Historic Context
Early Years

• Trading post started mid-1600’s

• Port City from mid-1700’s to 1860. Official port of entry for foreign flagged vessels

• Exported tobacco, wheat/breads, and fish

• Part of the District of Columbia from 1789 to 1847
Civil War Era

- Under military occupation throughout the war

- Major supply depot for war materials

- Waterfront building converted to wartime hospitals and infirmaries

- At end of war, commercial trade was minimal. Port thrived on government exports
Industrial Era

- The waterfront continued to support commercial and military purposes after civil war
- Shipbuilding was the dominant activities
- WWI era US Naval Torpedo Factory built. Factories constructed on waterfront to support WWII effort
- Mid 20th century, the port contracted - supported delivery of paper products
Today’s Waterfront

- Old Town Alexandria designated historical district in 1966
- Initial waterfront plan crafted in 1965
- 1973 – Federal/City ownership dispute
- 1983 settlement agreement - 70% open space, rest for commercial development
- Limited residential development and closure of existing commercial waterfront
Today’s Waterfront
Challenges for the City

• **Old Town Alexandria has rich maritime history:** Preserve the historical character of the waterfront

• **Focus on maintaining public access to the waterfront:** Adhere to the 1983 settlement agreement

• **Address nuisance flooding and integrate resilience planning:** Implement flood mitigation and future proof

• **Support boat access to waterfront:** Encourage public and new private investment in waterfront.
Waterfront Master Plan
• Revitalizing waterfront to showcase history, expand/enhance open spaces, improve public access, and ensuring compatible development


• Significant community and stakeholder involvement

• Phase 1 between Duke and Queen Streets

• Integrate separate studies on flood mitigation and boating access

2012 Adopted Plan

2014 Refined Plan
Core Elements

- Public Promenade and lower boardwalk for boating access
- Expanded Waterfront Park
- King Street Pier/Water Taxi
- Unified commercial berths and transient Slips
- Waterfront Steps
- Maritime Museum/Tall Ship
Point Lumley Park

- Renovate existing park
- Civic Building/Flex Space
- Children’s Garden with maritime history
- Open Performance Space/Bocce Courts
- South terminus of lower boardwalk
- Alexandria Seaport Foundation Museum and kayak launch facility
Waterfront Park

- Relocate ODBC Building and Marina
- Outdoor Concert/Festival/Movie Space
- Steps to Water
- Fitzgerald Square – Icon Location
- King Street Pier with shade structures
- Tall Ship Museum/Berth
City Marina/ Torpedo Factory

- Restructured marina with floating docks
- Dedicated commercial slips
- Permanent/transient slips
- Shoreline stabilization and promenade
- Dedicated dockmaster building and shade
Nuisance Flooding

- City has struggled with nuisance flooding since the late 1800’s.

- Low lying areas along the riverfront that were filled.

- Elevated tide levels backing through existing storm outfalls

- Rainfall contributes to flooding when river levels are high

- Frequency has increased to over 20 events per year.

- Flood mitigation to be integrated with Waterfront Plan
Initial Studies

- Initial study in 2007 to identify contributing causes and elevations
- Follow up study in 2010 identified mitigation strategies
- Challenge to systematically raise grades leeward of bulkhead due to historic structures and meet road/sidewalk standards
- Preliminary solution based on benefit cost analysis - floodwall supplemented by pump stations for interior drainage
- Extend from RTS to Founders Park (Core Area)
Integration-Waterfront Plan

- Determination that EL. 6 feet NAVD (10-year return period) addressed most nuisance flooding
- Refine floodwall alignment to support pump stations
- New alignment also improves pedestrian access along the waterfront
- City Marina and commercial slips restructured
Flood Wall Refinement

• Poor geotechnical condition, constructability, and concerns with archeology

• Integration with riverfront promenade.

• Maintain and enhance boating access

• Reduce debris accumulation

• Design for future conditions
Boating Study
Boating Access

- Waterfront Plan developed to maintain and/or improve boating access
- Conduct regional market assessment to assess slip demand/growth
- Developed marina siting plan (expansion waterward)
- Identified marina program
- Provided operational overview
Transient Boating

- City currently supports transient boating in conjunction with long term lease slip holders
- Private development is encouraged to promote transient docking
- Two opportunities along the City’s waterfront identified (RTS and RTN)
- Boating Infrastructure Improvement Grant
Implementation
First Phases

• Park at 1 King Street due to relocation of ODBC

• Flood Mitigation Plan finalized

• Relocation of Tall Ship Providence

• Federal and State Permit Efforts initiated

• Potential relocation of federal channel boundaries to expand City’s water area
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION, COASTAL RESILIENCY AND PUBLIC ACCESS: City of Alexandria, VA

States Organization for Boating Access 11th SEPTEMBER 2019