



# **Visit Alexandria**

**Update to City Council**

**March 26, 2019**



# Mission — What We Do

**To attract visitors that  
increase revenues and  
to promote the City of  
Alexandria and its assets**





# Core Purpose — Why We Do It

- ↑ Visitor economy
- ↑ Tax receipts
- ↑ Residents' quality of life
- ↑ Alexandria's brand



# Programs — How We Do It





# Visit Alexandria Marketing Funnel



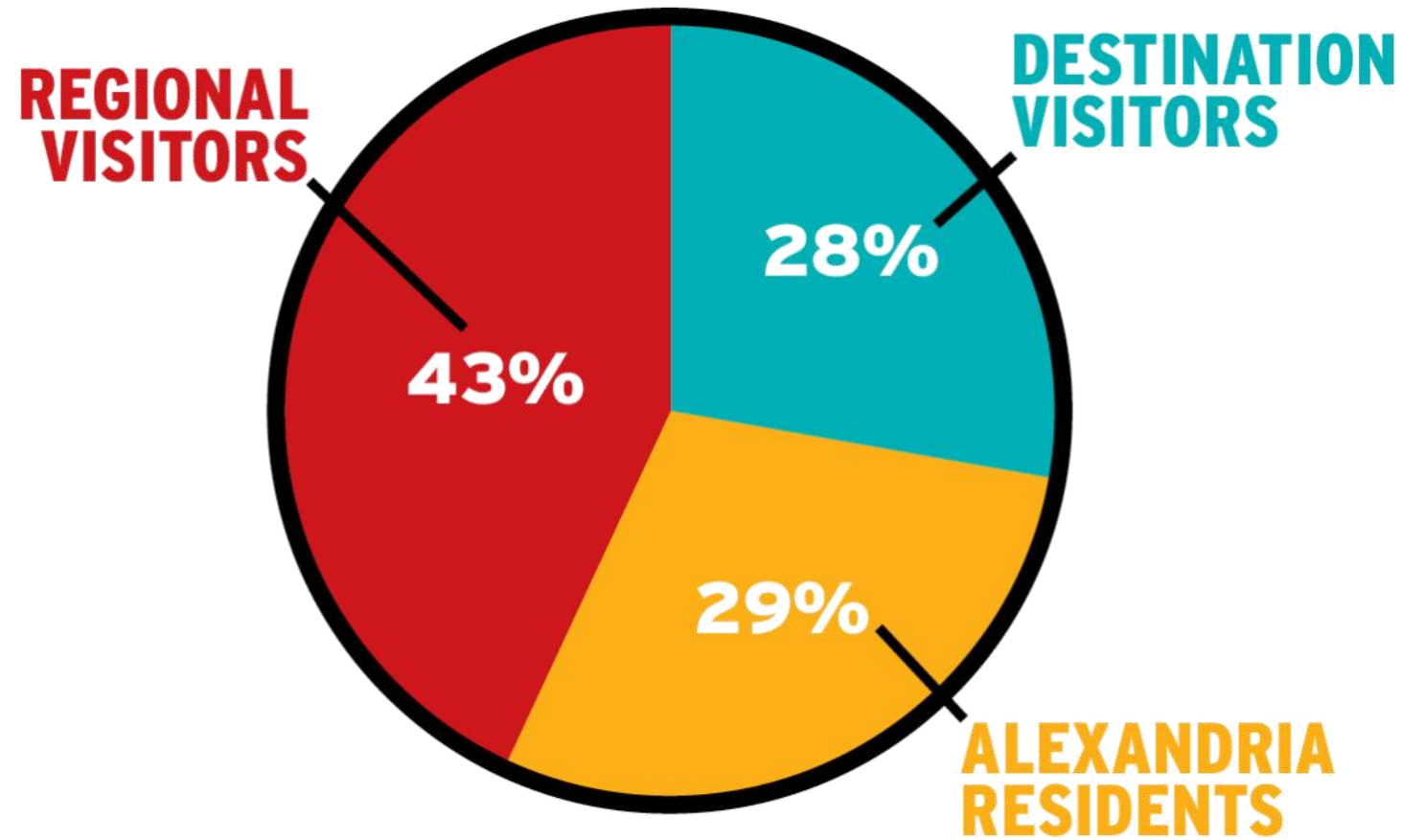
- Advertising
  - P.R.
  - Meetings Sales
  - International
  - Web
  - Social Media
- 
- VisitAlexandriaVA.com
  - Official Visitor Guide, Official Map
  - Visitor Center
  - Promotions: Sidewalk Sale, Restaurant Weeks, etc.
  - Members' Own Marketing
- 
- Product/Service Line
  - Pricing
  - Customer Service
  - Invitation to Return



## Visitor Economy Overview



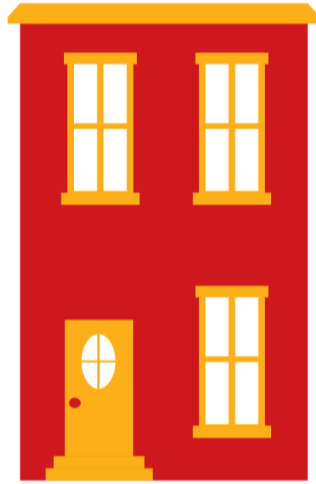
# Non-Residents Pay 71% of Alexandria's Consumption Taxes



Source: 2016 Visa credit card sales, meals, and lodging transaction data, VisaVue



