront awnings shall not project more than 6 feet into the public right-of-way, and generally should not be higher than 14 feet above the sidewalk. Awnings above 14 feet in height should not project more than 3 feet into the public right-of-way;

- Requiring newly constructed buildings fronting on King Street to have their primary entrance on King Street or at the corner of the intersecting street;

- Requiring newly constructed storefronts to have a minimum of 75 percent glass, which provides transparency into the store or to show windows that display merchandise carried in the store. In no case should this requirement supersede the requirement to preserve the architecture of existing historic buildings. Creative displays of merchandise shall be included in all storefront show windows, and show windows should encouraged to be illuminated until 10:00 PM;

- Encouraging the placement of plant materials adjacent to or on the building face to create a landscape identity for King Street. The landscape elements must be deemed appropriate to the historic architectural character of the building;

- Permitting storefront setbacks of up to 18 inches to allow the introduction of low planters of up to 12 inches in height below storefront windows;

- Permitting the sidewalk paving along King Street to accommodate planting beds at sidewalk level to encroach into the public right-of-way up to 18 inches. Such planting beds shall include durable curbing (up to 6 inches in height) to provide a clear visual separation;

- Permitting flower boxes and freestanding pots to project into the public right-of-way up to 18 inches, with a maximum height of 24 inches above the sidewalk level. It is recommended that flower boxes maintain a clearance of 12 inches above the sidewalk, not including decorative support braces. Flower boxes should be designed as a compatible and integral extension of the storefront window casing; materials shall be durable and of high quality. Flower boxes shall also provide for internal drainage connecting to appropriate drain lines;

- Permitting hanging flowerpots to project into the public right-of-way up to 12 inches;

LAND USE

- Requiring plant materials within planters, planting beds, flower boxes and flowerpots to provide color and variety throughout the year. The use of non-flowering shrubs or plants is discouraged, unless they are part of a planned pattern of landscape such as accommodating the winter season;
- Requiring chain store facades to conform to the historic character and design principles for King Street storefronts; and
- Requiring building access to conform to the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To the extent that these guidelines may not be consistent with City Code encroachment rules, those rules should be reassessed.



FIGURE 5.8 A, B – *Storefront landscape*



FIGURE 5.9 – *McDonald's not conforming to the King Street historic character*



FIGURE 5.10 A, B – *McDonald's conforming to Chicago's historic character*





Parking

PARKING

Parking is a key issue in the continued health and improvement of the King Street retail district. In a survey conducted for this Strategy, business owners ranked employee parking and customer parking equally as their second most important issues following the need for general marketing. In all of the Advisory Committee workshops and community meetings, parking was raised as a concern.

BACKGROUND

Old Town was originally planned at a time when there was no need for parking per se, and the fortunate fact that the historic fabric of this section of Alexandria is intact means that space for parking is limited. Comparison of the existing parking supply to the parking required under the City Zoning Ordinance indicates that there should be a parking deficit. Depending on whether one applies the standards proposed in individual project parking

studies, or the City’s Metro District Parking Standards, the parking deficit ranges between 1,000 and 2,200 spaces.

The parking supply varies by sub-area, as can be seen in Figure 6.1 (Parking supply by sub-area), which shows the off-street, on-street and total parking by block. In comparison with the standards, the area with the greatest parking deficiency is the Metro Commercial sub-area closest to the King Street Metro Station. The available parking supply is composed of on-street spaces (19 percent of the total) and off-street spaces (81 percent) primarily in structured parking (mostly underground). There is very limited surface off-street parking, and it is in small or irregular lots—which limits the potential for increasing supply by building structures on surface lots.



FIGURE 6.1 – Parking supply by sub-area

In order to better understand the true dimensions of the parking issue, a study of parking utilization was conducted. This study had four main components:

- A “turnover” study for both the on-street and off-street parking supply collected data by block and time of day on vacancy rates and the length of stay;
- An intercept survey of retail/restaurant customers was conducted assessing the potential interest in a parking validation program;
- A survey of restaurant owners/managers assessed their interest in a validation program and/or a valet parking program; and
- A survey of businesses was conducted in association with an employee survey to determine parking behavior and concerns.

Employee Survey

Employees were surveyed through a written/email survey distributed to all business addresses known to the City on King Street. Among the more interesting results was the mode of travel to work: 76.9 percent drive alone, but other modes include walking (5 percent), Metro (5 percent), bus (6.8 percent), and vanpool/carpool (7.3 percent). Sixty-five percent of the responding employees park off-street and 35 percent on street. Of the off-street parking group, almost half have employer-paid parking, and just over half say that is the major reason that they park off-street. City enforcement of parking restrictions is also a major factor, as 58 percent of employees who park off-street say enforcement is a major reason for not parking on the street. Parking restrictions on length of stay and limited-time meters may be the reason that nearly half of those parking on-street return to their vehicle during the day, and three quarters of those persons actually move their vehicle from one space to another.

The perception of a lack of parking in Old Town is more apparent in the results of the employer survey. Forty-seven percent of the respondents agree that a perceived lack of parking discourages customers, though only 38 percent strongly disagree with the statement that “there is enough off-street parking for customers.” The same percentage strongly disagrees that there is enough on-street parking for customers. The perspective that there is not enough customer parking (38 percent of respondents) translates into 40 percent support for business owners to contribute to a parking validation program for their customers. There appears to be little support for contributing to a subsidized valet parking program (65 percent disagree). With regard to their employees, 61 percent of the respondents provide their own employees with parking, while almost the same percentage has employees who leave to move their cars during the day.

