

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 18, 2016

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: CONCEPT REVIEW OF 1 and 2 KING ST
(INTERIM FITZGERALD SQUARE)
BAR CASE # 2016-00157

I. SUMMARY

Concept Review

The material before the Board is part of a BAR Concept Review for the Interim Fitzgerald Square (IFS). The Department of Project Implementation (DPI) is requesting comments related to the schematic design for this temporary park space. IFS is intended to strengthen the use of this public space that will anchor the foot of King Street and sit at the middle of a continuous waterfront park and promenade. The purpose of the IFS design is to showcase how the area can be used in the future and therefore aims to maximize flexibility. While major elements of the park have not been designed, DPI requests feedback that can be incorporated into the design review and community engagement processes.

The Concept Review Policy was adopted by the two Boards of Architectural review in May 2000. Concept Review is an optional, informal process at the beginning of a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) application whereby the BAR provides the applicant, staff, the Planning Commission and the City Council with comments relating to the overall appropriateness of a project's height, scale, mass and general architectural character. The Board takes no formal action at the Concept Review stage. However, if, for instance, the Board believes that a building height or mass, or area proposed for construction is not appropriate and would not be supported in the future, the applicant and staff should be advised as soon as possible. This early step in the development review process is intended to minimize future architectural design conflicts between what is shown to the community and City Council during the DSUP approval and what the Board later finds architecturally appropriate under the criteria in Chapter 10 of the Zoning Ordinance and the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*

Process

At this time, the BAR is being asked to provide guidance on an interim plan for the park area to be known as Fitzgerald Square at the foot of King Street, as envisioned in the Waterfront Plan adopted by City Council in 2012. The City, working with the design team at OLIN, is focusing on creating a high-quality, active and accessible park as the cornerstone to the overall Waterfront Plan. As final park design and construction may be years away due to funding priorities, City Council has directed City staff and OLIN to design an appropriate interim condition.

DPI has engaged consultants to document and research the site and the building at 1 King Street and it is anticipated that a Permit to Demolish the existing structure will be submitted in the fall of 2016. At this time, there is not a complete history or documentation of the building. The History Appendix to the Waterfront Plan noted that the building was originally constructed in 1923 and then heavily altered throughout the 20th century. Staff's preliminary archival and field investigations found that the site has a rich history of multiple uses since the 18th century but that there have been significant alterations to the present building over the years, resulting in a substantial loss of architectural integrity.

The timing of the construction of IFS is highly dependent on the Old Dominion Boat Club's (ODBC) move from the existing boat house at 1 King Street and into the new building at 0 Prince Street. ODBC reports that their construction will begin in the summer of 2016 with one year of construction followed by 60 days to move. That puts the City possession of 1 King Street about November of 2017 at the earliest. Demolition and construction for IFS will be about 6 months with a projected opening in Spring/Summer 2018.

The Waterfront Plan area is an extensive area with several different contexts, from the marina at the Torpedo Factory to the future waterfront parks to the existing parks at Founders Park and Oronoco Bay to the future public piers at Robinson Terminal North and South. The BAR has, therefore, also reviewed concepts for a Waterfront Common Elements palette of paving and lighting, etc. to provide unifying elements that convey the public nature and encourage public access to the waterfront, whether these waterfront spaces are owned by the public or are accessed through easement. It is anticipated that the BAR will approve the base Common Elements palette in June 2016. While some parts of the Common Elements may be applied to IFS, due to budget and timing restraints, alternate materials may be requested at IFS.

City Council will receive an update on IFS on May 24, 2016. DPI has conducted significant public engagement since January 2016, including presentations to the Waterfront Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, business groups and community associations. Feedback has also been provided online via AlexEngage.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

The OHAD BAR has seldom reviewed a public park in the past but will have several opportunities in the coming years with the Waterfront redevelopment. These parks will also be reviewed by the Waterfront Commission and, of course, all parks are throughout the City are reviewed by the Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission. As a reminder, many aspects of

this project are not within the BAR's regulatory purview, such as flood mitigation, use, or activities, and these should not be considered by the Board. In addition, by longstanding practice, the BAR does not review landscape plant materials, movable furniture and planters, or art. At this time, the BAR's policy for review during a concept review work session is limited to providing guidance on height, scale, mass and general architectural character of the fixed structural (non-plant) features of the park. In this particular design review, as it is a park and not a building, the BAR's purview is general design consideration and specific elements such as a shade structures, lighting and paving materials. The BAR should provide guidance on the overall design approach, as well as specific materials and structures that will require approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness in the future.

