

City of Alexandria

Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation

**City Council Retreat
October 26, 2002**



Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation incorporates two separate planning processes into one overall plan:

 **Open Space Plan**

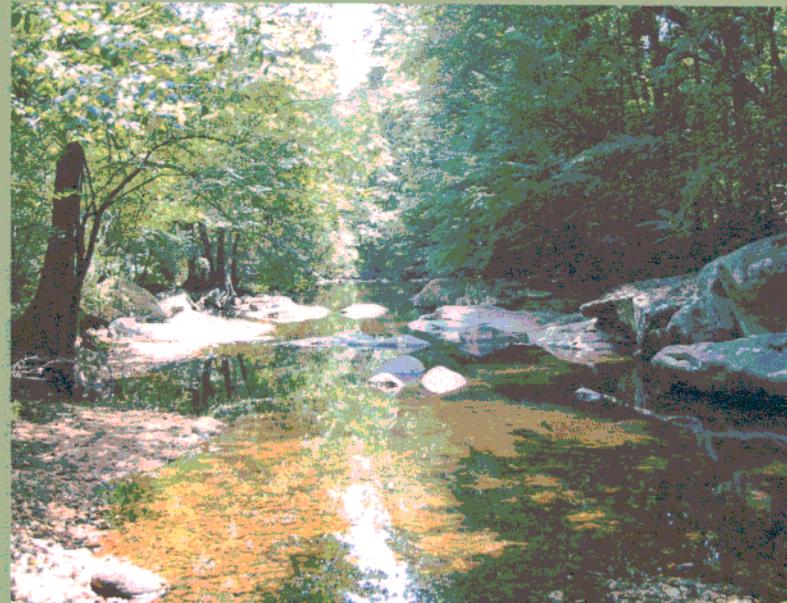
– Produced by Rhodeside-Harwell

 **Recreation Needs Assessment**

– Produced by Leon Younger & PROS

Purpose of Developing a Strategic Master Plan:

- ☀ To assess citizens' needs in 2002 to 2012 as they apply to Open Space, Parks, Recreation Facilities and Recreation Programs.
- ☀ To make findings and conclusions regarding these future needs.





Purpose of Developing a Strategic Master Plan:

- ☀ **To prioritize those needs to reasonably respond to the expectation of citizens.**
- ☀ **To make recommendations as to what the City should do in order to meet those needs.**



Our Planning Process

1. Information gathering included:

- Focus Groups**
- Stakeholder Interviews**
- Resident Survey**
- Public Forums**



Our Planning Process

Also included:

- **Staff Focus Groups**
- **Park and Recreation Facility Analysis**
- **Program Analysis**
- **Benchmark Analysis**
- **Demographics Analysis**
- **Open Space Analysis**

Our Planning Process

2. The information gathered led us to key findings, issues to address, conclusions, and recommendations.





Setting the Stage:

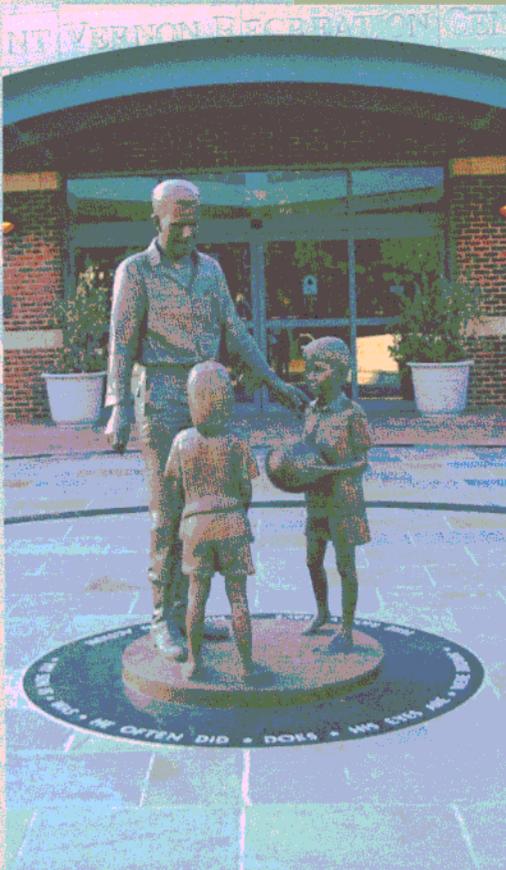
- ✿ **In 1990 Alexandria had 7.5 acres of active and passive open space per 1,000 residents, based on population of 111,000.**
- ✿ **Between 1990-2000 City added 125 acres of open space, and 17,000 residents.**
- ✿ **In 2000 Alexandria remained at 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents, despite adding the 125 acres.**
- ✿ **In 2012 the projected population of 142,000 will require the City to add 100 acres of open space to maintain 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents.**



Setting the Stage:

- ❖ **Population growth in district 1 was a 17% increase from 1990 (15,400) to 2000 (18,100).**
- ❖ **Population growth in district 2 was a 4.6% increase from 1990 (36,600) to 2000 (38,500).**
- ❖ **Population growth in district 3 was a 21% increase from 1990 (59,100) to 2000 (71,700).**

Setting the Stage:



The greatest growth between 1990 and 2000 in children aged 17 and under occurred in District 3 – 44% increase – as compared to 14% in district 1 and 8% in district 2.



Setting the Stage:

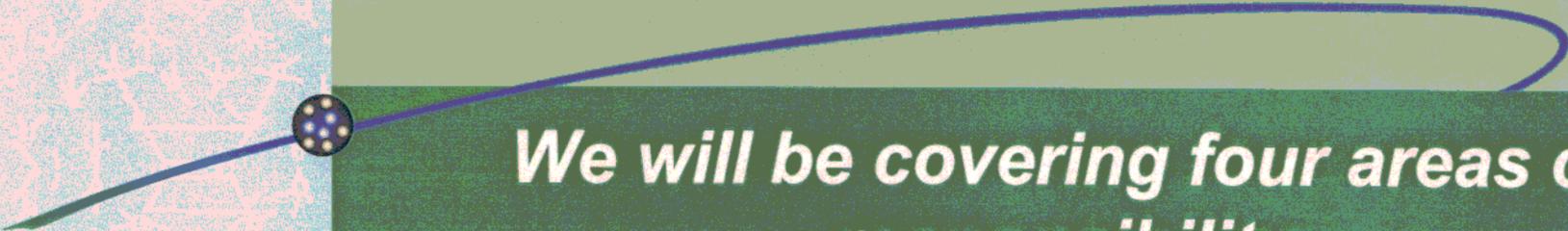
-  **District 1 has 12.28 open space acres per 1,000 residents**
-  **District 2 has 6.3 open space acres per 1,000 residents**
-  **District 3 has 7.7 open space acres per 1,000 residents**

District 3 comprises environmentally sensitive sites not suited or intended for active recreational pursuits.



Vision Statement:

“The City of Alexandria will provide recreational services of the highest quality to our citizens. We will create safe and desirable environments in all our parks and recreation facilities through high levels of maintenance and services. Our programs and facilities will meet the needs of our diverse population and enhance our citizens’ quality of life. We will help define the community by being responsible for the protection and enhancement of the City’s natural resources and open spaces.”