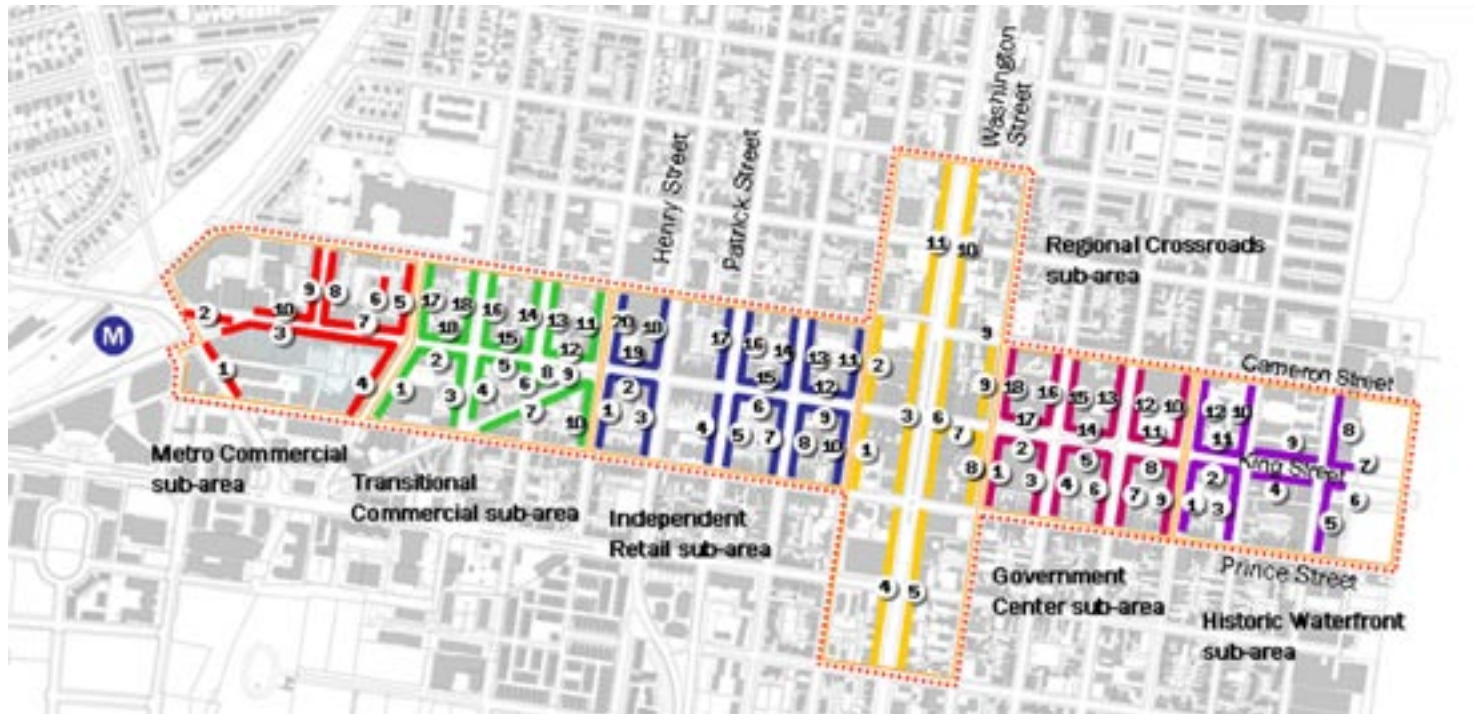


FIGURE 6.2 – On-street parking

ON-STREET PARKING

Definition

For purposes of this study, on-street parking refers to the curbside parking spaces that line the public streets. Some of these spaces have meters and others do not; most have time restrictions on the length of stay. Within the study area most spaces have two or three-hour limits, though there are locations with much shorter time limits. All of the spaces are under the control of the City—it has the ability to change restrictions and pricing—and so are the most likely spaces subject to policy changes.

Overview

On-street parking represents 19 percent of the total supply of parking in the study area, and it may contribute a disproportionate amount to the perception of parking availability in the area. For this reason a detailed study of the usage of this supply was conducted in May and June of 2004. Data on parking occupancy was collected every half hour from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekdays, on King Street from the Metro Station to the river, and on one block (both sides) on either side of King Street. The data were tabulated by sub-area and block face to evaluate turnover, duration of stay, and occupancy (see Figure 6.2 – On-street parking).

Figure 6.3 summarizes the available on-street parking by sub-area and time of day. Despite general perceptions, it can be seen that parking is generally available, with a few key exceptions. The Waterfront and Government Center sub-areas are fully occupied at midday, and the Waterfront area is essentially fully occupied in the early evening period. Figure 6.4 presents the analysis of turnover, measured in cars parked per space. There is a high level of turnover, though it varies by sub-area with the highest turnover in the Government Center and Waterfront sub-areas (5.4 - 5.7 cars per space per day), and the lowest in the Transitional Commercial area (2.9 cars per space per day). The average duration in the entire study area is under two hours, except in the Transitional Commercial area (2.02 hours). The longest duration (over six hours) is concentrated in a few blocks—there are seven blocks where 15 percent or more of the vehicles stay more than six hours, and five of these blocks are in the Transitional Commercial sub-area. The Transitional

Commercial sub-area appears to be the area utilized by more all-day or long-term parkers—likely employees. It is also an area with very limited off-street public parking capacity, which explains why employees park on the street. Logic says that the lack of turnover and the long stays would reduce the available parking supply in Transitional Commercial area, but the percentage of empty spaces ranged from 30 percent to 40 percent during the day. Despite the findings of the parking survey, input received at the public meetings suggested that there is the perception of a parking problem in this area.

FIGURE 6.3 – Percentage of available on-street parking places by sub-area

Sub-Area	11 am to 1 pm	1 pm to 3 pm	3 pm to 5 pm	5 pm to 8 pm
Historic Waterfront	5%	7%	20%	12%
Government Center	8%	10%	24%	22%
Regional Crossroads	26%	34%	48%	36%
Independent Retail	19%	28%	39%	37%
Transitional Commercial	30%	38%	41%	38%
Metro Commercial	28%	32%	33%	25%

FIGURE 6.4 – On-street parking turnover

Sub-Area	Total Spaces	Avg. Daily Turnover	Average Duration	% Parked Over 4 hrs
Historic Waterfront	142	5.4	1.51	5%
Government Center	192	5.7	1.29	3.7%
Regional Crossroads	175	4.8	1.06	3%
Independent Retail	225	3.6	1.68	8%
Transitional Commercial	221	2.9	2.02	13%
Metro Commercial	148	5.4	1.51	5%

PARKING

OFF-STREET PARKING

Definition

Off-street parking is defined as the parking supply that is not located on the public streets, but rather, located in parking garages (primarily underground in this area), surface lots and above-ground structures.

OVERVIEW

The off-street parking supply in the King Street study area is about 81 percent of the total parking capacity, with the vast majority of the publicly-available supply located east of Washington Street and at the Metro Station area. A substantial portion of the off-street supply (especially west of Washington Street) is only available for private or restricted use, or not open in the evenings. The parking facilities that close in the evenings

are (with one exception) all located in the Independent Retail or Metro Commercial sub-areas. There are no publicly-available off-street facilities in the Transitional Commercial sub-area.

The parking garages at Market Square and the Alexandria Courthouse are owned by the City (the City also has an ownership interest in the Torpedo Factory Condominium Garage), but are managed by a private firm. With the exception of a small surface lot on King Street between Patrick and Henry Streets, the balance of the off-street parking facilities are both privately-owned and -operated, with little ability for the City to influence the hours of operation or pricing. The Courthouse and Market Square garages have a reduced evening rate, with a maximum rate of \$2.00 on Fridays and Saturdays. Both of these facilities are located in the Government Center sub-area.



FIGURE 6.5 – Survey of garage locations

To understand the issues related to garage utilization, data were collected at parking facilities with more than twenty spaces and open to the public. Data were collected on each vehicle entering or exiting the facilities, from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays. Figure 6.5 (Survey of garage locations) documents the surveyed garage locations. The off-street facilities fill quickly in the morning, and begin to empty in mid-afternoon. Public and Advisory Committee comments indicate that the publicly-available facilities in the Government Center and Waterfront sub-areas fill up again in the evening, particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings which are periods not addressed by these surveys.

PARKING PRINCIPLES/RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the Guiding Principles and Recommendations for parking.

Guiding Principles

Utilize on-street parking on King Street to serve retail/restaurant customers, as it is the most convenient. Turnover should be encouraged to increase the supply.

Employees and longer-term customers should be served by off-street parking, with efforts made to maximize garage utilization by these all-day or multiple-hour parking users.

Transit use should be maximized as a means of reducing the parking demand pressures. Transit should be encouraged for local trips, such as those between the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) and King Street—to encourage leaving cars parked for the day once they arrive in the area.

Information, enforcement and pricing should be used to direct users to the appropriate parking supply, including brochures, improved directional and identification signage, validation discounts, etc.

Standards for valet parking should be created and an expedited permitting process established through an administrative permit process.