General Analysis of Plans

The Additional Standards for the Potomac River Vicinity do not apply to this proposal because those standards *only* apply for the construction of new buildings that exceed 30 feet in height. The proposed park design includes a promenade connection as well as four distinct "rooms" including the following: a flexible plaza on top of an existing asphalt parking lot, a lawn area, a marina terrace and a river terrace. Each of these areas is meant to be flexible and provide different ways to engage the public and use the space. Staff supports the schematic design arrangement of the space into different "rooms" that may utilize different materials at ground level, feature different planting concepts and introduce moveable street furniture.

Planters

Due to the interim nature of this area, the City and OLIN are consciously selecting design aspects that are affordable and moveable as well as able to be repurposed in the future in other parks. For example, based on changing needs and programming in the flexible plaza, the planters can be shifted and relocated. The *Design Guidelines* note that "temporary and portable planters in the public right-of-way do not require review by the Boards of Architectural Review but do require issuance of a permit by the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services." Additionally, the *Guidelines* note that "Planters can contribute to a friendly and inviting streetscape...and soften hard edges of buildings." The proposed collection of moveable planters that also features built-in seating may not need a Certificate of Appropriateness if the final design is considered temporary and portable, however, the BAR is invited to comment on them at this time. While still conceptual in nature, staff supports the planters in durable, long-lasting materials consistent and located in a cohesive arrangement so as not to become visual clutter. The low profile of the planters will help enhance the visual connection between King Street, The Strand and the Potomac River.

Street Furniture

Although the BAR does not by practice review movable furniture because of its ephemeral nature, the *Design Guidelines* do state that "street furniture is one of the principal elements that creates the overall visual impression of a streetscape. It should not detract from or visually interfere with the architectural character of the street." This reference was intended to address more permanent furniture that was bolted to the pavement. The current submission suggests general locations and types of tables and seating that will be used without describing specific materials or styles. Staff finds the general locations for tables and seating as well as the amount

of furnishings to be appropriate at this point. The amount and type provide a visual balance without overwhelming the space.

Paving

Regarding paving, the *Design Guidelines* note:

The Zoning Ordinance permits the Boards to review at-grade materials, however, except as provided below, they generally do not review or approve alterations or projects that are not above grade except in conjunction with a construction project otherwise subject to review. The Boards have become increasingly concerned about inappropriate and excessive paving of open space within the historic districts and inappropriate at-grade materials which detract from the historic character of the districts...

Again, by practice, the Boards do not generally review paving not used for parking and do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness for walks and patios on private property. However, in the case of a public park, the paving material can have an enormous visual effect on the overall character of the space and, as noted above, it is within the BAR's legal purview.

The proposed scheme does not identify any specific materials though it appears that there will be some sort of decking on the terraces, pavers on the interim promenade and a resurfacing of the existing parking lot. Because of the interim nature of this area, as well as the desire to make it more accessible, there may be proposals for paving materials beyond what the BAR is accustomed to reviewing. Over half of the existing site is an existing asphalt parking lot and as a result, whatever the approved materials may be will be a significant improvement over the existing conditions. Staff cautions that although new or different types of paving may be acceptable, the at-grade elements should enhance the historic setting and not detract from nearby buildings of historic merit, such as the Torpedo Factory or Fitzgerald Warehouse.

Shade Structure

The only proposed structure is a shade canopy in the general vicinity of the existing building at 1 King Street. The proposed schematic design indicates the use of poles and an undulating shade structure. Staff finds recommends support of a simple shade structure in this location and cautions that it should not be visually obstructive.

