Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks & Recreation

The City of Alexandria

2701

The City of Alexandria
Strategic Master Plan for
Open Space, Parks & Recreation

The City of Alexandria

Acknowledgments
Commission and Committees

City Council

Mayor Kerry J. Donley
Vice Mayor William C. Cleveland
Councilwoman Claire M. Eberwein
Councilman William D. Euille
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman David G. Speck
Councilwoman Joyce Woodson

City Manager's Office

Philip Sunderland, City Manager
Mark Jinks

Parks and Recreation Committee

Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair
Henry Brooks
William Conkey
Bruce Dwyer
Kirk Fedder
Kenneth Foran
Ellen Murray
Fabian Robitaille, Jr.

Open Space Steering Committee
Judy Guse-Noritake
Bruce Dwyer
Eric Wagner

Larry Robinson
Tom Tyler
Cynthia Degrood
Jay Johnson
Richard Leibach

Needs Assessment Steering Committee

Ethel S. Underwood
Jane Harrington
John Curran
Ludwig Gaines
John Komorske
Hunter McIntosh
Judy Guse-Noritake
Steve Nearman

Environmental Policy Commission

Cynthia Chambers, Chair
Susan Anderson
Ross Bell
Kevin Connell
Kevin Debell
Cynthia Degrood
Lisa Edouard
Donald Fix
Robin Hays
Kenyon Larsen
Douglas Macmillan

Jessie Morales
Paula Potoczak
Molly Theobald
Thomas Tyler

Planning Commission

Eric R. Wagner, Chair
Donna Fossum
Ludwig Gaines
John Komoroske
Richard Leibach
J. Lawrence Robinson

Open Space Planning Firm

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
Economics Research Associates

Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks & Recreation

Leon Younger & Pros

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Strategic Master Plan is to provide a broad policy and management framework to guide decision-making to meet current and future land use and recreational needs of Alexandria residents well into the twenty-first century. The recommended vision, policies, and actions are intended to further the city's comprehensive planning approach to quality of life for residents, the existing work force, and visitors to Alexandria. The Strategic Master Plan is comprehensive and incorporates two separate planning processes into one over-all plan. In 2001, the city commissioned Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. RHR, a land use and open space-planning firm to conduct the open space plan. The land use and open space plan focused on existing parks and open space and identified available lands that could be suited for parks or preserved for open space. In addition, the open space plan addressed linkages of where greenways and streambeds could be used to connect the parks and recreation system through a series of trails. Leon Younger & PROS was commissioned in late 2001 to develop a Recreation Needs Assessment for the remaining components of the Strategic Master Plan. Both studies had high levels of community input. The Recreation Needs Assessment included a recreation programs and facilities analysis, a demographics review, park maintenance analysis, open space analysis, administrative polices analysis for marketing, volunteer development, capital improvement needs, and governance issues.

What is a Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan?

The purpose of developing a Strategic Master Plan for open space, parks and recreation is to create a clear picture of the organization's future for the next ten years. A Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation sets a vision into motion of items the organization must focus on to create findings and conclusions regarding their future needs. The Strategic Master Plan identifies key milestones to be achieved over the first five years. Additionally, this plan creates action plans through which the organization can guide its efforts. These action plans are prioritized based on the cities ability to reasonably respond to the expectations for citizens.

The Strategic Master Plan is a living document that will require annual review of the work accomplished and the outcomes achieved. At a minimum, this plan should be updated every five years to keep pace with Alexandria's changing environment. This plan will require the support of many other city departments to achieve the community's vision that is desired. The departments that must embrace this plan include the police department, the planning department, and the transportation and environmental services departments.

The entire planning process between the open space plan and the recreation needs assessment plan can be viewed as a goal setting, consensus-building exercise with the intent of developing recommendations and strategies to guide future planning and development in the city. The City of Alexandria is the tenth densest city in America. The process to acquire and preserve property and protect quality of life is an

enormous task that requires a team effort between all departments in the city--thus the reason for seeking consensus and support from the other city departments.

The Strategic Master Plan for the City of Alexandria reflects a four-phase process. The first phase included a review of all *Available Open Space in the City* and how city properties are zoned.

The second phase, *Data Collection*, focused on collecting data, from the community, regarding city demographics, resident opinions, programs and facilities. The consulting teams planning process involved gathering community input into all aspects of how the city manages its efforts to acquire open space, parks maintenance operations, recreation facilities and recreation programs. The information was collected thought focus groups, stakeholder interviews, resident survey and public forums.

In addition, the consulting team held staff focus group meetings, evaluated parks and recreation facilities; evaluated recreation programs provided by the city and benchmarked the city against four other cities of comparable size and density. The consulting team evaluated the changing demographics within the city, and determined available open space that could be acquired or left in a natural state.

This gathered information led the consulting team to key issues to address over the life of the planning period, conclusions and recommendations for the city to follow and implement.

The third phase, entitled *Vision and Recommendations*, identifies the need for parks, multi-use paths, recreation facilities, and programs based on the data findings.

The fourth phase, *Implementation*, provides specific strategies to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation.

SETTING THE STAGE

Providing for the general public's recreational needs is one of the greatest challenges facing local governments. The challenge is complicated by ever-changing demands and expectations caused by increasing population growth and shifting community demographic profiles. The overall goal of the Strategic Master Plan is to provide residents of the City of Alexandria the opportunity to develop and meet their recreational needs through recreation programs, facilities, parks, and open spaces.

Over the Strategic Master Plan 10+-year horizon, Alexandria's population is expected to grow to another 5,000 to 7,000. As development continues, land opportunities to secure park sites diminish because of escalating land costs and the inability of the city to compete with private sector developers. To a certain degree this is occurring now.

In 1990, Alexandria had 7.5 acres of active and passive open space per 1,000 residents, based upon 111,000 population. Between 1990-2000 the 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 of parkland. 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.

According to the 2000 U. S. Census, population growth has occurred in all three of the city's planning districts. However, the growth has been greatest in District 3, the west side of the city (i.e., there was a 21

percent increase in population in District 3 between 1990 and 2000; over the same time period in Districts 1 and 2, growth was 17 percent and 4.6 percent respectively). Viewed in terms of open space acres per thousand residents, District 1 has approximately 12.28 acres per 1,000 persons; District 2 has approximately 6.3 acres; and District 3 offers approximately 7.7 acres. However, many of the open space acres, particularly in District 3, comprise environmentally sensitive sites not suited or intended for active recreational pursuits.

Available open space for active recreation in District 1 contains approximately 2.4 acres per 1,000 residents; District 2 comprises 4.6 acres; and District 3 offers 2.6 acres. The greatest growth in children aged 17 and under occurred in District 3 (44 percent, as compared to 14 percent in District 1 and 8 percent in District 2), it is not surprising that the need for additional open space in District 3 has been identified by the city as an issue requiring attention.

Through the citizen survey the community as a whole indicated their most important needs are for the city to acquire land for trails, neighborhood parks, and for preservation purposes. This should be a major goal of the city leadership before it is too late and the available land becomes unavailable.

Geographic equity of park access is an important consideration to provide short-distance access and service to all city residents. Park site acquisitions should be balanced and proportional to service populations in all areas of the city.

Available, undeveloped land for park sites in Alexandria is scarce, making it difficult for the city to achieve a balance of neighborhood parks equity and access in the city. The equity and open space maps clearly demonstrate where the land and park inequities are occurring. (Please refer to the *Neighborhood Park Service Areas*

map found on page 34.) In addition, the open space maps outlined in the appendix also demonstrate the scarcity of land for park purposes. Even though there are slim resources, the city still has opportunities it should pursue. These opportunities are outlined in the Open Space Plan.

The city has had ample catching up to do over the past 52 years since its first park was developed. Currently, the city park acreage levels 'per 1,000 residents' are in line with other cities with comparable density levels, such as Detroit, Minneapolis, and Cleveland. The citizens of Alexandria feel that more is desired above the 7.5 acres per 1,000 that is in place currently.

The new vision established for Alexandria Parks, focuses on key community values and addresses resident expectations on what they would like the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department to be known for.

"**Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department will provide the highest levels of quality services to meet citizens expectations. We will create safe and desirable environments for users in all parks and recreation facilities through high levels of maintenance and security services. Our programs and facilities will meet a diverse population needs and enhance all citizens quality of life. We will help define the community by being champions for the protection and advancement of open space.**"

The Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation addressed three critical questions. These included:

1) Where is Alexandria now in terms of open space, parks and recreation?
2) What are the needs of the citizens?
3) How does the city meet the citizen's needs?

OPEN SPACE

Open space - Where is Alexandria now?

In 1990, Alexandria was ranked the eleventh densest city in the United States. Today, it is the tenth densest city. Over the past decade, the density level has increased from eleven persons per acre in 1990, to 12.7 persons per acre in the year 2000. This is a 15 percent increase.

On a regional level, at 8,145 persons per square mile, the City of Alexandria is denser than either of its immediate neighbors. Arlington County is 7,315 persons per square mile and Fairfax County is a mere 2,385 persons.

It is not surprising given this density, that open space is a valuable and limited asset in the City of Alexandria. Viewed in another way, the city offers 8.9 acres of public and publicly accessible open space for every 1,000 persons living within its boundaries.

The current issues regarding the city's existing open space resources are as follows:

1) The lack of open space continuity and connection.
2) The diminishing availability of open space.
3) The uneven distribution of open space.
4) The need for open space stewardship and protection, particularly with regard to natural areas.

What are our needs in terms of open space?

Through a series of public input processes, the following citizen needs for open space were discussed. These were not in order of priority.

- The need for achieving continuous public open space corridor along the Potomac River.
- The need to create open space connections throughout the city through pedestrian friendly streets, trails, and enhanced streetscape corridors.
- The need to protect and enhance the city's stream valleys and other natural areas.
- The need to have stronger design guidelines and maintenance standards that are rigorously enforced.
- The city needs to maximize the use and visual quality of all open space.
- The need to protect existing parkland from development.
- Preserve areas of significant tree cover.
- Seek to acquire open space for park purposes in sections of the city where there is a need. (e.g. the west end and northeast portions of the city.)
- Provide additional multi-purpose fields.
- Identify and enforce all existing public easements, which could serve as trail linkages.
- Minimize surface parking lots.
- Define and develop attractive greenways to the city.
- Provide additional multi-purpose fields.
- The need to make better use of open space areas around school properties for habitats, gardens, educational and community opportunities.
- Create stronger zoning laws and developer requirements.
- Create a new zoning classification: A horticulture zone.
- The need to secure open space easements on key, privately held and institutional open space areas.

> **"A nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation."**
> **Theodore Roosevelt**

- Establish a streetscape and gateway enhancement program for Route 1.
- Implement a CITY green analysis to assess the status of tree cover in the City.

PARKS

How do we meet the community needs for open space?

To meet the needs of Alexandria residents for open space, the city and open space consultants established twelve recommended actions for the city to implement. These recommendations are as follows.

- Create an Alexandria Open Space Conservancy
- Hire a full-time, professional grants writer to pursue public and private sector funding.
- Begin completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan.
- Prepare a Greenway Management Plan for Holmes Run Stream Valley.
- Focus on the protection and enhancement of the City's Resource Protection Areas.
- Begin to preserve specific properties as open space areas (as defined in the Plan) through easements, acquisition, and other means of protection.
- Consider the creation of additional active recreation opportunities on open spaces located east of Simpson Field.
- Develop a workable open space conservation strategy for the City's major institutional lands.
- Rehabilitate Commonwealth Avenue as a significant parkway.
- Implement a system of new path/trail linkages at Holmes Run, at the eastern end of Eisenhower Valley, and from Booth Park to Fairfax County along Backlick Run.

Parks - Where are we now?

The City of Alexandria currently has 127 parks and open space areas that total 964 acres. It was not until 1958, nearly 200 years after the founding of Alexandria, the city recreation department planned to build its first official park. Therefore, it was not until the later half of the 20th century that Alexandria began to establish its system of public parks. The city continues to struggle against history whereby land is too valuable of a commodity to be used as open space. While the city has come a long way in creating a livable, green community for its residents, it must resist the trends of history to provide ample open space for future generations. The unique features of the city, as well as the quality of services that the city provides, mold the image that a city projects. Quality open spaces, parks, schools, and responsive safety measures collectively create a sense of community.

Through citizen input in the resident survey, 66% of Alexandrians had visited a city park last year. This is below average in comparison to many cities the consulting team has been involved with in developing Strategic Master Plans. Currently, citizens rate the physical condition of city-operated parks they visited as 'excellent' being 27% and 'good' at 52%. Typically, the consulting team finds residents rate the quality of parks at a higher rate. This is normally at 34% - 40%, which is an 'excellent' level. Residents understand clearly that parks enhance property value. The survey indicates this with 90% saying 'yes'. Of the residents surveyed, 78% indicated that parks provide economic benefits to the city.

Parks - What are the Alexandria park needs?

Citizens interviewed in focus groups, public forums and through the citizen household survey, indicated the following park needs should be addressed.

1) Additional and better-maintained athletic fields are needed for both youth and adult.
2) There are several areas in the city that are not adequately served by neighborhood parks and sports fields.
3) Many of the park infrastructure needs improvement especially the turf areas.
4) Many parks are too small for the neighborhoods that use them.
5) Upgrading of maintenance standards is needed in many of the parks.
6) The city is over-scheduling park facilities.

Parks – How do we meet the needs?

The city needs to create a balance of spending between recreation services and park infrastructure and maintenance. There are always more users of parks than recreation services in a city. It is imperative the city focus on maintaining park property that is currently owned and invest in the parks infrastructure and maintenance so property values are maintained. Additionally, the parks should support the level of use they receive.

The city needs to strive to meet the following recommendations.

1) Acquire more land for gamefields.
2) Manage existing capacity of fields.
3) Seek more user investment to offset maintenance costs of fields when user groups want higher levels of maintenance above what they city is currently providing.

4) Acquire land for parks in underserved areas of the city for neighborhood parks, especially in the west end of the city.
5) Encourage private sector acknowledgment of their role in providing more parks in high-density areas.
6) Enhance open space requirements for new developments.
7) Curtain granting of encroachments in RPA's and adjacent areas.
8) Increase partnership teams with schools, private institutions and the city to design solutions for new and renovated properties.
9) Develop maintenance standards for neighborhood parks from a level one to a level two.
10) Improve infrastructure of some parks by investing $10,000 per acre for lighting, drainage, parking, irrigation, and fencing.
11) Acquire park and recreation easements for recreation purposes.
12) Develop a land trust to help secure needed open space now before it is too late.
13) Enhance park maintenance partnerships.
14) Create a dedicated funding source for capital improvements, and land acquisition.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Recreation Facilities – Where are we now?

The City of Alexandria has ten indoor recreation-type facilities. The majority of the recreation centers are small in size. (8,000 to 18,000 square feet). These facilities serve one or two neighborhoods. Only Chinquapin Recreation Center truly serves a community-wide audience. The total amount of programmable square footage space available is 170,682. This is above the national average for indoor space but the key issue is how the space is used. The majority of recreation centers is served by youth and has minimal adult usage. This is due to the space being utilized for school purposes, as well as, after school, weekend, and summer programs.

The city has one indoor pool, which is located at Chinquapin Recreation Center and is heavily used by youth and adults. The majority of the city's three outdoor swimming pools are very small in size and again have little adult market appeal. These pools are also used for summer day camp activities.