We will be covering four areas of responsibility

 **Open Space**

 **Parks**

 **Recreation Facilities**

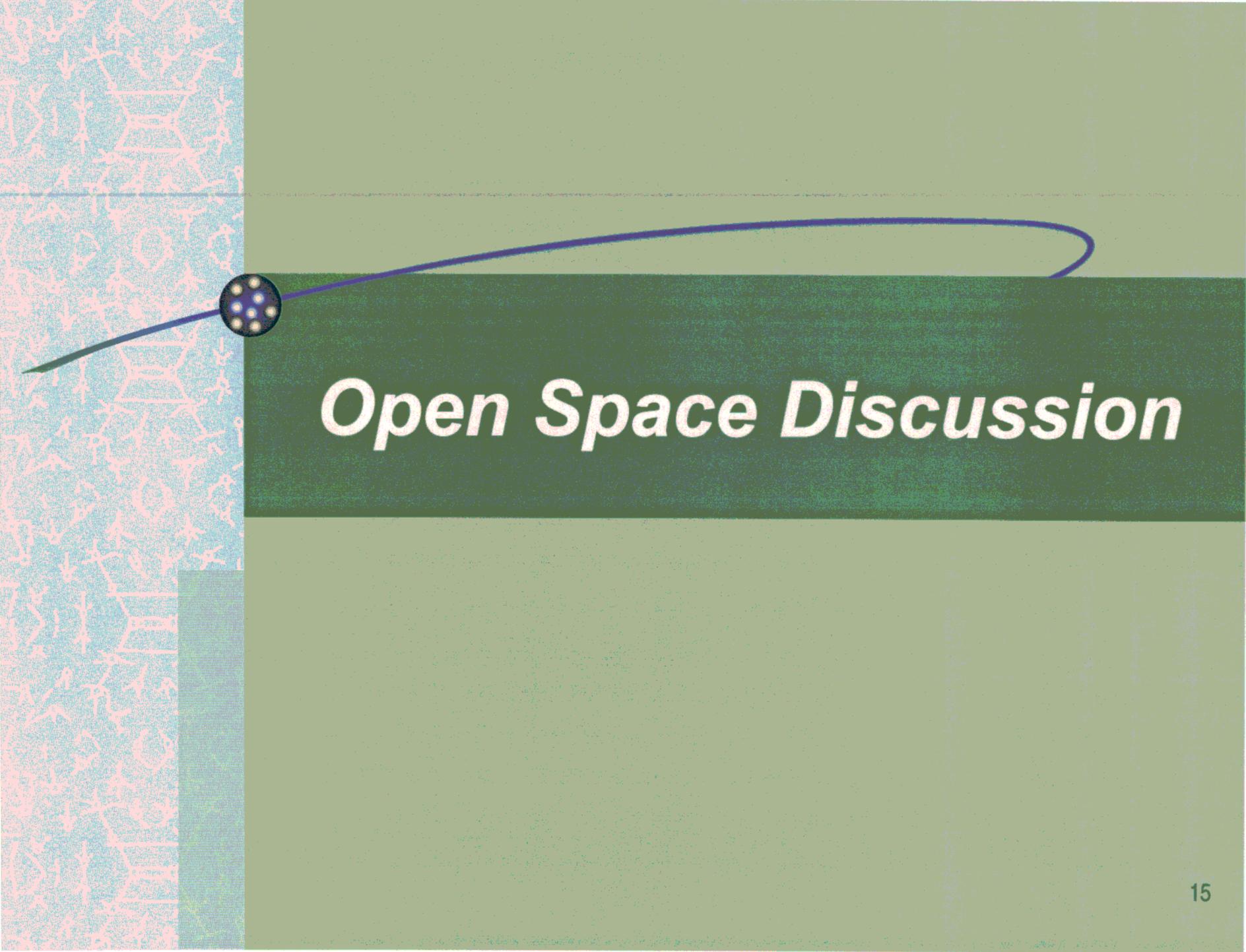
 **Recreation Programs**

Three critical questions for each area:

Where we are now

What are our needs?

How do we meet the needs?



Open Space Discussion

Parks – Where are we now?



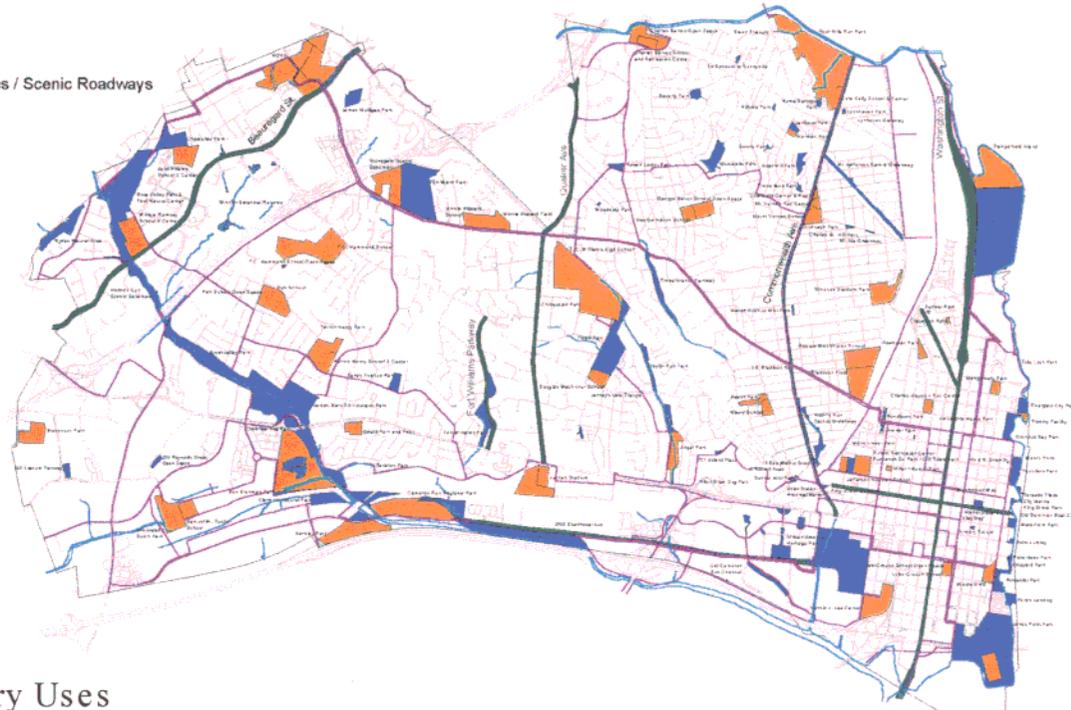
☀ **Currently have 964
acres of parks and
open spaces**

CURRENT PARKS

INVENTORY

Legend

- Active
- Passive
- Trails
- Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways



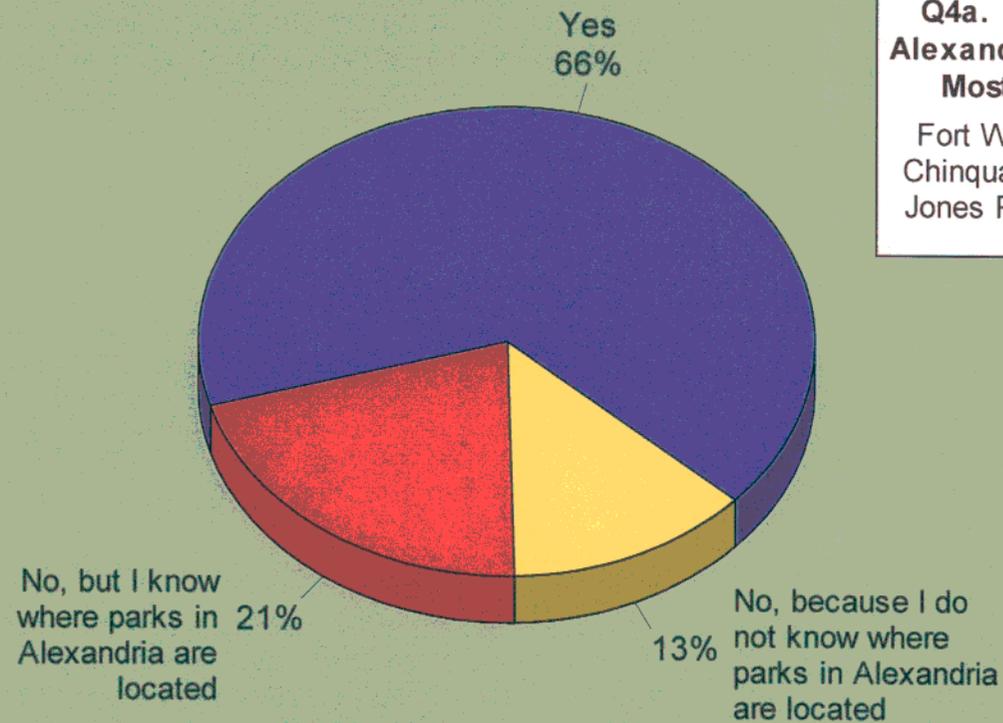
Primary Uses

ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN

Survey Says:

Q4. Have Respondent Households Visited Any City Operated Parks in the City of Alexandria During the Past Year

by percentage of respondents



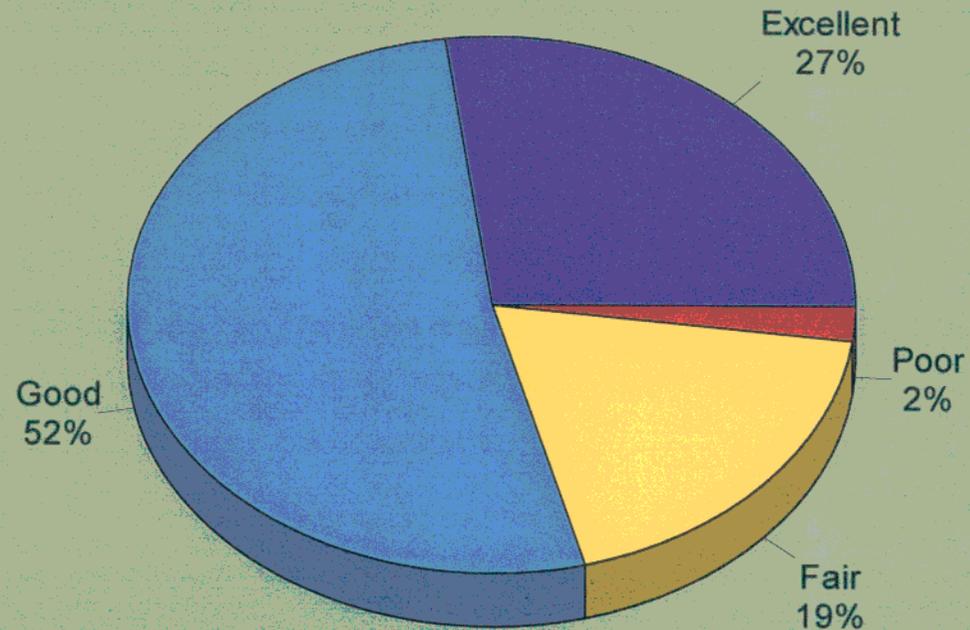
Q4a. Parks in Alexandria Visited Most Often

Fort Ward Park,
Chinquapin Park,
Jones Point Park

Survey Says

Q4b. How Respondent Households Rate the Physical Condition of ALL the City Operated Parks they Have Visited in the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents who have visited City operated parks during the past year

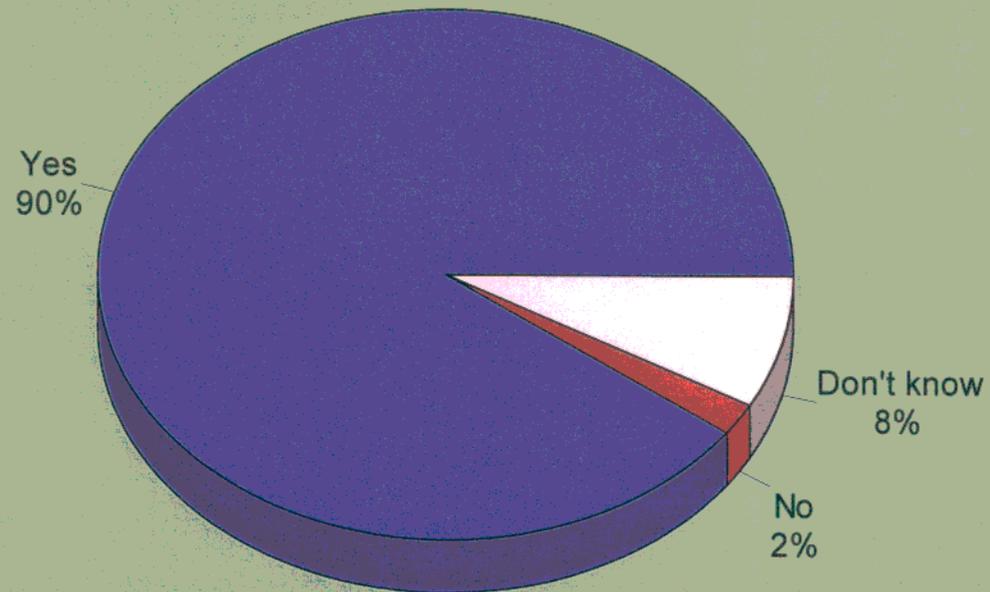


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Survey Says

Q11. Do Well Maintained Parks Enhance the Property Value of Surrounding Homes?

by percentage of respondents

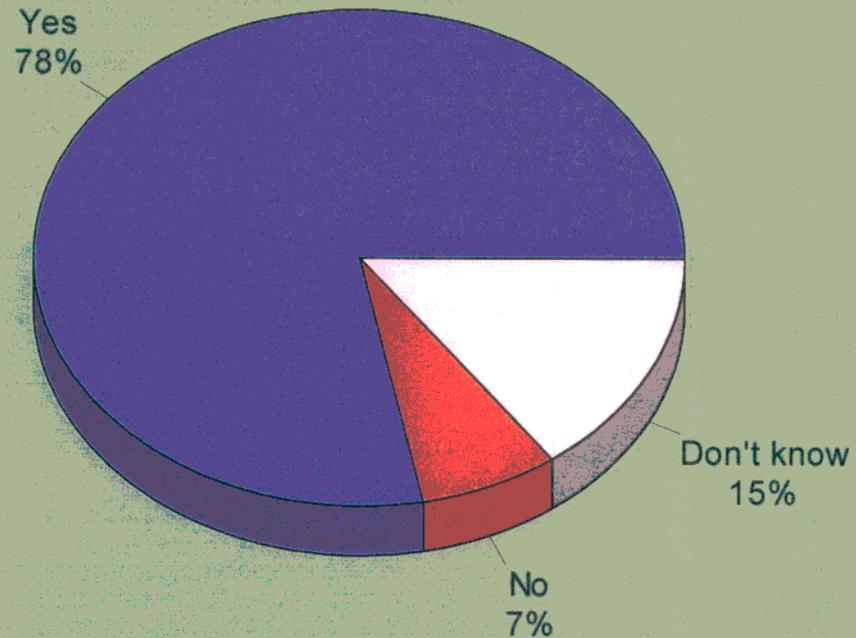


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July 2002)

Survey Says

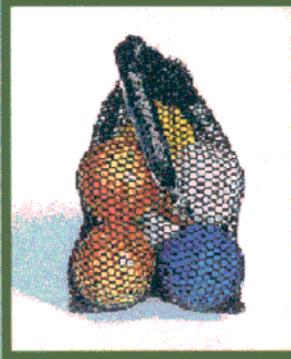
Q15. Do Parks Provide Economic Benefits to the City of Alexandria?

