

PUBLIC ART PROJECT PLAN

POTOMAC YARD PARK (North Extension)

Approved: April 15, 2025

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I. Introduction

The Public Art Implementation Plan sets out a process for the commissioning of new public art. For each project approved in the Public Art Annual 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 public art in the recently constructed north extension of Potomac Yard Park.

II. Site and Context

About the City of Alexandria

Alexandria, Virginia is a small historic seaport city of about 158,000 residents located on the Potomac River, minutes from Washington, D.C. It is best known for its historic Old Town but is also home to federal agencies such as the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, the Defense Department and the headquarters of the National Science Foundation.

About the North Potomac Yard and the Innovation District

North Potomac Yard is a community located in the northeast of the City of Alexandria bordering Arlington County. It is a section of a larger neighborhood called Potomac Yard. The Potomac Yard area, between the Potomac River and US Route 1, has long been an important transportation conduit, first as a Native American footpath, then over time incorporating canals, trains, and automobiles. Potomac Yard was an important freight classification yard that operated from 1906 to 1982, reaching its heyday during World War II. North Potomac Yard is bordered on the east by rail and metro lines with views of National Airport and the Potomac River, and on the west by the Virginia Tech campus.

North Potomac Yard is planned as an Innovation District, taking advantage of its proximity to a major airport and diverse industries near the nation's capital. Virginia Tech serves as the Innovation District's anchor, which along with other potential anchors, will attract and cluster leading-edge institutions, companies, start-ups, incubators, accelerators, and other organizations to North Potomac Yard. The North Potomac Yard Innovation District will create a network of indoor and outdoor spaces, open spaces and a variety of land uses that support collaboration, idea sharing, and integrate innovative technology.

For more information about the planned land uses for this area please see the [Approved North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan](#).

About North Potomac Yard Public Art

The developers of North Potomac Yard, JBG Smith, have provided a cash contribution for public art to be incorporated into the [northern extension of Potomac Yard Park](#) that has been recently constructed at 3601 University Drive. This project will be managed by the Public Art Program on behalf of the developer, and managed through the City's public art process.

III. Potomac Yard Park

Public art is planned within the northern extension of Potomac Yard Park. The 4.5-acre park is a new extension of Potomac Yard Park and was completed as a part of the North Potomac Yard development project. The park is planned as a regional amenity with a mix of active, passive, and social uses and helps provide a continuous off-street trail network from Braddock Road to Four Mile Run. The linear park is approximately 1/3 mile long and varies in width from ± 60 feet to ± 150 feet. The park includes a number of outdoor spaces including a natural playground, tables and seating, distinct lawn areas, shade structures, a fitness station, and a viewing mound. Trails connect through the park and provide visitors access to the park's natural and bioretention areas.

The public art task force recommends that the selected artist or artist team consider location opportunities throughout the park that best connect to its natural features and consider the linear nature of the park.