Many of the recreation centers need infrastructure improvements and have outdated equipment. Of the households responding to the resident survey, only 29% have used recreation facilities provided bye the city in the past two years. The overall satisfaction with recreation facilities in the city was 34% being 'very satisfied' to 34% being 'somewhat satisfied'. These respondents' percentages are below normal for other recreation survey respondents from other cities the consulting team

has conducted when conducting Strategic Master Plans.

Recreation Facilities – What are the facility needs?

The community of Alexandria has indicated through focus groups, public forums and a residential citizen survey their most important recreation facilities needs. These are listed in order of priority.

1) Walking and biking trails
2) Neighborhood parks
3) Playgrounds
4) Indoors swimming centers
5) Community recreation centers
6) Dog parks
7) Tennis facilities
8) Sports fields

Additionally, the majority of respondents (66% from the citizen survey) believe the city should develop indoor recreation programming space that supports a multi-generational indoor recreation center that can serve all ages as a priority. This far exceeds the development of a special teen center (31%) or a special senior center (26%) used by only seniors.

The city needs to renovate the infrastructure of the current recreation centers, especially at Charles Houston and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers. There is also a need for adding one additional neighborhood center in the western portion of the city where density levels are high.

Overall, the city needs to increase programs targeted for adults to increase the availability of recreation facilities for all citizens.

Recreation Facilities – How do we meet the community's needs?

Meeting the resident's recreation facility needs begins with developing Feasibility Studies and Business Plans for each new or renovated recreation facility. This accomplishment will achieve and record the maximum usage and productivity of each center. These studies will match program needs of the neighborhoods served by the facility.

Moreover, the city needs to create design standards for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to maximize its resources used by the greatest number of user types.

Through effective partnerships with schools and other public and private agencies, the city could increase recreation space both indoor and outdoor to support the recreation needs of youth and adults. This will require all partners be involved in the planning process of new or renovated indoor and outdoor recreation space.

The city should also explore the feasibility of enlarging Chinquapin Recreation Center to become the multi-generational center the residents desire. And, the city needs to explore the feasibility of acquiring property and constructing a new neighborhood recreation center on the city's west side to support its population density.

Where appropriate, the city should develop a free or subsidized recreation rider program to support user access to all recreation centers in the city to support greater access and usage.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation programs – Where are we now?

The consulting team evaluated the recreation programs and gathered public input from focus groups, public forums, and from a resident survey. Overall, there is not a clear understanding by the staff and the community on what the city's core and non-core services currently are.

Core services are services that are represented by five key principles. These include:

1) The program service is offered three out of four planning seasons.
2) There is dedicated full-time staff to support the program.
3) There are dedicated facilities designated to support the program.
4) The core recreation program consumes a large amount of the budget.
5) The core program has a deep history with wide demographic appeal.

Currently, the majority of users of the city recreation programs are youth and many age groups do not take advantage of programs offered. This is a marketing issue, as well as a program availability issue. The recreation staff currently does not know the true cost to produce a recreation service to establish the cost benefit in providing the service. Many of the existing partnerships are not uniform in the equity-effort level from each partner. The recreation program pricing is inconsistent across the city and program prices do not reflect the level of benefits received.

The level of survey respondents, who participated in recreation programs over the past twelve months, is 42%. This number is low for a city with ten recreation facilities currently in operation.

The recreation programs users participated the most in were festivals and special events (48%), swimming (22%), fitness and aerobics (16%), tennis (11%), dance/music (10%), and sports activities (5%). Residents rated the quality of the city's recreation programs in which they had participated in as 'excellent' at 28% and

'good' at 60%. This demonstrates the community recognizes the value and quality of their experience in city-sponsored programs.

The most important recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria, are walking and jogging at 50%, and festivals/special events at 42%. Swimming at 22% and fitness programs at 20% followed this.

Recreation programs – What are our needs?

The recreation program needs of the residents and staff begins with a clear understanding of how large the programs market is, as well as, for the city to maximize its resources. This will require the city doing business plans for core services to establish a clear understanding of who is being served and who is not being served. Additionally, the city should understand who is underserved within the City of Alexandria.

There is a need to establish program standards for core services so these services are provided consistently across the city. This applies to pricing and management of recreation services where inconsistencies are prevalent.

There is a need to enhance program partnerships in the city regarding public/public partnerships and public/ not-for-profit partnerships. Many of the partnerships are not equitable and the city is supporting the partnerships at a higher level than necessary.

There is a need to provide more adult and senior services within the city to create lifetime users of city's services. With the vast amount of adult population versus youth population in the city, this should be represented with much more adult participation in recreation programs than what currently exists.

Recreation programs – How do we meet the needs of the residents?

To meet the needs of residents in recreation programs, the city must establish business and marketing plans for all core programs. The staff must set consistent standards for how programs are delivered and define methods they will use for evaluating user satisfaction of the services provided.

Revenue funds need to be created where there are user fees involved so the people who pay for services can visually see where and how their funds are used to support the activity they desire. To accomplish this, staff needs to review the true costs of services in terms of benefits received. This will require the city to updates its pricing policy as well as to seek new earned income opportunities to offset operation costs. This may require the city to partner with the private or not-for-profit sector to assist in delivering programs while maintaining low user fees.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

The capital improvement needs for implementing the Strategic Master Plan will require $18 million for general recreation facility improvements. An additional $9 million is needed for general park maintenance improvements, and $50 million is needed for land acquisition and the purchasing of easements.

Should the city move forward on trail improvements, it would cost approximately $500,000 per mile. Should the city decide to develop a west side recreation center and a multi-generational center, it will cost approximately $170.00 per square foot in the year 2002 dollars.

CONCLUSION

Communities are ever-changing entities. In order to understand how a community is to change in the future, it is necessary to appreciate its history and culture. The vision, mission, values, and goals that have been created by the community for the city and provide and overall direction for the future. It is important to remember that this document is dynamic and must change over time because the makeup and nature of the community of Alexandria is ever changing. As the culture of the community changes, adjustments will need to be made to the Strategic Master Plan for Open Space Parks and Recreation to address these changes.
Five key goals were developed to guide the city. These goals become the core of all future planning engaged in by the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department.

In developing the goals, PROS worked with staff to develop a community values model that focused on the comprehensive community and stakeholder input process that identified a very broad range of ideas, principles, and values held by the citizens and leaders in Alexandria. The consulting team assimilated all of the input collected and developed a *Community Values Model,* a process of arranging community values into groups of perspectives, which then organizes the framework for the Strategic Master Plan.

Five community values were identified that the city must address in managing open space and parks and recreation services.

These include knowing and implementing the community *needs* for open space, parks and recreation facilities.

The city must establish *standards* of care for parks, recreation facilities, and program services. These standards should be adequately funded.

The city needs to *develop tiered* levels of parks and recreation programs to meet the needs of all citizens and create lifetime users.

The city needs to establish *new sources* of revenue to help offset operational costs and capital costs.

The city needs to create effective *partnerships* with public partners such as schools, not-for-profit, and private partners in the delivery of services and facilities.

The *Community Values Model* for Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department creates a balanced, sustainable approach to guide decisions and allocation of resources. Within this *Community Values Model,* a clear definition of community mandates is provided, allowing the department to more effectively manage its resources for all areas of need. Consistent standards were established so that a baseline of service and quality exists through out the system in all phases of work the department provides. Tiered facilities and programs allow the development of lifetime users and increases user capacity of programs and facilities. With a baseline subsidy established, appropriate resources can be applied to developing new sources of funding, including facilities and programs that are sustainable through self-generated revenue to offset and/or cover operating and maintenance costs. Equitable partnerships provide the ability to leverage the city's investments and resources to help deliver park facilities and program services at all levels.

The *Community Values Model* was developed to create the framework or organization of the Strategic Master Plan that is customized to Alexandria and founded in community values. Using this framework, goals, strategies, and actions are defined to fulfill the respective community value. The plan takes form as a *Vision Strategy Matrix,* found in this report. This allows the staff to incorporate results

and demonstrate to the key leadership the outcomes of their work. This vision strategies matrix will serve as a living document and strategy implementation tool for the length of the Strategic Master Plan.

The City of Alexandria had a vision to create two key planning documents to drive the parks systems planning efforts for the next ten years. These two planning efforts impact how they interface with each other regarding open space land use, economic development, and tourism. The Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation is a ten-year plan. The study calls for a stronger effort to be made by the city to balance development against open space protection. This will take political will on the part of elected officials.

The Strategic Master Plan identifies where gaps in park and recreation equity of access exist in parks, recreation facilities and programs services. The plan outlines where the city needs to put its efforts in acquiring land for parks and open space management. The recommendations in this plan are achievable and must be followed for the city to continue its efforts to achieve maximum livability and a balance against economic factors and population growth.

Summary of Key Recommendations

The Strategic Master Plan addresses several key issues that the city must act on over the next ten years. The most important recommendations include developing fifteen miles of new trails to connect the parks system and provide a greater ease of access for citizens to move about the city. An additional 100 acres of open space should be developed to provide greater equity of access to parks. Additional recommendations are to develop a new multi-generational center in the center of the city, add additional sports fields, and create new funding sources to support operational costs, capital costs and open space acquisition. The city should consider developing effective partnerships, enhance

the urban forest; beautify the city; make the necessary capital improvements to existing recreation centers and parks, and develop greater marketing efforts to increase the community's awareness of the services provided.

The Strategic Master Plan addresses the need for multi-use paths, with the goal of developing 15 miles of new trails. This can be achieved through effective partnerships with other city departments and non-city authorities. This will allow citizens to move freely through the Alexandria community without high levels of conflict between walkers, joggers, cyclists, and cars. These multi-use paths will become signature features because of their wide demographic appeal and because citizens indicated this type of park improvement to be the top priority among park amenities for the future.

These pathways provide a road map of connectivity to maximize all land in the city to achieve a balanced approach for active and passive recreation use. Park funding for land, infrastructure improvements, and new amenities will require a substantial investment by the city. Ten years is a short time; however, once in place, it will be there for citizens in perpetuity.

This Strategic Master Plan was developed by the citizens of Alexandria to detail what they want the parks and recreation department to deliver for the next ten years. The vision was developed by focusing on community values, past history, key trends in parks and recreation management, park design, and program services. Many key issues have been addressed with recommendations outlined.

Leon Younger and PROS and Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. RHR have completed their work and have delivered the final reports. The key leadership of the City, the Planning Department, Environmental Services and the Recreation Park and Cultural Services Department must now use the data, recommendations, and processes collected

to implement this plan. It will be necessary to consistently monitor trends that affect the recommendations and act accordingly. It will be equally important to gain community input, and for staff training and development to occur as needed. The real work to implement this plan has just begun.

INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

The Strategic Master Plan was developed in three separate formats and processes over the course of two years. The processes included the findings and observation phase, the vision and recommendation phase, and an implementation phase. Each phase has consisted of data collection along with key findings, recommendations, and strategies. From the beginning of the Strategic Master Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation planning process, goal setting has been a critical component to ensure the success of the plan. The intent was to seek much public input into the planning process at the beginning. This will ensure support and advocacy for meeting the public's needs for the future for parks, recreation facilities, and program services. The overall strategy involved in the planning process is to plan for the future and not focus on the past.

The consulting teams worked very closely with the community through two separate Needs Assessment and Open Space Steering Committees, made up of citizens who were interested in open space and the recreation needs of the community. The entire process can be viewed as a consensus-building exercise to address key issues and to create strategies to implement changes in how the department manages itself for the future. Development or redevelopment of new and existing parks, recreation facilities, and programs needs to occur to create the preferred future identified by the citizens of Alexandria.

The Strategic Master Plan strategies are written as a direct reflection of findings and observations identified from the research conducted by the consulting teams. This research provided a fresh look at the core services that the city is providing and helps define the areas where the city needs to concentrate future resources in the future. Policies and actions were developed from these strategies to help in the implementation of the Strategic Master Plan. These policies and actions are the steps to be taken for each key value statement. They reflect the immediate activity required of the department to accomplish the desired outcomes and to assert a positive direction towards meeting the community's vision.

The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff, as well as, the Planning and Environmental Quality Department staff is very proud and committed to achieving a high quality of life for its residents and visitors in Alexandria. This plan will require a tremendous amount of commitment and effort to achieve the vision and goals defined for the residents. The Strategic Master Plan is a reflection of that commitment. The Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department has the talent to be one of the premier parks systems in the United States if it can deliver on this plan and move the department forward by implementing the recommendations outlined. This will take political will on the part of elected officials to help the City achieve the goals and recommendations outlined. This is the time to get ahead of development and population growth. Also important is meeting the immediate needs of residents to experience the services that the department is capable of delivering.

To help focus effort and energy in this planning process, a framework for planning was adopted. The three-step strategic and comprehensive planning process included three major components:

Phase One – Data Collection/Findings
and Observations
Phase Two – Vision and
Recommendations
Phase Three – Implementation

"Past case studies suggest
that open spaces, even
good ones, cannot be just
designed and forgotten.
They need to be evaluated
and redesigned over time to
address changing user
needs. Ongoing evaluation
and redesign are critical to
the life of any open space."

Mark Francis
User Needs and Conflicts in
Urban Open Space: An
Issue Based Case Study,
2001

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The Data Collection phase focuses on key issues that need to be addressed and the summary of results from all the data collected from the two consulting teams work. The following process was conducted.

- Focus groups meetings
- Citizens survey
- Stakeholder interviews
- Public forums
- Staff focus group meetings
- Demographic analysis
- Park analysis
- Recreation facility analysis
- Recreation program analysis
- Open space and land use maps
- Volunteer analysis
- Marketing analysis
- Benchmark analysis
- Recreation Needs Assessment
- Open Space Summit

The most important elements that come from this initial research know what is important from the community's perspective and how satisfied they are regarding the current core businesses and services the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department is providing.

The first phase is a process in which community research and exploration of the entire parks and recreation system takes place. The focus of all efforts in this phase is to gather data to determine key issues that need to be addressed in the Strategic Master Plan. The data collected consists of community and staff opinions and facts. During this phase, there are no assessments of how well or poorly the department is performing. There are no judgments on how to correct problems or improve the department. This phase is merely an

attempt to gather and capture as much information as possible concerning how the community feels and the status of existing conditions. This phase of the process helps the consulting teams identify the baseline levels of expectations and conditions, and to understand how the department works.