# Non-Residents: Generate \$46 Million in City Lodging, Restaurant & Sales Taxes



Saving the  
average household  
**\$666**  
**PER YEAR**



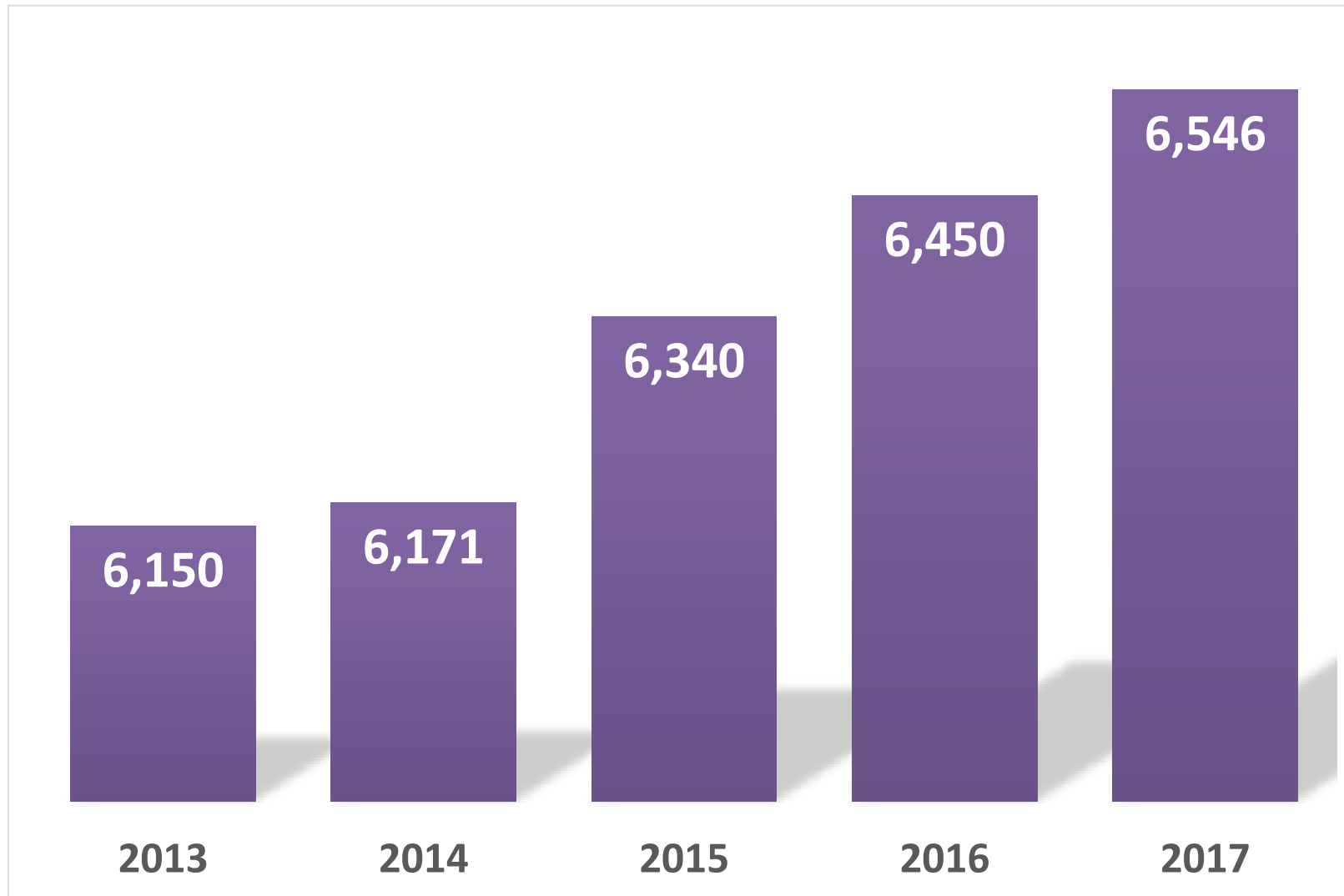
**EDUCATING**  
**2,662**  
Alexandria  
public school  
students

Sources: FY 2018 Alexandria Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), City of Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning and ACPS demographic data and 2016 Visa credit card sales, meals, and lodging transaction data extrapolation, VisaVue





# Jobs Supported by Tourism

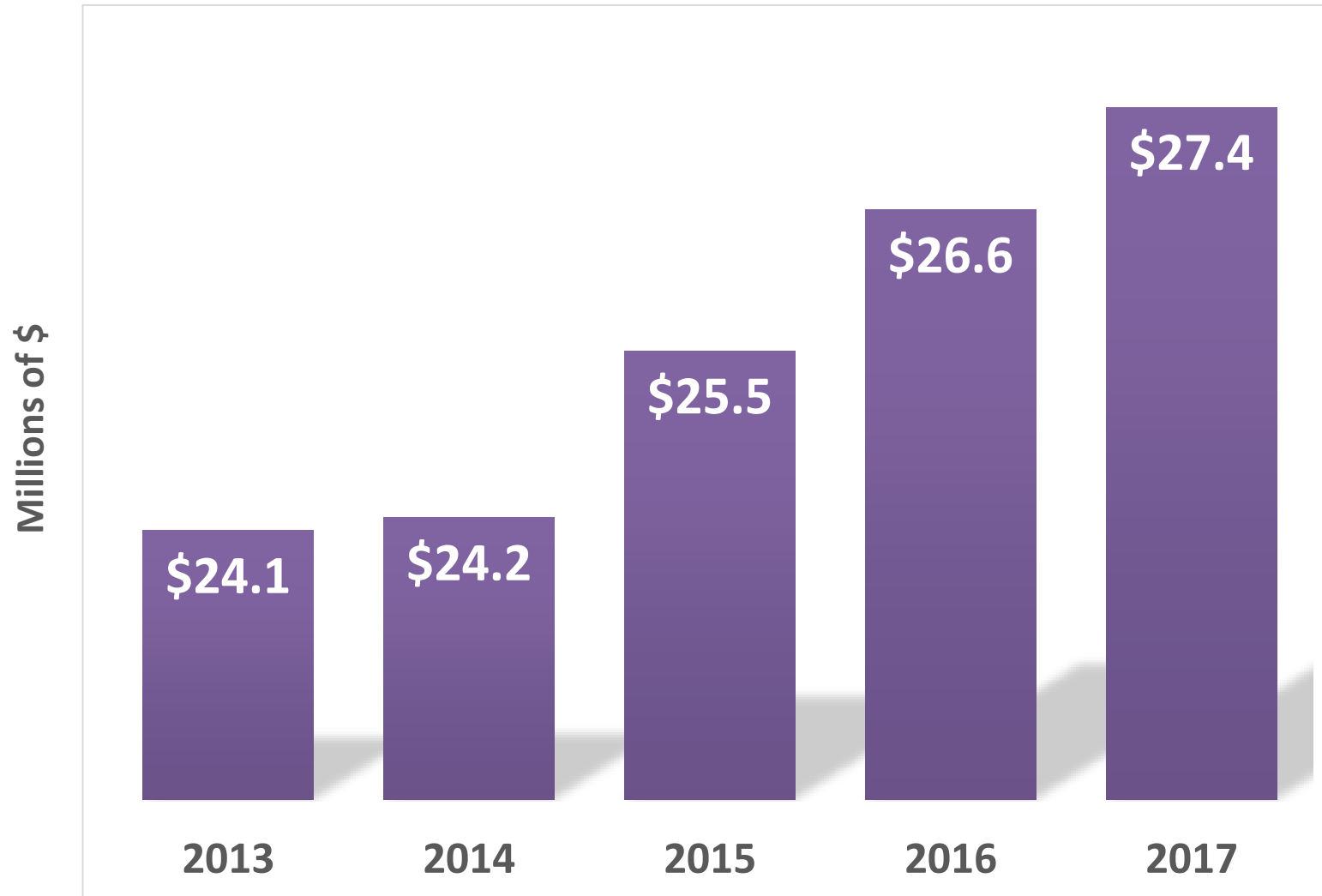


Source: 2017 Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on Virginia and Localities, Virginia Tourism Corporation



# Alexandria Tax Receipts from Tourism

(Home location: 50+ miles)