The schematic plan being reviewed does not include any lighting or historic interpretation at this time. This information should be provided at the next concept review.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends general support for the interim park design. Staff recommends that the proposal return for an additional concept review that includes information on proposed materials, lighting and historic interpretation.

Next Steps

At this time, it is anticipated that a Permit to Demolish request for the ODBC and additional concept review of the IFS will occur in the fall of 2016. Following City Council approval, the

applicant would then return to the BAR later in the winter/spring of 2017 with a formal application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The applicant should continue to work with staff as plans are refined to ensure continued conformance with BAR requirements and to make revisions based on the Board's comments at the work session.

STAFF

Catherine K. Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

ATTACHMENTS

1 – Presentation

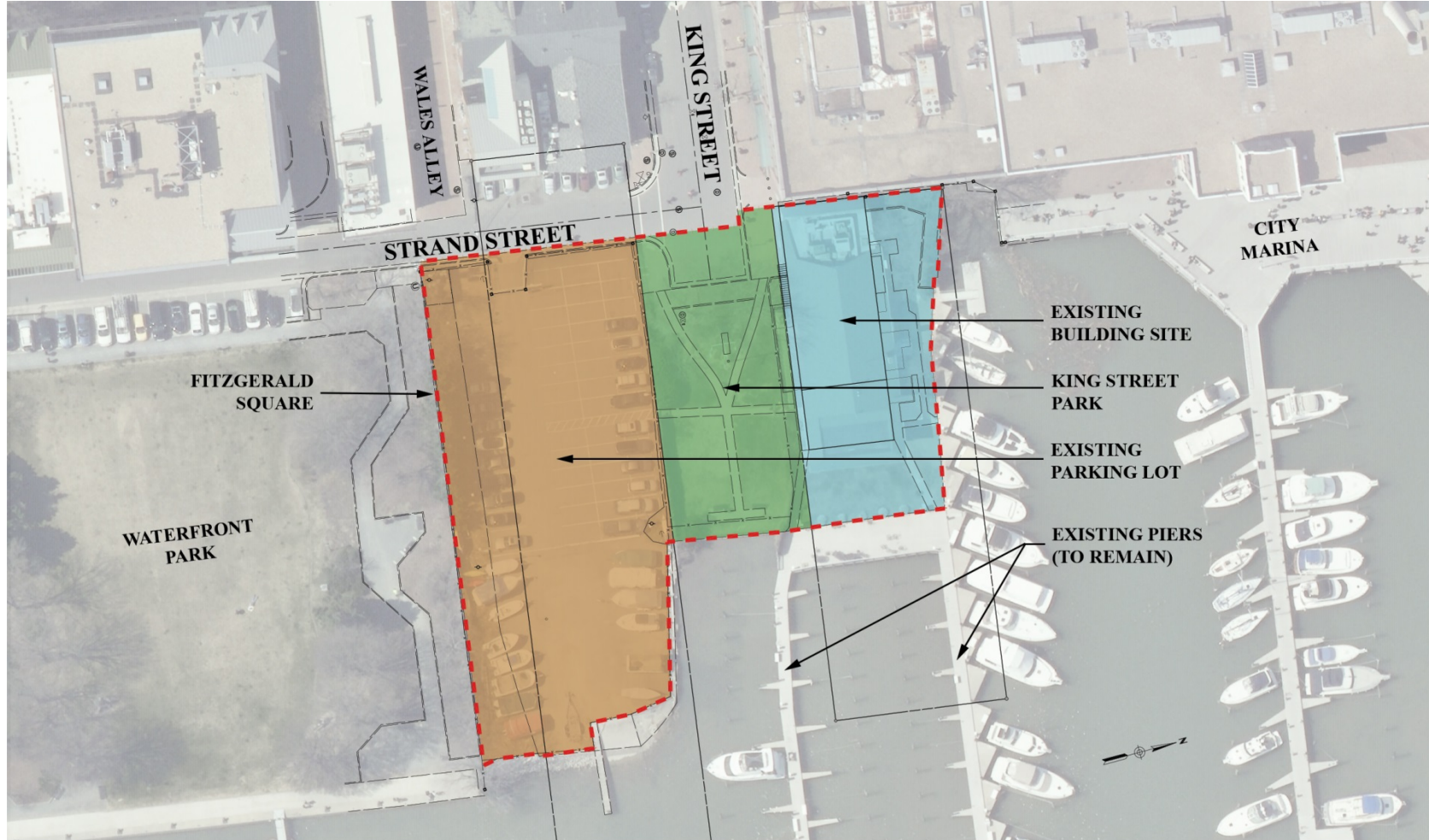
Attachment #1



Waterfront Update

Interim Fitzgerald Square

May 18, 2016





Interim Fitzgerald Square

Flexible Daily Use

FLEXIBLE DAILY USE - RELAXATION



WAGNER PARK, NEW YORK

FLEXIBLE DAILY USE - FITNESS AREAS



MILL RIVER PARK, STAMFORD