Needs Assessment Study Planning Process
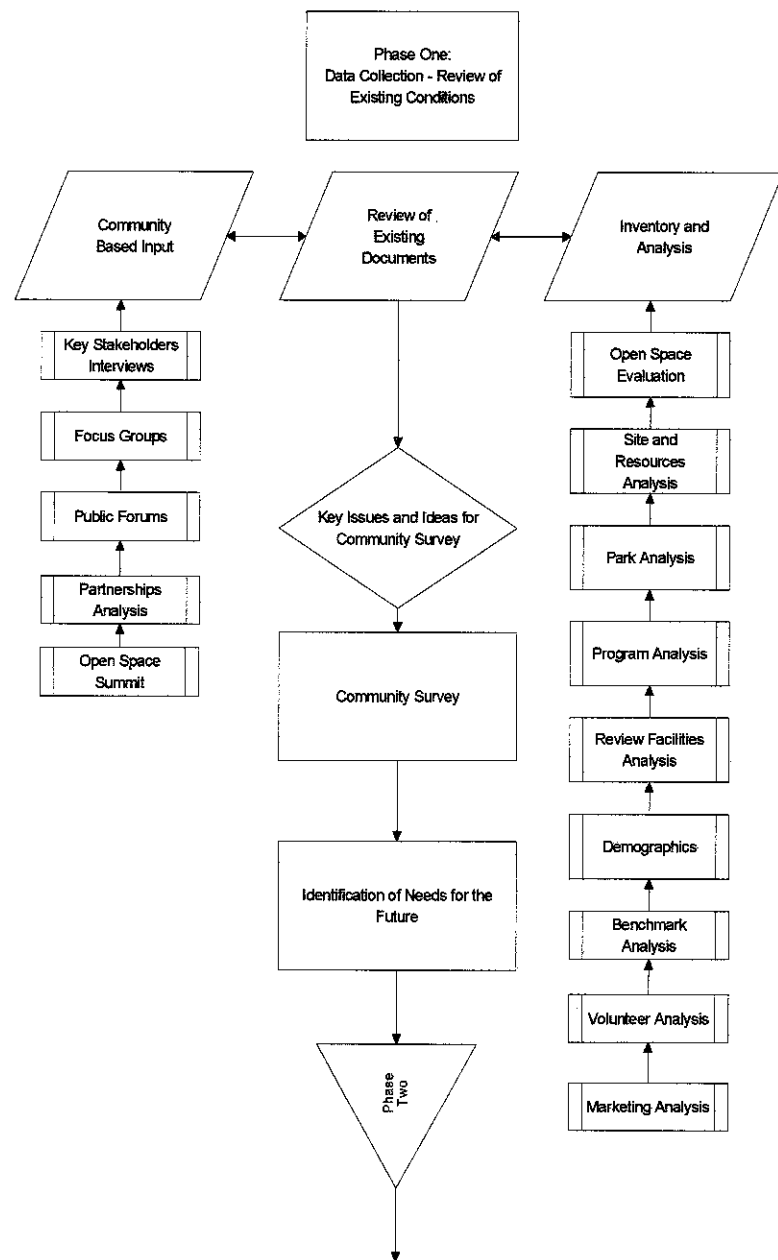
In addition to the exploration of the department, a variety of information gathering activities were initiated with key division staff, other agency department leaders, elected officials, community leaders, and the Open Space and Park and Recreation Steering Committee affiliated with the Parks and Recreation Department. Finally, an analysis was conducted of the existing local market, parks, recreation facilities, programs, volunteers, partnerships, and five other cities through a benchmark study.

Data was collected and analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Department to measure the effectiveness of the Department to deliver service and gauge the attitudes of citizens, staff, stakeholders, and leaders in the community. The intent is to hear from people using a multitude of tools and strategies to encourage feedback on where the City needs to focus its energies in the future. The strategies used are as follows.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

It is imperative that the Strategic Master Plan reflects the input of the citizens of Alexandria. The community of the future is built with present day planning. Tomorrow's promises are built on dedicated efforts to include the thinking of the citizens who will be served by the department in the future. To assure the voices of the residents of Alexandria were heard in this process, extensive public involvement was encouraged.

Public input was gathered through:

- Focus group meetings with special interest groups, ethnic groups, partners, seniors, users, and neighborhood leaders.

- Stakeholder interviews with elected officials, key city leadership Directors, the City Manager, and park and recreation staff.
- A series of public forums were conducted for both the open space study and the recreation needs assessment study.
- A mailed citizen survey randomly distributed within the City of Alexandria.
- Department and Stakeholder Involvement

In order for organizational department leaders of the city and Park and Recreation staff to participate and engage in future change; it is critical to involve them in the change process. To assure there was buy-in from these leaders and staff members, a series of focus groups were conducted to gain their insight and to address key issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL INPUT AND ANALYSIS

- The consulting teams conducted recreation programs and parks and recreation facility audits. Audits were completed through on-site visitations and staff interviews.
- Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in and outside the organization, including department staff, agency heads, elected officials, community. leaders, and recreation groups.
- An organizational policy review was conducted for partnerships, earned income review, systems analysis, pricing of services, organizational alignment, and efficiency.
- Standards mapping was conducted on land use and

recreational facilities for game fields and recreation centers. Gaps in parks and recreation facilities and programs exist based on a set of guidelines customized to Alexandria.

The growing popularity and demand for open space, parks and recreation opportunities are in proportion to the constant growth and development in Alexandria. Numerous community issues regarding parks and recreation were identified through the public outreach process. These key issues have been grouped by function and provide the basis for recommended visions, policies, and actions.

KEY CITIZEN SURVEY FINDINGS

- Walking and biking trials (55%) had the highest percentage of respondent households rate it as one of their four most important facilities. Neighborhood parks followed at 40%.
- The most common reason that kept respondents from using parks and recreation facilities and programs more often was "we are too busy or not interested."
- Walking/jogging trails (50%) had the highest percentage of respondent households rate; it as one of their top four most important programs.
- Nearly half (44%) of respondents indicated that open space should be acquired and dedicated for natural resource purposes. This was followed by the desire that open space be acquired for both passive and active uses at (42%).
- Nearly three-fourths of respondents were either very

supportive (28%) or somewhat supportive (44%) of having users of recreation programs and special events pay user fees.
- Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated that the City of Alexandria should develop a multi-generational indoor center that serves all ages. This far exceeded the city developing a teen center at 31% or a senior center 26%.
- Multi-purpose trails (52%) had, by a wide margin, the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/ facilities they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars. This was followed by an indoor wellness and fitness facility at 27% and acquiring properties for developing new parks at 27%.
- Nearly 90% of respondents rated the programs as either excellent (28%) or good (60%)
- Flyers/brochures (48%) were the most frequent way that respondents learned about the city's parks and recreation programs.
- Two-thirds (66%) of respondent households indicated they had visited a city-operated park in the last year.
- Over three-fourths (79%) of respondents rated the physical condition of city-operated parks they had visited as either excellent (27%) or good (52%).
- Festival/ special events were the programs that had the highest percentage of respondents indicating being either very satisfied (44%) or somewhat satisfied (42%) with them.
- The City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department (45%) is the organization used by the

highest percentage of respondent households.

- Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that there are enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities near their home.
- Nearly all (90%) respondents indicated that well maintained parks do enhance the property value of surrounding homes.
- Walking and biking trails were the facility that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate they are either very satisfied (38%) or somewhat satisfied (44%) with them.
- Over three-fourths (78%) of respondents indicated that parks do provide economic benefit to the City of Alexandria.
- Multi-purpose trails had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as either very important (63%) or somewhat important (29%). Acquiring properties for developing new parks was 88%, and acquiring and developing multi-purpose youth and adult athletic fields were 82%.
- Multi-purpose trails (57%) had, by a wide margin, the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities that they and members of their households would use most. Indoor wellness and fitness facilities were second at 31%.

KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS

The key issues and findings that were defined by the community and the consulting teams are as follows:

LAND ACQUISITION AND OPEN SPACE KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Citizens are particularly interested in seeing the City find solutions to the lack of open space and park space.
- There is a lack of open space continuity and connection throughout the city.
- The diminished availability of open space due to over-development of the city.
- There is a need for more walking, jogging and bicycling trails.
- There is a lack of equity of access to neighborhood parks and open spaces within the city.
- The need for open space stewardship and protection of land that is remaining is needed particularly with regard to natural areas.
- The city needs to complete the implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan.
- The city needs to protect and expand stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- The city needs to institute developer fees as a dedicated funding source for open space acquisition.
- Stronger zoning requirements are needed to establish significant preservation areas and more discretionary review of future development proposals are needed.
- Stricter streetscape design guidelines are needed for developers.
- Additional zoning mechanisms are needed to address the problem of infill development and the large loss of open space as a

result of home additions and individual land use decisions.

- The city needs to enhance its streetscapes and gateways to expand the citywide street tree program and protect existing trees and woodland areas.

include: old, worn play equipment, overused turf areas (particularly on athletic fields), overgrown trails and stream banks, cracked pavement areas, and in more natural areas, the removal of invasive plants.

LAND ACQUISITION, OPEN SPACE & CONSULTANTS OBSERVATIONS

- The department currently maintains 127 parks totaling approximately 964 acres.
- On a regional level, the City of Alexandria has 8,145 persons per square mile and is more dense than Arlington County at 7,315 persons per square mile. Fairfax County is a mere 2,385 persons per square mile.
- The city currently has eleven people per acre, which is relatively low in comparison to other highly dense cities.
- The city offers 7.7 acres per 1,000 residents, which is on par with highly dense cities. This compares with Baltimore at 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents, Chicago 4.3 acres per 1,000 residents, Los Angeles at 8.5 acres per 1,000 residents, new York and Philadelphia at 7.2 acres per 1,000 residents and San Francisco at 10.3 Acres per 1,000 residents.
- Planning District 1 contains perhaps the greatest number of citywide serving active space.
- Alexandria has 11 people per acre and overall 7.7 acres per 1,000 residents.
- While many of the city parks are in outstanding condition, maintenance issues were noted in a number of instances. These

PLANNING AND DESIGN KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES IN OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

The community of Alexandria would like the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan to address the following issues.

- Design parks to meet community needs and separate active sport areas from passive leisure activities.
- Develop a balanced approach to design that allows for passive, self-directed uses as well as active use.
- Develop a funding source to acquire land.
- Allow for customizing of parks during redevelopment to match the demographics of the neighborhood.
- Develop new park and open space guidelines for the Strategic Master Plan and for the city to follow.
- Develop multi-use paths to link and connect park facilities and open space to ease movement through the city.
- Address the lack of parking at recreation facilities and parks.
- More sports field space is needed to support the needs of youth and adults.
- Funding operational and capital needs is a major issue that needs to be addressed among all the other city priorities.

PLANNING AND DESIGN FINDINGS IN OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

- Residents would like to see open space connections throughout the City through pedestrian-friendly streets, trails, and enhanced streetscape corridors.
- Place a high priority on protecting and enhancing the city's stream valleys and other natural resource areas. This includes the creation of clean stream channels--"less engineered' stream banks.
- Enhance existing streetscapes so they become a secondary park system.
- Identify and enforce all existing public easements; these could become important trail linkages and small open space areas.
- Minimize surface parking lots; locating parking underground where possible and using the surface areas as open space opportunities.
- Define and develop gateways to the city, along streets, highways, and trails.
- Provide more multi-purpose trails.
- Make better use of open space areas around school properties for habitats, gardens, and educational and community opportunities.
- Create a new zoning classification: a horticultural zone.
- More dollars are needed from developers for open space to support higher density development that what the city is getting currently.
- Create a continuous open space along the Potomac River waterfront.

- The creation of significant public open space in the Eisenhower Avenue corridor is needed.
- Create new open space opportunities in the west end and the northeast portion of Old Town.

GIS MAPPING ACTIVE OPEN SPACE AREAS

A GIS map follows. This map outlines three planning districts within the City of Alexandria. Of the three districts, the Active Open Space areas are color-coded in gold.

City of Alexandria
Neighborhood Park
and Community Parks

Schools Sites
Mini & Neighborhood Parks (< 8 arces)
Community Parks (8 Acres or >)
Streets
2000 Census Density
0 - 122
123 - 351
352 - 769
770 - 1803
1804 - 4025
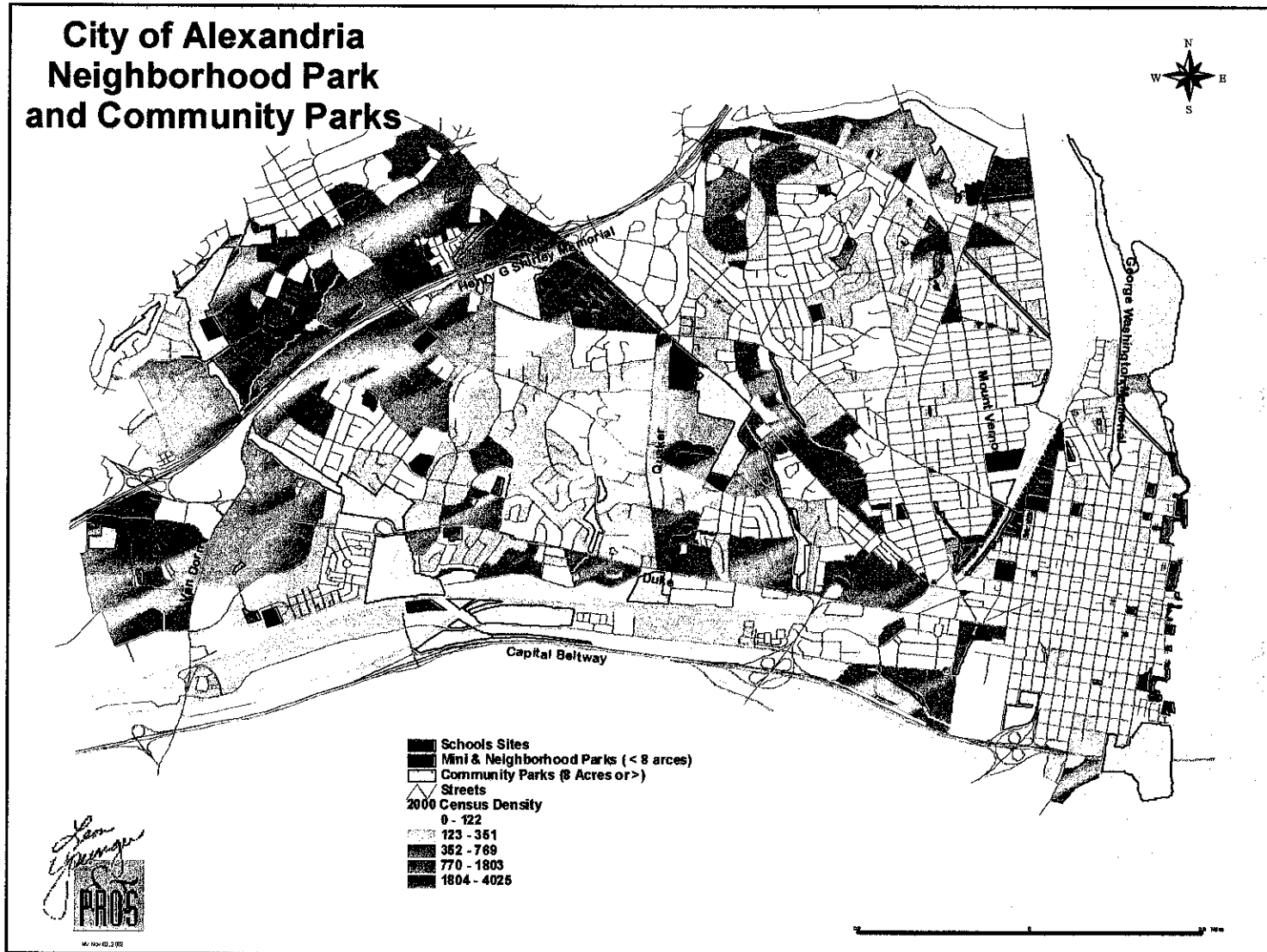
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Continually retrofit and improve existing parks to new design standards
- Add to existing facilities where appropriate to maximize space and use.
- Update existing facilities to year 2002 standards and design to create operational revenues to offset operating costs.
- Update color schemes and image of many recreation facilities.
- Lack of storage, parking, weight room space and program space needs to be addressed.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FINDINGS

- The existing parks are the focal points of communities and the locations for important civic events.
- As parks become more intensively used, the need for increased maintenance, management, and planning becomes greater.
- Minimize over use and scheduling of fields and parks.
- A resource management plan is needed that inventories and protects existing cultural and natural resources in the parks and expands public education and enjoyment.
- Develop a citywide stream protection plan that includes maintaining streams, springs, and seeps in a natural condition.