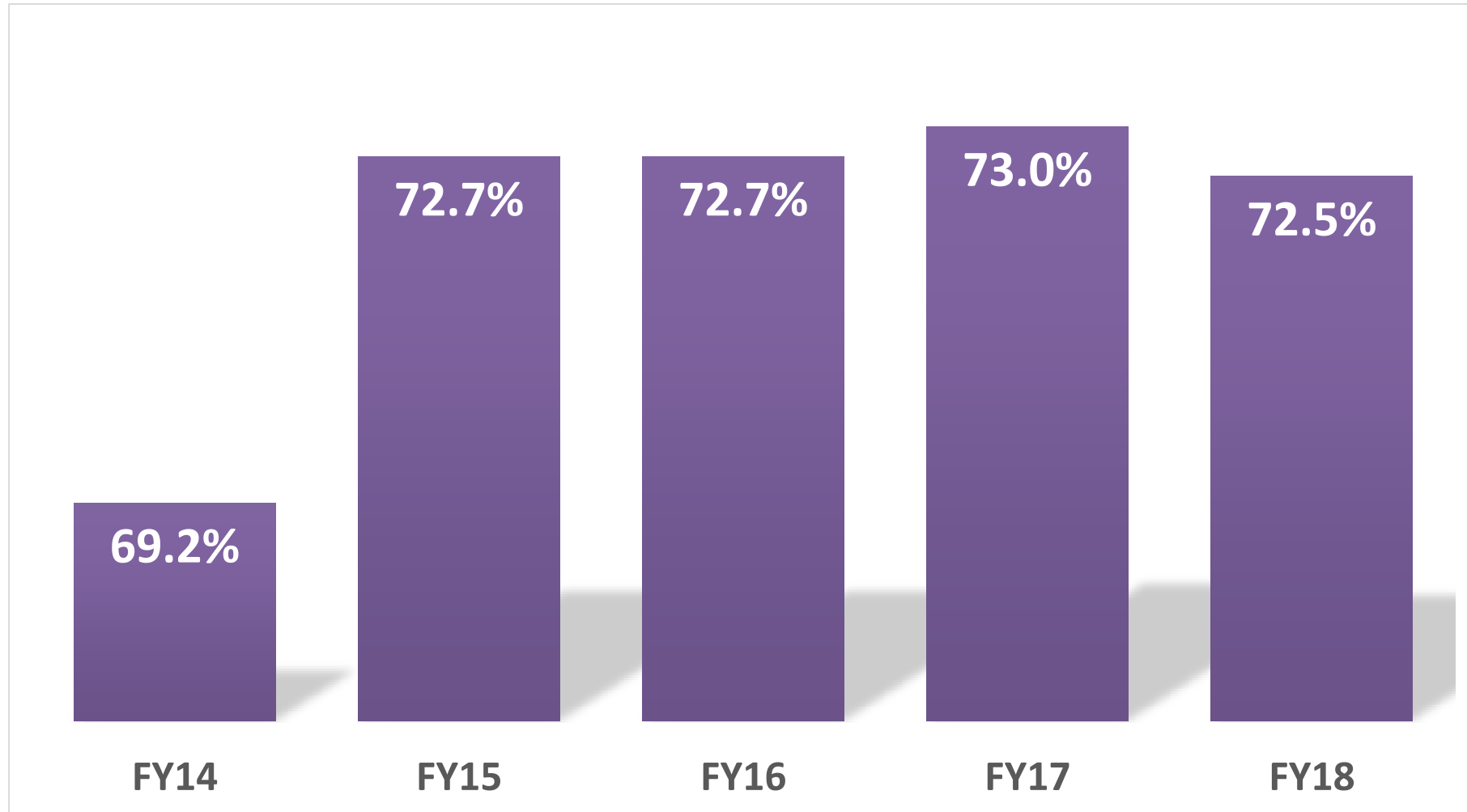


Source: 2017 *Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on Virginia and Localities*, Virginia Tourism Corporation  
Data is based on macroeconomic modeling and provides an estimate of receipts, not an accounting of actual taxes and receipts.





