

Gadsby's Tavern Museum



Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of two buildings – the smaller c. 1785 tavern and larger 1792 City Tavern and Hotel. While both were constructed by John Wise, they were made famous by John Gadsby, a rising tavern keeper who rented the buildings for only 12 years, from 1796 to 1808. This tavern and hotel provided a place for locals to gather around food and entertainment as they discussed business and events of the day. For travelers, the tavern offered overnight accommodations, as long as they didn't mind sharing a room or even a bed, while the hotel provided rooms more similar to what travelers might expect today. With little entertainment available in Washington, D.C., which was still under construction, Gadsby's elegant hotel became the destination for distinguished guests from both sides of the river.



"I found elegant accommodations at Gadsby's hotel. It is observable that Gadsby keeps the best house of entertainment in the United States."

– John Davis, 1801

Gadsby was known for his hospitality and flair for entertaining. Famous events include the Birthnight Ball hosted to celebrate George Washington's birthday, which Washington himself attended the last two years of his life.

Mr. Gadsby also hosted Thomas Jefferson's Inaugural Banquet in 1801. Today, the Museum brings these events to life for guests to experience first-hand.

While hotel operations continued after Gadsby's departure, no other tavern keeper reached the same level of fame. The buildings' connections to George Washington made them a tourist destination for Union soldiers stationed in Alexandria during the Civil War. Francis H. Pierpont, Governor of the Restored Government of Virginia, used the hotel for his temporary quarters during the war.

By the mid-1920s, interest in preserving the buildings was generated by the newly-formed American Legion Post 24, which was seeking not only a Post headquarters but also a fitting memorial to World War I soldiers. With support from many local groups and individuals, the American Legion purchased and restored both structures, then opened them to the public for tours. In 1972, the Legion gave the buildings to the City of Alexandria, which restored both buildings again and reopened them as a museum and restaurant in time for the Nation's bicentennial celebration in 1976.

↔ Shopping 🛍️

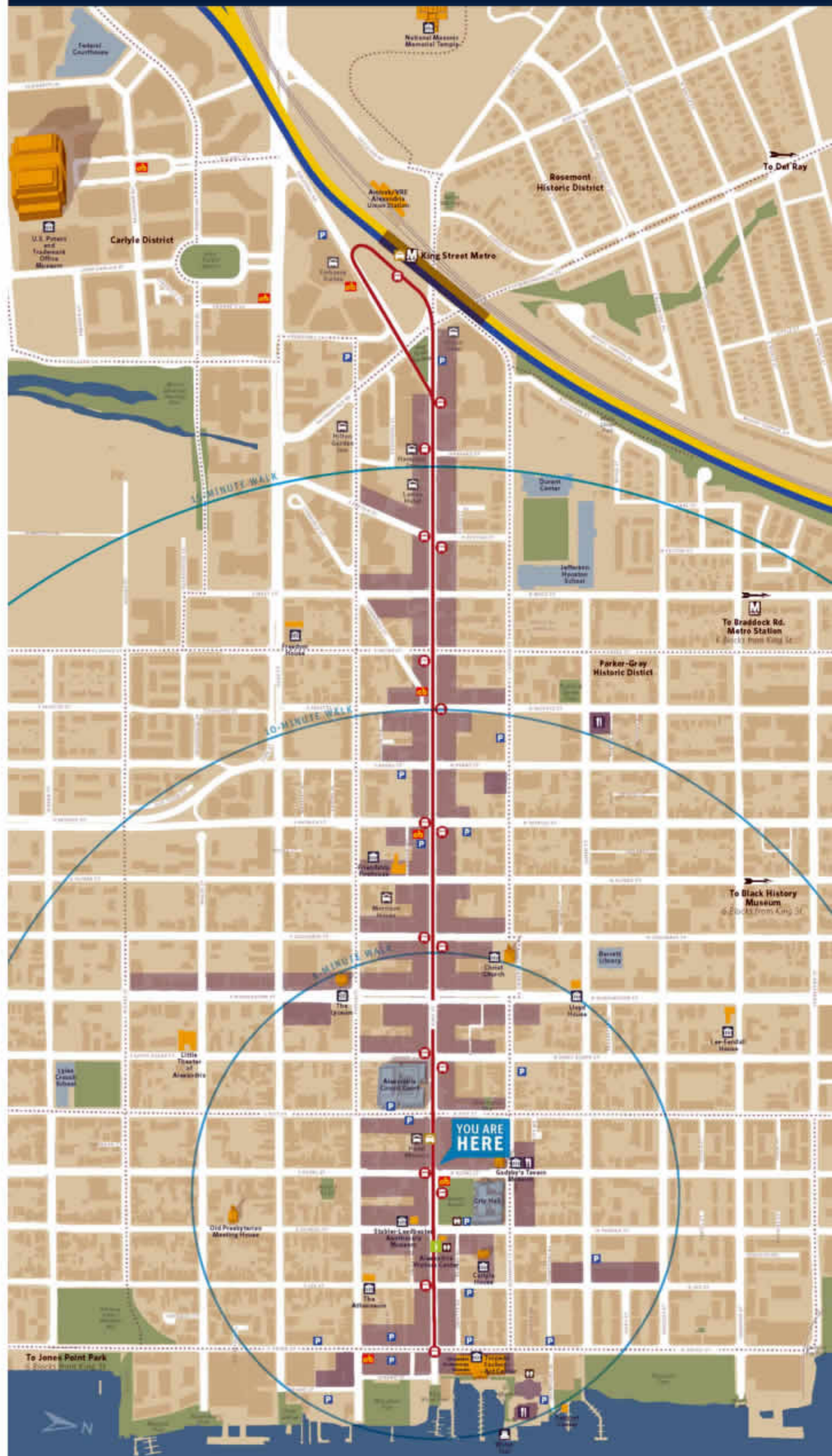
↔ Dining 🍴

➔ Gadsby's 🍴 🏛️

↪ City Hall

↪ Waterfront 🚢
4 BLOCKS

↑ King Street 🚇
14 BLOCKS



WALKING MAP LEGEND

- 📍 Information
- 🚗 Public Parking
- 🏛️ Museum
- 🏠 Shopping & Dining
- 🌳 Park
- 🚇 King Street Trolley Stop
- 🚕 Taxi Stand
- 🏨 Lodging
- 🚲 Bike Route
- 🏞️ Public Parks
- 🚝 MetroRail Station
- 🚖 Water Taxi
- 🚲 Capital Bikeshare
- 🚶 5-minute walk (1/4 Mile)
- 🏰 Visitor Attraction
- 🏛️ Civic Destination