- Develop a significant reforestation and forestation program.
- Create and encourage the creation of civic parks at and adjacent to metro stations.
- Develop Park Master Plans for each of the city's existing parks to guide short-team and long-term needs.

KEY COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS ISSUES

- Maintenance levels of recreation facilities and parks need to be enhanced
- The city needs to address the changing demographics of the community as it applies to recreation programs, parks and recreation facilities.
- More athletic facilities are needed.
- The city needs to involve the business community and other partners in solving key issues.
- More programs for youth and seniors are needed.
- School facilities need to be used as community assets.
- The city needs to find creative ways to adapt the re-use of facilities that receive little use.
- The city needs to find a balance between active and passive park space.
- Position the system to tap into new sources of funding, while providing inclusion for all who want to participate.
- Deal with the perceived need for more dog parks.
- Allow for the provision of new types of recreation amenities such as skate parks, trails, and connectivity to places of public value.

- Work with developers to create more public spaces and appropriate land uses, and to provide public amenities.
- Find strategies to keep teens engaged in productive activities beyond the early teens.
- Address the increased demand for organized sports programs.
- Serve the special needs of people with disabilities.
- Provide adequate space for seniors.
- Effectively deal with the before and after-school needs of young people.

KEY FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS

- Identify and establish achievable levels of service rather than trying to be all things to all people.
- Acceptable levels of maintenance are needed at all facilities.
- Beautification of the city needs to be a priority.
- Adequately fund the park and recreation system.
- Find appropriate partners who can help the city deliver services.
- Stay current with citizens' needs and finding effective methods to meet those needs.
- Better coordination with the school system is needed.
- Develop larger recreation facilities that address the multi-generational make-up of the community.
- Manage the aging infrastructure.

RECREATION PROGRAMS KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Fees for programs are low or non-existent for the value received.
- A cost recovery system needs to be established that provides for a reasonable Return On Investment, balanced against the need to provide core services at minimal or not costs.
- The department needs a better method of tracking participation in its programs.
- Consistent standards between programs need to be developed.
- The department is inconsistent in how it addresses policies and procedures in its programs.
- The department lacks a strategy on how to replace worn out or broken equipment.
- The department needs to provide more training to key staff members on benefits based marketing, program evaluation, basic accounting, and program tracking.
- Development of additional equitable partnerships with other service providers is needed.
- Development of an equitable and consistent city/school use agreement is needed.
- Create more practice field space to keep game fields in good condition.
- The city does not differentiate between the city's core recreation services and non-core services.
- A transportation plan is needed to get people to recreation facilities.
- More enhancements of programs are needed for people with disabilities.

- There appears to be several safety issues with the mechanical areas of the aquatic facilities.
- Facility space for contract classes is limited because of a lack of program space.
- There appears to be inconsistency between contract classes that are fee based and similar free programs offered at recreation centers.
- Arts Programs are heavily subsidized.
- There are great opportunities for sponsorships and other revenue enhancing activities for the Arts Programs.
- Fees for room rentals are below market price for the value of the space.
- Senior programs have high levels of tax subsidy for the value of the experience.
- Senior Centers and program offerings are geographically concentrated on the east side of Alexandria.
- Special Events are heavily subsidized with no revenue return to the department.
- Youth Sports programs are limited by field and facility availability.
- The youth sports programs are heavily subsidized.

RECREATION PROGRAMS FINDINGS

- Core programs consisted of Adult Sports, After-School Programs, Playground and Summer Camp, Aquatics, Contract Classes, Cultural Arts/Performing Arts, Facility Rentals, Family Programs, Senior Programs, Special Events, Therapeutic Recreation Programs, Volunteers, Wellness and Fitness and Youth Sports.
- Adult Sports has an annual participation rate of 7,500.
- There is a lack of adequate sized fields for coed and men's softball.
- There is a lack of lighted fields for evening use.
- Parking at recreation facilities is inadequate.
- There are few gymnasiums available for use by adults.
- Fees for adult sports are designed to cover program costs.
- The city has a procedure for charging non-residents a higher fee.
- After-School, Playground and Summer Camps has an annual participation rate of 7,565.
- Several of the after-school and summer camp programs are licensed.
- The department has a great opportunity to capture a large portion of this program market by adding activities such as adventure programs and non-traditional sports programs targeted at teens.
- There is a good partnership with the use of schools to help host these programs.
- A comprehensive fee schedule has been developed for the Aquatic facilities.
- Operating costs for the four seasonal mini-pools appear to be high.
- The department has developed a pool of qualified staff to support aquatics.
- There is a demand for aquatic services that is more then the present pools can provide.

- A variety of courses and programs are offered and serve a wide demographic group.
- Program offerings are limited by facility size and availability.
- Contract classes had over 3,500 registrations in 2001, which is below average for the size of Alexandria. More indoor space is needed to increase this level of participation.
- The cancellation rate is low at 10% for contract classes.
- The Cultural Arts and Performing Arts programs have participation rates of between 7,000 to 130,000 people.
- The Arts Programs provide a positive economic impact for the city.
- Rentals at Lee Center are at maximum capacity and are currently being expanded.
- Special events provide an untapped opportunity for revenue development and for promoting the department.
- The therapeutic program is nearly 100% subsidized while in other community's subsidy levels are 80% - 90%.
- There appears the opportunity to partner with many agencies on therapeutic services.
- Fitness programs are very popular and the demand outstrips capacity.
- Fees for fitness facilities are inconsistent.

FUNDING AND MARKETING COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Coordination between divisions and recreation centers needs to be developed between promotions and program services.

- The department does not have an assigned marketing person for marketing the services provided which creates a lot of inconsistencies in how information gets distributed to the community.
- The department needs to centralize the marketing function and operations to increase effectiveness and consistency.
- The department is very reactionary in its approach to marketing versus proactive.
- Cross promotions have not been explored in-house or with outside agencies.
- Marketing strategies are not fully developed or implemented.
- Promotional distribution materials need to be expanded beyond just the schools.
- The budget for marketing is very limited for the number of programs and services provided.
- There is little market research done as it applies to customer feedback from programs and events.
- Sponsorships are not pursued even though there are great opportunities to attract sponsors to underwrite programs and events.
- The staff is stretched to their limits in trying to manage multiple operations outside of their expertise and experience in regards to marketing.
- The department needs to develop new funding sources to help offset operational costs.

COMMUNITY FUNDING AND MARKETING FINDINGS

- The staff could be better equipped with the appropriate

technology to produce their own in-house publications that go beyond the basic flyer. For example, this could include newsletters and quarterly brochures.

- Staff understands the purpose of having a good image, but it is difficult to develop image improvements, such as a unique logo, due to limited time and resources.
- The staffs have to work through a PIO officer at city hall that selects programs or events for publication.
- There is little time to track the effectiveness of any promotions.
- No paid advertising is used to help support promotional costs.
- Although the staff is in the process of creating a marketing plan for the department, there is not a current one available. Most of the marketing efforts are reactionary rather than planned.

VOLUNTEERISM KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- There are many areas in the system where volunteers could be used more.
- The organization of volunteer operations is not coordinated or managed by a specific division or person, which creates inconsistencies.
- There is an issue with communicating to the volunteers. Volunteers would like to have something more directed for them in information and opportunities.
- Tracking of volunteer hours is not coordinated and each division has its own method for

collecting the information, or it is not collected at all.

- Training is not offered to volunteers in all cases.
- There is no standard orientation process for new volunteers.
- The department does not have a system-wide volunteer recognition program that allows all volunteers from each program area the opportunity to understand the diversity of volunteer accomplishment throughout the parks and recreation department.
- The department does not have standardized forms and procedures to streamline operations and reduce staff workload regarding volunteer recruitment and management.
- The liability waivers are an issue in that there is conflicting information about the types necessary for each area.
- Most areas do not have volunteer job descriptions so that both staff and volunteers understand the skills needed, the expectations, and purpose of each job.

VOLUNTEERISM FINDINGS

- A volunteer manual and guidelines is not in place to guide staff in volunteerism.
- There is no comprehensive listing of long and short-term volunteer opportunities.
- The department is lacking volunteer policies and staff training on managing volunteers.
- The department does not have a work-alone policy in place. This policy states constant supervision should be in place when volunteers are working or two or more volunteers must

- work in a group versus working alone. This is for safety purposes.
- With the exception of youth sport programs, screening of volunteers is done on a limited basis.
- There is no standard orientation for volunteers and training needs to be enhanced.

PHASE TWO: VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The second phase in the Strategic Master Plan planning process is the Vision and Recommendation Phase. Once the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department systems and operations are researched and the key issues and findings are identified, summary statements are written that describe the observations and findings for each researched area. Key findings are developed and various strategies, policies, and actions are offered as possible solutions to address shortcomings and weaknesses in the system and organization. The first product of the Vision and Recommendations Phase is the creation of the Vision Statement, which serves as a catalyst and guide for the creation of the recommendations. Through a series of visioning sessions, the consulting team and department staff created the recommendations that can be implemented to improve the system in the future. The *Community Values Model* was created along with key value statements and goals to serve as the main catalyst for achievements over the next ten years.

Associated with the development of the vision, the consulting team evaluated the demographics of Alexandria and conducted a benchmark analysis that compared Alexandria to five other cities

of comparable size and demographics. These two analysis reports help to shape the *Community Values Model* for the department.

In developing the goals, PROS worked with staff on developing a *Community Values Model*; this focused on the comprehensive community and stakeholder input process that identified a very broad range of ideas, principles, and values held by the citizens and leaders in Alexandria. The consulting team assimilated all of the input collected and developed a Community Values Model, a process of arranging community values into groups of perspectives, which then organizes the framework for the Strategic Master Plan.

There were five community values identified. Those community values recognize what the city must address in managing open space, parks and recreation services.

These include knowing and implementing the community *mandates* for open space, parks and recreation facilities.

The city must establish *standards* of care for parks, recreation facilities, and program services. These standards should be adequately funded.

The city needs to *develop tiered* levels of parks and recreation programs to meet the needs of all citizens and create lifetime users.

The city needs to establish *new sources* of revenue to help offset operational costs and capital costs.

The city needs to create effective *partnerships* with public partners such as schools, not-for-profit, and private partners in the delivery of services and facilities.

The *Community Values Model* for Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department creates a balanced, sustainable approach to guide decisions and allocation of resources. Within this *Community Values Model*, a clear definition of community mandates is provided; allowing the departments to more effectively manage its resources. Consistent standards are established so that a baseline of services and quality exists throughout the system. Tiered facilities and programs allow for the development of lifetime users and to increase capacity of users. With a baseline established, appropriate resources can be applied to developing new sources of funding, including facilities and programs that are sustainable through self-generated revenue to offset and /or recover operating and maintenance costs. Equitable partnerships provide the ability to leverage the city's investment and resources to help deliver park facilities and program services at all levels.

The *Community Values Model* was developed to create the framework or organization of a Strategic Master Plan that is customized to Alexandria and founded in community values. Using this framework, goals, strategies, and actions are defined to fulfill the respective community value. The Strategic Master Plan takes form as a Vision Strategy Matrix, which allows the staff to incorporate results and demonstrate to the key leadership the outcomes of their work. This matrix will serve as a living document and strategy implementation tool for the length of the Strategic Master Plan.

The growing popularity and demand for parks and recreational opportunities are in proportion to the constant growth and development in Alexandria. The need for more open space, parks, recreational facilities, and programs has been

identified. To address these issues, goals, vision statements and recommendations have been identified and outlined in the vision matrix found in this report.

Strategic Master Planning Process
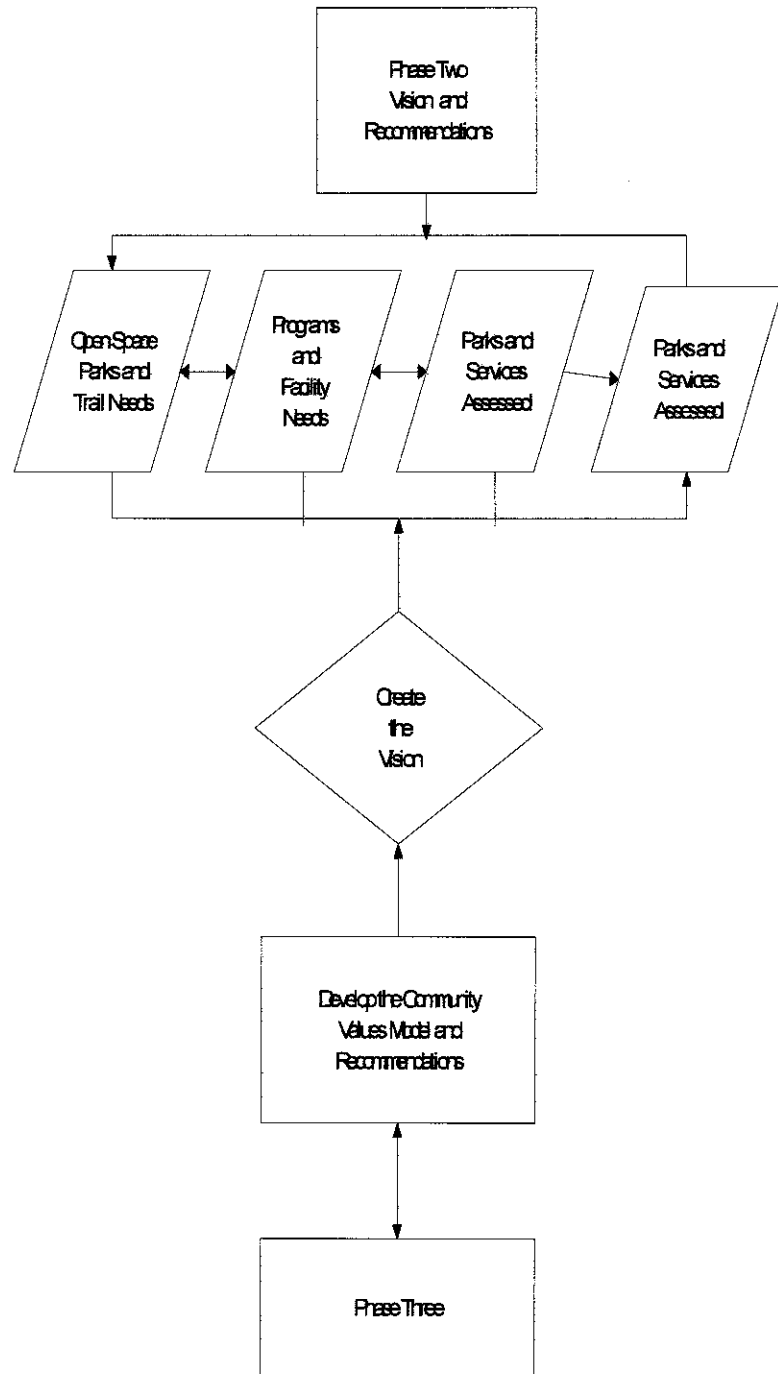
PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