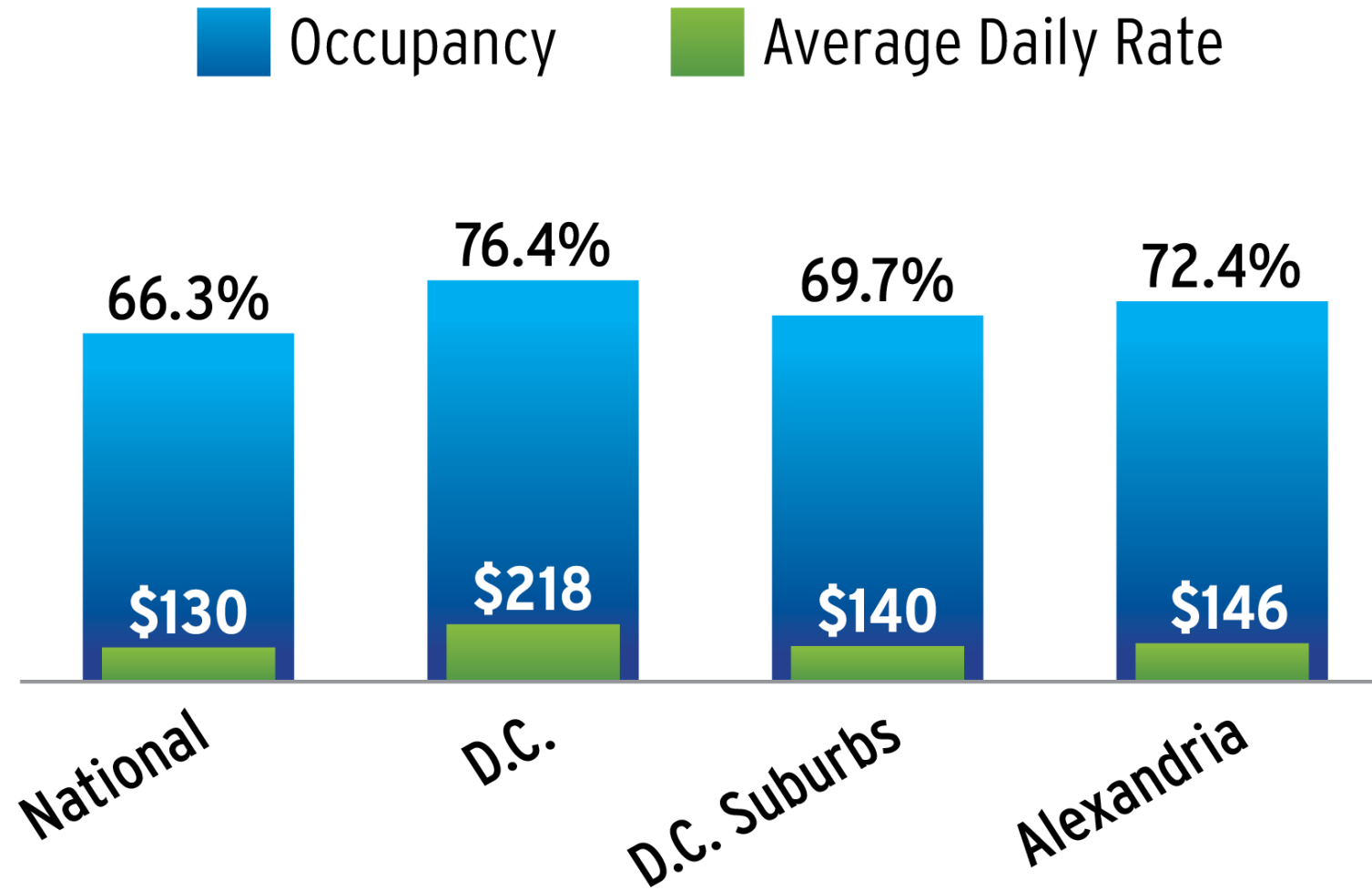
# Hotel Occupancy



Source: Smith Travel Research; Fiscal years run July through June



# How Does Alexandria Compare?



Source: FY 19 year-end forecast based on Smith Travel Research actuals July 2018-Feb. 2019.  
D.C. Suburbs includes Arlington County, Fairfax County, and Prince George's County (MD).





# Visit Alexandria Monthly Dashboard

1. Lodging Revenue per Available Room
2. Future Meeting Sales Leads Generated
3. Press Hits
4. Major Press Hits
5. Total Web Visits
6. Highly Engaged Web Visits
7. Total Membership
8. Visitor Center Traffic
9. Net Income

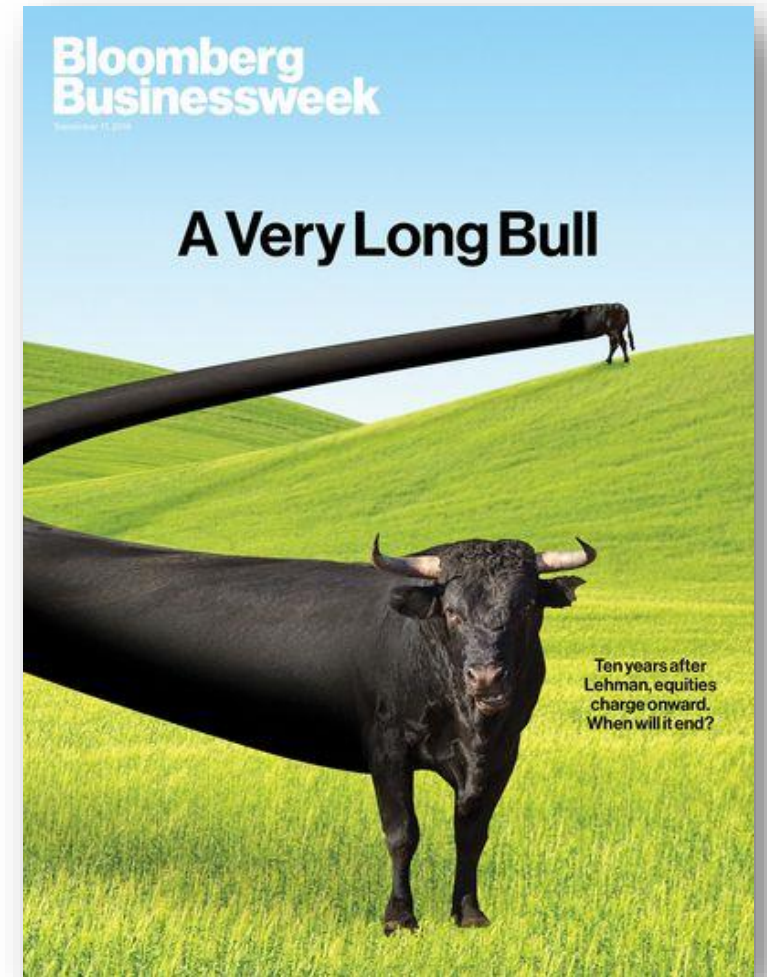
VISIT  
*Alexandria*

**National Trends**



# Economy: Strong 2018/2019, Risks 2020

- Global/US peak was in 2018, leading indicators flattening
- 2019 still positive
- 2020 Risks: Deficits, Interest Rates, Trade Wars
- Past 10 years – increasing share of wallet on travel



# DC and Compression

- Hotel demand Oct 2017-Sept 2018
  - DC downtown +3.2%
  - DC region +1.1%(22nd out of top 25 metros)
- ↓ DC citywide conventions
- DC accepting more government travel
- Absorbing business that used to go to suburbs

