

# Underpass set to bring Alexandria history to life

By ANDREI BLAKELY/Journal staff writer

**The historical art and maps set to line a new Duke Street underpass are expected to guide walkers through periods in Alexandria's history as they stride between a Metro station and a busy commercial district.**

"I believe somewhat simplistic artistic renderings will help animate the space, engage the viewer, link the present with the past and serve as educational reminders that this is an important area that has undergone change," C. Ashley Spencer, an Alexandria-based artist, wrote in her statement of interest for the project.

The city council last week unanimously approved a \$3,600 plan for Spencer to produce 12 wooden panels containing maps of historic Alexandria and six period settings.

Possible scenes in the paintings include a 1755 tobacco inspection site; the slaughterhouse industry of the 1800s; a Civil War encampment in 1863; the Virginia Glass Company of the 1900s; railways of the 20th Century; and the new U.S. Patent and Trademark Office complex.

"The artwork is definitely an enhancement to the walking experience," said Michael Bevenour, the architect for the PTO campus.

PTO is expected to add 7,100 new employees to the city when it is fully functional in 2005. Half of those employees are expected to use public transportation, Bevenour said.

The underpass, expected to be finished by the end of June, spans Duke Street, linking Metro with an area containing the Time-Life Building, PTO campus and Carlyle residential neighborhood.