Once the vision and recommendations are developed and adopted, the final phase of the planning process is the Implementations Phase. Key vision statements, recommendations, policies and tactics are summarized and prioritized. These are summarized into a working matrix attached to the body of this Strategic Master Plan report under section six, outlined as Implementation and Funding Strategies. Future energies and efforts of the department will focus on these initiatives by level of priority. Strong links between results from Phase One and Two are recognized in the Implementation Phase. The Implementation Phase also focuses on capital improvement costs to implement the recommendations as well, as funding sources to support operations and maintenance costs associated with each recommendation and policy action. Wide acceptance of these results is one of the goals of the consulting team and staff in creating the vision, key value statements, and tactics. As a result, this shared vision helps the organization progress to a changed environment driven by advancing the public's vision for parks and recreation services.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
PHASE III
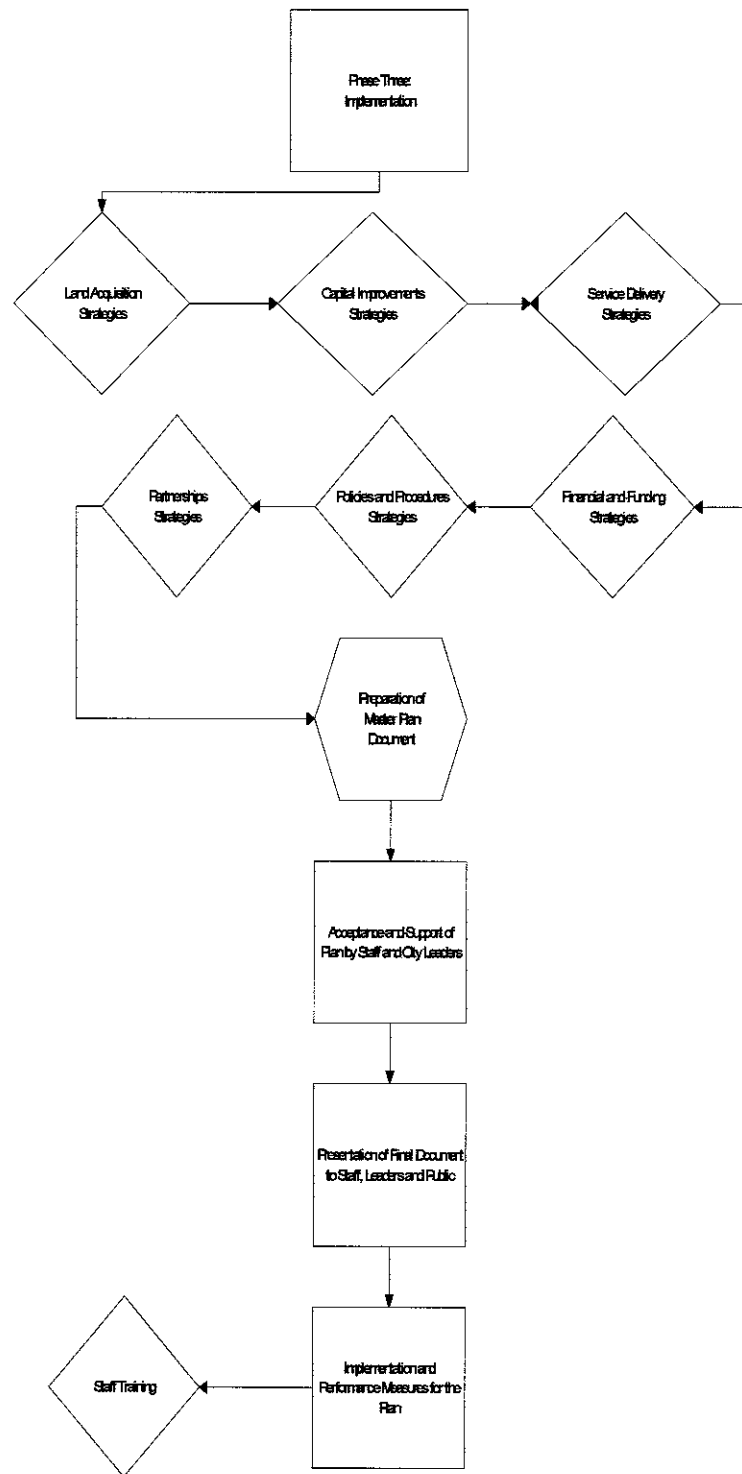
STANDARDS AND MAPPING
INTRODUCTION

Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. developed the Open Space Plan for the City of Alexandria. The Open Space Plan was developed inconjunction with the Recreation Needs Assessment developed by Leon Younger and PROS. Through efforts of these two firms a parks and facility needs analysis was developed using a Geographic Information System (GIS) program to develop a series of maps depicting where open space opportunities exists in Alexandria and where trail and greenway linkages could be created to connect the park system. In addition, two recreation facility maps were created that outlined where game fields and recreation facilities were located to demonstrate how equitable access currently is in the city. Data that was incorporated into the program included the city's current inventory of parks and recreation facilities, Alexandria's population characteristics for 2000, and the projected population for 2010. These provided the consulting teams information to make better decisions on where parks, recreation facilities, and programs services need to be provided to create a more balanced parks and recreation system. These guidelines serve as a visual component to demonstrate where areas of the city are underserved. Five principal characteristics park where identified in the open space plan, which included the following:

1. Primary use
2. Secondary characteristics
3. Service area
4. Ownership
5. Maintenance responsibility

The categories under each of these overall classifications helped to differentiate the variety of open spaces in the city were developed into a comprehensive inventory of existing parks and open spaces. This inventory planning process is an important tool developed for the first time and includes streams, natural features, and cemeteries that all add to the open space available in Alexandria and is outlined in the open space plan.

Map Review

The service area based on density depicts an approximation of the number of people served in the community by that facility or complex.

Recreation Center Density Service Area

The recreation center service area is based on one square foot per person. The sites shown are indicated as stand alone sites. Citywide centers and aftercare sites locations are shown with no service area due to specialized influence on community.

Sports Fields Density Service Area

Classified into four groups for density service areas analysis. The sites included baseball, soccer, softball and multi-use fields. The site densities have not been adjusted to account for the consolidated programming of a user group site. The following densities were used for the specified grouping:

- 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

New Neighborhood Park Target Area

The map identifies target area for potential sites for Neighborhood Parks. Mini parks are considered less than 2 acres; neighborhood parks are 2 to 8 acres; and community parks are greater than 8 acres. The influence a community park has on an area as a neighborhood park was determined by that community park's portion classified as passive*. The service area around these facilities was determined by averaging the population contained within the designated distance from the park site. The average was calculated to be 1 acre of neighborhood/mini park per 1100 people.

The map shows the current park locations; estimated service area around neighborhood and mini parks; estimated service area for community parks influence as a neighborhood parks; vacant land or opportunities for vacant land/open space development**; and population density. Overlaying these components identified potential target locations for future neighborhood park site.

Note:
* Definition indicated by Rhodeside-Harwell Inc. - Open Space plan for City of Alexandria
** Areas identified as vacant or potential opportunities determined by created by Rhodeside & Harwell Inc. - Open Space Plan for City of Alexandria.

Alexandria Recreation Center Density Service Area

Alexandria Sports Fields
Density Service Area
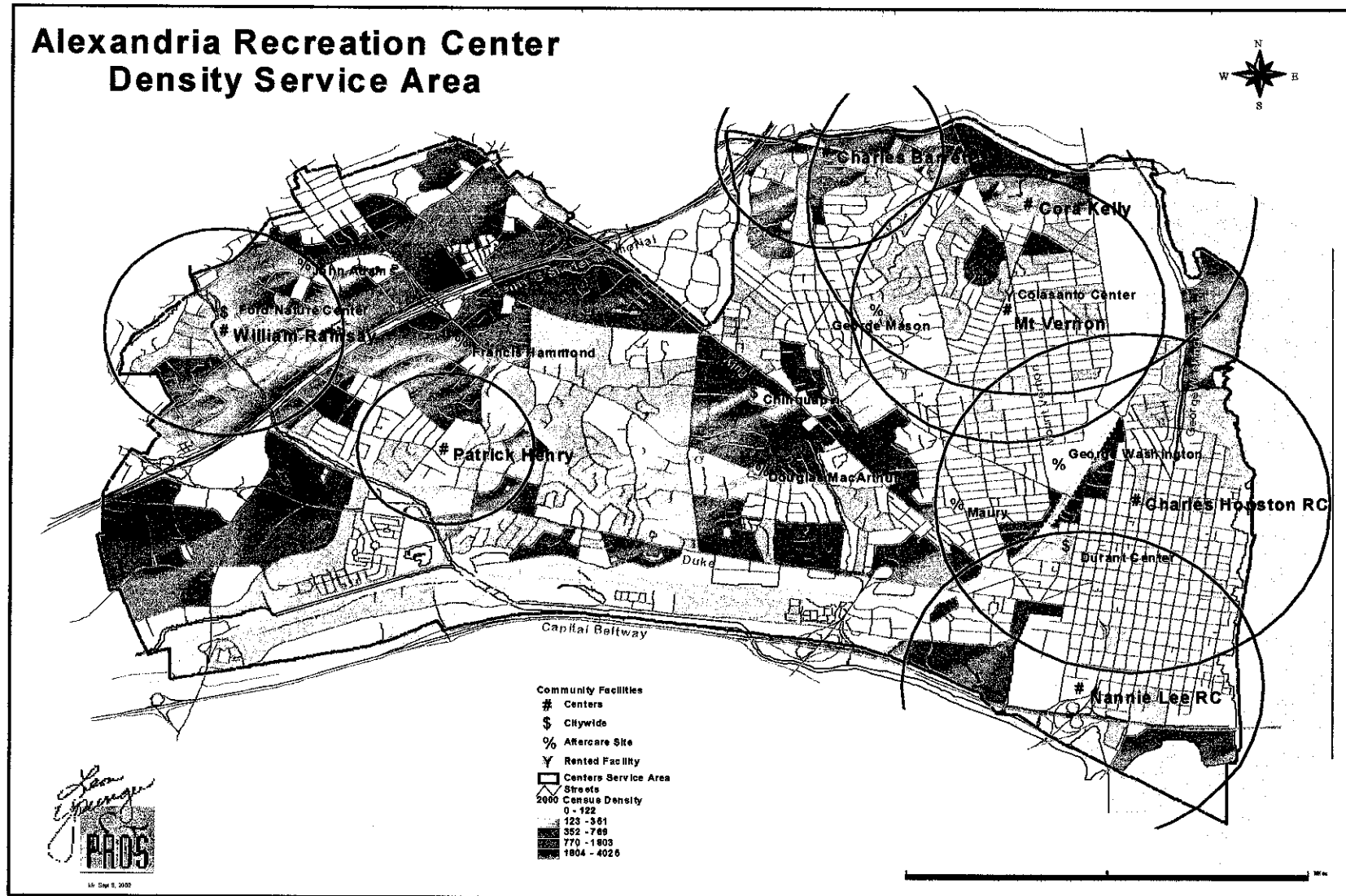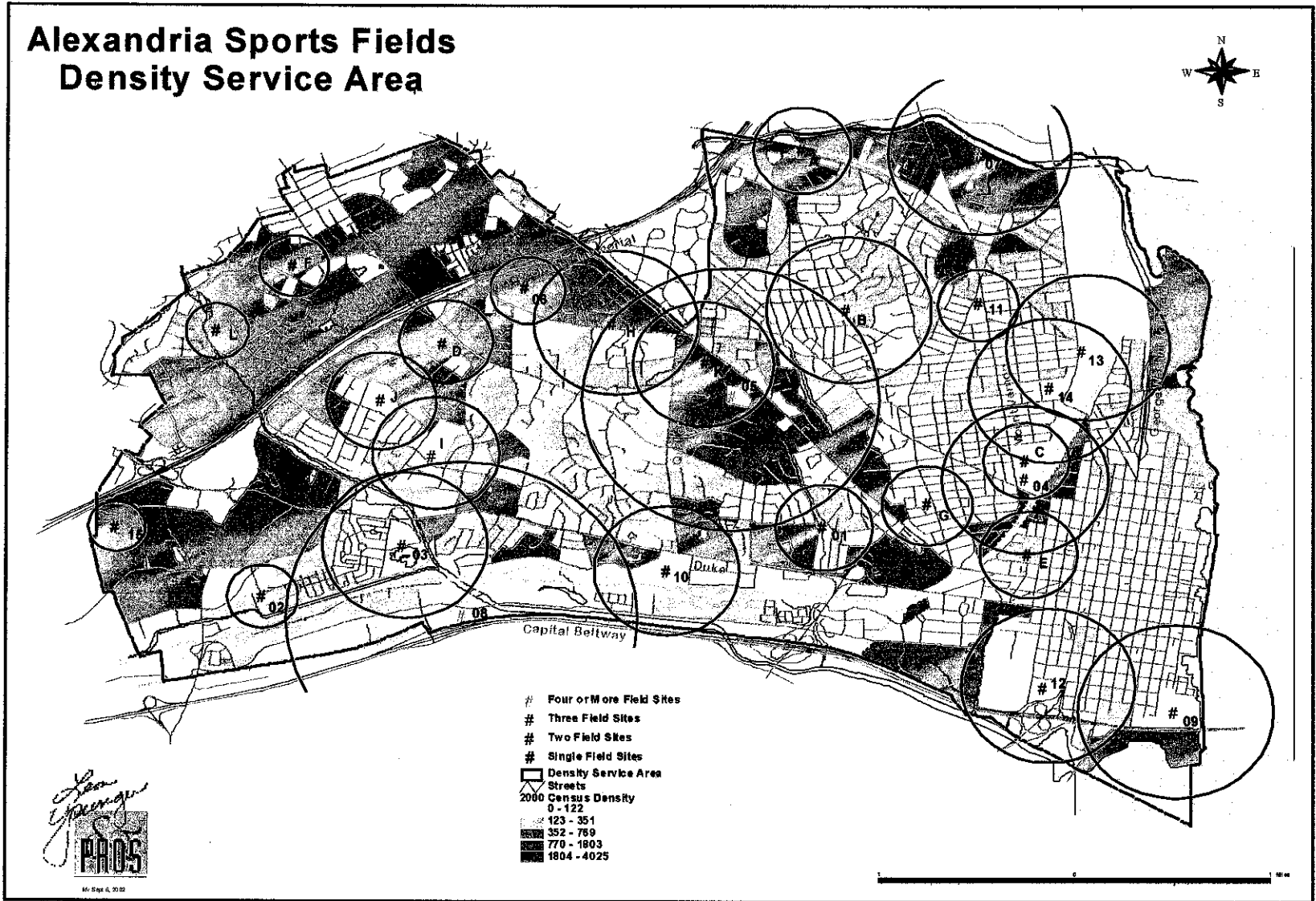
City of Alexandria
Neighborhood Park
Service Areas
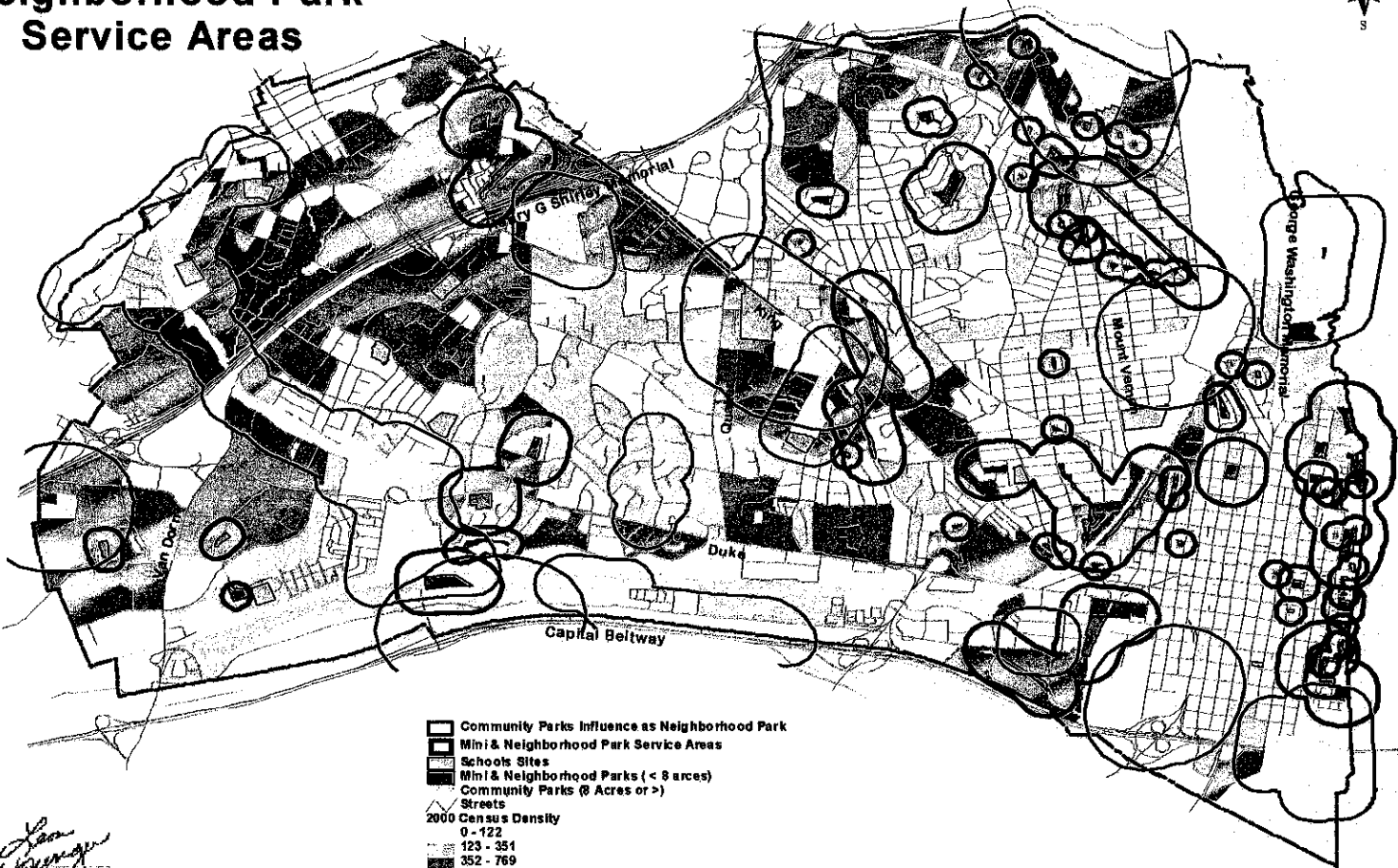
Community Parks Influence as Neighborhood Park
Mini & Neighborhood Park Service Areas
Schools Sites
Mini & Neighborhood Parks (< 8 arces)
Community Parks (8 Acres or >)
Streets
2000 Census Density
    0 - 122
    123 - 351
    352 - 769
    770 - 1803
    1804 - 4025