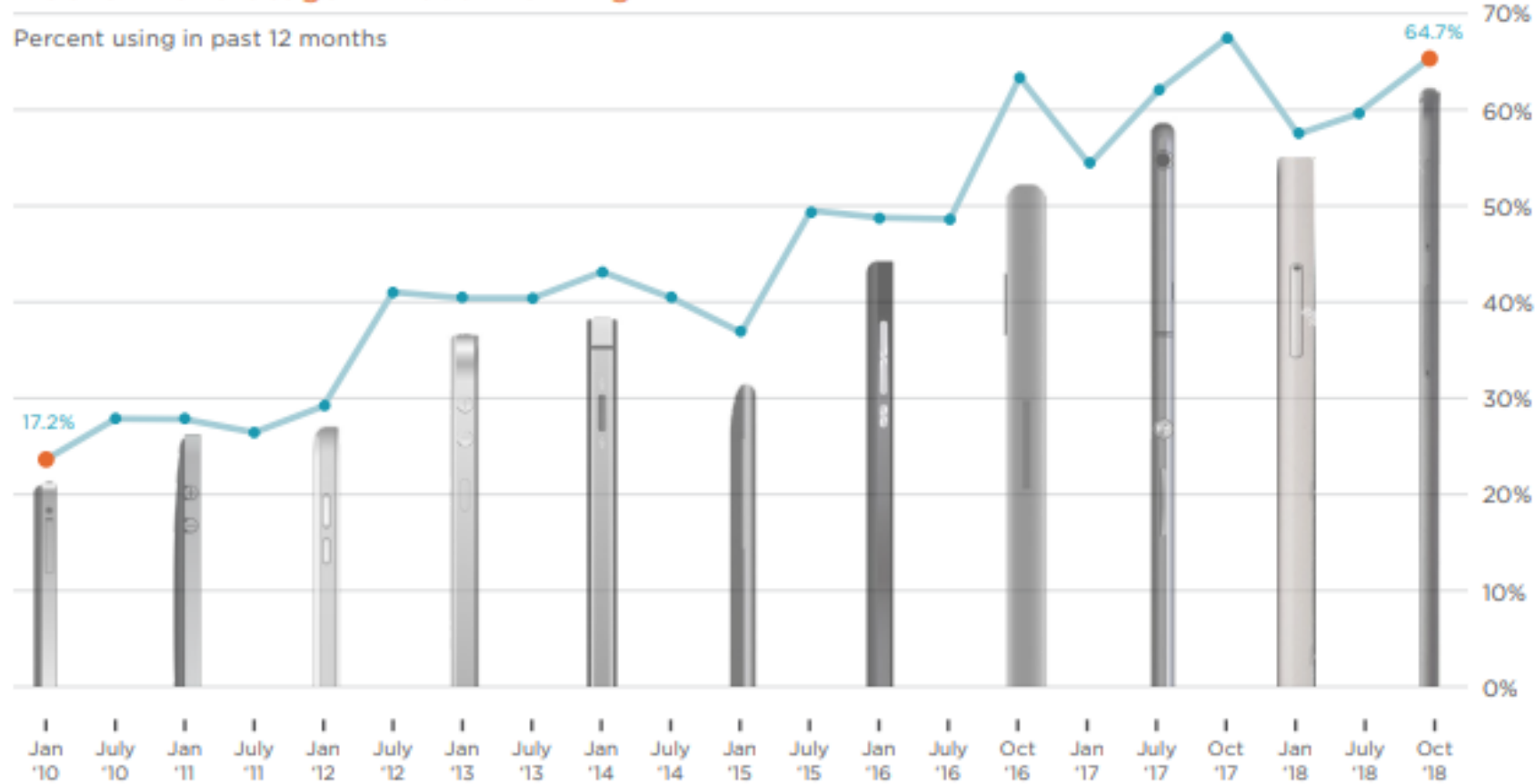




# Mobile First! And Second, and Third...

## Mobile Phone Usage in Travel Planning

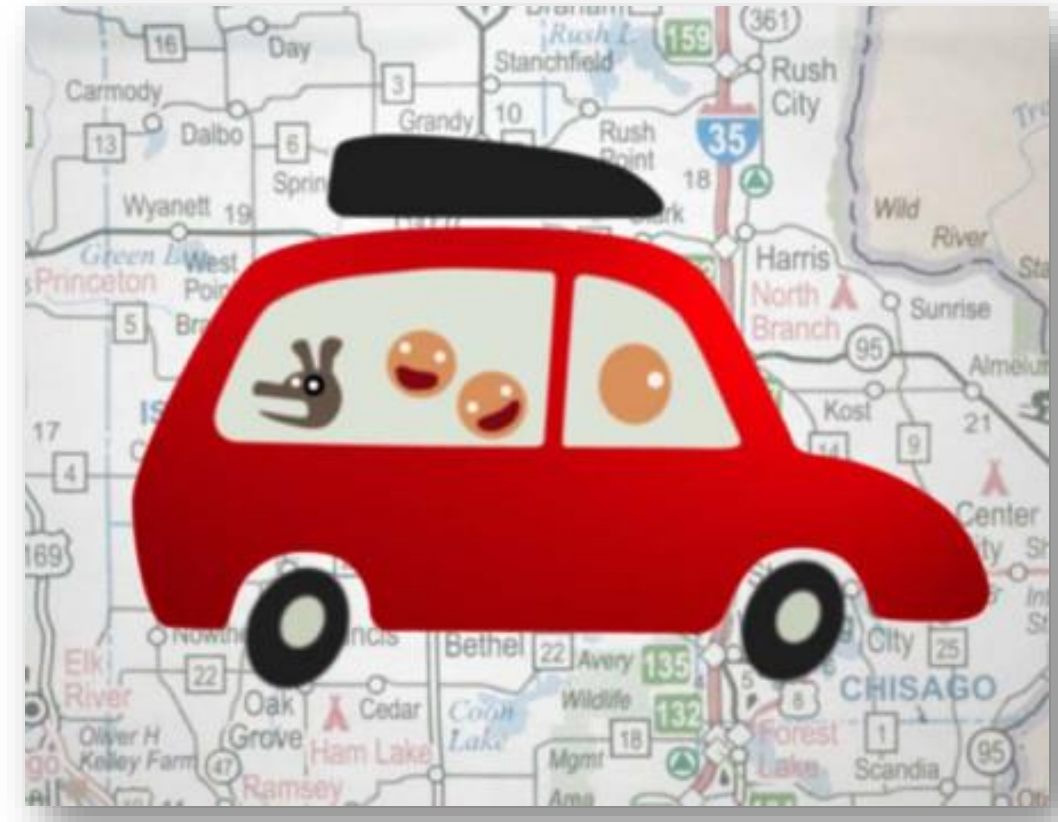
Percent using in past 12 months



Source: Destination Analysts "State of the American Traveler" Fall 2018

# Growing Importance of Quick Hit Travel

- Road trips, shorter weekend getaways, regional drive
- Visiting friends & relatives (VFR) still biggest reason to travel
- Add-ons to business or VFR ↑
- Destination marketable trips ↓





# The Bar is Higher: Make it Epic

- Digital social connectedness + infinite content → Need a good reason to “go out”
- Need for distinctive “wow” physical experiences





**FY 2019 Highlights**



# Advertising

## Purpose:

Build foundation of awareness + drive inquiries

## Highlights:

- Over 32 million impressions in paid digital display and social\*
- 1.7 million video completions across YouTube and in-article pre-roll\*
- 44% increase in regional paid search traffic (FY19 to date)
- Regional ad campaign launching

**ALEX**  
likes a quick ride to D.C.

**ANDRIA**  
likes a slower pace.

OLD TOWN  
*Alexandria*

A nationally designated historic district founded in 1749, Old Town Alexandria, Virginia hums with more than 200 independent restaurants and boutiques alongside intimate historic sites and museums. At the heart of it all is renowned King Street, a walkable mile that leads to the Potomac riverfront. And with Old Town just minutes away from both the National Mall and George Washington's Mount Vernon, it's the perfect base for a legendary DC vacation.

