



The Most Ambitious Transportation Plan Pitched in 2018

By Nena Perry-Brown | 17 DECEMBER 2018

UrbanTurf usually avoids publishing rankings or lists...except at the end of the year, when we look back at what DC's residential real estate scene had to offer during the previous 12 months. This week, we revisit some of the best, most intriguing and peculiar things we came across over the course of 2018. Enjoy.

A DC-area architecture firm presented a vision this year for a vast water transportation network aimed at reducing traffic congestion and improving access to sites along regional waterways for commuters, military personnel and tourists alike.

The pitch from Winstanley Architects and Planners depicts how an efficient, extensive water-surface transportation network could connect dozens of potential landings in the area. Each landing would be designed as an intermodal transit center with connections to public transit options.

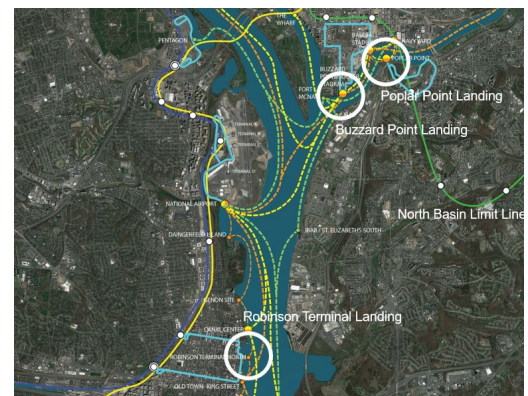
Some sites, like Diamond Teague Park, Old Town Alexandria, National Harbor, Washington Harbour in Georgetown and The Wharf, are already accessible via water taxis generally more popular for tourists and other occasional visitors.

Another major component of water-transit which could bolster the network is to provide commuter routes for residents further south. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission has been studying the idea extensively in preparation for a pilot commuter route between Woodbridge and the Joint Base at Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB), with additional connections to the Wharf and National Harbor. A recently-released feasibility study envisions a route between an improved Occoquan Harbour Marina and a Navy-built landing on the south end of JBAB. Ferries running this route during the morning rush hour at full speed (35 mph) could save Prince William County residents up to 20 minutes on their commutes.

In order to make water-transit a more viable and prevalent option for travelers throughout the region (and alleviate road congestion), more landings should be constructed at other waterfront sites, creating additional service routes that could intersect with one another similarly to how buses operate on land.



Aerial rendering of an "Art Boat" shuttle between Poplar and Buzzard Points



Close up of network map with three potential sites highlighted.



Planned Woodbridge commuter ferry route



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It will take a combination of political will, interagency and inter-governmental cooperation, and private investment in order for the reality of water transit to reach its full potential in the region. For example, two important considerations that will be crucial to the success of a water transit network are the need for an overarching governing authority for transportation along the waterways and the need for a convenient service station for ferries near the District.

Composite of potential transit networks along a revitalized Alexandria waterfront. Courtesy of Winstanley Architects. Click to enlarge.

In the meantime, however, the notion of water transportation is gaining traction for many along the waterfront. The Capitol Riverfront BID is reportedly interested in constructing a landing at Buzzard Point. Winstanley Architects' principal Michael Winstanley shared with UrbanTurf that the firm created a conceptual framework for Alexandria's incoming mayor as the city plans to redevelop its waterfront. The firm is also in preliminary conversations with JBG Smith as the company works to select a site for a ferry stop at National Landing.



Rendering of Poplar Point landing.

UrbanTurf looks forward to seeing how these plans continue to progress over the next few years.



Composite of potential transit networks along a revitalized Alexandria waterfront. Courtesy of Winstanley Architects