Ph. Olivier Koonman



SPRUCE STREET HARBOR PARK, PHL



KAYAK LAUNCH, MAINE

Interim Fitzgerald Square

Seasonal Activities and Special Programs

SEASONAL PROGRAMMING



PARIS PLAGE 2015, PARIS



SPRUCE STREET HARBOR PARK, PHL



DELAWARE RIVER WINTER FEST, PHL



OUTDOOR EVENTS



ROBERT F. WAGNER JR. PARK, NYC



FOUNTAIN SQUARE, CINCINNATI



MILL RIVER PARK MOVIE NIGHT



BROWN-FORMAN AMPHITHEATER

OUTDOOR EVENTS



PHS POP UP PARK, PHL



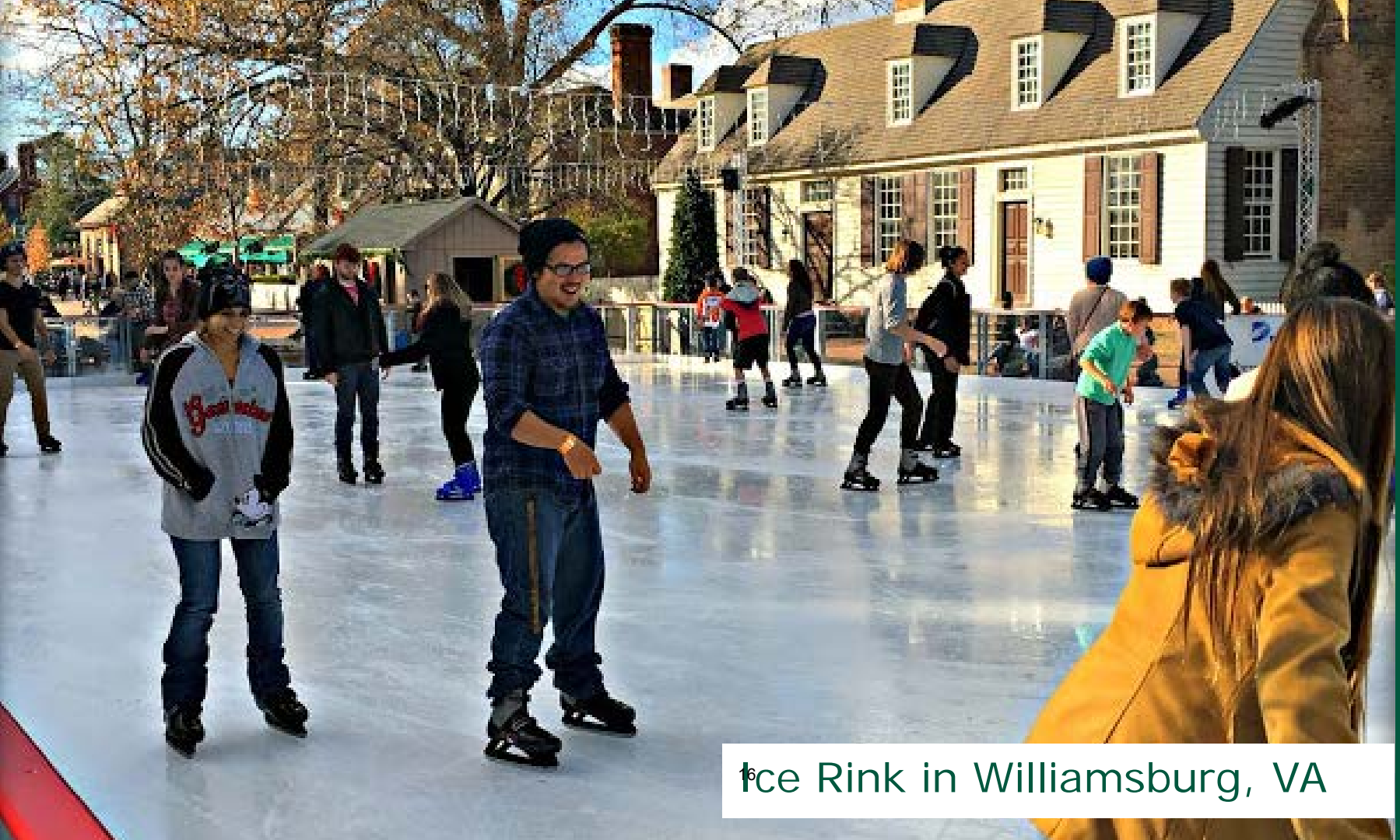
DILWORTH PARK TEMPORARY ICE RINK, PHL



SPRUCE STREET HARBOR PARK, PHL



KALVEBOD, COPENHAGEN WATERFRONT

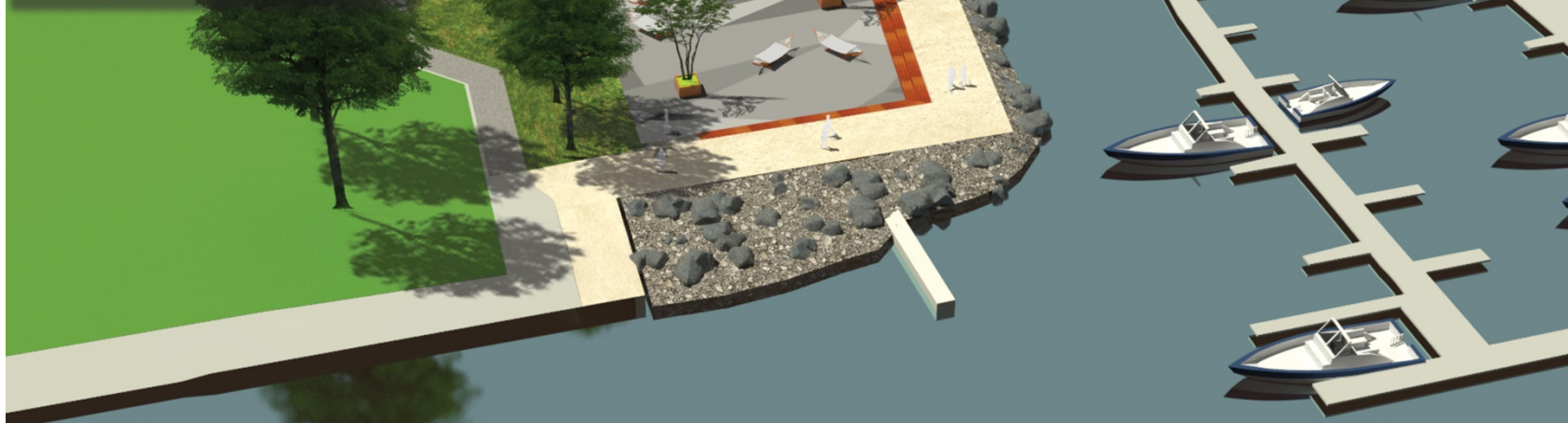
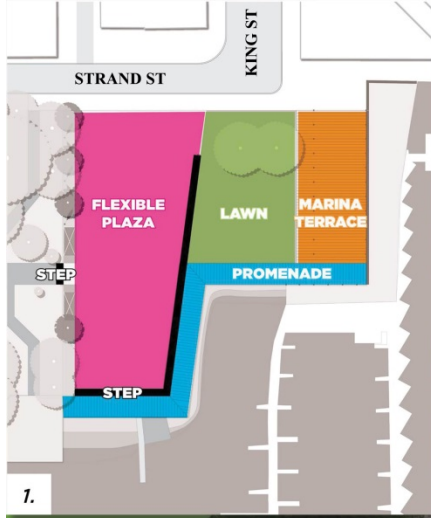