**#1 BEST VALUE U.S. TRAVEL DESTINATION**  
Money Magazine - 2018

#VisitALX | VisitAlexandriaVA.com/OldTown |

\* FY19 full-year estimate, destination audiences only

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# Advertising



See the “DC’s Best Kept Travel Secret” 30-second ad at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsZRPYOh\\_Dc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsZRPYOh_Dc)



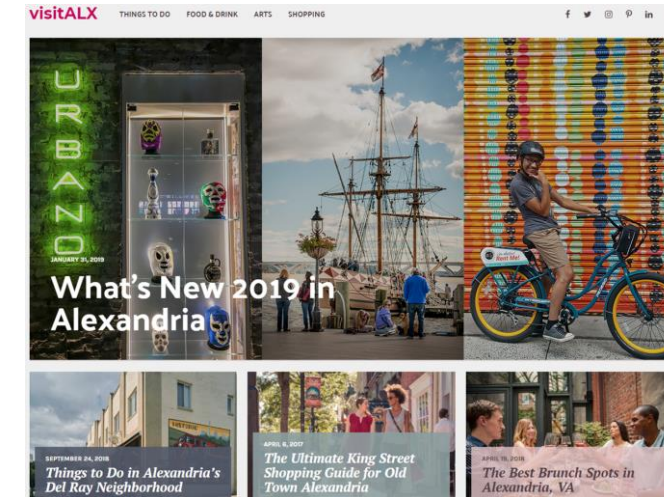
# Digital Marketing

## Purpose:

Convert ad leads into sales,  
provide one-stop inquiry  
fulfillment, generate social media  
buzz and word-of-mouth

## Highlights:

- 2.1 million annual web visits (+7%)
- 46% are “engaged” (multiple pages, minutes on site, sign-ups)
- 138,000 social media followers



# Public Relations

## Purpose:

Build foundation of awareness and drive inquiries

## Highlights:

- 710 stories placed in 8 months (+6%)
- 107 major press hits (-15%)

Condé Nast  
**Traveler**

 **Expedia**

**Forbes**



**The Telegraph**

**Southern Living**

**The Washington Post**

**BEST**  
PRODUCTS

**ShermansTravel**

**instinct**

**am**  
NEWYORK

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# What They're Saying About Us

“Washingtonians are all in on the secret, but it's no surprise the rest of the world is catching up: Alexandria, Virginia, the charming, historic city just across the Potomac River from our nation's capital, is a draw—for travelers and future residents alike.”

Condé Nast  
**Traveler**

“Washington, DC, has long been one of the world’s top travel destinations...its best kept secret isn’t within city limits. In fact, you’ll discover this gem a few miles south, across the Potomac River. Alexandria, Virginia, is a culturally-rich, walkable city with small-town charm and urban convenience.”

**Forbes**

*Why Alexandria, Virginia is Your Next LGBTQ Destination:* “This is Alexandria, Virginia, which is located about 20 minutes outside D.C. and easy to get to. It’s a place that I am ecstatically proud and happy to feature for our Travel Thursday this week on *Instinct Magazine*, as I was left feeling with a sense of superb happiness that I’m still thinking about to this day.”

**instinct**

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# 2018-19 Accolades

- Best Small Cities in the U.S. (Alexandria #4)
  - [Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards](#)
- #1 Best Value U.S. Travel Destination (Alexandria #1)
  - [MONEY](#)
- The South's Prettiest Cities (Alexandria #14)
  - [Southern Living](#)
- Most Dog-Friendly Vacation Destinations in the U.S.
  - [Expedia](#)
- Best Bike Cities in America (Alexandria #25)
  - [Bicycling](#)
- Safest Cities in America (Alexandria #2)
  - [SmartAsset](#)



# Meetings & International Sales

## Purpose:

Generate meetings, group and international business

## Highlights:

- “Close to DC, Far from Expected” campaign
- ALX Networks launched
- “Bleisure” travel
- \$27 million in leads generated YTD (-9%)
- Leveraged partnerships to maximize international reach



**CLOSE TO D.C.  
FAR FROM EXPECTED.**

On the Potomac River waterfront, tucked beneath the nation's capital, you'll find Old Town Alexandria—a surprisingly unique setting for small to mid-sized meetings. This cosmopolitan city steeped in historic charm is known for its walkable lifestyle and its 200+ independent restaurants, boutiques and museums. Recognized for outstanding hospitality, Alexandria's facilities range from four-star boutiques to a full-service convention hotel—ideal for groups of up to 800. And with inspired venues set amongst picturesque backdrops, your meeting is sure to be an authentic experience that exceeds attendees' expectations.

Contact our team of destination experts and plan a meeting that's far from expected.

*Alexandria*  
MEETINGS

**#1 BEST VALUE  
U.S. TRAVEL  
DESTINATION**  
*Money Magazine - 2016*

**Meet AlexandriaVA.com**  
**(703) 652-5369**

**SAVE BIG WITH  
ALX EXTRAPERKS**  
*Enjoy seasonal rebates & discounts  
at 15 Alexandria hotels. No perks  
to pick—you get them all!*

5 miles to Washington, D.C./3 miles to the Ronald Reagan National Airport/4 Metrorail stations





# King Street Corridor Initiative



## Purpose:

Ensure vibrant downtown core, compete with well-funded neighbors like the Wharf, Yards, MGM/National Harbor

## Highlights:

- 9,000 attendees at fall Portside festival
- 124 press hits
- 37,000 page views
- Raised \$175,000 as public-private partnership





# Seasonal Promotion



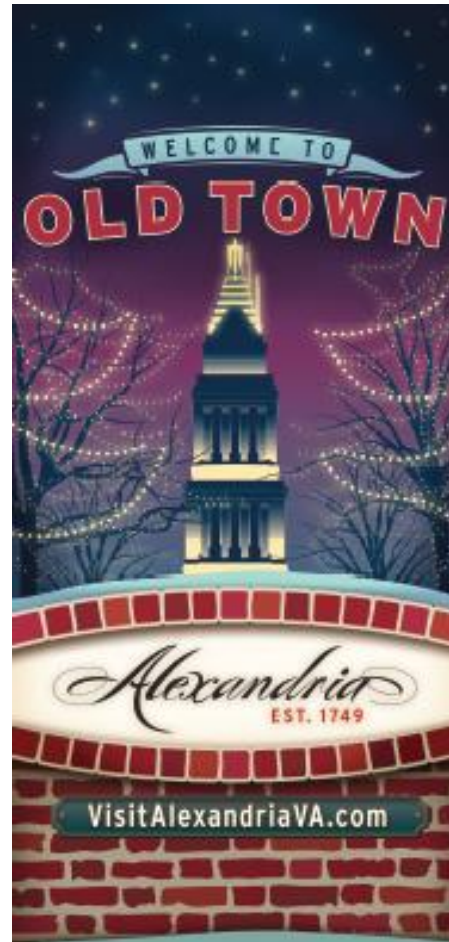
**HOLIDAY MAGIC**  
**HISTORIC STREETS**

Illustration of two women walking on a brick street in front of a historic building with lit windows and small Christmas trees.

MAKE OLD TOWN PART OF  
YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITION.