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Parks – What are our needs:

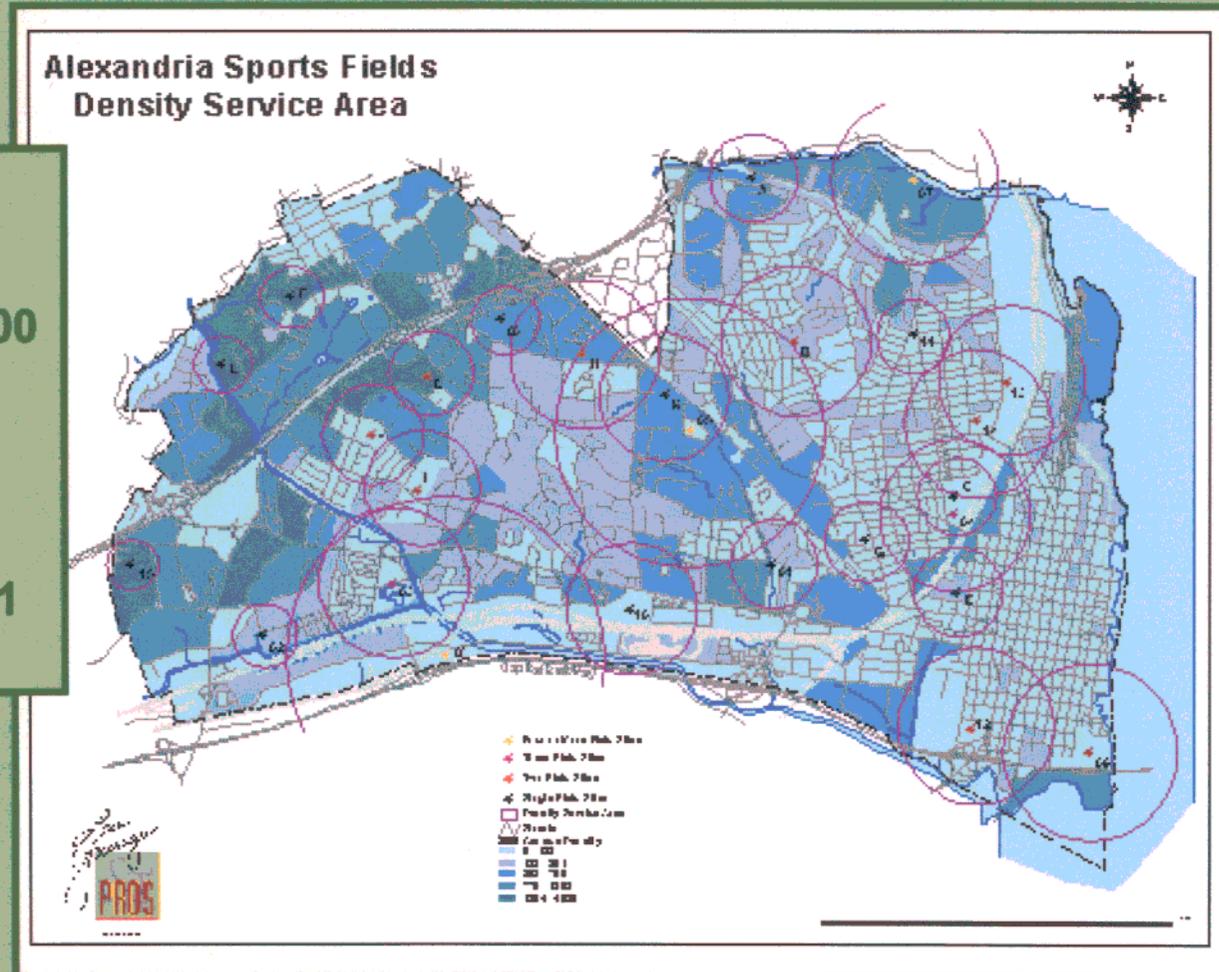


- 1. Additional and better maintained athletic fields are needed**
 - **Adult and Youth**



Alexandria Sports Fields – Density Service Area

- Single fields – service area 1 per 3,000 people
- Two fields – 1 per 5,000 people
- Three fields – 1 per 7,000 people
- Four or more fields – 1 per 10,000 people





Parks - How do we meet the needs?

-  **Acquire more land for fields**
-  **Manage capacity of fields**
-  **Seek more user investment to offset maintenance cost of fields**

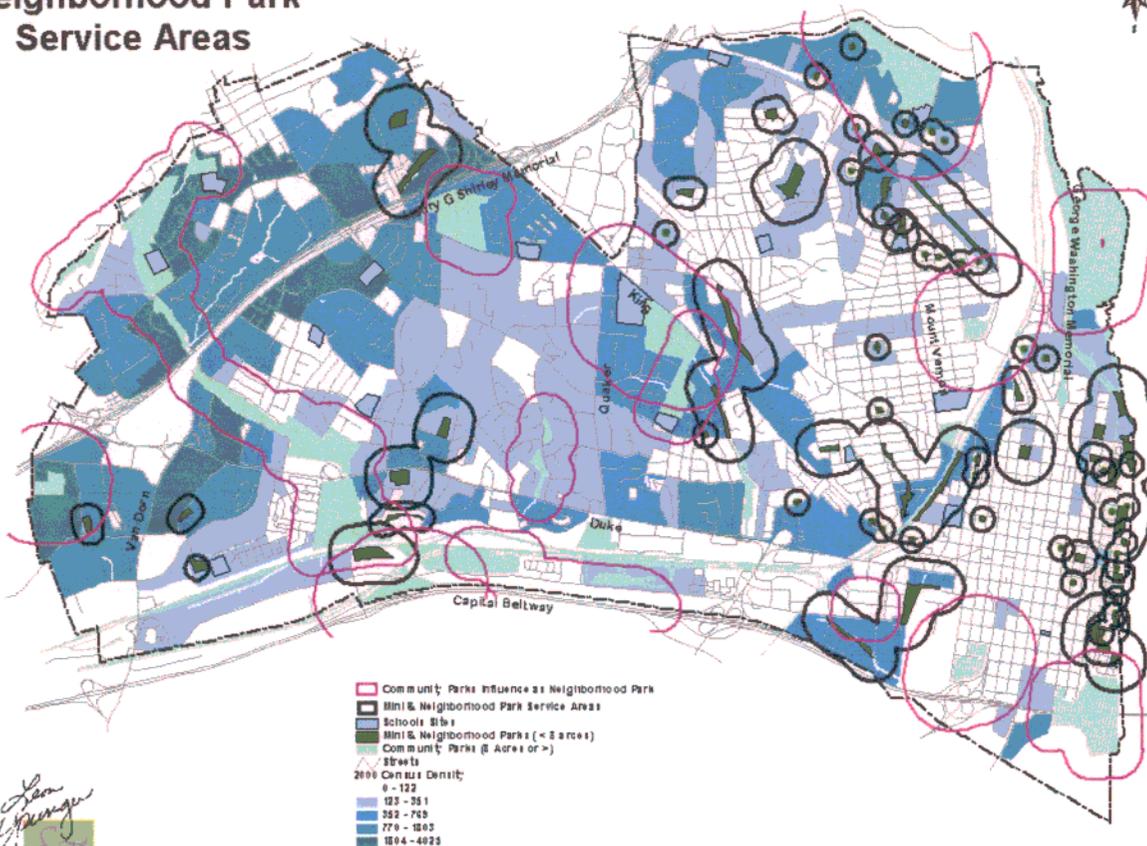
Parks –What are our needs?

- 2. New neighborhood parks in underserved areas are needed.**
- 3. Increase in size of some existing neighborhood parks is needed.**



Parks Service Area Map:

City of Alexandria Neighborhood Park Service Areas





Parks – How do we meet the needs?

- ✿ **Acquire land for parks in underserved (largely west end) areas.**
- ✿ **Encourage private sector to acknowledge their role in providing more parks in high density areas.**
- ✿ **Enhance open space requirements for new developments.**
- ✿ **Curtail granting of encroachments in RPA's and adjacent areas.**
- ✿ **Develop partnership teams with schools, private institutions and city to design solutions for new and renovated properties.**



Parks – What are our needs?

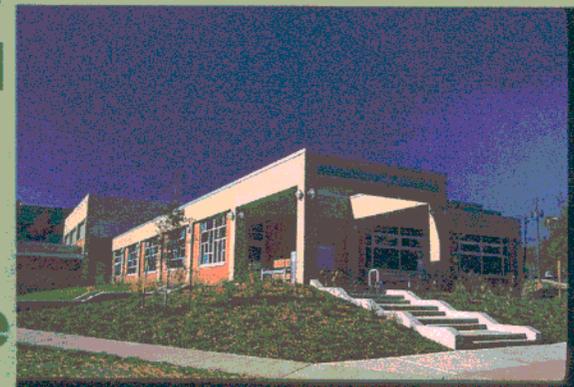
- 4. Upgraded maintenance of current parks is needed.**

Parks – How do we meet the need?

- ✦ Develop maintenance standards for neighborhood parks from level one to level two.**
- ✦ Improve infrastructure of some parks by investing \$10,000 per acre for lighting, drainage, parking, irrigation, fencing.**
- ✦ Enhance park maintenance partnerships.**

Recreation Facilities – Where are we now?