VISION, MISSION, GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The staff and consulting team held a vision workshop to analyze all findings and observation reports. From this information workshop a new vision was developed to guide the organization for the future. The vision statement states what we want to be known for an is as follows:

> "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."

Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department mission is to support the vision through the following mission statement.

> " Our Mission is to be a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity through the development of effective and efficient recreation programs, facilities and parks for all citizens and visitors to enjoy."

Attractive parks and open space play a role in attracting businesses to Alexandria. Parks and recreation services help to create a positive economic market through attracting people to live in the city and come to the many special events provided by the city. The Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department has worked very hard over the last 10 years to make parks and recreation services a central part of quality of life for all citizens. Recreation programs have been expanded over the years, but the lack of parkland and facilities is the key issue that the department has struggled with in meeting community needs.

Growing popularity and demand for parks and recreational opportunities has been consistent with the growth of the city especially as it applies to youth and young adults. The need for more park facilities is a common theme in Alexandria. Numerous community issues regarding the need for open space, additional neighborhood parks and recreation facilities have been identified through the Needs Assessment Study and transformed into the Strategic Master Plan. The Strategic Master Plan will require resources and staff energy to fulfill all the goals and recommendations. However, the parks and recreation needs are not all the responsibility of the public sector. The private sector needs to acknowledge their role in providing more parks in high density housing areas and assist the city in developing and integrated multi-use path system.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The framework for meeting the Alexandria community's values is outlined in the vision matrix. The vision matrix creates strategies for overcoming key issues regarding land acquisition, capital improvements, recreation service delivery, partnership development, policies and procedural changes, and financial and funding strategies. These are expressed in the five goal statements, the vision statement and the strategy recommendations. The Department will require some management changes and policy direction to maximize the resources they have. This approach to enhancing efficiency and responsibility will require efforts to generate greater revenue from a variety of sources to help offset operational costs.

The following vision matrix illustrates the specific actions related to each of the five key goals statements. The planning team developed these actions as specific implementation measures that will help the city realize the citizen's vision. The department needs to evaluate progress on the list of actions on a semi-annual or annual basis. This is a dynamic list of actions that should be examined and re-evaluated at least every two years. Adding and deleting actions respond to changing priorities and conditions. It will be critical that the department retain the five key goals as a constant framework toward which all actions relate.
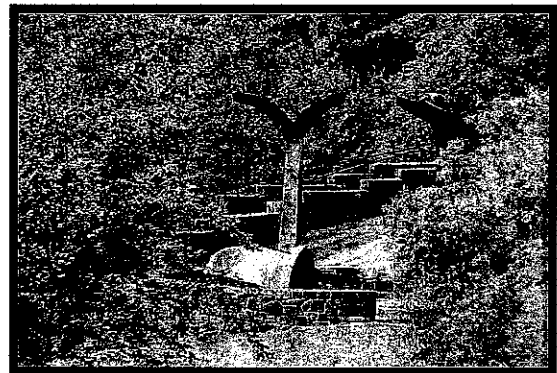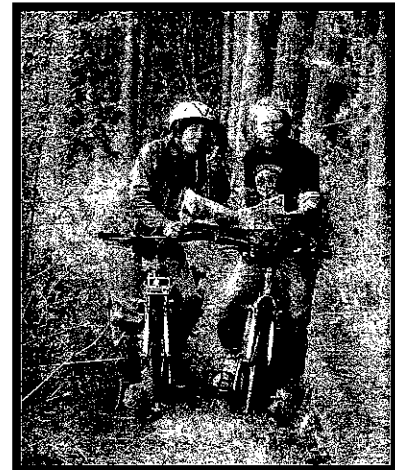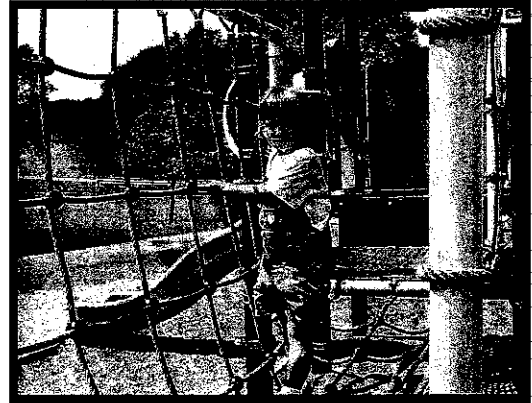
VISIONING MATRIX

Goal: Meet Community Mandates for Open Space, Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services

Vision Statement 1: Our vision is to meet and exceed the community's mandates for parks and recreation services that define, build and enhance all citizens' quality of life.

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.1 Aggressively preserve, protect, enrich and advance open space and associated natural resources.	• Identify those properties outlined in the open space plan that should remain open space. • Identify appropriate funding sources to provide for preservation and acquisition of open space. • Identify Citizen Group to lead initiative • Zoning: •Change zoning to require public open space set-asides. •Apply requirements to commercial properties •Create Open Space Trust Fund citywide. •Develop open space component for all specific planning study areas.	Coordinate with City Hall Action Team as designated in the Open Space Plan Potential additional funding required	Director of P&R	Fall 2002 *on-going
1.2 Connect the community through an effective trails system.	• Prioritize and establish a time line for implementation to develop those trail routes that will connect the system to as many parks as possible. • Continue to apply for Tea-21 monies for developing those trails. We already have two Tea-21 grants. • We are funded annually for bike trails at $77,000.	Staff time coordination with T&ES and bike committee	Supervisory Landscape Architect	Dec 2002 *on-going

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.3	Protect and enhance the urban forest and beautification of the city.	• Develop an urban forestry plan for the city. • Seek council approval for funding the plan. • Implement a work plan that is 70% planned work and 30% reactive work.	Coordination with Community Groups, Planning and Zoning Department, VDOT Potential additional funding required	City Arborist Private consultant to assist in developing urban forestry plan	March 2003 March 2004
1.4	Establish equal opportunity to parks, recreation facilities, and programs citywide.	Department staff will evaluate all programs by mapping on GIS to determine coverage areas for each core program and determine where gaps exist. • Decision will be made to provide more services, partner with another service provider, or discontinue the service if another provider is offering it. • Statement for parks and open space	Identify the information to analyze, Dept. staff time and GIS staff resources Provides strong basis for decision making regarding resource allocation	Deputy Directors, Division Chief and City GIS staff	Jan 2003 Jan 2004

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.5	Provide the highest level of safety in parks and recreation facilities.	• Develop a safety plan for each park in the system and inspect against it. • Seek neighborhood park support for a park watch program.	Staff Time Coordination with police and community	Deputy Director for Parks	Jan 2003 July 2003
1.6	Establish core and non-core programs for each Division.	Appropriate Staff will identify those programs that meet the following criteria: • Have dedicated staff assigned to the program • Have dedicated facility assigned to the program • Consume a large portion of the budget • Have wide demographic appeal • Program is offered 3 out of 4 seasons	Staff Time, Research with various user groups	Deputy Directors and Division Chief for Administration	Jan 2003 May 2003
1.7	Preserve the history of the City and parks system.	• Coordinate historical information on each park and recreation amenity of significant dates to celebrate the park and amenities with the neighborhood and community.	Coordination with the Office of Historic Alexandria	Senior Landscape Architect Office of Historic Alexandria	July 2003 July 2005

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.8	Make all parks and recreation facilities available through transportation initiatives.	• Develop a free or subsidized recreation rider program with the transportation division and Public School Division of the city to provide bus routes to the recreation centers and facilities.	Need to access appropriate funding source Staff Time, coordination with other agencies	Director of R, P&CA Director of Trans-portation Director of DASH, CMO Supt. Of Schools	Jan 2003 Jan 2004
1.9	Protecting and enriching existing parks.	• Work with Alexandria's business and residential communities to create an open space conservatory and stewardship program that can: ○ Accept financial and property donations ○ Support renovation and expansion of parks and other public open spaces ○ Create new parks and preserve existing open spaces and natural areas. • Establish an open space endowment for the purchase and development of public open space. • Continue to seek increased City funding and other sources of funding for park maintenance, renovation, and expansion, as well as for staff training and professional management to improve use of existing resources. • Develop a master plan for each of the City's existing parks to guide short and long-term needs. • Expand the City's volunteer programs, such as Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Garden, and Tree Stewards, to encourage organized groups to help with the maintenance of open space resources. • Develop a management / stewardship plan for cultural and natural resources in Alexandria's parks.		Director of R, P&CA Deputy Directors of Planning Department, Landscape Architect, Volunteer Coordinator, City Manger	

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.10	Developing innovative opportunities for creating additional open space.	• Create a City Hall "Action Team" comprised of representatives from the City Manager's office; the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; Department of Planning and Zoning; Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; Office of Historic Alexandria; and others as needed to create a coordinated strategy for rapid action of land disposition. • Enhance existing requirements for open space in new development and make amendments as needed to ensure that new projects will provide sufficient usable open space. • Develop specific plans for strategies for all stream valleys in the City and target agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and EPA as funding sources for this effort. Build upon the City's on-going environmental efforts regarding these areas. • Develop plans and strategies for natural areas in the City. • Strategically seek and develop additional funding sources that will allow the City to realize the recommended strategies for creating new open space opportunities.		City Manager, Director R, P&CA, Planning Director, Office of Historic Alexandria, Depart. Of Transport-ation, Environ-mental Services	

1.11	Completing implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan.	• The City should seek and encourage all available opportunities to add missing parcels to the Potomac River Waterfront Plan. These strategies include:
		   o Acquisition
		   o Gifts of land
		   o Easements
		   o Purchase of development rights
		 • The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, the Department of Planning and Zoning, and the Office of Historic Alexandria should collaborate to develop an Alexandria Waterfront Education Plan, including interpretive and directional signs, written and electronic materials, and interpretive events.
				Director of R, P&CA, Director of Planning & Zoning, Office of Historic Alexandria	

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.12	Protecting and expanding stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas.	• Seek funding from State, Federal, and other sources for site protection, demonstration projects, and environmental education programs. • Curtail or eliminate the granting of encroachments in stream valley RPA's & adjacent areas. Enhance identified RPA's with natural area buffers. • Require the restoration of RPA's when sites are redeveloped. • Establish on-going regional coordination with Arlington & Fairfax Counties for stream valley & natural resource protection, building on the model established for Four Mile Run. • Conduct a detailed survey of the City's streams and woodlands, threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes in coordination with the Environmental Policy Commission. The survey should include preparation of specific recommendations for the protection of these resources. • Develop financial & other incentives for private property owners within watershed areas to protect the natural resources of those areas (e.g., by reducing impervious surfaces, reusing rainwater on sire, etc.) • Continue to set aside City monies for stream valley restoration projects. Where possible, leverage those funds with grants & other monies in order to restore our streams and stream valleys. • Undertake carefully monitored Adopt-A-Stream and/or similar programs to increase implementation resources and educate citizens about the significance of our stream valleys.		GAPS Coordinator, Director R, P&CA	

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date

1.13 Creating an open space network, The Green Crescent, in new development areas.	• The City should consider using all available planning tools to create an open space network in new development areas. Such tools might include:
	   o Conditional zoning (proffers)
	   o Targeted development areas
	   o Master plans for development areas
	   o Transit-oriented development neighborhoods
	   o Conservation and scenic easements
	   o Taxation-incentive programs
	   o Design guidelines and historic themes
	   o Stream valley setbacks
	 • Require coordination in the planning and design of open space areas for new developments in order to maximize and link spaces in a definable, usable manner.
	 • Evaluate all new development proposals in the context of their impact on Alexandria's public and private open space.
	 • Require significant open space areas that are large, connected and green as part of any discretionary approval. In addition, require the creation and maintenance of visual linkages among open spaces and key vistas.
	 • Create requirements for the maintenance of proffered open spaces in new development areas that may include the creation of endowments for such purposes.
	 • Investigate the transfer of density between adjoining or nearby parcels in exchange for open green areas.
	 • Where development has already occurred, consider conservation and scenic easements, taxation programs, and other techniques for creation, preservation and maintenance of open spaces on these sites.
	 • Review existing zoning and development standards and requirements for open space adequacy in creating and protecting open space in developing areas, as well as for all
			City Manager, Director of Planning, Director of R, P&CA	

	development citywide. Revise standards as required to incorporate desirable ratios of open space to built environment. • Coordinate with Arlington and Fairfax Counties to implement the plan to protect and connect open space linkage in new development areas, where applicable.			

