

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 21, 2017  
**TO:** Chair and Members of the  
Old and Historic Alexandria District  
Board of Architectural Review (OHAD BAR)  
**FROM:** BAR Staff  
**SUBJECT:** Informational Presentation on Proposed Expansion of the Capital Bikeshare  
Stations in Alexandria

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At your regular meeting on Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Transportation & Environmental Services staff (T&ES) will provide a presentation under Other Business regarding proposed Capital Bikeshare stations in Alexandria. The BAR is not being asked for any approvals and this is for your information only, as there are several bike stations in or adjacent to the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the City hopes to add more in the future.

T&ES staff have previously presented or shared information on Capital Bikeshare with the BARs and would like to continue strengthening this relationship. Please see the below questions for more information on the Capital Bikeshare expansion process.

**How many bikeshare stations will the City add during the next round of expansion?**

The City has proposed suitable locations for public comment and feedback but will only be selecting 10 of these stations during the next round of expansion. For more information on the public outreach process, to view all the proposed locations, and to submit feedback, please visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/goalex/info/default.aspx?id=95476>

**Are the proposed Bikeshare stations in the public right of way?**

The City of Alexandria parcel viewer shows that with the exception of the South Braddock Metro station, the proposed stations are within the public right of way. You can access the property viewer here:

<https://geo.alexandriava.gov/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=parcelviewer>

**Is a Bikeshare station a “business”?**

Bikeshare is not a business, it is a government program to promote mobility in Alexandria and the region. The City of Alexandria owns the Bikeshare stations and manages the program but contracts with Motivate to service these stations. The use of a contractor to service the stations does not change the program’s status to that of a business. As a result, Section 7-2400 of the zoning ordinance, regulating bicycle rental businesses, does not apply to Bikeshare.

**Has the Board of Architectural Review approved the design of the bikeshare stations located in the Old and Historic Alexandria District?**

Section 10-103(A) states that: “No building or structure shall be erected, reconstructed, altered or restored within the Old and Historic Alexandria District unless and until an application for a certificate of appropriateness shall have been approved by the Old and Historic Alexandria District board of architectural review or the city council on appeal as to exterior architectural features, including signs (see Article IX), which are subject to public view from a public street, way or place.”

The BARs considered Bikeshare stations to be temporary and easily removable because they are not affixed to the ground and are held in place only by gravity. The electrical system is not hard wired and the station is powered by solar panels. The stations may expand, contract or be removed easily as the rider demand dictates. As such, they are not considered permanent structures and do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The OHAD BAR received an informational presentation from T&ES staff and endorsed the Capital Bikeshare pilot program on October 5, 2011. The BAR directed BAR staff to work with T&ES staff to install individual Bikeshare stations in the historic district, to insure that they are not placed directly in front of the district’s most significant historic buildings or frequently photographed tourist sites such as Gadsby’s Tavern. The BAR reviewed and supported the initial locations, such as King Street at Market Square. On July 10, 2013, the BAR again received an informational presentation from T&ES on expansion of the program. Subsequently, BAR staff reviewed the proposed locations for the 2016 stations and found no objection with their placement since they were not located in front of buildings of historical significance.

During the July 2013 BAR meeting, T&ES staff did indicate that they would return to the BAR and brief them on additional locations for Bikeshare stations in the historic district BEFORE installing additional stations. This, unfortunately, did not happen. While staff should have honored the commitment to the BAR by coming back prior to the installation, this regrettable omission does not violate any regulatory requirement with respect to installing the stations.

For the 2017 expansion process, T&ES staff has shared locations and worked with the BAR staff to address any concerns for individual stations. This process has helped to improve station siting and will ensure that any new stations do not negatively impact historic sites.

**Do the signs at the Capital Bikeshare stations require BAR approval?**

Zoning Ordinance section 9-103(A) exempts governmental signs from the ordinance requirements. Because Bikeshare is a governmental program, these signs are not subject to BAR review. The Bikeshare equipment is owned by the City, and the maintenance of the program is contracted to Motivate.

**What are examples of other “temporary” structures in the historic districts?**

The BAR does not have a formally adopted policy for what is considered temporary, though by longstanding practice, the BAR has chosen not to review seasonal or special event tents, such as those used at the Carlyle House for concerts and weddings or the special event stages in the waterfront parks. Likewise, they did not review the seasonal dining tent in the rear of Taverna Cretekou on King Street, though they reviewed the fixed outdoor dining awnings proposed in the City Marina for the Waterfront Café and in the rear of Blackwall Hitch because these were to be permanently bolted to the decking to resist the wind loads proscribed in the building codes. The

BAR did not require a Certificate of Appropriateness for the temporary stage at Market Square, as this stage is not affixed to the ground. They do not review the individual tables, chairs and umbrellas or railings used for seasonal outdoor dining on King Street, though they did endorse the King Street Outdoor Dining program design guidelines.

There are a number of other minor architectural elements that the BAR has chosen not to review. The OHAD BAR permits administrative approval of sheds in the rear yard less than 50 square feet in area if they are easily removable and not set on a permanent foundation. The BAR does not review children's play equipment because swing sets are often in place for a short period of time and equipment like soccer goals and basketball hoops are often portable. The Board does not review temporary or portable planters, which are specifically defined in the City Code as capable of being moved by two persons when empty. They do not review portable benches in the public sidewalk or private patio furniture. Finally, they do not review landscape plant materials because trees and shrubs grow, may lose their leaves seasonally and then die and are removed at the end of their natural lives.

However, the BAR has required a Certificate of Appropriateness for so-called "short term structures" that were permanently affixed to the ground, such as the temporary guardrail around the damaged bulkhead at Windmill Hill Park and the BAR will review any fixed structures above grade at the Interim Fitzgerald Square.

**Will staff update the BAR on the Capital Bikeshare program?**

Since last summer, staff has reported back to BAR on the Bikeshare program, attended a meeting to update and discuss station placement in the Old and Historic District, provided a report on the program to City Council in the fall of 2016, and has detailed refinements to the station siting and community involvement process now that the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan has been adopted. This round of expansion specifically aims to improve the public outreach process and provide Alexandrians with more input on where stations will be placed. Staff have also communicated with the BAR and have used their recommendations to improve the proposed station sites.