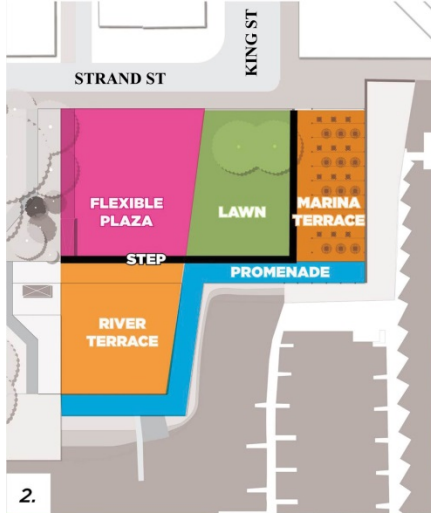
Ice Rink in Williamsburg, VA

Interim Fitzgerald Square

Concept Evolution

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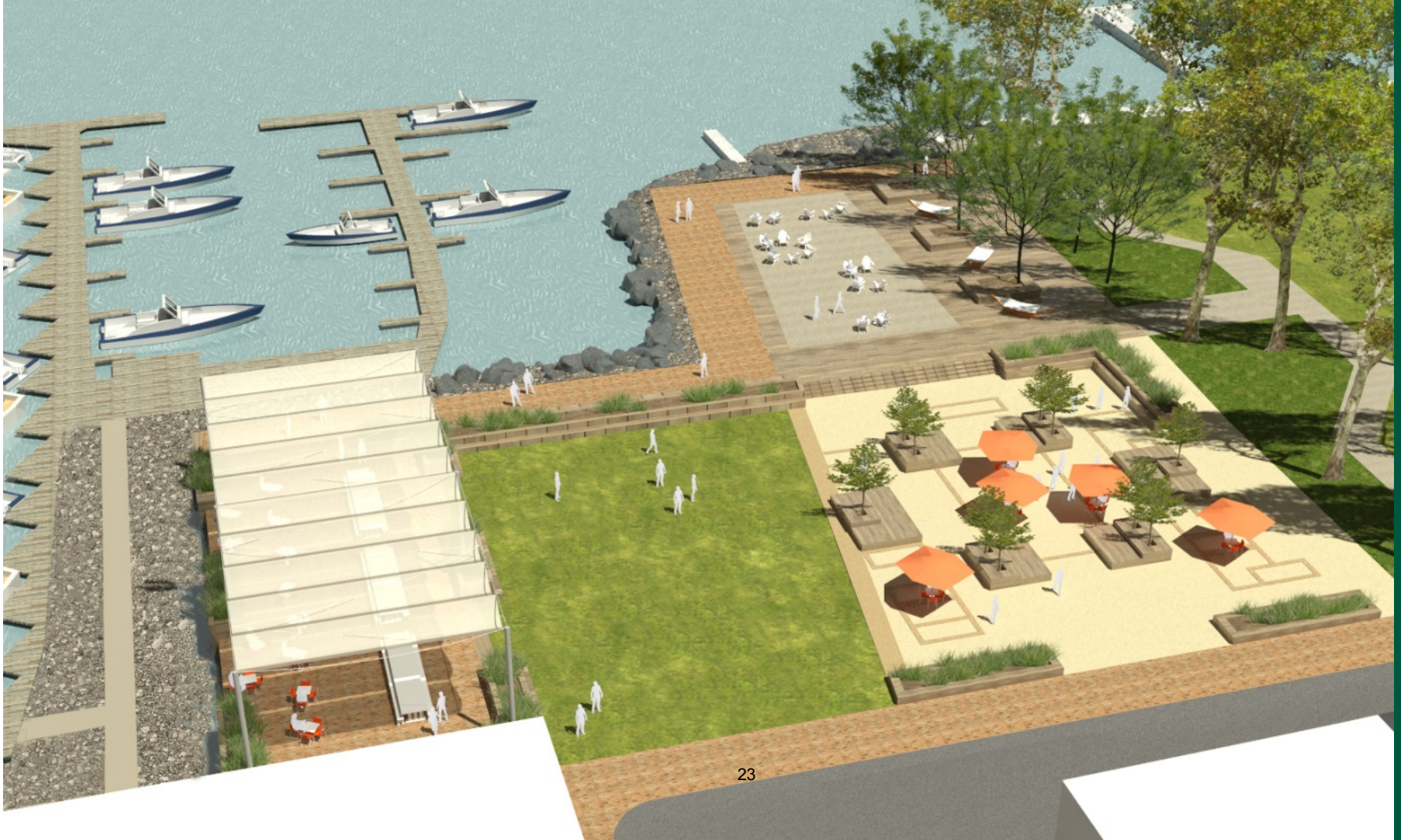