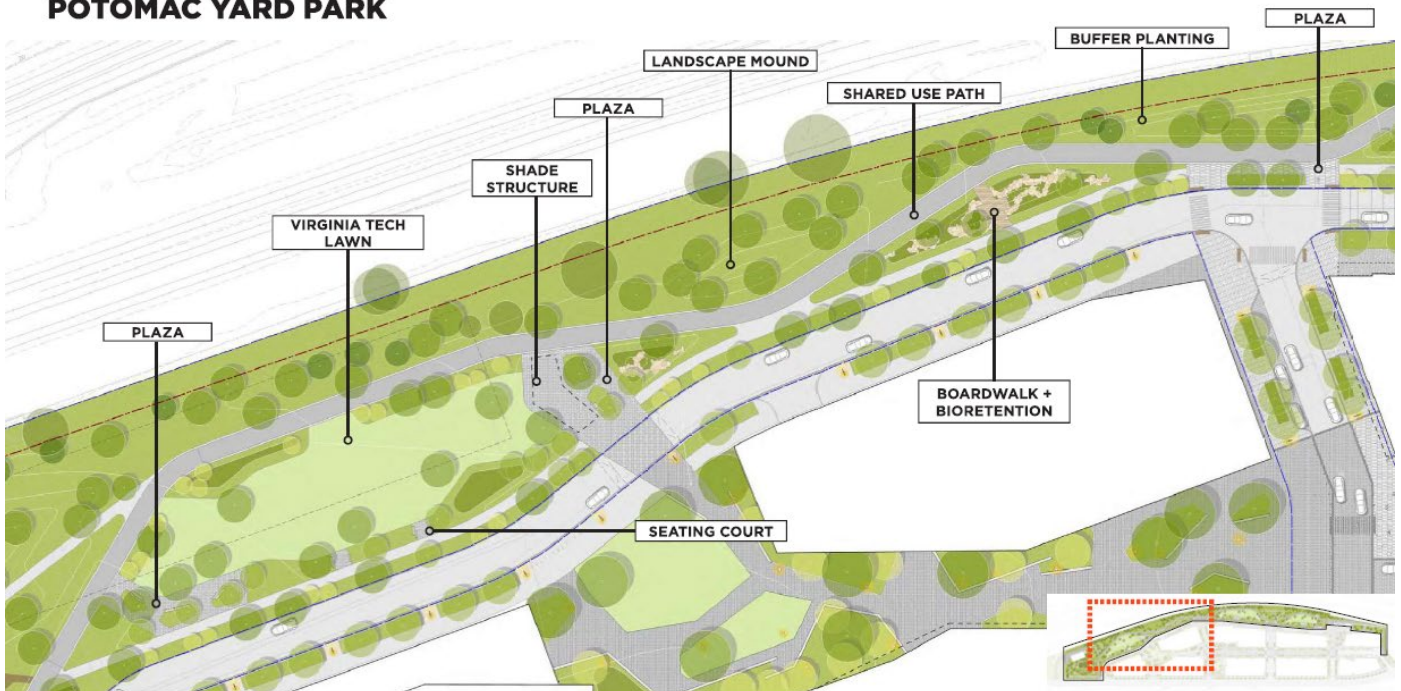
POTOMAC YARD PARK



POTOMAC YARD PARK



POTOMAC YARD PARK



POTOMAC YARD PARK



IV. Scope

- Public art will be incorporated into the recently developed north extension of Potomac Yard Park.
- The selected artist or artist team will work with the City to develop plans for one or more pieces of public art within the park.
- The location(s) for the artwork will be determined in consultation with the City following a site visit by the selected artist/artist team.
- The selected artist/artist team will be required to be onsite to participate in community engagement arranged by the City of Alexandria.
- The artist/artist team will be required to meet regularly with representatives of the City to coordinate on the project development. Progress meetings may occur virtually.
- Depending on the design, the artist/artist team may be required to obtain professionally certified drawings prior to final approval of the public art by the City.
- The project will utilize donated developer funds and the project budget is all inclusive, including funding for research, travel, design, fabrication, and installation.
- The selected artist/artist team may work with the City and the community to consider a daytime and nighttime experience. The park's hours are currently 5am-10pm.

V. Goals

The Alexandria Public Art Program is interested in commissioning an artist or artist team to create a site-specific, permanent work(s) of art to be included in the recently developed north extension of Potomac Yard Park. The program goals of the project are to:

- Bring exciting new artwork to Alexandria that is informed by the context and history of the site.
- Celebrate one or more of the following themes: the relationship between our past and the future; the spirit of innovation, technology, and creativity; growth; and inspiring the future.
- Attract residents and visitors to the park to experience dramatic, visually compelling, and unique work(s) of art.
- Provide an interactive environment for people of all ages that encourages continued use, gathering, and community participation at the park.
- Provide high-quality art experiences that elevate the user experience in the park and addresses its unique physical characteristics as a linear park.

VI. Selection Process

For the project, the Office of the Arts will issue a national call for artists. Finalists will be selected and given the opportunity to come to Alexandria, visit the park, meet with staff, and interview with the Task Force.

Public Art Task Force

The Public Art Task Force helps shape the Project Plan for the project and recommends selection of artist(s) and approval of concept(s).

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

- David Pritzker
- Ashley Smith

The Community Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Sarah Pascual
- Christopher Potter

Project Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Benjamin Knapp, Executive Director of Virginia Tech's Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT)
- Carly Snyder, member of the Development Team at JBG Smith
- Daniel Unkel, Landscape Architect with the Alexandria's Dept. of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

Artist Selection Process and Concept Approval

A nationwide open call process will be used to select artists/artist team for the project.