*Alexandria*  
EST. 1749

**BROWSE EVENTS**

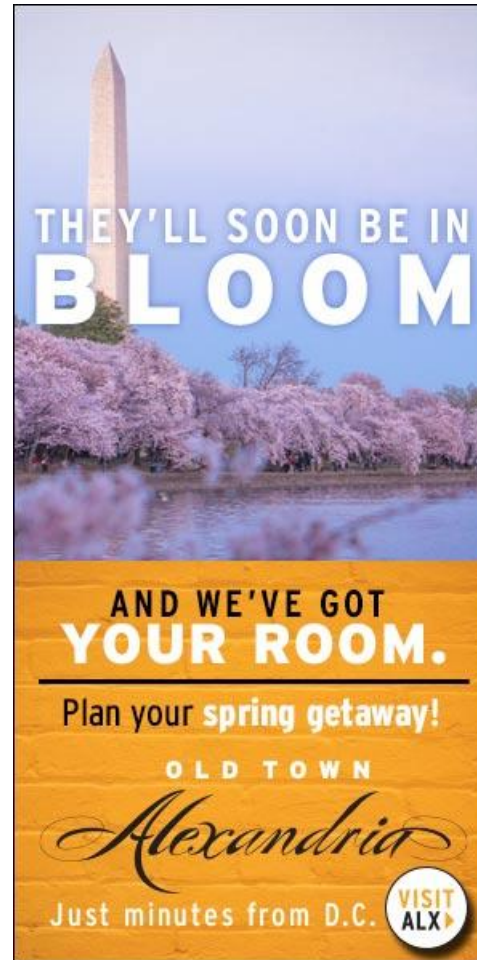


WELCOME TO  
**OLD TOWN**

Illustration of the Old Town clock tower at night with string lights.

*Alexandria*  
EST. 1749

VisitAlexandriaVA.com



THEY'LL SOON BE IN  
**BLOOM**

Illustration of cherry blossoms and the Washington Monument.

AND WE'VE GOT  
**YOUR ROOM.**

Plan your **spring getaway!**

OLD TOWN  
*Alexandria*

Just minutes from D.C. **VISIT ALX**



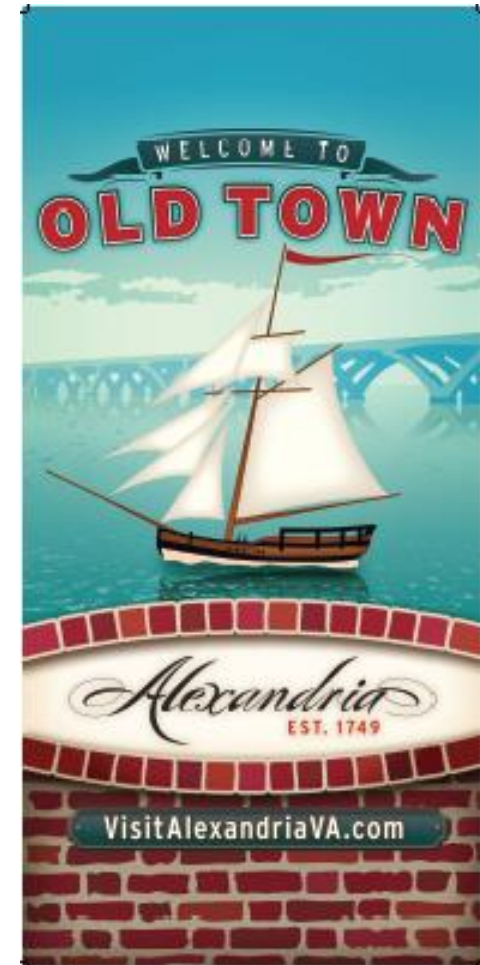
**PARKWAY**  
**CLASSIC**

**APRIL 28,  
2019**

Illustration of a large group of runners on a tree-lined path.

OLD TOWN  
*Alexandria*

**STAY THE  
WEEKEND!**



WELCOME TO  
**OLD TOWN**

Illustration of a sailboat on the water with a bridge in the background.

*Alexandria*  
EST. 1749

VisitAlexandriaVA.com



# Member & Visitor Services

## Purpose:

Increase length of stay, repeat visitation and member connection

## Highlights:

- 372 members, record high
- 88% Member retention rate
- 56 new members in first 8 months
- Visitor Center garden redesigned



EXTRAORDINARY





# Putting it all together....

**BEST  
SMALL  
CITIES  
IN THE U.S.**  
— Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards, 2018

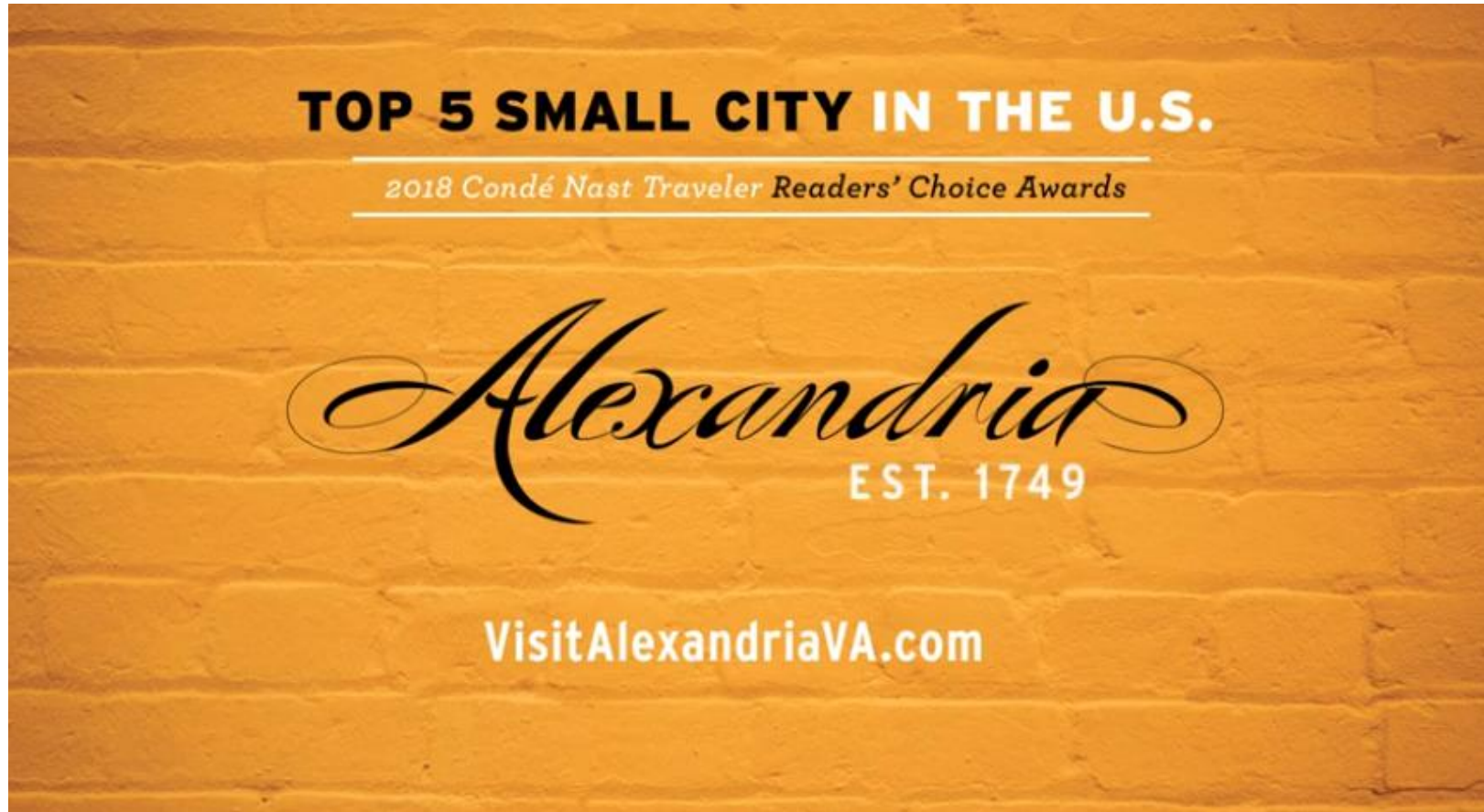
1. Charleston, SC
2. Santa Fe, NM
3. Savannah, GA
- 4. Alexandria, VA**
5. Sarasota, FL
6. Sedona, AZ
7. Monterey, CA
8. Asheville, NC
9. Greenville, SC
10. Key West, FL
11. Portland, ME
12. Napa, CA
13. Palm Springs, CA
14. Newport, RI
15. Santa Barbara, CA