Interim Fitzgerald Square

Refined Design Scheme 2











Civic Engagement

12/02/15 – Interdepartmental design charrette

12/16/15 – DCC presentation

01/06/16-01/21/16 – Council briefings

01/19/16 – Waterfront Commission

01/21/16 – Parks and Rec Commission

02/02/16 – Interdepartmental meeting

02/11/16 – Founders Park Com. Ass'n.

02/16/16 – Community meeting

02/19/16 – Old Town business owners

03/15/16-04/04/16 – AlexEngage

03/21/16 – Environmental Policy Commission

03/22/16 – Old Town Business and Professionals Association

03/30/16 – Visit Alexandria Board

04/05/16 – Chamber of Commerce – Government Relations Committee

04/20/16 – Torpedo Factory Board

04/26/16 – OTBPA and Boutique District "Shop Talk"

05/11/16 – Old Town Civic Association

05/18/16 - BAR

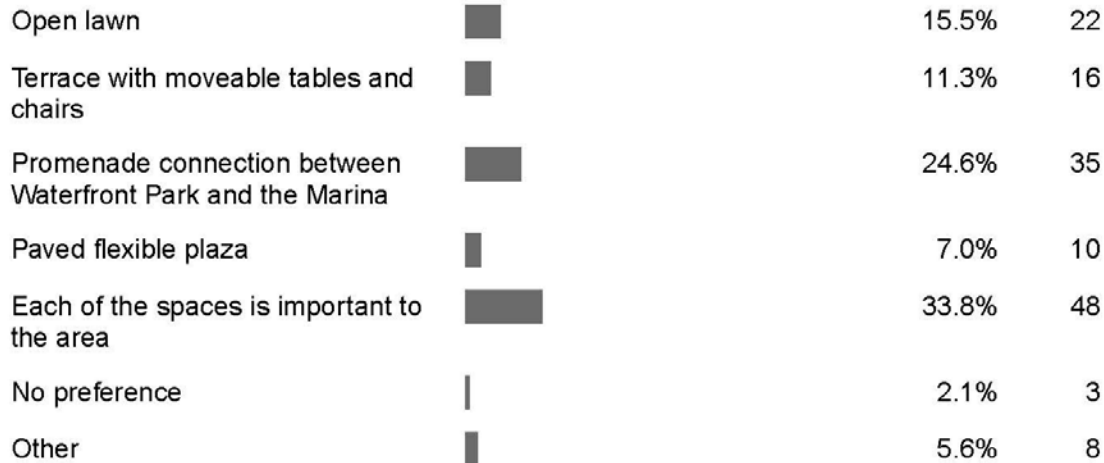
05/24/16 – City Council update

AlexEngage

March 15 through
April 3, 2016

145 responses

Scheme 2 was
preferred



7. Are there any specific seasonal activities or special programs you would like the space to accommodate through design?