In accordance with the Public Art Implementation Plan and Policy the Office of the Arts, will draft a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) based on the information provided in the Project Plan. This call will be issued via an online application system. Interested artists/artist teams will be welcome to submit a letter of interest, qualifications, and work samples.

The Task Force will review the application and qualifications and recommend an artist for the project. The selected artist/artist team will be approved by the Commission for the Arts.

The selected artist/artist team will develop a 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 will be reviewed for feedback by the Task Force

and be recommended for approval by Commission for the Arts prior to execution.

VII. Timeline

March/April 2025	Task Force reviews and approves Project Plan*
April	Project Plan submitted to Commission for the Arts for approval*
May	Staff develops and issues a Call for Artists
July	Review qualifications and select artist/artist team*
July/August	Artist Interviews (optional)*
August	Task Force Recommends Artist(s)*
September	Arts Commission Approval of Artist(s)
September/October	Artist contract
October/November	Artist(s) site visit and Community Engagement
January 2026	Artist presents concept for Task Force approval*
February	Concept approved by Commission for the Arts
March	Artist submits final design for technical review
Spring 2026	Fabrication
Fall 2026	Installation

*Steps with which the task force has a role.

VIII. Budget

The public art project will utilize developer funds specifically allocated for public art in North Potomac Yard.

Artist design, fabrication & installation	\$285,000
Project Contingency	\$15,000
Total	\$300,000

IX. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications

Stakeholders

Community engagement, marketing, and communications should build upon the existing stakeholder base for art and tourism in Alexandria and include additional stakeholders in the North Potomac Yard and Potomac Yard community. These will include, but are not limited to, representatives from:

- Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
- Del Ray Business Association
- Del Ray Citizen's Association
- National Landing BID
- Northeast Civic Association
- Potomac Greens residents
- Potomac Yard and North Potomac Yard residents
- Potomac Yard Businesses
- Potomac Yard Citizens Association
- Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee
- Virginia Tech
- Visit Alexandria
- WMATA

Marketing and Communications

The Office of the Arts staff will develop a marketing and communications strategy for the public art that will engage existing stakeholders as well as bring new audiences to experience the artwork. Information/materials should be provided in languages relevant to the nearby communities. The marketing plan could include:

- Web-based information about the project.
- 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.
- Word of mouth, outreach.
- Engagement events/activations with the surrounding community.

X. Additional Resources

Historic Resources

The Potomac Yard area that is now a hub of homes, shops and businesses was once a vital rail classification yard that facilitated distribution of freight between northbound and southbound trains for multiple railroad companies. Most trains entering the Yard were composed of rail cars bound for different destinations. One train entering the Yard might contain freight bound for five or more cities. These trains were "switched" (or dismantled) and reassembled into different trains where all the cars were headed to the same location, or at least a destination along the same route. Potomac Yard, located along Route One north of Slater's Lane, was in operation from 1906 to 1982.

- **Archaeology at Potomac Yard:** Alexandria Archaeology has been interested in the history and landscape of Potomac Yard for decades. Since the 1980s, archaeological firms have conducted historical studies and investigations of various segments of the area either for developers as part of the City's archaeological code or for planning efforts. A vast amount of information has been acquired on the history, prehistoric and historic landscapes, and architecture of the area. *For more information please visit <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/history-and-archaeology-at-potomac-yard>*
- **Oral History Map:** In commemoration of the City's 275th anniversary in 2024, the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) has launched a new project, Mapping Alexandria: Stories of a Changing City. The map displays the City's entire oral history collection by neighborhoods and individuals, and contains 200+ unique stories. Users may select individual stories on the map; or select individual neighborhoods in the sidebar and see what stories have been collected related to that specific neighborhood. *For more information please visit: [Oral Histories Web App](#)*