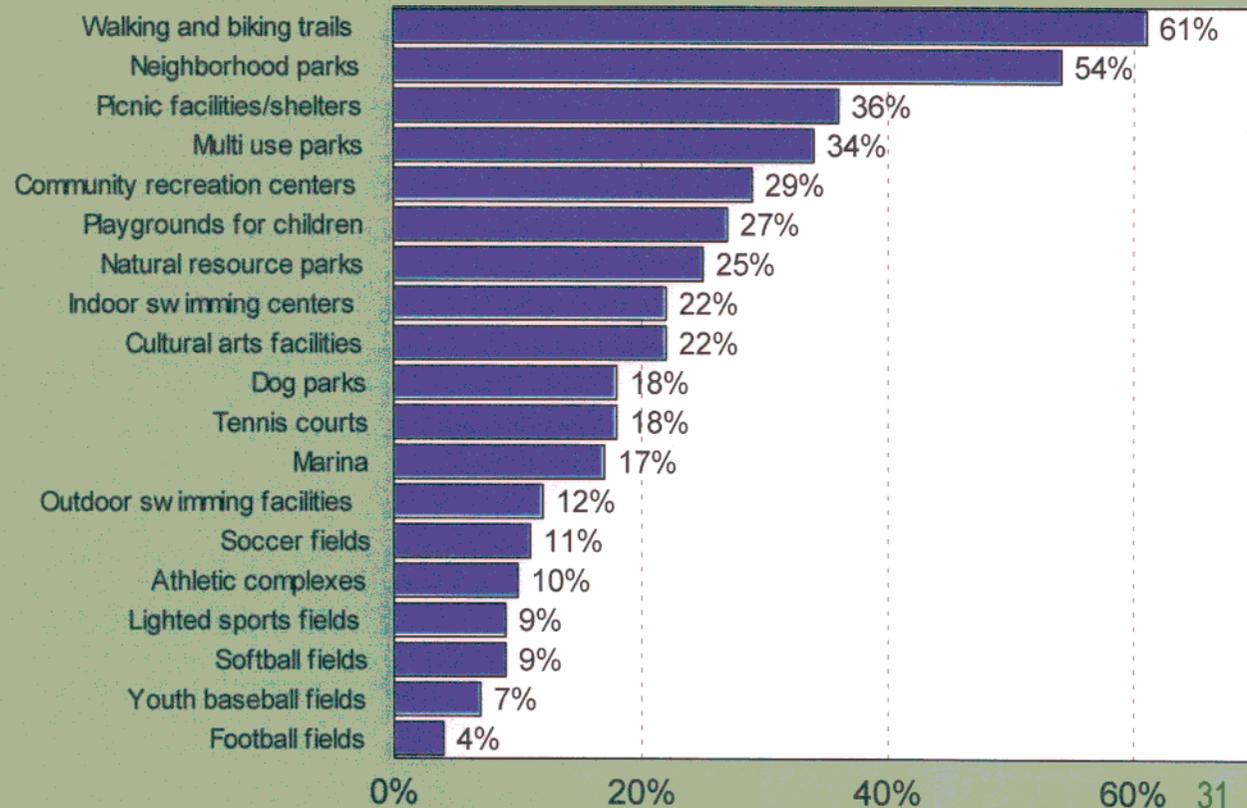
- ❖ **Combination of neighborhood and community recreation facilities.**
- ❖ **One community wide recreation facility.**
- ❖ **Existing recreation centers mainly serve the youth and have minimal adult use.**
- ❖ **Some existing recreation centers need infrastructure improvements.**



Survey Says:

Q12. Household Respondents who have Used Various City Recreational Facilities During the Past Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

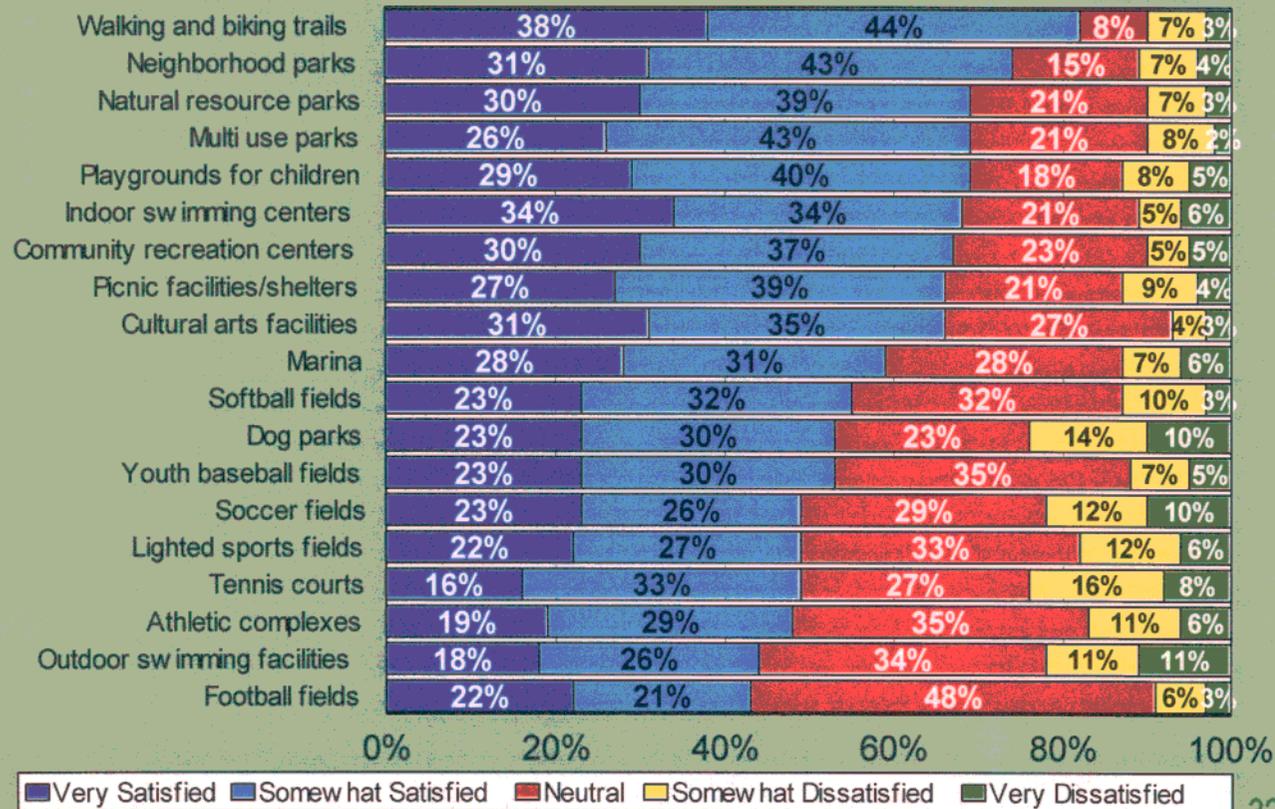


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Survey Says:

Q12. Overall Satisfaction with Various Recreation Facilities Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't knows")

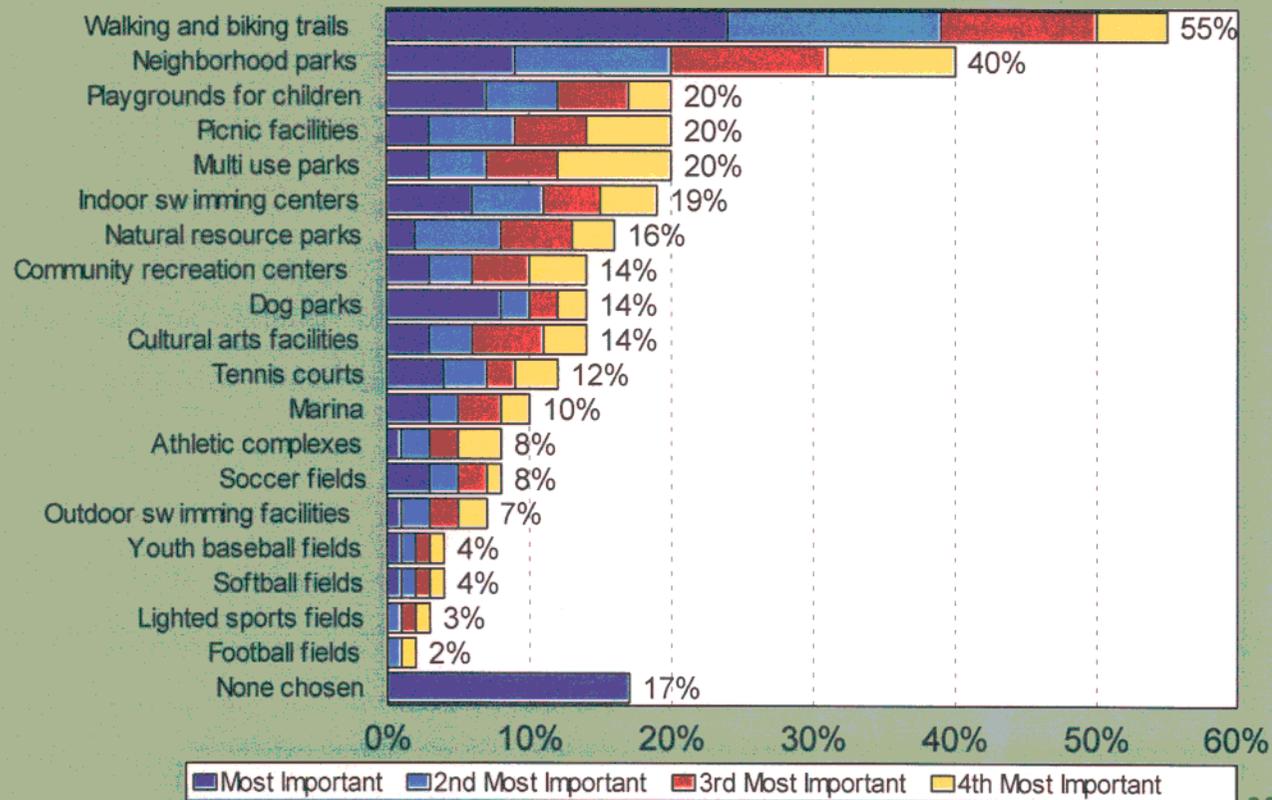


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Survey Says

Q13. Most Important Recreational Facilities Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

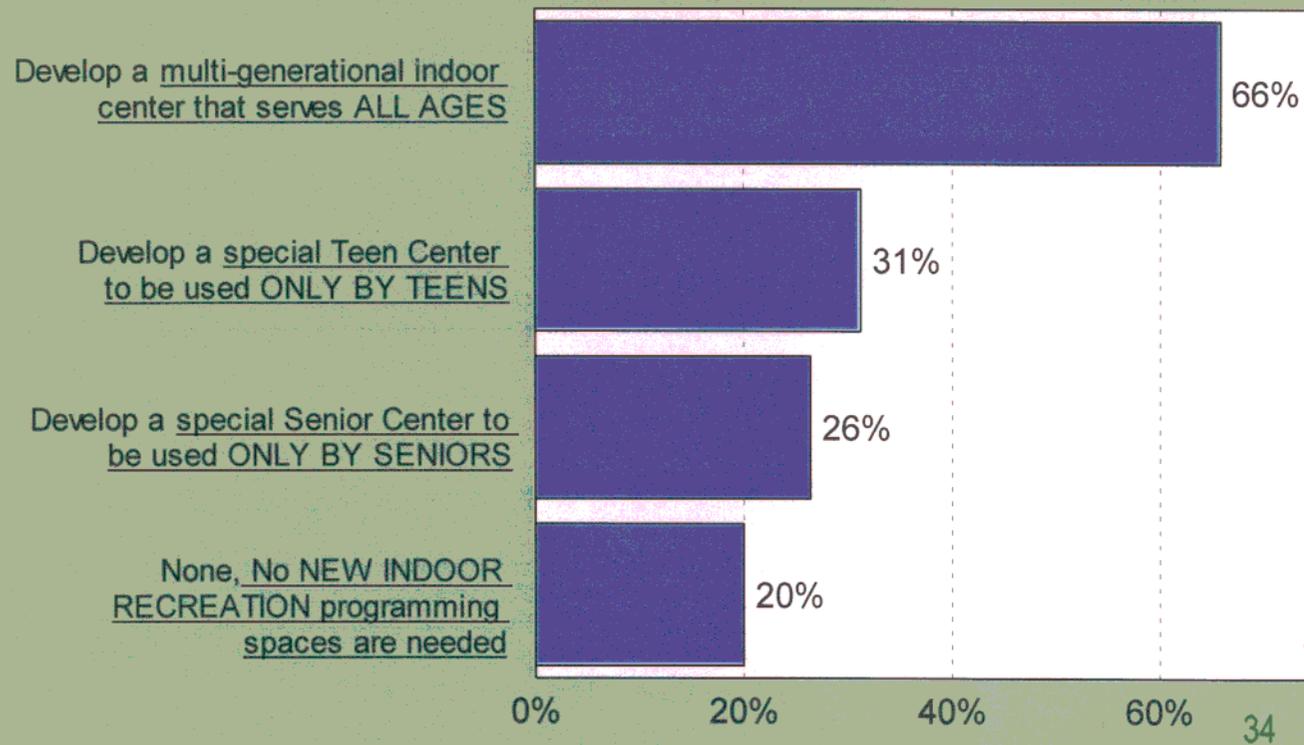


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

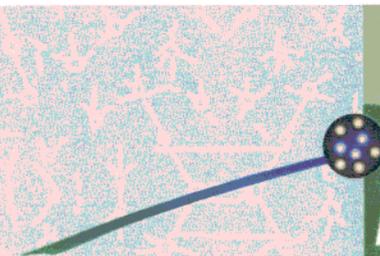
Survey Says

Q20. Statement that Best Describes How Respondents Believe the City of Alexandria Should Develop Indoor Recreation Programming Space

by percentage of respondents (two choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)



Recreation Facilities – What are our needs?

- 1. Renovation of current facilities is needed to address infrastructure and space needs – priority: Charles Houston and Patrick Henry recreation centers.**

Recreation Facilities – How do we meet the needs?

- ✦ Develop feasibility studies and business plans for each new or renovated facility.**
- ✦ Develop consistent design standards.**
- ✦ Seek to enhance partnerships with schools and other public/private agencies for added space.**



Recreation Facilities – What are our needs?

2. One large multi-generational center, to serve all citizens, is needed.

Recreation Facilities – How do we meet the needs?

- Explore feasibility of enlarging Chinquapin Center or building new citywide facility.

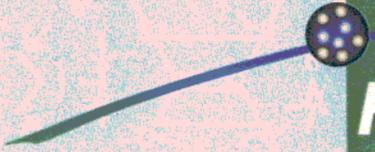


Recreation Facilities – What are our needs?

3. **One additional neighborhood center is needed in western portion of City.**

Recreation Facilities – How do we meet the needs?

- **Explore feasibility of acquiring property and constructing new neighborhood center in west end.**

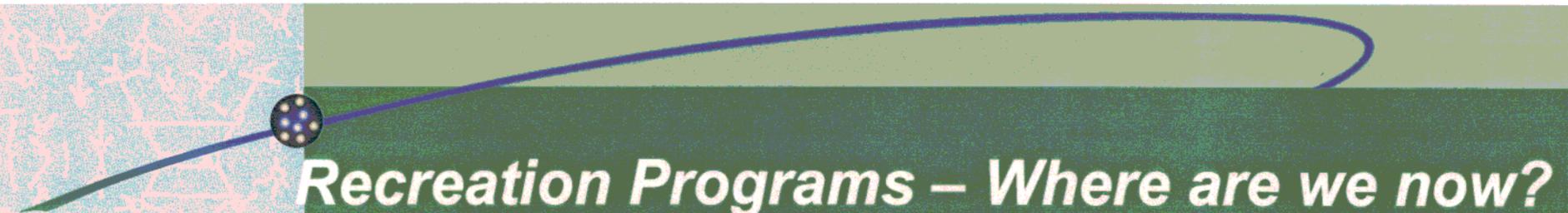


Recreation Facilities – What are our needs?

- 4. Increased availability of facilities for all citizens is needed.**

Recreation Facilities – How do we meet the needs?

- ✎ Develop a free or subsidized recreation rider program.**



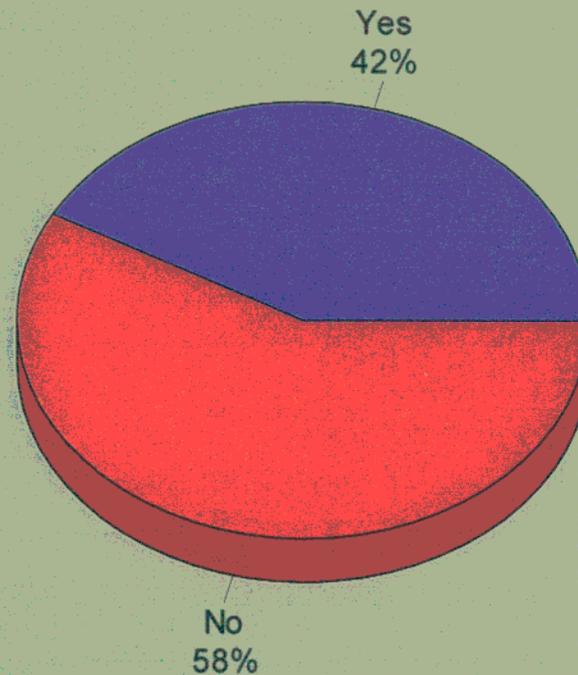
Recreation Programs – Where are we now?

- ✖ There is not a clear understanding of what are core and non-core services.**
- ✖ Various populations do not take advantage of programs.**
- ✖ Staff does not know what their true costs are to produce a service.**
- ✖ Current partnerships are not uniform.**
- ✖ Program services lack consistency in pricing of services versus benefits received.**

Survey Says

Q3. Have Respondent Households Participated in any Recreation Programs or Special Events Offered by the City of Alexandria During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents

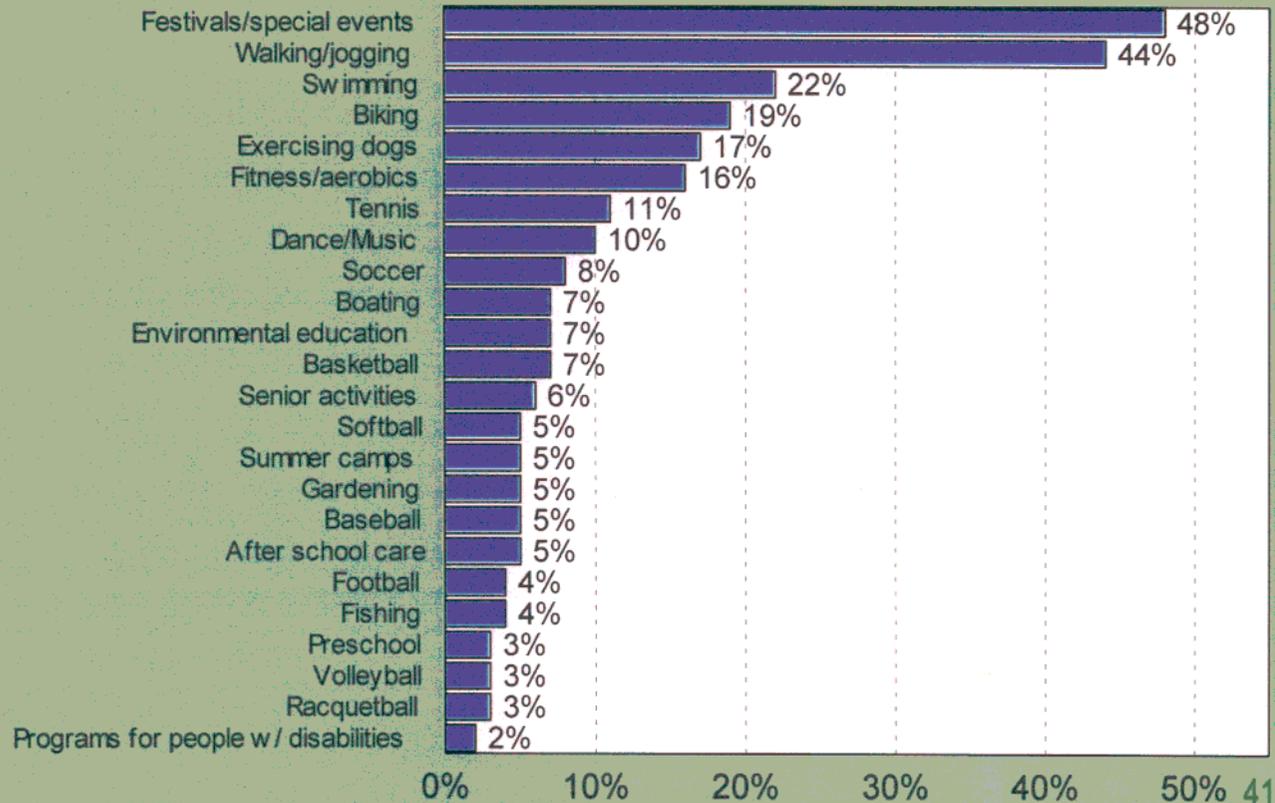


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Survey Says

Q5. Participation in Various City Recreational Programs During the Past Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

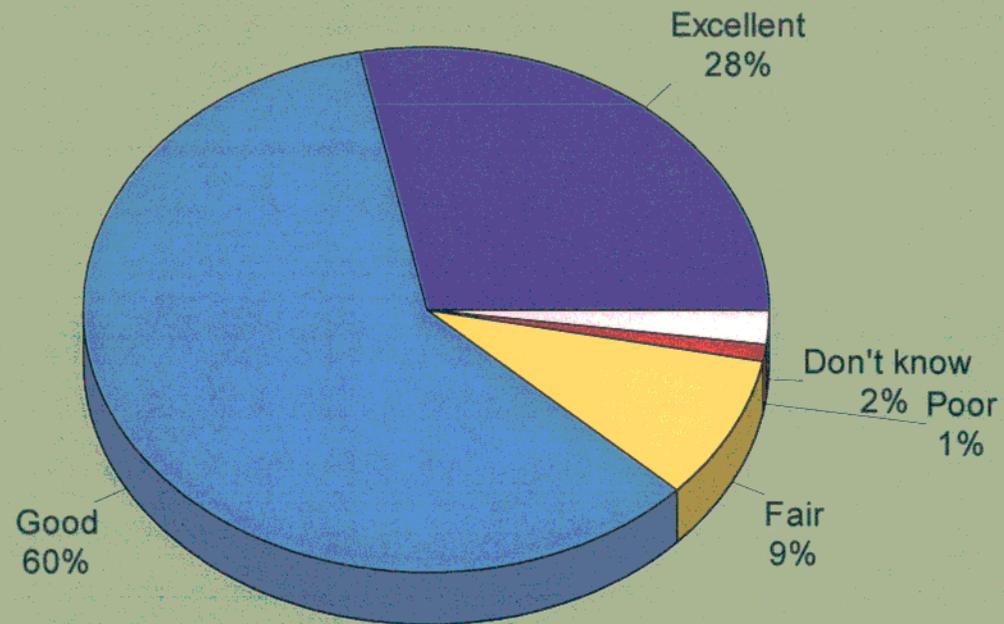


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Survey Says

Q3b. How Respondent Households Rate the Quality of the City Recreation Programs they Have Participated in

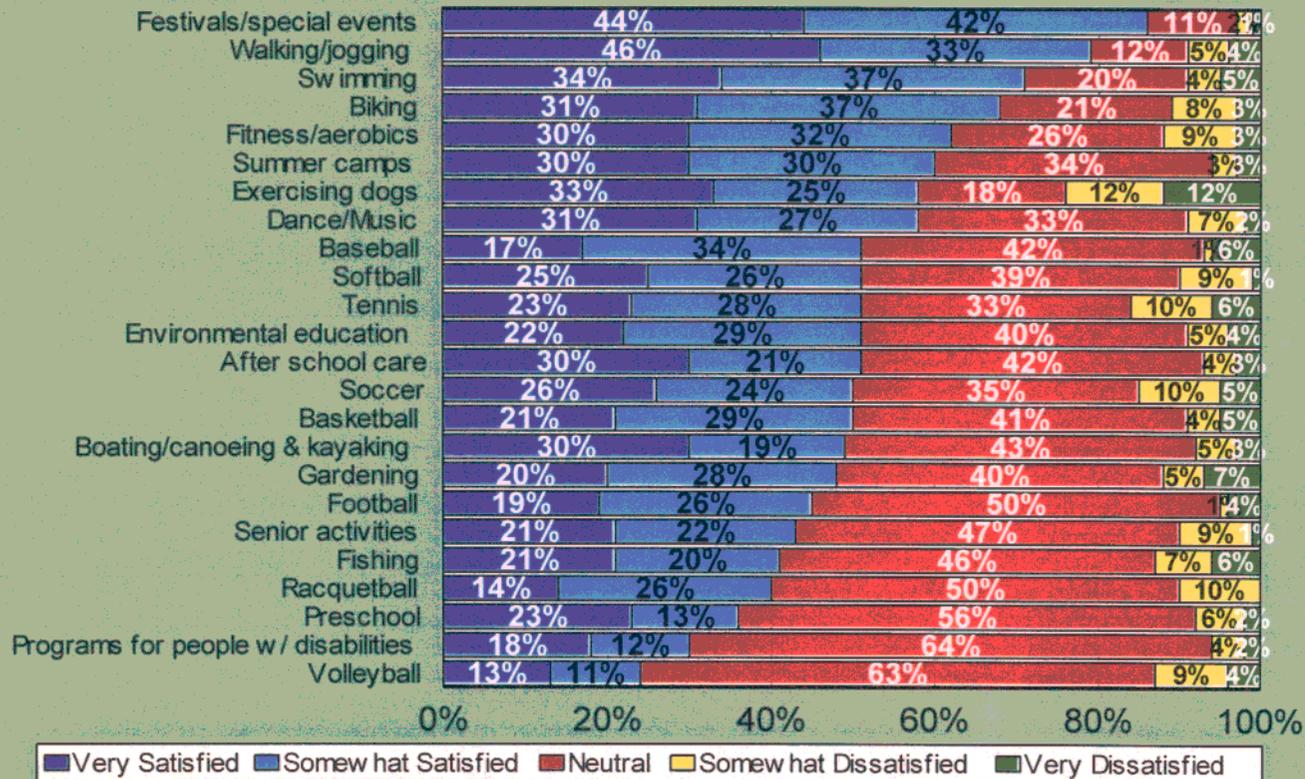
by percentage of respondents who have participated in City recreation programs or special events during the past year



Survey Says

Q5. Overall Satisfaction with Various Recreational Programs Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't knows")

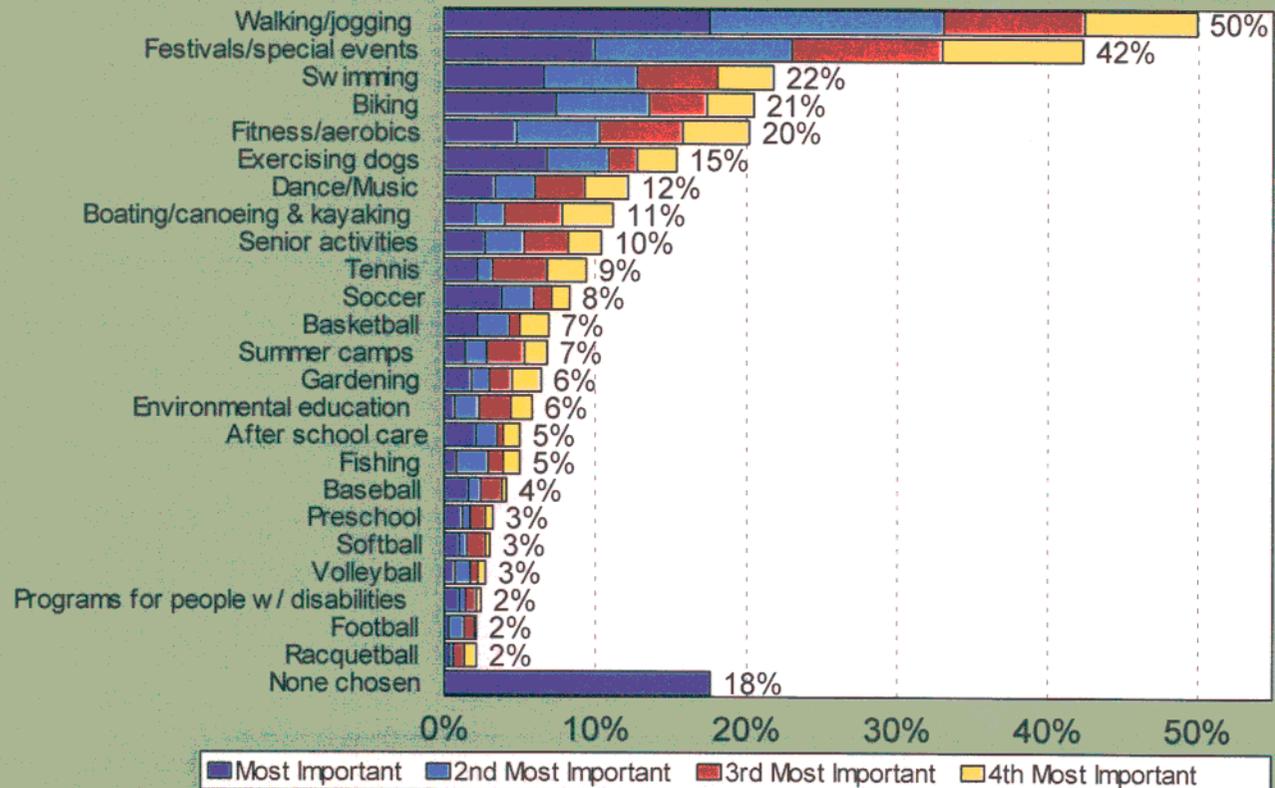


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

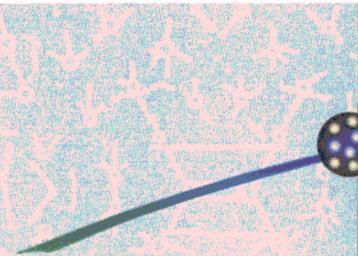
Survey Says:

Q6. Most Important Recreational Programs Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)



Recreation Programs – What are our needs?

- 1. Business plans for core services are needed.**

Recreation Programs – How do we meet the needs?

- ✿ Establish business and marketing plans for all programs.**



Recreation Programs – What are our needs?

- 2. Consistent program standards for core services are needed.**

Recreation Programs – How do we meet the needs?

- 🔦 Review all programs, set standards and define methods of evaluation.**



Recreation Programs – What are our needs?

3. Clear pricing philosophy is needed.

Recreation Programs – How do we meet the needs?

-  **Create revenue funds.**
-  **Review true costs of services in terms of benefits received.**
-  **Seek new earned income opportunities to offset operating costs.**



Recreation Programs – What are our needs?

4. Enhanced partnerships are needed.

Recreation Programs – How do we meet the needs?

-  **Review cost of services and assess if private or non-profit sector can provide equal service at lower costs.**



Capital Dollars:

- ✦ \$18 Million for General Recreation Facility Improvements
- ✦ \$9 Million for General Park Maintenance Improvements
- ✦ \$50 Million for Land Acquisitions

\$77 Million over 10 Years



“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations!”

Charles Swindall, Writer



DÍSCUSSION