Look who made the list! It turns out that one of the best travel destinations in the U.S. is just up the road. A nationally designated historic district founded in 1749, Old Town Alexandria hums with more than 200 independent restaurants and boutiques alongside intimate historic sites and museums. At the heart of it all is renowned King Street, a walkable mile that leads to the Potomac riverfront. And with Old Town just minutes away from both the National Mall and Mount Vernon, it's the perfect weekend escape you've been looking for.

*Alexandria*  
EST. 1749  
Visit [AlexandriaVA.com](http://AlexandriaVA.com)

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*Alexandria*

# Putting it all together....



See the "Best Small Cities in the U.S." 45-second ad at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVy5aK9-ISM>







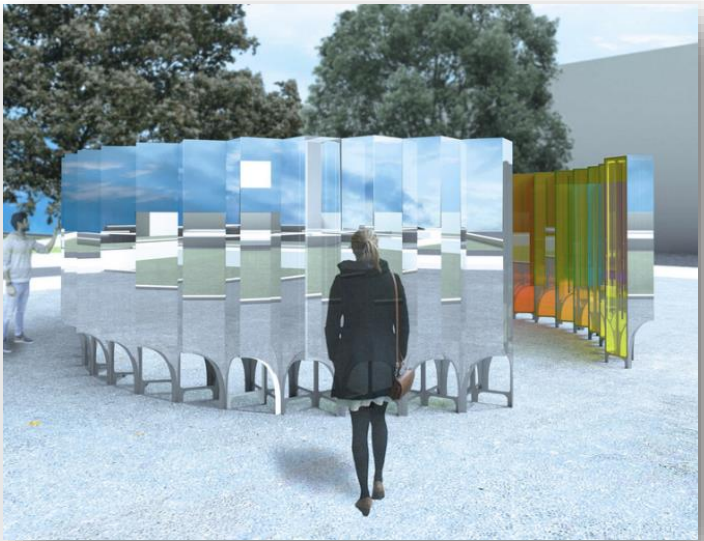
**FY 2020 What's New Preview**





# King Street Corridor Initiative

## Beautification, Programming & Promotion



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# Executive Leadership Program

## Position Alexandria as the premier location for small executive meetings

- Programs: Leadership, team building
- Facilities: Unique, historic, innovative
- Destination: Inspirational, accessible, walkable, friendly
- Packaging: One-stop for: facility, hotel, transportation, off-site events, dining



# New Advertising Creative

## Build on New Personas Research

- Uncovering new market segments
- Understanding key triggers
- Affirming highest value segments
- Identifying differentiable Alexandria strengths by audience
- Capture new video/photography that aligns with learning





# Metro Platform Improvement Project Response

- Independent revenue forecast
- Travel options flyer
- “Love Your Summer” Hotel Package
  - Free unlimited ride water taxi pass
  - Free Key to the City museum pass
  - Free hotel parking
  - = \$200 in added value for visitors



## TRAVEL OPTIONS DURING SUMMER 2019

### ALEXANDRIA METRO PLATFORM IMPROVEMENTS

Provided by Visit Alexandria

#### CONNECTING ALEXANDRIA TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

|  |   |  |            |
|--|---|--|------------|
|  | <b>WATER TAXI</b><br>Connecting Alexandria and the Wharf in D.C.<br>Additional service available to:<br>Georgetown, Nationals Park, National Harbor, Mount Vernon               | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$10.00 – \$12.00 one way<br>More info: PotomacRiverboat.com  | 30 MINUTES |
|  | <b>RIDESHARE</b> (Lyft.com / Uber.com)<br>First time Lyft users, save \$5 with this code: VISITLX19   | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$15.00 – \$20.00 one way<br>More info: Lyft.com/Uber.com   | 20 MINUTES |
|  | <b>TAXI</b>   | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$17.00 – \$21.00<br>More info: AlexandriaYellowCab.com   | 20 MINUTES |
|  | <b>VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS</b><br>Connecting the Alexandria Amtrak Station with L'Enfant Plaza and Union Station in Washington, D.C.<br>Note: Not available midday or weekends | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$7.00 one way<br>More info: VRE.org  | 25 MINUTES |
|  | <b>CAR</b>  | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>Fuel \$2.00+; parking garage \$15 - \$20 (all day garage) or \$2.30/hour (meters)<br>More info: DCParking.org | 20 MINUTES |
|  | <b>CAPITAL BIKESHARE</b><br>Various locations throughout Alexandria and Washington, D.C.  | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$4.00 one way<br>More info: CapitalBikeshare.com   | 45 MINUTES |
|  | <b>METROBUS</b><br>Various stops throughout Alexandria and Washington, D.C.   | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$2.00 one way<br>More info: WMATA.com  | 60 MINUTES |
|  | <b>METROWAY</b><br>Connecting Braddock Road Metro with Crystal City Metro. Features dedicated coach-only lanes to beat traffic. Service every 6-15 minutes.                     | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$2.00 one way<br>More info: MetroWayVA.com   | 30 MINUTES |
|  | <b>CARSHARE</b> (Zipcar)  | <b>Est. Cost:</b><br>\$10.00/hour<br>More info: Zipcar.com   | 20 MINUTES |

2

VisitAlexandriaVA.com/MetroOptions





# Thank You!

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*Alexandria*

**VisitAlexandriaVA.com | #VisitALX**

