

WATERFRONT PARK: TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART EXHIBITION SERIES

PROJECT PLAN FOR *SITE SEE: NEW VIEWS IN OLD TOWN*

Updated: December 2020

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Site and Context.....	3
III. Goals.....	3
IV. Selection Process	4
Site See Task Force.....	4
Artist Selection Process and Concept Approval.....	5
V. Timeline	5
VI. Budget.....	6
VII. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications	6
Stakeholders	6
Marketing and Communications.....	6
VIII. Evaluation	7

I. Introduction

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

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

This document is the Project Plan for the fourth and fifth commissions in *Site See: New Views in Old Town*, an annual temporary exhibition series for Waterfront Park.

II. Site and Context

Waterfront Park is a new public park at the foot of King Street, which was called out in the City's Waterfront Plan. The new Waterfront Park, which opened in 2019, combines the original King Street Park and Waterfront Park sites with the sites of the former Old Dominion Boat Club building and parking lot to create a seamless transition between Old Town's historic retail corridor and the water. The interim park features an open plaza, a waterfront promenade, shade structures, and a modular space that can adapt to different purposes throughout the year. In several years, the interim park will close so that flood mitigation infrastructure can be constructed and additional amenities added before the permanent park reopens. The overall concept for Waterfront Park and other waterfront public spaces was approved in 2014, but it may be a decade or more before the planned flood mitigation infrastructure is in place and the permanent plaza can be constructed.

The 2019 and 2020 *Site See* installations have played an important role in the success of Waterfront Park, providing engaging and interactive visual anchors that received accolades from the public and the [press](#) and drew thousands of visitors. For 2019, SOFTlab created *Mirror Mirror*, an interactive artwork that was programmed to respond to sound with colored lights and was inspired by the Fresnel lens of Alexandria's Jones Point Lighthouse. The 2020 installation *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* by Olalekan Jeyifous frames Alexandria's African American history through the lens of the city's industrial and merchant history and features a set of four sculptural seating platforms with ornate metal profiles of figures facing the water. The third artwork in the exhibition series will be created by Mark Reigelman II and will be installed from March to November 2021.

For each installation, the Office of the Arts has commissioned original programming by local artists to activate the artwork and further engage the public with the artwork, including [site specific dance and music performances](#), and a [spoken word series](#) curated by Alexandria's Poet Laureate.

III. Scope and Goals

The Alexandria Public Art Program is interested in commissioning artists to create a site-specific, temporary work of art for Waterfront Park that will be on display for from March to November. The

artwork can be sited anywhere within the King Street Park portion of Waterfront Park but the project must include a ground mural for the asphalt plaza. The mural can be designed by the artist or a collaborator of the artist's choosing.

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

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

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

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

IV. Selection Process

For the 2022 and 2023 *Site See* exhibitions, the Office of the Arts has engaged Meridith McKinley and Aliza Schiff of the consulting firm Via Partnership to facilitate artist selection and manage the overall project.

Site See Task Force

The *Site See* Task Force helps shape the Project Plan for the exhibition and recommends selection of artist(s) and approval of concept(s).

The two Commission for the Arts representatives on the *Site See* Task Force are:

- Alison Nance
- Kadhambari Sridhar

The Community Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Clint Mansell, Principle Gallery
- Nicole McGrew, Threadleaf boutique

Project Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Jack Browand, Division Chief, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Claire Mouledoux, Visit Alexandria

Artist Selection Process and Concept Approval

An invitational process will be used to select artists for the 2022 and 2023 *Site See* exhibitions.

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

The Task Force will review the letters of interest and qualifications and recommend an artist for the project. The Task Force will have the option of selecting two artists, one for an installation in 2022 and one for an installation in 2023. The selected artist/s will be approved by the Commission for the Arts. If only one artist is selected, the Task Force may revisit the submissions the following year or decide to issue an invitational call to a new list of artists.

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

V. Timeline

By Dec 31, 2020 Task Force members recommend names for artist invitation.

January	Issue Call for Artists to invited list.
Late Feb to Mid March	Task Force reviews qualifications, interview finalists and select artist.
March 16	Artist(s) approved by Arts Commission
April	2022 Artist contract
May	2022 Artist site visit
August	2022 Artist presents concept proposal
September	Concept Proposal approved by Task Force, Commission for the Arts
November	Artist submits final design for technical review
March to Nov 2022	Exhibition

VI. Budget

From Public Art Fund	
Artist design, fabrication & installation	\$100,000
Contingency	\$8,000
From Operating Fund	
Programming & communications (specific to the public art project)	\$16,000
Total	\$124,000

VII. Community Engagement, Programming, Marketing and Communications

Community engagement, marketing and communications should be geared toward engaging with existing stakeholders as well as bringing new audiences to experience the artwork. Commissioning local and regional artists to create site-specific performances in response to the artwork will be continued as a way to deepen the public's engagement with the artwork and result in special events that draw visitors, while also creating opportunities for local artists to engage with the Office of the Arts.

Stakeholders

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

- *Site See* Task Force members
- Commission for the Arts
- Visit Alexandria
- The Torpedo Factory
- Waterfront Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Historic Alexandria Resources Commission
- Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
- Old Town Civic Association

Marketing and Communications

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

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

VIII. Evaluation

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

These issues should be considered in an evaluation:

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

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

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