Planning Recommendations

- The King Street Partnership, in cooperation with the City, should undertake a cooperative effort with private garage owners to permit or encourage public parking. The intent is to have garage owners keep the facilities open and accept public parking if the market (demand times the rate) will pay the costs involved. In the sub-areas west of Washington Street most of the garage capacity is unavailable to the public in the evenings or at night—and in some cases garage capacity is only open to employees and customers at any time. The King Street Partnership would be the most appropriate entity to find ways to provide off-street public parking in existing facilities that are now closed by negotiating agreements with the owners. Because current demand may not be large enough to pay the full costs of opening these facilities, this program may involve the City or the King Street Partnership providing subsidies for a period of time to ensure public parking availability, which in turn, will support the restaurant and retail uses in those areas;
- The King Street Partnership should maintain communications with the private garage owners in the area in order to achieve a common understanding of the King Street parking goals and objectives, to better understand the operators' concerns, and to cooperate on hours of operation, signage and other issues;
- The King Street Partnership should coordinate a program to provide improved information for customers, employees and visitors about the available parking supply, including rates, hours, locations, entrances, etc. A brochure and website need to be developed and widely distributed to provide this information. Some of the off-street parking usable for King Street has entrances on surrounding streets and is not visible or known to infrequent visitors. Some of the publicly-available parking is in hotels or other facilities and access to the public is not clearly understood. Without better information, drive-by customers may not recognize that parking is available at some of these

PARKING

locations; Similarly, common standards for signs for parking fees and hours would also help users, who may be reluctant to enter a garage without knowing the likely cost or the closing time;

- The City should include improved parking signage in a comprehensive wayfinding sign program for Old Town. Current signs vary considerably (see Chapter 4. – Street Graphics); many are small, placement is inconsistent, and there are often long gaps in the trailblazer markings that would lead a motorist to available off-street parking;

- The City, in cooperation with the King Street Partnership, should develop policies and programs that support employee use of off-street parking. The City already has \$1.00 (weekday) and \$2.00 (weekend) evening maximums at two garages in the Government Center area to encourage restaurant employees to park off-street; many employers also provide or pay for off-street parking on weekdays. Yet information about the reduced evening garage rates may not be reaching employees. A caveat is that some of the parking survey data suggest that there is little or no all-day capacity in some off-street facilities. To compensate for the lack of capacity, private garage owners should be encouraged to increase the capacity of their garages through the use of stacked or tandem parking;

- The King Street Partnership should initiate a validated parking program similar to “Park Alexandria”, a customer validation program introduced by the Chamber of Commerce to encourage the use of garages. This program involves negotiating agreements with garage operators to accept stamps or tickets distributed by businesses in lieu of cash payment, development of a distribution method to get the tickets or stamps into the hands of the merchants, and a major marketing effort to promote parking, King Street and the validation program—including a consistent logo, a web page and promotional activities directed at both the business community and their customers;

- The City should revise valet parking regulations to simplify the approval process by allowing for administrative approval of valet parking permits, rather than requiring a Special Use Permit (SUP). As part of the implementation of the parking recommendations in the Strategy, review the valet parking requirements within the Central Business District with the intent to promote valet parking as a strategy for all restaurants located off of King Street, especially on Union, Lee, and Cameron streets. This program would require the development of standards for a valet parking application regarding the lease of on-street spaces for pick-up and drop-off of vehicles, limits on hours and days of operation, standard requirements regarding signs and the identification of the off-street parking supply to be utilized (including contracts with the provider demonstrating actual availability);

- The City, King Street Partnership, or a similar organization should be charged with the responsibility to develop, oversee, manage and implement the parking strategies, including identification of appropriate funding. The organization should provide the forum for working with the parking providers, manage the parking validation program, provide information about parking availability, monitor parking usage and availability, oversee signage improvements, coordinate special event parking and coordinate special transit service implementation. This management could be a City function, an independent parking service district or a responsibility of the new King Street Partnership; and

- The City should continue efforts to expand the parking supply through consideration of proposals to build additional off-street parking that would be available to the public. A current proposal involves swapping the City-owned surface lot near the corner of Patrick Street for the construction of a parking structure mid-block between Patrick and Henry streets. Such a project could offer a significant increase in net parking supply

in an area with very limited off-street parking. Clearly, many questions about this proposal would need to be addressed, but the City should take an active role in seeking to increase parking supply while meeting preservation and design goals for King Street.

The above recommendations address management of parking demand and supply to make the best use of the available supply.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Based on conventional parking standards there is a shortage of parking in the King Street area, but the impact of this shortage in terms of low turnover, high occupancy, etc. is essentially limited to specific areas and times of day. A strategy of adding to the off-street parking supply is not possible in the King Street area because there are limited available surface lots that could conceivably be used for new parking structures and they are all small. In addition, the area is contained in two historic districts, and there is little sentiment for demolishing existing structures to create parking within the district. On King Street the desire is to maintain a lively and continuous streetscape of shop windows and activity, rather than create dead zones fronting parking structures. Additionally, there is little available excess parking nearby that could be used in conjunction with a shuttle—except for the garages at the PTO complex that may have available capacity during evenings, weekends and for special events.

The potential for other management strategies is limited compared to the options often available in other cities. The on-street parking is about 20 percent of the total, and the City has policy control over this portion of the supply. However, because most of the off-street parking supply and operational policy is in the hands of the private sector, the City has very little control over the pricing or hours of the remaining 80 percent. Only in the three City-owned facilities can the City direct the contracted private management firms on these issues. This policy of private parking garages has protected the City from economic losses that might result from subsidizing parking, but it limits the management options considerably—and it means that private garage owners will need to be involved in a cooperative process with the City to make future changes.



Transit

TRANSIT

The Guiding Principles outline steps to enhance public transit to provide convenience, reduce traffic and reduce the demand for parking in the core retail/commercial areas. The employee survey conducted for this Strategy suggests that many King Street employees already use alternative travel modes. While nearly 77 percent of the employees drive to work alone, the balance walk (5 percent), take Metro (5 percent), ride a bus (6.8 percent), or vanpool/carpool (7.3 percent). These rates of alternative modes are significant, but there may be potential to increase these percentages by various means.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

King Street is served by Metro, Virginia Railway Express and Amtrak at the western end of the study area. The King Street Metro Station is also served by Alexandria's own DASH bus system and regional Metrobuses. However, much of the study area is beyond the typical 1,500-2,000 foot walking distance from rail services, and the major governmental office and restaurant/retail area is located at the eastern end of the study area, furthest from Metro service.

There is substantial bus service along King Street, provided by the DASH AT2, AT3, AT5 and AT7 routes, which offer 11- to 14-minute trip times each way from Market Square to the King Street Metro station, with headways varying between 20 minutes at peak times and hourly at midday and during the evening. However, the effect of having multiple, overlapping routes means that along King Street the frequency of bus service is high, if irregular. Only one of the routes, the AT7, connects King Street with PTO and Eisenhower Avenue—it has 30-minute headways in the peak hours and hourly service midday. The base fare on these DASH routes is \$1.00. The relatively high percentage of bus users among the employees surveyed reflects the high level of access provided by these multiple bus routes.

There is also a distinct service oriented to retail and restaurant customers. In addition to the base services described above, the DASH system operates the Dash About Shuttle on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, using specially “graphically wrapped” transit buses. This service is free; it operates on 15-minute headways between Market Square and the King Street Metro Station. Dash About serves the peak dining and shopping times in Old Town, facilitating access from the Metro. Because of slow traffic on King Street during peak times, the overall trip time is comparable to walking. The Dash About shuttle is seen as a successful route by the Alexandria Transit Company, based on the growth in ridership.

Finally, a shuttle system is being developed as part of the transit component of the PTO Transportation Management Plan. This shuttle is intended to link the PTO development with the King Street Metro Station with a frequent service that will encourage transit use among PTO employees as an alternative to the single-occupant vehicle.