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date

1.14 Protecting and preserving institutional open space.	• Establish a strategy for working collaboratively with the institutions owning such land in order to establish an appropriate approach to open space preservation and public benefit.
	• Encourage conservation easements or other similar actions, with benefits to institutional and nonprofit organizations.
	• Encourage the City to explore additional actions, some of which might include:
	  o Rights of first refusal (should be the City's first line of action when land becomes available)
	  o Gifts of land
	  o Conservation restrictions
	  o Tree cover protection measures
	  o Tail, scenic and/or historical easements
	  o Fee simple acquisition
	  o Purchase of development rights
			GAPS Coordinator, Director of R, P&CA, Planning Director	

1.15 Maximizing use of public school open space areas to satisfy local needs.	• Establish a team for each school project that is representative of the Alexandria School Board; private institutions; the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; the Department of Planning and Zoning; and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in order to identify innovative and effective solutions for use of school open space areas by neighborhood residents while satisfying outdoor school programs. This working relationship should extend to the planning and design of both new and renovated school properties.		Director of R, P&CA, Director of Planning & Zoning, Director of Transport-ation, School Superinten-dent	

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.16 Preserving and protecting cemeteries.	• Work with owners and administrators of the cemeteries within the City to protect the sanctity of these sites while still allowing for visual access, open space linkages, natural resource protection, and interpretation where appropriate. • List, map, and create a guide to Alexandria's cemeteries in order to heighten public awareness of their extent and location. • In cemeteries with unique natural resources, consider developing public/private partnerships for the maintenance of sensitive environmental and cultural resource areas, including use of tools such as historic and scenic easements, where appropriate.		Director of R, P &CA, Director of Historic Sites	

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date

1.17 Creating public open space from vacant land.	• Undertake a detailed survey of all vacant lands, rights-of way, and alleys/street ends in order to understand the City's potential open space opportunities for these sources.
	• For public, vacant lands:
	  o Establish a vacant land program to convert underutilized and vacant land into public open space
	  o Transfer critical vacant land sites to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
	• For private, vacant lands:
	  o Actively identify "key" vacant parcels or portions of larger vacant parcels according to criteria
	  o Purchase or otherwise acquire strategic sites for open space purposes
	  o Actively seek grants and other funding sources to ensure that resources other than those of the City can be used for this purpose.
	• Work Collaboratively with other citywide interests (e.g., schools, and affordable housing advocates) to define a strategy from which everyone stands to gain in the definition/use of vacant property.
	• Reference conservation easements and other protection measures as a precursor to acquisition.
			Director of Planning, Director of R, P&CA	

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.18 Linking and expanding the pedestrian, bicycle and trail system.	• Work with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services to implement bike trails in public right-of-ways (e.g., streets). • Work on a site-by-site basis with private property owners to seek easements for trail development and expansion. • Reassess and revise the Alexandria Trails Plan to provide the connections identified in the Open Space Plan. • Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Department of Transportation and Environmental Services should coordinate regional planning efforts for trail linkages with Fairfax and Arlington Counties, VDOT and the National Parks Service. • The City should aggressively seek private, state, and Federal funding for continued trail development. • The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; and Office of Historic Alexandria should work together to improve trail signage, provide public education through pamphlets, maps, and web sites, mark historic sites and natural resources, and create events to encourage trail use by both walkers and riders. • Evaluate the City's network of public alleys and define those most appropriate for use as trail and open space connectors. • The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services should collaborate with the School Department to identity "Safe Routes to School" using the trail system and other public streets. Coordinate with the proposed "Safe Routes" national effort and seek funding when it becomes available. • The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Department of Planning and Zoning should encourage developers to include facilities for bicyclists and walkers in their Transportation Management Plans.		Director of Transport-ation, Director of R, P&CA, Director of Environ-mental Services	

	• The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services should develop a multi-lingual public education campaign to promote bicycling and walking as effective and healthful ways to get around town while reducing traffic congestion.				

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.19	Enhancing streetscapes and gateways.	• Establish an interagency working group with representation from the Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Transportation and Environmental Services; Planning and Zoning as well as from the Office of Historic Alexandria and VDOT, and the other relevant commissions and groups to create and implement a comprehensive streetscape program for the City. This should encompass: o Signage o Sidewalks o Intersections/crosswalks o Lighting o Street Furniture o Landscaping and street trees o Historical sites o Underground utilities		Director of R, P&CA. Director of Trans- portation, Director of Planning	

	○ Median treatment ● This interagency group should also consider implementation of a gateway program, to include: 　○ Special planning 　○ Lighting 　○ Signage 　○ Paving 　○ Historic Overviews 　○ Irrigation and maintenance 　○ Improvements to highway interchanges within the city limits ● Establish design guidelines for streetscape elements that recognize and reflect the individual character of each neighborhood or area of the City. These might be derived, in part, from the historical features of each area. ● Provide adequate levels of infrastructure to support and maintain these streetscape/gateway programs. In addition to City funding, consider calling upon volunteer programs such as Tree Stewards, Adopt-A-Park, and Adopt-A-Marker programs for heritage trail sites in order to support these efforts.				

| 1.20 | Expanding citywide street tree program and protecting existing trees and woodland areas. | • Establish an aggressive campaign to involve community organizations in protecting existing trees and planting new trees within each neighborhood. Provide incentives for the planting & maintenance of trees on private property.
• Strengthen existing tree protection regulations. Establish a City Tree Plan and identify areas for increased forestation.
• Support & strengthen the newly established Arlington & Alexandria Tree Steward Program to assist in tree maintenance, planting, and public education.
• Request the Department of Planning & Zoning to research the feasibility of establishing a Tree Cover Overlay District. This designation would provide an additional means of protection for trees in areas of the City where these are essential to their quality & character. Distinguish between areas where tree crown cover is provided on private versus public lands.
• Amend City's landscape and streetscape guidelines to improve tree-planting areas (e.g., continuous trenches, enlarged planting areas, greater soil volumes, irrigation and drainage) and increase tree coverage requirements for new developments where possible.
• Strengthen the City's ability to maintain its existing tree inventory (e.g., institute a watering program for new trees, etc.).
• Evaluate existing City tree crown cover based on American Forests recommended standards for residential and commercial areas.
• Create specific agreements with VDOT for maintenance of wooded areas along highways and through the City. | | Director of R, P&CA, City Forestry Division, Director of Planning, Director of Transport-ation | |

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.21 Encouraging the creation of Civic Parks at Metro Stations.	• Establish a collaborative relationship with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to develop a program for upgrading open space at Metro stations. • Establish a working relationship between the appropriate City departments and WMATA to maximize opportunities to create additional civic space in new joint development efforts in and around the City's four Metro stations. • Seek opportunities to link Metro stations to Alexandria's trail network.		Director of Transport-ation, Director of R, P&CA	
1.22 Beautifying interchanges and highway corridors.	• The Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities should collaborate with VDOT on upgrading maintenance of, and developing design standards for, highway interchanges and corridors throughout Alexandria. • The City should monitor all highway expansion programs proposed by VDOT to ensure protection of existing landscape plans.		Director of Transport-ation, Director of R, P&CA, Director of Environ-mental Services	

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.23 Protecting privately – owned open space.	• Provide a biannual seminar on easements that are currently available to all residents of the City. Such easements are available through the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, and through other organizations accepting easements. Individuals owning properties highlighted in or close to those identified in the Open Space Plan, as well as representatives from the real estate and development communities would be specifically invited to attend these sessions. • Actively support the request for an amendment to Article 4 of Chapter 32, Title 58.1 of the Virginia Code, which would decrease to one-quarter acre the minimum acreage required to receive the tax benefit for creation of an easement. • Request authorization of City Council to enact an ordinance to increase the recordation tax for real property deeds recorded for conveyance of land within the City. If then approved by the General Assembly, this authorization could provide the beginning of an open space purchase fund.		Director of Planning, Director of R, P&CA	

Goal: Create High Standards

Vision Statement 2: We will create the highest level of programs, maintenance, and security standards for all areas we manage.

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.1	Create maintenance standards for all assets within the parks and recreation system.	• Develop assigned levels of maintenance for all parks and facilities. • Develop and implement standards and frequencies of maintenance for all tasks. • Develop cost estimates for all tasks and tie to financial resources. • Seek additional funding as necessary.	Could have fiscal impact on existing organizational structure Staff Time	Deputy Directors for Parks and Programs Key staff Division Chief for Administration	Fall 2002 Fall 2003
2.2	Develop design standards and guidelines for renovation and the development of new parks and facilities based on actual and emerging demands to effectively manage capacity.	• Develop minimum design standards for all parks and facilities based on community values. • Integrate consistent image theme to address signage, building design, use of color schemes, etc.	Coordination with Planning T&ES, General Services and Community Groups	Deputy Directors for Parks and Programs Key staff	Jan 2003 Jan 2005

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.3	Establish asset lifecycle standards.	• Identify planned lifespan for all physical assets. • Assure adequate financial resources are identified to effect replacement of all capital assets.	Coordination with Planning, T&ES, General Services and OMB	Deputy Directors for Parks and Programs and Division Chief for Administration Key Staff	July 2003 July 2005 July 2005 July 2006
2.4	Establish safety standards for all users and staff protection.	• Develop minimum guidelines of operations to assure safe environments in parks, facilities, and programs. • Develop minimum guidelines of maintenance to assure safe environments in parks, facilities, and programs.	Coordinate with Office of Risk Management, Code Enforcement, Fire Dept., Police, Public Schools, and NPS	Deputy Directors of Parks and Programs	Winter 2003 Summer 2003
2.5	Develop program Standards for providing consistency of services citywide.	• Recreation staff will develop written standards for all core programs to achieve the highest quality at an established subsidy level. • Non-core services will also have written standards.	Staff Time Potential for reduced subsidies	Deputy Director for Programming and Division Chief for Programming Key program staff	Fall 2002 Fall 2005 *see 1.1

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.6	Create a pricing philosophy and standards for baseline core programs and other departmental services.	• Establish a pricing plan for all recreation programs and services. • Develop Activity Based Costing for all services. • Seek Park and Recreation Commission and City Council approval. • Train staff how to communicate and implement new pricing for services.	Coordinate with OMB, conduct market research	Director of P&R Outside consultant to help write the policy	Jan 2003 Jan 2005
2.7	Establish customer service standards for all operation of the system	• Department Staff will develop a customer service plan for parks, programs, and facilities.	Staff Time	Deputy Directors of Parks and Programs Key Staff	July 2003 July 2004
2.8	Establish consistent citywide communication standards to encourage participation in available programs and events.	• Hire someone to conduct Department Marketing efforts. • Develop a marketing and communication plan for the department that focuses on customer feedback, media development, promotional strategies, image development and use of themes to increase use of facilities and participation in programs.	Coordinate with OMB, conduct market research	Director of P&R Outside consultant to help write the policy	Jan 2003 Jan 2005

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.9	Review and update all department policies to support the vision of the department and to maximize the public access to services.	• Evaluate every policy and procedure in the system. • Determine if the policy is effective. • Make adjustments to the policy. • Develop new policies where appropriate. • Develop flowcharts on procedures to eliminate bureaucracy. • Train staff on new systems.	Staff Time City Council approval City Manager approval	Director	Fall 2002 July 2003
2.10	Develop technology standards that provide for efficiency of operation and service delivery.	• Evaluate current levels of technology in place. • Determine those positions that need technology support or upgrades. • Develop a priority system based on available funding.	Coordination with ITS and OMB	Division Chief of Administration	Fall 2002 June 2003

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.11 Enhance citywide human resource standards through licensing, accreditation certification and training of personnel.	• Identify specific qualifications for positions in the department. • Establish training programs and career development opportunities.	Coordination with personnel department Staff Time Potential of additional funding of training	Senior Staff	Fall 2002 *on-going

Goal: Create a Lifetime Customer

Vision Statement 3: Create a lifetime customer through the development of tiered levels of services that support access by all age segments in Alexandria.

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
3.1	Enhance core services so they can offer expanded services for youth, adults, and families to create a lifetime user. They have dedicated staff and facilities; the core service consumes a large amount of the budget; has a deep history, and has wide demographic appeal.	• Market core services through tiered programs to expand the base and create lifetime users. • Develop new programs to attract new users. • Price services to benefits received.	Staff Time Market research Coordination with other partners	Deputy Directors for Parks and Programs Key staff	Jan 2004 July 2005

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
3.2	Establish progressive levels of pricing that reflect services received.	• Recreation Staff will establish baseline costs for all tiered services through an Activity Based Costing model. **see glossary* • Create new pricing strategies for tiered services. • Train staff how to communicate pricing effectively.	Coordination with OMB, Staff Time, Market research, outside agencies	Director All Key staff	Fall 2002 *on-going
3.3	Create recreation facilities that are community and special use driven to reach all age segments and interests in the community.	• Develop feasibility studies and business plans for each new or renovated recreation facility to maximize its capacity of use and its ability to produce operating income. • Encourage public participation in the planning and design of facilities.	Staff Time, Public Meetings, Market Research, Potential Revenue, Increased Operational and Capital Expenses	Director Deputy Directors of Programming and Parks, Division Chief of Administration	On-going

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
3.4 Provide volunteer opportunities for parks and recreation activities that provide lifetime experiences for members of the community to volunteer their services.	• Hire a volunteer coordinator to develop the volunteer program. • Create a volunteer manual. • Train existing volunteers and staff on the manual. • Train staff how to work with volunteers	Staff Time Coordination with outside agencies, fiscal impact of new position, training of volunteers, supplies and Incentitive	Director	Fall 2002

Goal: Create Revenue Opportunities

Vision Statement 4: Our vision is to create revenue producing programs and facilities that support operational budgets, and capital costs to create lifetime users while finding new dedicated revenue sources for land acquisition and open space.