Answered 100

Skipped 45

activities also **area** art bike chess **concerts** dc during **festivals** food
from great historic ice kids **like** make movies music nice
other outdoor park **parking play** please rink see **skating**
space summer tables they trees up want water **waterfront** winter



Letters of Support



April 1, 2016

Mayor and Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council:

I am writing to you today to strongly endorse Fitzgerald Square. As you may know our (Lorien Hotel & Spa and Morrison House) are economic activity which helps to support hotel taxes and community involvement.

We are honored to operate in Alexandria, community, quality and energy. We strongly advance those values even more. At West we are excited to be briefed by Mitch Bernstein on the implementation on the alternative execution plan.

On behalf of Kimpton Hotels of Alexandria I represent as Chair of the Alexandria Hotel endorsement of Fitzgerald Square and our way.

The opening of MGM National Harbor this is the overall competitive landscape in the hotel to ensure we continue to deliver a unique strategic asset for Alexandria—we have a lot for residents and for our economic vibrancy.

Sincerely,

Tobias Arff
Kimpton Hotels—Lorien Hotel & Spa, General Manager
Alexandria Hotel Association—Board Chair

Cc: Mark Jinks, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Karl Moritz, Director of Planning
Mitchell Bernstein, Acting Director
Patricia Washington, President & CEO
Stephanie Landrum, President & CEO

March 31, 2016

Mayor Allison Silberberg, Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the board of the 300+ members of Visit Alexandria, I would like to express our endorsement of the proposed civic improvements to Fitzgerald Square.

We view the Fitzgerald Square project as an important community opportunity for several reasons:

- Fitzgerald Square represents a user-friendly community park that will enable us to enjoy our waterfront.
- Given the opening of new tourism amenities in National Harbor, we must provide attractions that will enable us to compete with other cities and retain the level of visitation that supports our hotels, restaurants, and retail.
- In an economic era when independent mom-and-pop retail is struggling, Alexandria must offer a unique experience that will enable independent retailers to survive. Fitzgerald Square is integral to that effort.
- Public activation is entirely consistent with and core to the City's Waterfront plan.

For all of these reasons we encourage you to approve the plans for Fitzgerald Square so our community can reap the full benefit of this new community asset.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Victor Parra
Board Chair, Visit Alexandria

Cc: Mark Jinks, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Karl Moritz, Director of Planning
Mitchell Bernstein, Acting Director of Project Implementation
Stephanie Landrum, President & CEO, Alexandria Economic Development

Visit Alexandria | 625 N. Washington Street, Suite 400 | Alexandria, VA 22314
703-652-5369 | VisitAlexandria.com

EXTRAORDINARY

Alexandria



April 18 2016

The Honorable Allison Silberberg
Mayor, City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Consideration of Interim Fitzgerald Square Proposal

Dear Mayor Silberberg:

On behalf of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, we express our support for the proposed plans for an Interim Fitzgerald Square.

The Chamber strongly supports the Waterfront Small Area Plan. We are committed to the development of Alexandria's waterfront into a world-class venue through broader uses, vibrant amenities and increased public access, while generating sustainable revenue that will maintain the operation of the new waterfront and fund other critical City services.

The Chamber believes it is in the best interest of the City to make the best possible use of the space at the foot of King Street during the period between the Old Dominion Boat Club's move and the permanent completion of this portion of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

The Interim Fitzgerald Square proposal will bring an added visitor/community friendly atmosphere to that area, a much better option than either a vacant building or an unimproved parcel. A friendly and inviting atmosphere that capitalizes on our natural and manmade assets is good for business. And, as you know, when business is good the whole City benefits and thrives. The Interim Fitzgerald Square proposal, which includes a pop up ice rink, will also bring much needed activity and business to the waterfront during the winter months.

The Chamber notes that the Interim Fitzgerald Square proposal has already gone through an extensive community input process. We therefore urge Council and the Planning Commission to move forward expeditiously with approving the proposal, including approving the permits required for demolition, construction, and proposed special uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Interim Fitzgerald Square proposal. We look forward to working with each of you and the boards and commissions on this and other waterfront implementation projects.

Sincerely,

Next Steps

Revise and finalize design concept

Begin detailed design and site analyses

Begin approval processes (BAR demo, site plan)

Construction anticipated: late 2017/early 2018