While Dash About provides a special shuttle on Friday evenings and weekends, and substantial conventional bus service weekdays during the day, there is no special lunchtime shuttle to encourage movement up and down the length of King Street. The City Council recently authorized a pilot program for a midday shuttle linking the upper end of King Street with the PTO at 10 minute intervals. It is not clear whether a substantial number of PTO employees would have the time or income to frequent restaurants on lower King Street, but a frequent connection by transit would allow employee vehicles to remain off the street if such trips are taken.

TRANSIT PRINCIPLES/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Guiding Principles aim to maximize transit access to the King Street retail corridor, reducing traffic and parking demand while attracting customers or employees who would not otherwise come to King Street. As stated above, there is already transit service, but the basic recommendation is to enhance it in order to better serve retail and restaurant patrons, enabling both visitors and area employees to move up and down King Street in a more time-efficient manner. The Guiding Principles also seek to make commuting via transit a more suitable option for King Street employees, thereby reducing parking demand by daily commuters and freeing more parking spaces for retail customers.

Guiding Principles

Maximize transit access to the study area to reduce traffic, parking demand and attract customers who would not otherwise come to King Street

Increase Metro and VRE rider access to jobs on King Street by instituting free, frequent service along King Street during the peak hours

Continue to provide the free, frequent (between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM weekdays) shuttle service that connects the PTO employees to serve all of King Street. Expand the shuttle service to serve a broader area of King Street

Provide shuttle service to serve evening entertainment trips (between 6:00 PM and midnight or 2:00 AM on Friday, Saturday and Sunday) to link Metro, parking garages away from Market Square and hotels with the restaurants along King Street

Planning Recommendations

- The Alexandria Transit Company (ATC), operator of DASH services, should recommend new shuttle transit initiatives following the completion of its current comprehensive operations analysis. Organizationally, ATC is the likely operator of any such transit service improvements, but the King Street Partnership would likely provide specific policy guidance for the King Street portion of the services, and could be tasked with the marketing and promotion. The City through its oversight of the PTO shuttle (an obligation of the PTO TMP) should be involved in the guidance for the PTO shuttle to coordinate with King Street transit service;
- The Alexandria Transit Company should explore potential funding sources including a special service district for King Street, the King Street Partnership, the PTO's shuttle contribution, as well as City transit funds. Another potential source of funding that may be available for capital and for the initial three years of operation is the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Certainly this shuttle should address the goals of the CMAQ program, though there are likely to be significant regional planning tasks involved in obtaining funds of this type;



FIGURE 7.1 – Shuttle routes

▪ The Alexandria Transit Company should explore the potential for a lunchtime shuttle that serves the length of King Street. Implementing a lunchtime shuttle coordinated with the PTO shuttle and the Dash About in a single, distinctive service would address multiple City goals of linking rail transit with both retail/restaurant and employment sites that are beyond the likely distance that people will walk to or from Metro, as can be seen in Figure 7.1 – Shuttle routes. (Note that the City Council recently authorized a pilot program for a midday shuttle that links a portion of King Street with the PTO at 10 minute intervals.) Based on other applications of specialized “Metro extender” shuttles (shuttles intended to spread the high transit mode share beyond the 1,500 foot area where it typically exists), the desirable characteristics of a shuttle include:

- High frequency—no more than ten minutes between vehicles, preferably much less;
- Free or minimal cost to the user;
- A simple, clear, direct route;
- A distinctive, attractive vehicle (see Figure 7.2 A – Graphic-wrapped Dash About vehicle and 7.2 B – Distinctive shuttle vehicle); and
- A focus on service in peak demand hours



FIGURE 7.2A – Graphic wrapped Dash About vehicle



FIGURE 7.2B – Distinctive shuttle vehicle



FIGURE 7.2C – Distinctive shuttle vehicle



FIGURE 7.2D – Distinctive shuttle vehicle

- The recommended shuttle should use distinctive, possibly smaller shuttle vehicles that are attractive to people who would not normally think of using a bus. These types of vehicles would also help to create a distinctive “fun” identity. Substitution of rubber-tire trolley style vehicles for conventional transit buses has resulted in increased ridership in other locations. It is recognized that these vehicles often have higher maintenance requirements, and may actually be less comfortable or accessible—but the public finds them attractive. As a special service operating a full schedule this operation should have distinctive graphics, including on-street signs as well as (see Figure 7.3 – Distinctive transit signs) a website and brochures. The service should also tie into parking and destination information, as well as ridesharing and commuter support programs;
- Provide bicycle racks along the length of King Street to promote bike use;
- Bicycle rental facilities should be considered as an alternative transit mode. Self-service bicycle rental stations (see Figures 7.4 A & B) could be located at the King Street Metro Station, the seating areas along King Street and at or along the waterfront. Bicycles could be rented from and returned to any one of the stations; and
- Working with boat operators, the City should explore the potential for a water taxi or shuttle service to connect the Alexandria Waterfront and the foot of King Street with Georgetown, Washington, D.C. and the new National Harbor project in Maryland.



FIGURE 7.3 – Distinctive transit signs



FIGURE 7.4 A, B – Self-service bicycle rental stations





Waterfront

WATERFRONT

During the planning process the waterfront was cited on many occasions as a missed opportunity. In its current use and disconnected visual relationship with King Street, the waterfront does little to improve the atmosphere of King Street as a retail district, nor does it provide a quality recreational open space area for the community. Alexandria has the opportunity to showcase a waterfront that matches the quality of other existing and planned waterfronts along the Potomac River and is consistent with the world class character of King Street. The waterfront should provide full access to the water's edge for the community while incorporating active and passive recreation opportunities—offering entertainment and event opportunities, enhancing maritime and waterfront transportation and anchoring the activities of King Street and Old Town.

The waterfront could provide a handsome eastern terminus for King Street and function as an economic driver to generate spin-off benefits to the visitor-oriented businesses that line the first several blocks of King Street as well as the adjacent north-south cross streets. Clearly, the quality of life for Alexandria's residents and visitors can be enhanced substantially by creating better public access to the water, expanding the City's inventory of open space, and expanding its program of community activities. The City is currently working with the Old Dominion Boat Club and other waterfront property owners in exploring opportunities to create a more public waterfront adjacent to King Street. New public access and active use of the waterfront, such as for entertainment, boating, recreation, dining, and other activities are recommended. The following principles and recommendations are provided as advisory only to a future waterfront planning effort.

WATERFRONT PRINCIPLES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Guiding Principles

Develop a comprehensive waterfront plan to create an active/passive community focused waterfront

Enhance the waterfront physically and programmatically to celebrate the waterfront tradition and the City's history as a port

Program open spaces to accommodate entertainment activities for visitors and residents, especially in the summer and good weather months

Link the waterfront and other areas with existing and potential new trails for biking, walking and recreation to bring people (not cars) to King Street, as envisioned in the City's open space planning

Provide new programs that will create active boating festivals and races that can bring focus to the King Street waterfront

Organize crew regattas, volleyball and softball tournaments or leagues and other outdoor recreation opportunities that will attract residents to the waterfront and Old Town



FIGURE 8.1 –
King Street's access to the waterfront



FIGURE 8.2 –
Obstacles to waterfront access



FIGURE 8.3 A, B – *Constrained access to the redeveloped waterfront*

Planning Recommendations

- The City should undertake a waterfront planning process to identify a common vision for the waterfront. The comprehensive master planning and design process should follow the pattern of other waterfront planning efforts nationally. The planning should include a citywide process of visioning, a thorough understanding of the market support, assessment of transportation and parking impacts and an economic analysis and implementation strategy to ensure funding for the implementation of the waterfront plan;



- The economic viability of waterfront uses should be tested to determine the appropriate scale, type and mix of uses that would maximize the economic spin-off for King Street business and anchor the waterfront plan, while being compatible with a community focused waterfront. For example, the market potential and financial viability of public or private uses such as museums, marinas, restaurants, entertainment venues or other anchor facilities should be determined. The cost of public improvements and sources of public/private funding should also be determined;
- The impacts on transportation, circulation, parking, light and noise that may adversely affect neighboring residential communities must be considered as part of the planning process;

FIGURE 8.4 A, B, C – *The waterfront opportunity*

- The recreation and open space needs of the community and Old Town should be examined as an integral part of a plan to maximize public access and community amenity value for citizens and visitors of Alexandria;
- Identify and accommodate programmed community activities; and
- The plan should identify the appropriate organizational and operational structure to coordinate the efforts to achieve the waterfront development goals. Any number of development and operating models may be appropriate and should be explored.



Strategy Implementation

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Three steps were identified as key to the implementation of the recommendations outlined in King Street Retail Strategy. The first is the establishment of a public/private organization that will work closely with the City to provide leadership, management and financial support to maintain and enhance King Street's competitive position in the region. The second is the modification of existing ordinances and regulations to bring them into line with the current vision for King Street. Lastly, is the creation of marketing strategies to assist King Street in achieving its potential.

THE KING STREET PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT

Background

It was clear from the initial identification of issues derived from the stakeholder interviews, discussions with the City staff and input received at the Advisory Committee workshops that there is a need for a form of new governance and management to implement the vision for King Street. Successful implementation of the Strategy over time requires a close working relationship between the property owners, the business proprietors, the community and the City. Each of these groups has expressed the desire to have "ownership" in King Street and Old Town and each should have a proactive role in the planning and management of King Street. Indeed, King Street, in both image and substance, is important for all of the residents of Alexandria, and therefore, all elements of the City have a stake in the continued success of the street.

For King Street to maintain a prominent position in the region's increasingly competitive environment, full-time paid leadership, oversight and management are required. No longer will part-time assistance from the City and volunteer-based organizations suffice. While those have made a difference on King Street and in Old Town their limited resources have limited their potential impact. King Street is now competing with privately-funded

(through common area maintenance charges) professionally managed retail/entertainment malls and "town center" type complexes that have the ability to manage the retail/entertainment/restaurant operations and provide coordinated hours of operations, comprehensive marketing and promotions. To assure a leadership position in the future, the Strategy proposes a management and funding entity whereby the private sectors will drive the leadership and management while the public sector facilitates the funding for the capital improvements and operations of King Street.

It is not the intent of the Strategy to lay out a specific roadmap for the new management entity; rather, this Strategy provides an outline for one example of an organization and offers strategic approaches for a process that will lead to the formation of an appropriate entity based upon input from all of the parties. A King Street leadership organization needs to be derived from local businesses and any new effort needs to be grassroots-based.

During the course of the planning, a number of Advisory Committee members suggested that the City consider the formation of a Business Service or Improvement District (BID) to fund the creation and operation of a management organization established as a joint venture between the King Street community and the City. This approach is important to the Strategy's recommendations.

Issues and Opportunities

The following is a summary of issues and opportunities that were identified by the Advisory Committee during the planning process relating to the development of a new leadership/management entity:

- A form of governance is required that will provide the desired resources for leadership and nurturing necessary for implementation of the vision outlined in the Strategy;

- The City staff resources are limited;
- The King Street business community desires more direct involvement, leadership and management of King Street;
- The multiple business and non-profit organizations relating to King Street do not have crisply-defined and well-coordinated goals and responsibilities;
- Volunteer leadership which run their own businesses can only go so far in leading and managing the key elements of King Street;
- Shared governance provides a more energized and cohesive King Street business community. Most importantly, shared governance provides “ownership” of the problems, concerns and solutions; and
- The community wants to be more empowered so that it does not have to approach the City as a benefactor each time it wants to implement a program.

Experience of Other Communities in Virginia

Other communities within Virginia, as well as Maryland and Washington, DC have undertaken a similar public/private approach to lead, manage and fund their commercial cores. Typically, these organizations in Virginia utilize the provisions of the Service District enabling statutes, which permit the formation of a special taxing district to provide a series of improvements or services for the district. These statutes require that all funds generated through the district must be spent in or for the benefit of the properties in the district.

While no particular management structure is mandated by State legislation, the most typical format in Virginia for the management of such districts is through a 501(c) (6) corporation. In general, revenues are derived from an add-on to the localities’ general real estate tax rate paid by the properties

within the given service district. The following is a list of select Virginia localities that have utilized the state legislation for the purpose of creating a business service (or improvement) district, as well as an estimate of each district’s annual tax revenue/budget.

Arlington (Rosslyn)	\$ 1,000,000	in tax revenue
Fairfax City	\$ 600,000	
Roanoke	\$ 200,000	
Richmond	\$ 700,000	
Norfolk	\$ 1,000,000	
Staunton	\$ 65,000	

**LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT/FUNDING/
ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Strategy recommends the formation of a new public/private organization, which for the purposes of the Strategy is called the King Street Partnership (KSP). This KSP should evolve from the current King Street Metro Enterprise Team (KSMET), incorporating the Old Town Business Association organization. A key issue in establishing the KSP is delineating the division of leadership, management, funding and implementation responsibility between the City; City-funded agencies, such as the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) and the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA); and the KSP. The intent is to create a new organization to ensure that the programs and recommendations from the King Street Retail Strategy are implemented. The following are some thoughts on how the KSP could allocate responsibilities. The responsibilities of all parties would be negotiated during the formation of the KSP and documented in the bylaws or charter. It is not the intent to devolve from the Planning Commission, the Board of Architectural Review for the Old and Historic Alexandria District, or the City Council any of the responsibility that now rests with those bodies for the adoption of public policy.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

ESTABLISHING THE KING STREET PARTNERSHIP

The establishment of a public/private entity such as the King Street Partnership is considered key to implementing and sustaining the vision and strategies for King Street. The initiative for the KSP must come from the community, and there should be a broad buy-in as to its mission and taxation plans. A successful BID is community-based and grassroots-driven. To that end, it is recommended that as a part of the King Street Retail Strategy, a working group primarily comprised of KSMET with City staff support, should survey the business and property owners to determine if support for the KSP is as broad as that expressed within the Advisory Committee and the public meetings. Before a King Street Partnership is created, there must be a “buy-in” as to its mission, boundaries and taxation plans.

The establishment of an entity such as the proposed KSP requires expertise, organization and support. Once the community determines that it supports the concept of the KSP, it is recommended that the City assist the community by providing staff and funding to create the organization. Start-up costs would be required to incorporate the new organization, undertake the process to identify the responsibilities of the City and KSP, establish the boundaries of the District, identify the makeup of the Board, hire staff and identify the business leadership. These start-up efforts could be reimbursed by KSP once it is operational.

The make-up of the new organization is important. The vision for the KSP is that it will engage full-time staff supported by an active and engaged volunteer board. There are a number of ways that the makeup of the board could be determined. The most appropriate would be determined by the community working with the City. The desired representation and experience of the board members could be determined and a nominating committee established from the various existing constituencies established to nominate candidates for the Board.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KING STREET PARTNERSHIP

The following are thoughts for consideration on the roles and responsibilities of the KSP:

- Planning, implementing and managing the business and marketing elements of the King Street Retail Strategy, such as business promotion, marketing and operational activities, in coordination with the activities of ACVA;
- Supporting and enhancing the King Street mission and goals/objectives as outlined in the King Street Retail Strategy;
- Working with the City to provide a coordinated overview of all issues and proposed actions relating to King Street, including prioritization of all proposed actions and funding allocations;
- Coordinating the private parking resources with the public resources;
- Coordinating with DASH to provide enhanced transit services;
- Establishing and monitoring retail/entertainment operational standards/guidelines, such as show window lighting, consistent retail hours of operation, private sidewalk cleaning, snow removal, etc.;
- Working with the ACVA’s local marketing efforts in developing and implementing a King Street marketing plan, including: general and special promotions, retail and merchandising expertise;
- Working with the City to clarify public and private maintenance responsibilities and managing the implementation of the private sector responsibilities;
- Working with AEDP and others to identify and recruit complementary regional and local businesses, and developing information resources and programs to recruit and retain desired businesses; and
- Advising the City on issues that arise relating to King Street and Old Town.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITY

Within the context of the KSP, the roles and responsibilities of the City could include:

- Continuing the responsibility for the policy development and implementation. The Strategy provides the public policy guidance for the Strategy’s implementation by the various parties;
- Continuing the use of city-wide tax dollars for existing public services on King Street;
- Assisting in the process of initiating the leadership/management entity (KSP);
- Negotiating a common understanding of the public and the private responsibilities;
- Assisting in establishing bylaws, charter or other documents that reflect the agreement on responsibilities;
- Establishing a legal Business Improvement or Service District (starting as early as 2006) if determined appropriate and there is the necessary support;
- Advancing initial start-up costs, if necessary;
- Assisting the KSP in the implementation of its charge by providing advisory support;
- Establishing and maintaining the policy for land use and public/private physical improvements through City policy (based upon the adopted strategy), zoning and other appropriate regulations as implemented by the Department of Planning and Zoning, including facilitating the processing of permits through the Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Establishing public/private streetscape standards to implement the Strategy;

- Implementing and maintaining a city-wide funded “base” level of capital improvements through the City’s Capital Improvement Program process;
- Providing transit services consistent with the strategy to reduce the adverse impact of the automobile;
- Providing coordination between all City departments as they relate to King Street; and
- Working with the KSP to establish an overall parking strategy; this includes ensuring the close coordination of the public parking resources with the overall Old Town parking management plan.

THE KSP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Typically, the boards of other similar districts are comprised of 20 to 30 members. For King Street it appears that a board on the lower end of this range may have the potential to be more effective than a larger board, in conjunction with an active executive committee. Terms of the board members should be established to provide overlap and continuity. The Board should have broad representation including participation by property owners, merchants, civic and business associations, the City and residents. The business and property owner members could either be elected by the board or by the membership at large.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

BUDGET/FUNDING OF THE KSP

The overall success of the KSP will be predicated on its ability to generate funds to implement the Vision for King Street. To that end it is expected that the City will maintain its historical financial support for King Street/Old Town; however, it is incumbent on the private sector to provide its share of resources that will assure the enhancements to create the vibrant mix of retail, restaurant and entertainment that is described in the mission and vision for King Street. The establishment of a Business Improvement or Service District (BID) would have the greatest and most equitable potential to contribute significantly to the KSP's budget.

The community must determine the level at which it is willing to support the KSP, and the level of potential revenue from the special district depends upon the following factors:

- A determination of the individual parcels within a defined contiguous boundary that would be subject to the BID assessments;

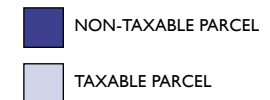
- The assessed property values; and
- The tax rate proposals for the district.

A number of alternative district boundaries were reviewed to determine the potential tax revenues. For discussion purposes Figure 9.1 depicts one potential example for a King Street Business Improvement District boundary. The properties proposed to be included within the BID are graphically highlighted as well as the tax exempt properties located within the boundary. It is clear that there are a number of ways the boundary could be drawn.

Figure 9.1 (BID boundary) indicates the commercial and tax exempt properties within the draft BID boundary. The properties (those included in the district tax base) include only those that are zoned CD (Commercial Downtown), CL (Commercial Low), OCH (Office Commercial High), OCM (Office Commercial Medium), WPR (Waterfront Park and



FIGURE 9.1 – *King Street Business Improvement District - Possible BID boundary.*



Recreation), or RC (High Density Apartment)—these properties are zoned for some manner of commercial use. Apartment buildings may be considered commercial enterprises for the purposes of BID District definitions and are included in the proposed BID district boundary.

Assessed Property Values

To estimate potential revenues associated with the draft BID service area, the assessed values were analyzed for all properties within the draft area’s boundaries. Values used in this analysis were valid as of March 2004 (changes in assessed value after March 2004 are not reflected).

FIGURE 9.2 – Estimate of Additional BID Property Tax Payments

	BID Tax Rate (Per \$100 of Assessed Value) with BID Budget of:		Annual BID Assessment with a BID Budget of:	
	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
Property with \$500,000 Assessed Value	2.59¢	5.19¢	\$130	\$259
Property with \$1,000,000 Assessed Value	2.59¢	5.19¢	\$259	\$519

Calculations based upon City of Alexandria property tax assessments, March 2004

Potential Revenues

Based upon the draft service district boundaries outlined in Figure 9.1 and the assessed values of the taxable properties contained within the boundaries, the increase in tax rate and BID assessment were calculated to fund hypothetical annual BID budgets of \$250,000 and \$500,000. Figure 9.2 summarizes the tax impact for theoretical properties that are assessed at \$250,000 and \$500,000. The additional tax assessment for each property is dependent upon the value of the property, the annual budget of the BID and the physical area that is serviced by the BID. For instance, a property located in the BID and

assessed at \$500,000 would pay \$259 (or 5.19¢/\$100 of assessed value) in additional annual real property taxes to support a BID with a \$500,000 budget. The BID assessment would rise or fall depending upon the BID’s projected budget and/or the BID’s boundary, as well as changes in annual assessments within the BID boundaries.

BID revenue is clearly a significant source of funding for the King Street Partnership. However, other sources could contribute as well. Another source of revenue could include membership dues from business owners and operators. A membership component would give businesspeople a stake in the organization that they would not otherwise have if revenue were limited to Business Improvement District taxes that are paid exclusively by property owners.

It is not envisioned that the BID would become a large operational entity with a large staff. Rather, the BID could be a lean “virtual service delivery” organization that would contract with the City or use existing City contracts, (or that of other organizations in the City) to provide the desired higher level of services within the BID boundaries. This organizational structure will help keep the BID staff focused on helping lead the organization to achieving its goals, rather than on day-to-day administration. An example of this contracting method would be additional flower plantings beyond those the City already provides. In those cases the BID can reimburse the City for increasing its contract with the City’s private sector contractor to provide the additional services.

SUMMARY

The establishment of a new public/private leadership/management entity is critical to the success of the King Street Retail Strategy. KSMET and other community representation with assistance from the City should initiate a dialogue to determine if there is wide support for the King Street Partnership approach with funding through the establishment of a Business Improvement District.

Modifying the Small Area Plan Zoning Ordinance

The Department of Planning and Zoning intends to prepare the necessary changes in the Small Area Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and other documents that are required to have these existing plans and ordinances conform to the King Street Retail Strategy. The intent is for formal public hearings on the Small Area Plan and the Zoning Ordinance to be held concurrently with the review and approval of the King Street Retail Strategy.

Implementing the Marketing Strategies

Following the approval of the King Street Retail Strategy and the implementation of the King Street Partnership, the following strategic marketing approaches are recommended for implementation. The marketing strategies propose concepts and specific recommendations for strengthening the market for King Street and building upon the findings from the market analysis, consumer surveys, business interviews, client/Advisory Committee discussions and consultant experience.

INTEGRATED MARKETING THEMES

Several marketing themes or concepts have been developed as an outgrowth of the findings from the market analysis. These themes provide a baseline for the gradual development of ongoing management and revitalization programs. In essence, these programs are proposed as elements of a vision for marketing the King Street corridor.

All of the marketing concepts emphasize the strengths of Old Town as a “charming, walkable, historic small town.” There is the need to focus on enhancing street life, promoting local/independent stores, creating an active waterfront, and enhancing the opportunities for King Street to be a place to live, work, shop and play. The marketing concepts and their respective elements are described below. These concepts are not mutually exclusive, but should be integrated in a way that emphasizes King Street’s real strengths. The following are thoughts on marketing themes:

Cafes & Street Life

This concept emphasizes outdoor cafe dining, evening activity, later and more consistent business hours and regular outdoor programming (street festivals, events, shows, holidays, farmers markets, live music) in order to enhance the street activity that draws local and destination shoppers to the area.

Arts & Music

This theme builds on King Street’s and Alexandria’s strengths as a center for art and music. Marketing should focus on the Torpedo Factory Art Center (perhaps as a sponsor of art competitions and art-on-the-street), recruiting a regional art supply center, art shows, music festivals, public art and related activities.

Active Waterfront

There is clearly a need to create more public access and enhance utilization of Alexandria's waterfront. The waterfront holds the best opportunity for creating a new anchor attraction or amenity as a regional destination. An important step is to begin the planning and creating the vision for a true public waterfront. Key elements of this marketing concept include greatly enhanced access to the waterfront, development of a marina and/or boating services (and visual interaction with sailboats and tall ships), events and regular waterfront programming, an anchor entertainment venue and/or visitor attraction (e.g. museum), well-integrated cafes and active or passive recreation (open space, trails and recreation programming).

Walkable, Historic Small Town

The most attractive feature of King Street to many of the current consumers is the "small town feel" of the street and its "walkability." These features should be emphasized through enhanced pedestrian accommodations such as seating, protecting and encouraging small-scale "urban" development, emphasizing the district's architectural merits through marketing and competitions, walking tours and special events.

Local, Independent & Diverse

The small town image and scale is heightened by the presence of many smaller locally-owned businesses. This marketing theme emphasizes independent and local business through the use of special promotions, economic incentives, parking programs and associations. The diversity of business is encouraged by monitoring and maintaining a balance of chains and independents, as well as local-serving and destination-oriented establishments.

Live, Work, Shop & Play

King Street is not just about retail. The corridor's strengths rely on the ability to draw people for a variety of reasons and to support a diversity of market uses. This concept encourages the further development of housing (new mixed-use, upper-floor apartments, and with diverse price range) to strengthen the primary retail market base. Entertainment, recreation and visitor attractions (such as a museum) help diversify the existing mix and add quality of life to the corridor as a 24-hour destination district. Office uses perform well on King Street and help generate employee expenditures in support of the retail uses.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAMMING

Programming is critical to enhancing King Street’s visibility, unique character and overall retail experience in a competitive environment. King Street has the opportunity to differentiate itself from malls and other “programmed” retail space by offering a true sense of community and an active urban street life. Festivals, events and other programming can add significant value in this context with minimal capital expenditure. It is easy to create a “laundry list” of activities that can be incorporated into the King Street experience. The challenge is to create activities that are both natural and logical for this environment and exciting in a way that builds on the themes identified as marketing strengths. Key programming recommendations are provided below:

Street Festivals & Events

Art Competitions, Shows and Festivals

These types of events should complement those already operating in Del Ray or other parts of the City. Such events should reinforce the City’s place as an art center.

- Consider an international art competition sponsored by or promoting the Torpedo Factory;
- Enhance the music festival and the regular concerts at Market Square or the waterfront;
- Develop festivals around holidays, historic themes and ethnic events. Capitalize on the desire of merchants to decorate the street for more seasonal holidays. For example, King Street could be home to an annual Halloween pumpkin carving contest and ghost walk, Easter Parade, Revolutionary War Days or other events that need to be tested in the market to determine potential for increasing retail traffic and sales; and
- The City should examine its own policies that currently discourage holiday decorating outside of individual shops.

Farmers’ Market

While this regular event is already successful, build upon the opportunities to promote the existing farmers’ market; make the event more visible, increase awareness/attendance or otherwise increase its overall impact.

PUBLIC ART

Permanent installations

There is an opportunity for the use of public art as a marketing tool to attract and/or keep visitors on King Street. Public art should not be designed or used generically, but should evolve organically from King Street’s strengths. Public art should be incorporated into the overall concept of Old Town as an art center, with art competitions, the Torpedo Factory, art galleries, public art, festivals or other opportunities for residents and visitors to experience and participate in the making of arts and crafts.

Temporary Exhibitions

Rotating exhibitions will do more to enhance opportunities for repeat visitation, especially among Washington Metropolitan Region visitors. Exhibitions and permanent installations can be complementary. Exhibitions might also be staged in a special venue (such as at the waterfront).

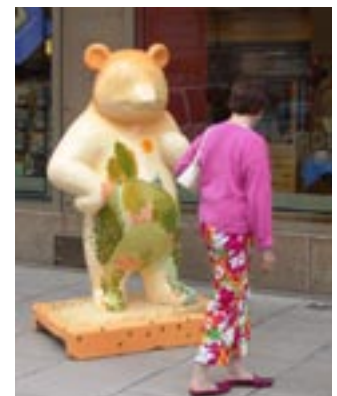


FIGURE 9.3 A, B, C – Community art program



FIGURE 9.4 – *Waterfront Open Space*

Recreation Programming

Open Space

Open space should be programmed to accommodate activities that will provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, especially in summer. This can be organized with crew regattas, volleyball and softball tournaments or leagues and other outdoor recreation opportunities. Such spaces should be focused at the waterfront and included in a comprehensive waterfront plan.

Trails

The waterfront and other areas should be linked with existing and potential new trails for biking, walking, and recreation to bring people (not cars) to King Street.

Sailing/Boating/Marinas

The waterfront should be enhanced physically and programmatically to celebrate the City’s history as a port and its boating tradition. Programs should be developed that will create active boating festivals and races that can bring focus to the King Street waterfront.



FIGURE 9.5 – *Sailing and Boating*

Architecture

Architectural awareness program

A good portion of the 200 respondents in the consumer survey identified King Street’s architecture and traditional “urban” feel as a strength. People tended to recognize the brick sidewalks and the charming buildings, rather than “history” itself, as the real draw. So, every effort should be made to build on that strength through awareness programs such as identification signage.



FIGURE 9.6 – *Architectural Heritage*

Walking tours

Create walking tours and “fun walks” that capitalize upon Old Town’s preserved architectural heritage and authentic “urban” experience. Capitalize on the opportunity to create educational programs between design professionals, adults and schoolchildren to understand the architectural and urban planning heritage.

Visitors’ Center

Create a distinctive visitors’ center that provides information not only on attractions, events, locations, history, and businesses, but also on the area’s architectural heritage.

Urban Design

Design is an important element of the marketing strategy, since urban design improvements help create and strengthen the marketing identity. While detailed design recommendations are discussed elsewhere in the Strategy, it is important to reiterate that identity elements (such as signage, banners, kiosks, lighting, etc.) should not conform to generic styles but wherever possible should be specially designed to reinforce the marketing themes as determined through a comprehensive marketing strategy.



FIGURE 9.7 – *Urban Design*

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The market analysis, coupled with information from the consumer survey, identified specific gaps in the existing and potential market mix for King Street. The following are recommended as types of uses that should be targeted for recruitment:

Recruitment Targets

Regional Artist Supply Center

The market analysis identified potential for the net addition of up to 25,000 square feet in specialty and miscellaneous shoppers' goods retail space. In an effort to bolster and solidify Old Town's reputation as an art center and to fill a gap in the market, it is recommended that proactive efforts focus on attracting such specialty uses as an arts and crafts supply retailer. Ideally, this type of store might be located near the Torpedo Factory on "lower" King, perhaps in the location recently vacated by Imaginarium;

Waterfront Entertainment Venue

The market analysis identified market gaps and a potential (46,000 square feet) for entertainment venues beyond existing side uses. The best location for an entertainment and/or cultural attraction would be at the waterfront, where it could be incorporated into a comprehensive waterfront plan. There are many possible concepts for entertainment or cultural

venues that could be incorporated into the waterfront. Such uses should not be programmed, recruited or developed until they have been tested in the market and the most viable and appropriate mix of new and existing uses identified.

Among the possible venues are:

- Live Music Venue (amphitheater, music hall, concert hall);
- Legitimate Theater (theater, children's/puppet theater);
- Cinema (art-house cinema, IMAX);
- Museum/Exhibition Center (art, historical, marine, or environmental exhibitions or permanent collection);
- Family Entertainment Center (recreation and computer games with eating and drinking);
- Community Facility (recreation/education facility);
- Mixed Use Facilities (live music/restaurant/pub facility, boating/museum/visitor facility). A key question that should be tested is the market potential for redevelopment or reconfiguration of the existing food court and the need for such a facility as part of a larger waterfront plan;

Ideally, whatever venue has the strongest market and community support should also serve to strengthen King Street's and Old Town's marketing identity. Uses such as a museum, cultural attraction or family entertainment may be more viable and appropriate as they would attract a daytime clientele and alleviate the neighborhood's concerns about late night noise. City control of a museum or cultural attraction would also alleviate the community's concerns.

FIGURE 9.8



Independent Retailers

Recruitment programs should be initiated to focus on attracting locally-owned, independent stores to fill vacant spaces or new leasable space. The market analysis identified potential demand for additional apparel and accessories (6,000 square feet), shoes (19,000 square feet), home furnishings (11,000 square feet), pubs (29,000 square feet), convenience food store (11,000 square feet) and other uses that can be captured along King Street within the next five years. Recruitment should focus on efforts to determine optimal store locations and to work with prospective tenants in order to meet their needs. Larger stores, such as a grocery, should be accommodated in ground-floor retail space as part of mixed-use development in the blocks designated for new buildings.

Facade Improvement Program

The KSP should work with the City/AEDP on matching grant programs for facade improvements. This program can assist small, independent businesses to construct quality storefronts in keeping with the desired quality of King Street.

Retention

The City and the KSP should also expand the outreach and monitoring of existing businesses along King Street to understand the issues and concerns facing the merchants and to ensure that unhealthy competitive issues can be avoided. Intervention (either by the City, the KSP, AEDP or some monitoring agency) can help identify actions in support of existing businesses that may be threatened for any of a variety of reasons.

Outreach & Promotion*Local Buyer Programs*

Promotion efforts should focus on the local market. Economic analyses and consumer surveys indicate strong local support. Local buyer programs should target not only residents and employees, but also King Street businesses so that local businesses may assist each other by buying locally.

Networking

Proactive networking programs may also assist King Street businesses by strengthening ties among the existing operators.

Hotels/Conferences

King Street businesses should be building strong relationships with the hotels to ensure that hotel guests patronize the King Street businesses.

Advertising – Targeting Employees and Business Visitors

King Street businesses should target the business visitor, along with employees and other regular markets.

Based on survey data, a large share of King Street’s “tourist” sales are generated from people visiting the City on business. While a comprehensive advertising program will include placements in tourist-oriented periodicals, it is also important to target the traveler that reads business publications. Tie-ins between business and conferences need to be made.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

SUMMARY

The marketing strategy provides a broad outline of several elements that would help strengthen the market for King Street, based on the findings of the market analysis and interviews with stakeholders and consumers. Several broad themes are introduced in order to provide a framework for more specific actions. These themes relate primarily to preserving and strengthening King Street's image as a "charming" and walkable small town commercial district. Key strategies emphasize programming, which helps generate street activity that can attract people on an ongoing basis. Recruitment of targeted tenants, such as an art supply store, food market, and waterfront entertainment venue, is critical to help solidify the existing business mix. The waterfront is clearly a key element of the destination marketing strategy, because it provides an opportunity for new anchor development and community public space.



Appendix

APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS FOR KING STREET TRADE AREAS A, B, C, 2003-2008

Factor	2003	2008	2004-2008 Change	
			Number	Percent
Trade Area A - Old Town				
Population	22,517	24,005	1,488	6.6%
Households	12,851	14,022	1,172	9.1%
Household Income	\$122,125	\$134,449	\$13,324	10.9%
Trade Area B - Central City				
Population	46,105	49,401	3,296	7.1%
Households	21,003	22,553	1,550	7.4%
Household Income	\$95,718	\$104,753	\$9,035	9.4%
Trade Area C - Remaining Area				
Population	66,647	72,674	6,026	9.0%
Households	31,485	34,049	2,563	8.1%
Household Income	\$85,253	\$92,320	\$7,067	8.3%

Notes: Income expressed in constant 2003 dollars. Remaining Area includes other portions of city of Alexandria and immediate vicinity. Sources: Claritas, Inc. and Randall Gross/Development Economics

WARRANTED RETAIL DEMAND IN SQUARE FEET BY USE, KING STREET AREA, 2003-2008

Type or Retail Category	Gross Demand, sf		Existing Uses, sf	Warranted Demand, sf	
	2003	2008		2003	2008
Convenience Goods					
Grocery	52,200	42,300	5,100	47,100	37,200
Food	15,800	18,400	6,500	9,300	11,900
Pharmacy	25,000	19,400	9,600	15,400	9,800
Gas	12,400	41,100	—	12,400	14,100
Misc. Conc.	18,600	21,100	17,400	1,200	4,700
Sub-Total	124,000	116,300	38,600	85,400	77,700
Shoppers Goods					
Department Stores	37,900	44,000	10,800	27,100	33,200
Apparel/Accessory	93,400	109,200	103,500	(10,100)	5,700
Footwear	25,600	29,600	9,900	15,700	19,700
Furniture	27,900	33,000	29,400	(1,500)	3,600
Home Furnishings	86,300	101,200	89,300	(3,000)	11,900
Appliances	6,100	7,100	—	6,100	7,100
Hardware/Garden	5,900	6,900	4,600	1,300	2,300
Computers/SW	6,800	8,000	—	6,800	8,000
Electronics	3,700	4,300	900	2,800	3,400
Auto Supply	13,800	16,100	—	13,800	16,100
Home Center	3,100	3,700	—	3,100	3,700
Misc S.G.	124,900	145,800	122,300	2,600	23,500
Sub-Total	435,400	508,900	370,700	64,700	138,200
Eating	170,300	200,300	224,300	(54,000)	(24,000)
Drinking	25,300	29,700		25,300	29,700
Entertainment	38,800	45,600	—	38,800	45,600
Personal Services	50,200	58,700	46,400	3,800	12,300
Total	844,000	959,500	680,000	164,000	279,500
Existing Vacant			152,400		
New New Space				11,600	127,100

Sources: Randall Gross/Development Economics