XI. Additional Maps, Photos, and Exhibits

North Potomac Yard and Vicinity



Regional Open Space Context

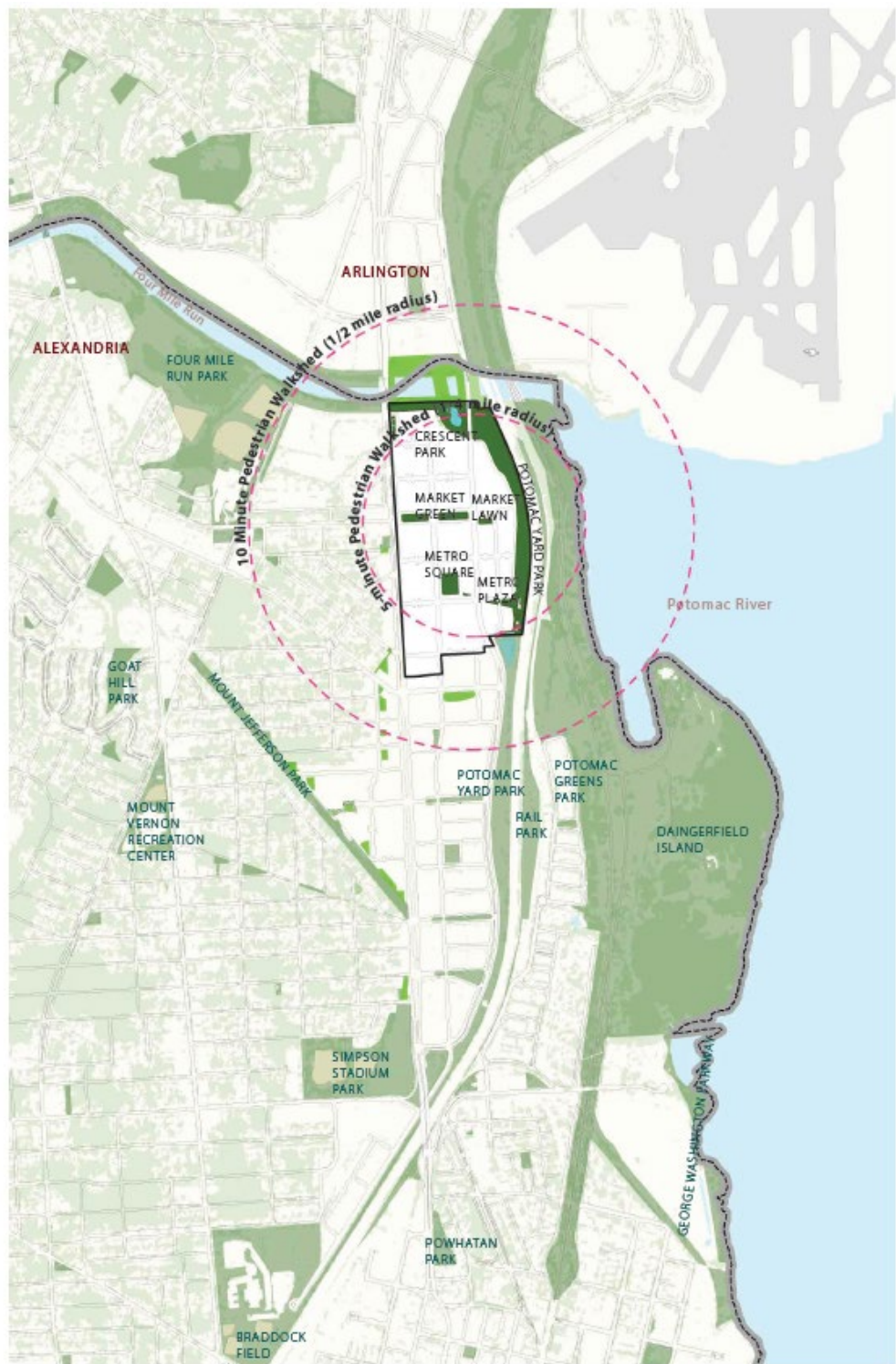
Open Space

Regional Context

The Plan area is located within a regional system of public parks, trails, and open spaces including parks and open spaces in South Potomac Yard/ Potomac Greens, Four Mile Run, pocket parks, and recreational fields west of Route 1, Potomac Yard - Arlington, the George Washington Parkway, and Daingerfield Island.

The locations of open spaces within North Potomac Yard provide an opportunity to connect existing and future residents, workers, and visitors to the larger regional system of spaces, while also providing a variety of open space types with the Plan area within a 5-minute walkshed.

- Existing Open Space
- Planned Open Space
- North Potomac Yard Open Space



North Potomac Yard Open Space Map



Photos



View to the north from the park's north lawn



View from the south end of the park to the Potomac Yard Metro's North Pavilion.



View from the park to a new academic building on Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus.