



### FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

#### **Dear Friends and Members:**

Fiscal Year 2021 was a year of resiliency and recovery. In the summer and fall of 2020, we were still reeling from a pandemic that would not go away. By December, hope had emerged with the launch of vaccines. Ambitious vaccination rollouts in the winter and spring of 2021 boosted our optimism. And as summer began, visitors, many regional and local, returned. Our restaurants and shops filled again, and with them, critical revenues that power our economy, fund City services and provide jobs to our residents.

In so many instances, the key to Alexandria's resilience and recovery was partnership. Business leaders invested, adapted and pledged their commitment to safety through ALX Promise. City Council, departments and partner agencies introduced zoning and economic adaptations that enabled outdoor dining and shopping, curbside pickup, expanded alcohol sales, grants and revenue flexibility that improved cash flow. But the most critical partners in the recovery were our frontline and behind-the-scenes staff members who pulled together and welcomed visitors back as hospitality demand returned. We are so grateful to all of you.

At Visit Alexandria, our team was also committed to ongoing adaptation. As conditions and the market shifted, so did we. Adjusting our message and timing, we were able to capitalize on resurgent demand at the end of the fiscal year. Sales, meals and lodging taxes, though still below their pre-pandemic peak, finished \$6 million higher than originally forecast. Marketing impressions, web traffic and membership all grew. We obtained over 1,000 media stories with record broadcast coverage. And Alexandria was named a Best Small City in the U.S. for the third consecutive year by Condé Nast Traveler—this year ranking #3.

As we entered Fiscal Year 2022, there still remained challenges to our continued recovery. New variants, emerging inflation, labor and supply chain shortages all pose obstacles. But if this pandemic has taught us anything, it's how to stand up and meet challenges.

At Visit Alexandria, we are committed to working with all of you to continue our recovery through expanded advertising, new campaigns to reach diverse visitors, a new website, promotion of our neighborhoods and waterfront and the return of business meetings. Thank you for standing with us and ensuring that we continue this recovery that means everything to our City, our residents, our employees and our guests.



**Kate Ellis** Board Chair



Patricia Washington President & CEO

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Each fall, the Commonwealth of Virginia releases data for all municipalities measuring the economic impact of the tourism sector in the prior calendar year. In 2021, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth expanded its analysis to include a forecast of the impact of the pandemic into the next two years, 2021 and 2022. The graph to the right demonstrates the steady upward trajectory of Alexandria's performance through 2019, and the subsequent effect of the pandemic and forecasted recovery.\*

\*Source: 2020 Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on Virginia and Localities, Virginia Tourism Corporation". Data is based on macroeconomic modeling and provides an estimate of receipts of actual taxes and receipts from visitors traveling from a radius 50+ miles outside of Alexandria. Note: because of the change in VTC's research partner in 2021, data reported in prior Visit Alexandria Annual Reports is not directly comparable to data reported here.

\*\*Source: 2020-2022 Analysis and Forecast of COVID-19's Impact on Virginia's

Visitor Economy, Tourism Economics

### **DIRECT SPENDING (\$MILLION)**



## COMMUNITY IMPACT

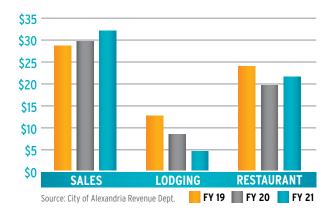
### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Consumption tax revenues are critical to support City services. In Fiscal Year 2021 Alexandria's combined sales, meals and lodging tax receipts were initially forecast to come in at \$53 million, but recovered by year-end to actually deliver \$59 million.

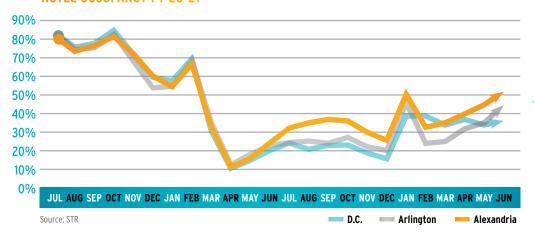
### **SALES, RESTAURANT & LODGING TAX RECEIPTS (\$MILLIONS)**



#### **ALEXANDRIA CONSUMPTION TAX RECEIPTS (\$MILLIONS)**







Retail and restaurants led our recovery, but the hotel sector is still lagging.

Alexandria's hotel occupancy is starting to recover, and finished the year above 50%. We have been recovering faster than key regional peers, but there is still a long way to go to return to pre-pandemic levels.

## RESILIENCE, RESTRUCTURING & RECOVERY



Fiscal year 2021 tested us in many ways as the coronavirus persisted long beyond all initial expectations. Alexandria was not content to ride out the pandemic—instead we met the challenge with an adaptive multifaceted approach to business recovery. The City of Alexandria, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Alexandria Health Department and Visit Alexandria coordinated a response that included relaxing restaurant regulations, supporting outdoor dining and retail, launching safety branding, providing grant support, conducting workshops and promoting to local and regional markets.



### MEETING THE MOME

Key to our response and recovery was the ability to create content, adapt promotions and adjust media timing to ensure that our marketing was resonating with consumers and meeting the moment.









Digital banner campaign





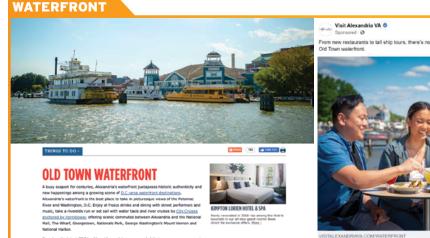
30-second video

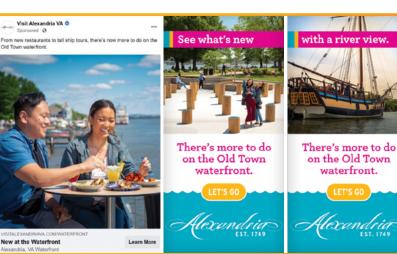






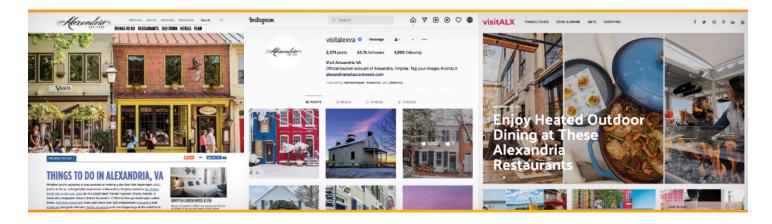
**Expanded promotions** like Shop Small Week and Sidewalk Sale attracted shoppers.





## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In addition to community-based indicators like economic impact and tax receipts, Visit Alexandria also tracks internal marketing measures of performance such as advertising impressions, web traffic, and media volume.



### **FISCAL YEAR 2021 PERFORMANCE**

**JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021** 







1,000+ 5 straight years



785,000 +31%



DIGITAL MARKETING IMPRESSIONS 125 Million

125 Million +110%



**405 MEMBERS +5%** 



# DEDICATION TO DIVERSITY & EQUITY

The Black Travel Alliance launched the Black Travel Scorecard in 2020 to evaluate travel brands on not just what they say, but also what they do. They asked travel brands to publicly communicate their metrics in key areas.

### **MARKETING:**

- 100% of Visit Alexandria's most-run video ads included a Black person as a lead
- 86% of print advertisements included Black representation
- 91% of digital banner campaigns include BIPOC representation
- 80% of Visit Alexandria's top 10 paid social media posts (measured by impressions) had BIPOC representation
- 67% of total national writers who were hosted by Visit Alexandria were BIPOC

### **MANAGEMENT:**

- CEO is Black
- 40% of employees in management positions are BIPOC (2 of 5)
- 35% of organization-wide employees are BIPOC (9 of 26)
- 13% of Board members and 20% of Executive Committee are Black

### PRESS COVERAGE

Visit Alexandria's communications team secured more than 1,000 press hits for the fifth consecutive year. With COVID severely limiting special events and in-person press visits, the team shifted approaches including hosting 11 *virtual* deskside visits with national media, 17 writers on their first trips to Alexandria since the pandemic started and working with local news stations to garner nearly 100 broadcast clips, a 58% year-over-year increase.

### MEDIA COVERAGE

**1,000+ STORIES** 

**Traveler** 

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

woman's day

**Southern Living** 

**Fodors**Trave

The Washington Post







**Forbes** 





**ESSENCE** 





99

There's never been a better time for travelers to explore hidden gems right within their own backyard, as many want to get away but are still concerned witht the safety of traveling via plane, train or other modes of public transportation. You're sure to love your time in this charming riverside city.

-Essence

## **Traveler**



Courtesy of Visit Alexandria/Sam Kittner

### 3. Alexandria, Virginia

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, draws travelers and would-be residents alike. Most folks start to imagine moving there just after setting foot in Old Town, once they've strolled the redbrick sidewalks, clocking street after street of perfectly preserved rowhouses from the 18th and 19th centuries. When you visit, scope out King Street, packed with boutiques, restaurants, and specialty shops; then land at the waterfront, where you can watch the boats bobbing on the water before touring the Torpedo Factory Art Center, a collective of galleries and artists' studios. End the day at Gadsby's Tavern, where some of our founding fathers used to drink—don't mind the actors in colonial garb.

99

I was enchanted by the

King Street shops and bustling

waterfront restaurants in cobblestoned

Old Town—and by the progressive Del

Ray neighborhood. I recall thinking,

'I could live here.'

-Roadtrippers

99

Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards, 2021

Given its close proximity to Washington, D.C.,

Alexandria offers the best of both worlds: small-town charm and urban access.

-Southern Living

## PREVIEWING FISCAL YEAR 2022

As we began Fiscal Year 2022, several initiatives were already underway. We will launch a new website in the spring to improve our user experience and increace search ranking. It will feature mobile-first design, faster page speed, new mapping, and inspirational visuals.

Thanks to American Rescue Plan funding from the City to support business recovery, we'll increase advertising this year by 34%. We'll relaunch our "Stay in the Moment" campaign, add new paid media, reach out to new audiences of color, increase our presence in several of our most historically high-efficiency channels, and continue to leverage our Condé Nast Traveler Best Small Cities ranking. We are especially excited to launch our new "Drop-In" campaign focused on the \$109 billion Black travel market.

We'll be advancing meetings recovery through key partnerships and in-person site visits. We know that 4 out of 5 meeting planners who visit Alexandria book their event with us. We are also thrilled to have the return of signature special events, including the Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights and Portside in Old Town Festival produced by Visit Alexandria.

Our content first strategy will feature these areas of emphasis: waterfront, outdoors, neighborhoods, shopping, inclusive history, and weddings.

Ultimately, our top priority at Visit Alexandria is maintaining momentum and completing the economic recovery of Alexandria's visitor-based economy. Our strategies will remain nimble and adaptive. We have learned from the past two years that, despite constantly changing environmental and health conditions, consumers are hungry for the ever-evolving Alexandria experience. Our marketing will continue to capitalize upon those opportunities by promoting Alexandria's dynamic environment, authentic culture, and historic backdrop.





"Stay in the Moment" ad campaign relaunches



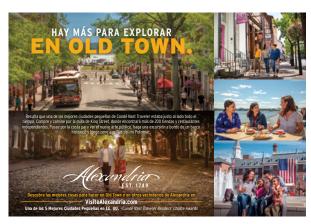
"Drop-in" campaign created for Black travel market



**Special events return** 



New website in Spring 2022



New Spanish language ad campaign introduced



Neighborhoods and waterfront will be featured

### VISIT ALEXANDRIA MEMBERS **WORKING TOGETHER**

Thanks to our Charter Members:

Alexandria Hotel Association Burke & Herbert Bank

George Washington's Mount Vernon

219 Restaurant 3 Sisters 529 Kids Consign

A Galerie - Antiques and Fine Art

A la Lucia

Abvssinia Market & Coffee House

Ada's on the River African American Hall of Fame

Aldo's Italian Kitchen Alexandria Aces

Alexandria African-American Heritage Park

Alexandria Archaeology Museum Alexandria Arts Forum Alexandria Black History Museum Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Alexandria Clay Cooperative Alexandria Colonial Tours

Alexandria Colonial Tours' Kids' Scavenger Hunt

Alexandria Cupcake

Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and

**Cultural Activities** 

Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Alexandria Film Festival Alexandria Harmonizers

Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum

Alexandria Library Alexandria Living Magazine Alexandria Seaport Foundation

Alexandria Singers Alexandria Small Business Development Center

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Alexandria the Great Tours Alexandria Transit Company Alexandria Visitor Center

The Alexandrian Old Town Alexandria, Autograph Collection

All Pro Charter

The Allen S. Lichter, MD Conference Center Ally Charter Bus Washington, D.C.

Al's Steak House

ALX Community - Atrium
ALX Community - Waterfront
American Horticultural Society's River Farm
America's Favorite Gourmet Popcorn

Amtrak Alexandria Union Station

The Antique Guild

AR Workshop Alexandria Arlandria Chirilagua Business Association

Art League, Inc. Art on the Avenue **Artistic Artifacts** The Athenaeum Augie's Mussel House BAŔCA Pier & Wine Bar Barkhaus

Bashford & Pitt Bastille Brasserie & Bar

Bellacara

Belle Haven Marina Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream The BEST Gift Shop Beulah Baptist Church Birchmere

Bistro Eighteen90

Bistro Sancerre Blackwall Hitch

**Bloomers** 

Blue Fern Travel - Fork & Fizz Tours

Boxwood Brabo Brasserie

Brave Spirits Theatre Bugsy's Pizza Restaurant & Sports Bar

Building Momentum Burke & Herbert Bank Buzz Bakeshop Cafe 44 Café du Soleil Cafe Pizzaiolo Cameron Cafe

Cameron Run Regional Park The Campagna Center

Caphe Banh Mi The Capital Wheel

Captain Gregory's Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans' Memorial

Carlyle Council Carlyle House

Casa Rosada Artisan Gelato

Cedar Knoll

Celtic Wedding Music

Chadwicks

Chart House Restaurant

Cheesetique Chewish Deli

Chinquapin Park Recreation Center

Chop Shop Taco Christ Church

Chrysalis Chiropractic City Cruises Anchored by Hornblower

City Kitchen Clyde's at Mark Center Columbia Firehouse Comfort One Shoes

Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial Courtyard by Marriott - Alexandria Pentagon South Courtyard by Marriott Alexandria

Old Town/Southwest The Creamery CSI Washington, DC Cualtzin Salon

Dairy Godmother Frozen Custard &

Nostalgic Treats
Daniel O'Connell's Irish Restaurant & Pub

DC Livery

DC Metro Food Tours DC Military Tours Dejan Studio Jewelry Del Ray Artisans Del Ray Business Association

Del Ray Cafe Delia's Mediterranean Grill & Brick Oven Pizza

Destination DC

Discover Alexandria Tours

Discovery Map Dishes of India Diya Indian Cuisine The Dog Park Dolci Gélati Don Taco Donna Lewis Doyle's Outpost Eisenhower Partnership

Electric Café Elizabeth's Counter Elo's Italian

Embassy Suites by Hilton Alexandria Old Town

Emmy Squared

Encore Consignment Boutique

Entertainment Cruises (Hornblower Cruises)
Envy Us Beauty Supply

Escape Room Live ESP Tea & Coffee Evening Star Cafe The Exécutive Cafe The Executive Diner

Fairfield Inn & Suites Alexandria West/Mark Center

Federal Conference

Fern Exposition & Event Services

fibre space Finn & Porter First Night Alexandria Fish Market The Flats on King Fleet Transportation Fontaine

Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site

Foster's Grille Fountains Day Spa Fraternal Order of Eagles Freedom House Museum Fresh Baquette

Friendship Firehouse Museum From Head to Tail Grooming Spa Gadsby's Tavern Museum Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant Galactic Panther Art Gallery

The Garden Del Ray
The George of Old Town

George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee The George Washington Masonic National Memorial

George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill George Washington's Mount Vernon

Get Fit Studio Glory Days Grill

GOGO Charters Washington, D.C.

Gold Works Goldfinch

Goodies Frozen Custard & Treats

Gossypia

**Greenstreet Gardens** 

**Gunston Hall** 

Hampton Inn & Suites - Alexandria Old Town

Area South The Handover

Hank & Mitzi's Italian Kitchen

Hank's Oyster Bar

Harambée Books & Artworks

Hard Times Cafe Haute Dogs & Fries

Hawwi Ethiopian Restaurant

Hazel O. Salon Hen Quarter

Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hilton Alexandria Old Town

Hilton Garden Inn Alexandria Old Town

National Harbor

Historic Garden Week's Alexandria Tour

Holiday Inn Alexandria Carlyle

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Alexandria - Old Town

Holistic Hair Studio

Hollin Hall & the Meeting House at Mount Vernon

Unitarian Church Holy Cow Home on Cameron Hooray for Books! Hops Ń Shine

Hosts Global

Hotel Indigo Old Town Alexandria

The Hour Shop Humminabird

Hyatt Centric Old Town Alexandria

II Porto

**Imagine Artwear** ing Tattoos

International Spy Museum Intertribal Creatives The Italian Place J Shea

Java Grill

Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams

Julian Tours

Junction Bakery & Bistro

Kaizen Tavern

Kelly Loss Photography

KH Giving Kidcreaté Studio Kilwins

Kimpton Lorien Hotel & Spa

King & Rye

King Street Souvenirs King Street Tavern King's Jewelry King's Ransom Kismet Modern Indian Kisso Asian Bistro KungFu Kitchen Kyo Gallery Landini Brothers Laporta's Restaurant Laura Hatcher Photography Lavender Moon Cupcakery

Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden

Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap

The Light Horse Lilly Pulitzer

Little Theatre of Alexandria

Lloyd House Los Cuates Lost Boy Cider Lost Dog Cafe Lotus Blooms The Lucky Knot Mackie's Bar and Grill Made in ALX Mae's Market and Cafe Magnolia's on King Mai Thai Restaurant

The Majestic MANSE Manumission Tour Company

Market 2 Market Martz Gray Line of Washington DC Mary M. Gates Learning Center at

United Way Worldwide Mason and Greens Mason Social McChrystal Group McEnearney Associates Inc.

Mia's Italian Kitchen Michael's Little Italy Mint Collective Mint Condition

Misha's Coffee - King Street Misha's Coffee - Prince Street

Momma's Hemp Momo Sushi & Cafe Monday's Child

Morrisón House Old Town Alexandria.

Autograph Collection Mount Purrnon Cat Café & Wine Bar

Mount Vernon Inn Murphy's Irish Pub

Myron Mixon's Pitmaster Barbeque

Mystique Jewelers

Namaste Jalsa Restaurant & Bar

Nando's Peri-Peri

National Cancer Registrars Association

National Charter Bus Alexandria

National Harbor

National Industries for the Blind National Inventors Hall of Fame National Law Enforcement Museum National Museum of the United States Army

**Neighborhood Provisions** 

Nicecream Nightly Spirits Nomad Event Systems Northside 10 Oak Steakhouse

Office of Historic Alexandria

Old Hat Bar

Old House Cosmopolitan Grill

Old Town Books

Old Town Business Association Old Town Farmers Market The Old Town Shop Old Town Sock Co. Old Town Trolley Tours Old Virginia Tobacco Co.

Pacers Running Store Alexandria Pasara Thai Restaurant Passionately Pets Patagonia Patina Polished Living Patricia Palermino Studio Pedego Electric Bikes Penny Post

The Peoples Drug Pho Nam Picnic & Peonies Piece Out PIES Fitness Yoga Studio

The Pita House Planet Wine **PLNT Burger** 

Pop's Old Fashioned Ice Cream Co.

Pork Barrel BBQ

Port City Brewing Company Potomac Paddle Club Praha Beads and Jewelry Principle Gallery

**PSAV** Queen Bee Designs Ramparts Tavern & Grill The Rectory on Princess Red Barn Mercantile RedRocks Neapolitan Bistro

Residence Inn Alexandria Old Town South

at Carlyle

Residence Inn by Marriott Alexandria Old Town/Duke Street

Riverside Taco Company Robinson Landing Rock It Grill RocketFizz Alexandria

Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company

Rouge Fine Catering Royal Restaurant RT's Restaurant The Rub Chicken & Beer Rus Uz - Alexandria Rustico Restaurant Sacred Circle Salon deZEN Salon Monte

Sardi's Pollo A La Brasa

Sephora

Serafino Fine Italian Leather & Accessories ShadowLand Family Entertainment Center Sheraton Suites Old Town Alexandria

She's Unique Jewelry & Gifts Shiloh Baptist Church

The Shoe Hive Shooter McGee's Shop Made in VA Silver Parrot

Silverman Galleries Antiques & Antique Jewelry Sisters Thai and the Magnolia Dessert Bar

Smoking Kow BBQ Sonder Sonoma Cellar Southside 815

The Spice & Tea Exchange of Alexandria Spice Kraft Indian Bistro

SpringHill Suites Alexandria Old Town/Southwest

St. Elmo's Coffee Pub

Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum Stitch Sew Shop String Quartet of Northern Virginia

The Study

Sugar House Day Spa and Salon

Sunday in Saigon sushi bar Sweet Fire Donna's Swing's Coffee

T.J. Stone's Grill House & Tap Room

Table Talk Tall Ship Providence Taqueria Picoso Taverna Cretekou Ted's Montana Grill Tempo Restaurant Ten Thousand Villages Tequila & Taco Thai Signature

Theismann's Restaurant & Bar The Thornton Apartments

Threadleaf Toastique

Today's Cargo Topgolf National Harbor Torpedo Factory Art Center Trademark Drink and Eat Tranquil Healthcare Truly-Life Eco Gifts

tu-anh Turkish Coffee Lady The Twig Twist Boutique T-ZO Vietnamese Union Square

Union Street Public House Unlimited Biking: Alexandria

Urbano 116

**USA Guided Tours DC** Van Dorn Diner

Vaso's Mediterranean Bistro

Vermilion Vía Volcán Coffee Village Brauhaus Vintage Mirage VIP Alexandria Magazine

Virtue Feed & Grain Visit Alexandria

Vola's Dockside Grill and Hi-Tide Lounge

Volunteer Alexandria The Warehouse Washington Sailing Marina Wear Ever Jewelry

West End Business Association The Westin Alexandria Old Town

The Wharf

Wheel Nuts Bike Shop

Whiskey & Oyster Windows Catering Company Wine Gallery 108

Wooboi Hot Chicken Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House

Yagút St. Your CBD Store

Yunnan by Potomac - a Noodle House



### VISIT ALEXANDRIA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Board Chair**

**Kate Ellis** 

GM, Hotel Indigo Old Town Alexandria

### **Vice Chair**

**Denise Jackson**Vice President, MCI USA

### **Treasurer**

**Stuart Fox** 

C.F.O., Route 66 Ventures

### **Executive Committee At-Large**

Ben Fiore-Walker

Town Crier, City of Alexandria

**Emily Baker** 

Deputy City Manager, City of Alexandria

### Secretary (non-voting)

**Patricia Washington** 

President & CEO, Visit Alexandria

### **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Chelsea Anderson (Outgoing)

Homegrown Restaurant Group

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker (Outgoing)

Former Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria

C.J. Cross (Incoming)

Founder, Hops N Shine

Tristan Harris

GM, Embassy Suites

Amy Jackson (Incoming)

Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria

Trae Lamond

Owner, Chadwicks Restaurant

Mark Mathews

Vice President, Research Development and Industry Analysis, National Retail Federation Nicole McGrew

Owner, Threadleaf

Niamh O'Donovan

Company President, Daniel O'Connell's Irish Bar & Restaurant

Emma Quinn

Manager of Programming & Marketing, Building Momentum

Mary Rinaldo

Regional VP, City Cruises Anchored by Hornblower

Victoria Vergason

Founder/Owner, The Hour









### **VISIT ALEXANDRIA IS LISTENING**

We are here to serve you. If there are other questions you want to ask, or suggestions to help us improve the marketing of our City, we'd love to meet with you virtually or at your location.

**Patricia Washington** President & CEO

Carla Bascope-Hebble Vice President of Sales

**Lindsey Chase** Destination Sales Manager

Mary Cruz

Destination Sales Associate Manager Rebecca Doser

Communications Manager

Misha Enriquez Social Media & Visual Production Manager

Melanie Fallon

Vice President of Member & Visitor Services

**Vito Fiore** 

Vice President of Marketing & Research

Tom Kaiden

Chief Operating Officer

Trisha Meisner

Member Relations Manager

**Lilly Mitchell**Business Development Manager

Claire Mouledoux

Senior Vice President of Communications

**Caroline Secrest** 

Communications Associate & Writer

Elissa Staley Event & Partnership Manager

Alfonso Wright

Digital Marketing Manager

#### **VISITOR CENTER STAFF**

Leila Abarca **Jacquelyn Austin** Leah Devendorf **Taylor Hancock** Jeff Herre **Nate Jones** Lisa McClure **Jay Middleton Steve Posner** Clara Reynolds Ayman Silva Virtue Williams

Max Zummo



### **FINANCIAL RESULTS**

### **REVENUE:**

| CITY ALLOCATION | \$3,656,000 |
|-----------------|-------------|
| EARNED INCOME   | \$240,006   |
| TOTAL           | \$3,896,006 |

### **EXPENSE:**

| MARKETING & PROGRAMS | \$3,643,768 |
|----------------------|-------------|
| GENERAL & ADMIN      | \$210,209   |
| TOTAL                | \$3,853,977 |

### **CHANGE IN NET ASSETS:**

**TOTAL** \$42,029