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
4.1	Renovate and adapt the reuse of community facilities to support operational costs through effective revenue development.	• Establish the cost of each space in recreation facilities. • Determine best program use to maximize productivity and efficiency. • Change out space and/or improve space to accommodate the new program uses. • Track impact.	Coordination with OMB and General Services Potential capital operating funding impact Potential additional revenues	Deputy Directors for parks and programs Division Chief for Administration Key staff Outside consultant	July 2003
4.2	Establish full activity based costing for all programs, maintenance operations, and facilities in the system.	• Teach staff to fill out Activity Based Costing form. • Determine cost per experience and subsidy level. • Establish the cost of a park standard. • Train staff how to be more efficient.	Coordination with OMB and General Services	Deputy Directors for parks and programs Division Chief for Administration Key staff Outside consultant	Jan 2004 Jan 2006

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
4.3	Establish business plans for all core programs and recreation facilities.	• Establish business plans for each core program and facilities to create incentives for staff to increase quality of services and standards	Coordinate with OMB	Key Staff	Fall 2006 Fall 2008
4.4	Establish a revenue fund to keep revenues earned to support the quality of the programs developed and incubate new opportunities.	• Seek City Manager and City Council approval to create revenue funds for all core programs and destination facilities to create incentives for staff to increase quality of services and standards.	Coordination with CMO and OMB	Director	Fall 2002 July 2004
4.5	Develop an effective marketing and communication plan for all revenue producing programs and activities.	• Develop a revenue strategy through effective marketing practices that will encourage people to want to pay for quality services and facilities.	Staff Time Potential additional revenue, cost & clientele	Director Deputy Director for Programs and new Marketing entity	July 2004 July 2005

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
4.6	Create Grants, Alliances, Partnerships, and a Sponsorships Division (GAPS) for helping to support the development of additional fiscal resources.	• Develop a GAPS position through the support from the City Manager to leverage the resources for grants, create alliances with other service providers, develop more sponsorship to offset operating costs, and to enhance public/public, public/not-for-profit, public/private partnerships.	Additional position, and associated financial resources Potential revenues Potential program expansion	Director	Fall 2002

Goal: Develop Partnerships

Vision Statement 5: Our vision will be to develop effective partnerships with the public sector, not-for-profit, community groups, and private service providers to leverage our resources and provide adequate open space, parks and services to our residents.

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
5.1	Develop effective and implemental working policies that contribute and encourage public, private, and not-for-profit partners.	• Establish principles, and policies for each type of partnership the city engages in, i.e., public/public, public/private, public/not-for-profit.	Potential revenues Potential program expansion Coordination with all entities	Director GAPS staff	July 2003 July 2004
5.2	Seek to enhance the development and use of parks and other community facilities with public/public partnerships.	• Refine existing Adopt-A-Park program to include routine opportunities for park improvements. • Enhance partnerships with the school district on joint use of facilities.	Coordination with schools and community groups	Deputy Director for Parks and Programs	Fall 2002 *on-going

Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
5.3 Seek to enhance the development of not-for-profit partnerships that provide services for each partner's benefit and the community's benefit.	• Develop a list of all not-for-profits in the city. • Determine where they could help the department in the delivery of services. • Develop a partnership workshop and invite all not-for-profits. • Outline areas in the workshop where they can contribute and benefit. • Create working agreement and assign individual staff to each partnership.	Coordinate with all not for profit groups	GAPS Coordinator Director	July 2004
5.4 Seek to enhance the incorporation of private partnerships that provide services beyond the city's capability and/or for efficiency purposes.	• Review costs of services and assess if the private sector can provide the same quality at a lower cost. • Develop RFP's. • Determine which proposals provide the level of service at a lower cost with the same or higher quality and affect the appropriate MOU's, MOA's, service agreements and contracts.	Cost savings Improved efficiency Enhanced quality	Director Deputy Directors for parks and programs Division Chief for Administration	Sept 2002 *on-going

	Strategy Recommendation Policy	Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
5.5	Track the level of service provided by each partner on an annual basis and adjust accordingly to the commitment desired.	• Develop levels of commitment for each partnership – create a working agreement with measurable outcomes. • Track resources vested. • Review with each partner on a routine basis where each partner stands regarding his or her contractual commitment.	Cost savings Improved efficiency Enhanced quality	GAPS Coordinator Staff assigned to the partnership	June 2003 *on-going
5.6	Enhance and support the role of commissions, committees and advisory groups.	• Establish goals and responsibilities for each collective group. • Develop criteria to meet goals. • Evaluate accomplishments on an annual basis.	Staff Time Promotes community advocacy	Staff assigned	June 2003 *on-going
5.7	Develop an Alexandria Open Space Conservancy	• Establish citizen group. • Develop goals. • Develop revenue opportunities.	Staff support	Citizens City Council Support staff	June 2003

* on-going projects, programs
** see glossary 3.3

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Master Plan is based upon a review of the entire community, an analysis of the existing parks system, the identification of user needs, the development of customized recreation standards, and focus on land acquisition and open space needs regarding parks, trails and recreation spaces. The plan is intended to be action-oriented. It is design to provide framework from which the city can enhance its parks and recreation system.

Instrumental to implementation of the study, is the identification of adequate funding at a time when balancing municipal budgets has become difficult. Even though funding options are limited at this stage, it does not appear to reflect upon the high value Alexandrians place on parks and recreation facilities and services.

Implementing the Strategic Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks, open space and recreation services. The department operates a variety of parks and recreation facilities throughout the city. Many of these facilities and parks require upgrades to support the future needs of the community. In order to ascertain the productivity and condition of these facilities, a facilities analysis was conducted. All of Alexandria's eleven recreation centers, three of the school based after-school centers, and twenty of the 127 parks were evaluated. The recreation centers were assessed in order to identify the current condition of each facility, the overall level of use the facility is receiving, and to generate

potential renovation and re-use options to enhance the productivity of the facility. General improvement recommendations for each site were developed and cost estimates were formulated to identify the impact of effecting such improvements. The after-school sites were assessed and ideas for consideration regarding enhancing productivity were assimilated. No capital improvement cost estimates were developed for these school owned sites.

A cross section of parks were evaluated in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the park system condition and the necessary improvements that would be required to meet current demands of the community. The capital improvement costs for enhancing parks is estimated at $9 Million amortized over ten years.

The open space acquisition costs and trail development costs need to be developed and with funding strategies. The open space acquisition costs averages $3,000,000 per acre, currently in several areas of Alexandria. A consistent funding source is needed to support the needs for trail development and connections. It is estimated that $50 Million is needed to support the land acquisition needs outlined in this plan.

PARK FACILITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

A sampling of park facilities enabled the consultant to draw general conclusions regarding the entire park system.

The parks in Alexandria are generally well maintained, although they contain many amenities that are near the end of their useful life.

Most parks are currently being maintained to a level three, on a rating system of one being the most intense maintenance and five being the least intense.

There is an inconsistent image regarding parks and facilities. The lack of a consistent graphics program and color scheme makes the facilities appear less than optimal.

Many facilities are in need of renovation, and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Most facilities do not have adequate parking.

The athletic facilities are somewhat scattered throughout the park system, and a consolidation through adaptive re-use of facilities could prove to enhance site productivity.

There appears to be over use of the athletic facilities, possibly a result of extensive team sport practices.

Recommendations

The assessment of park improvements focused on needs that would enhance infrastructure improvements in parks. The site assessment for capital improvement needs evaluated turf, site amenities, lighting, parking and safety problems.

In order to elevate the condition of the park system from a level three to a level two, it is estimated that related costs will be in the neighborhoods of $10,000 per acre in capital improvement investments. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities currently maintains 964 acres of parkland. This estimate equates to an infusion of approximately $9,640,000.

Improvements might include such items as tennis court renovations, ball field renovations, new sports lighting systems, playground replacements, stand alone restroom renovation and replacements, and parking improvements and other related site work.

Consolidation of similar athletic venues and better scheduling of practice times will result in considerable improvements to game fields.

PARKS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

The Parks Capital Improvement evaluation focused on needs that would enhance park improvement as it applies to infrastructure. The consulting team did site assessments for capital improvements that focused on turf, site amenities such as restrooms, playgrounds, signage, lighting, picnic areas, parking, tennis courts, basketball goals, fencing and other park needs. The general observation is the city needs to invest approximately $10,000 per acre in capital improvements for the 965 acres they currently own.

Capital Improvement Plan
Recommended Projects and Estimated Costs Chart

City of Alexandria - Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities						
Recommended Projects and Estimated Costs						
Recreation Facility	**Project**	**SF**	**SF Cost**	**Est. Cost**	**Lump Sum**	**Total Cost/Facility**
Charles Barrett Recreation Center (9,800 SF)	Multi-Purpose Room Renovation New Weight Room Equipment				$40,000 $30,000	$70,000
Chinquapin Park Recreation Center (34,000 SF)	Renovation Study Renovation Addition	 34,000 25,000	 $120 $140	 $4,080,000 $3,500,000	$20,000	 $7,600,000
Doctor Oswald Durant Memorial Recreation Center	Renovation in Progress					
Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center	Renovation in Progress					
Patrick Henry Recreation Center (8,850 SF)	Renovation Addition	8,850 6,000	$160 $140	$1,416,000 $840,000		$2,256,000
Charles Houston Recreation Center (24,302 SF)	Renovation Study Renovation Addition	 24,302 10,000	 $160 $140	 $3,888,320 $1,400,000	$20,000	 $5,308,320
Cora Kelly Recreation Center (25,840 SF)	Renovation Study Reception Desk Relocation Selected Renovation	 25,840	 $50	 $1,292,000	$20,000 $30,000	 $1,342,000

Lee Center	Renovation				$200,000		
	New square footage over entry	1,000	$180	$180,000			$380,000
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center (13,690 SF)	Renovation	13,690	$100	$1,369,000			$1,369,000
Mount Vernon Recreation Center (18,900 SF)	HVAC study				$1,000		
	Floor repairs; baffle replacement				$100,000		$101,000
William Ramsay Recreation Center (18,000 SF)	Alarm System Study				$1,000		$1,000

Summary							
Total Number of Facilities	Total Number of Projects	Total SF	Average SF Cost				Total Cost
11	21	148,682	$132				$18,427,320

FUNDING STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

A significant challenge for the City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department in meeting public recreational demands is funding. Significant financial investment is necessary for physical development, land acquisition and for maintaining on-going resources for park management. This includes programming, operational maintenance, and public safety assistance. Implementing the recommended policies and action strategies hinge on the ability to secure funding from multiple sources and responding with effective management of parks and recreation facilities and programs. Several potential funding mechanisms are outlined in the Strategic Master Plan.

The major impediment to the implementation of this study is the lack of adequate dedicated funding sources for both capital improvements and land acquisitions and for ongoing park management. Currently significant funding deficiency exists Strategies could be pursued by the city to meet the needs of the park and recreation system.

Estimated capital improvement and maintenance improvement costs are outlined at $26,827,000. This figure does not include land acquisition costs or trail improvement costs. Additionally, no one funding source can reasonably be expected to generate the level of funding required to implement this study. Currently in several areas of the city, land acquisition costs $500,000 per acre. Land acquisition funding methods will require several alternatives to meet the goal of adding additional land for parks.

Currently, there is a need for additional operational and maintenance dollars to support existing system infrastructure needs to continue providing the level of service that Alexandrians desire. The park system maintenance standards are maintained at a level three. This is based on a rating scale of 'one' being the most intense maintenance and 'five' being the least.

There are parks and facilities image inconsistencies. The lack of a consistent graphics program and color schemes makes the facilities appear less than optional. The city should attempt to move maintenance standards to a level two from a level three.

Throughout the United States many cities have turned to creative methods to develop earned income to help offset operational and capital costs. Alexandria has the ability to implement these revenue development options, should the city choose to do so.

The following funding sources are a comprehensive listing of funding options the city should consider.

FUNDING SOURCE SUMMARY

The funding options listed below provide the city with alternatives to consider that other park systems across the United States use to help fund their systems. The most important funding options the City of Alexandria should consider are listed below.

1) Dedicated/development fees
2) Recreation service fees
3) Partnerships
4) Recreation and conservation easements
5) Land trust
6) Public grants
7) Special improvement district

8) Real estate transfer fees
9) Capital improvement fees
10) Sales tax

Corporate Sponsorships

This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. Sponsorships are also highly used for programs and events.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a City department, or a private business and a City agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Dedication/Development Fees

These fees are assessed for the development of residential and/or commercial properties with the proceeds to be used for parks and recreation purposes, such as open space acquisition, community park site development, neighborhood parks development, regional parks development, etc.

Foundation/Gifts

These dollars are raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of items, etc.

Recreation Service Fees

This is a dedicated user fee, which can be established by a local ordinance or other governmental procedures. Its purpose is for constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities, which require a reservation of some type, or other purposes as defined by the local government. Examples of such activities include adult basketball, volleyball, and softball leagues, youth baseball, soccer, and softball leagues, and special interest classes. The fee allows participants an opportunity to contribute toward the upkeep of the facilities being used.

Intermodal Transportation and Efficiency Act

This funding program, commonly called TEA-21 Grants was authorized by the Federal Government in 1991. Funds are distributed through the state. There are several million dollars in enhancement revenues available for transportation related projects, including bicycle and pedestrian trails, rail depot rehabilitation, landscaping, and beautification projects.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

These funds are awarded for acquisition and development of parks, recreation and supporting facilities through the National Park Service and State Park System.

General Obligation Bonds

Bonded indebtedness issued with the approval of the electorate for capital improvements and general public improvements.

Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Tax

Tax based on gross receipts from charges and meals services, which may be used to build and operate sports fields, regional parks, golf courses, tennis courts, and other special park and recreation facilities.

Grants
A variety of special grants either currently exist through the Federal and State governmental systems or will be established through the life of current and proposed facilities.

Special Improvement District/Benefit District
Taxing districts established to provide funds for certain types of improvements that benefit a specific group of affected properties. Improvements may include landscaping, the erection of fountains, and acquisition of art, and supplemental services for improvement and promotion, including recreation and cultural enhancements.

Annual Appropriation/Leasehold Financing
This is a more complex financing structure which requires use of a third party to act as issuer of the bonds, construct the facility and retain title until the bonds are retired. The City enters into a lease agreement with the third party, with annual lease payments equal to the debt service requirements. The bonds issued by the third party are considered less secure than general obligation bonds of the City, and therefore more costly. Since a separate corporation issues these bonds, they do not impact the City's debt limitations and do not require a vote. However, they also do not entitle the City to levy property taxes to service the debt. The annual lease payments must be appropriated from existing revenues.

Interlocal Agreements
Contractual relationships entered into between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.

Revenue Bonds
Bonds used for capital projects that will generate revenue for debt service where fees can be set aside to support repayment of the bond.

Private Concessionaires
Contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed, and operated by the private sector with additional compensation paid to the City.

Bond Referendum
The plan recommends massive capital needs, renovation and new facilities, to meet the needs and demands of residents of the City. The plan recommends that a referendum be sought beginning in 2003. These bonds would be general obligation bonds initiated through City Council approval and citizen vote.

Fees/Charges
The plan has documented that the Department is far undervalued and must position its fees and charges to be market-driven and based on both public and private facilities. The potential outcome of revenue generation is consistent with national trends relating to public park and recreation agencies, which generate an average 35% to 50% of operating expenditures.

Cost Avoidance
The Department must take a position of not being everything for everyone. It must be driven by the market and stay with the Department's core businesses. By shifting its role as direct provider, the City will experience savings by deciding whether or not to provide that facility or program. This is a cost avoidance. The estimated savings listed could be realized through partnering, outsourcing, or deferring to another provider in the provision of a service and/or facility.

Real Estate Transfer Fees
As cities and counties expand, the need for infrastructure improvements continues to grow. Since parks add value to neighborhoods and communities, some cities and counties have turned to real estate transfer fees to help pay for needed renovations. Usually transfer fees amount to ¼% to ½ % on the total sale of the property.

Land Trust
Many counties have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost for acquiring land and conservation easements that needs to be preserved and protected for greenway purposes. This could be a good source to look to for acquisition of future lands.

Naming Rights
Many cities and counties have turned to selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement. This opportunity exists in the City.

Rental Car Tax
This tax is designated for land acquisition purposes. Some cities and counties have used a percentage of rental car taxes to support land acquisition or improvements in parks.

Establish a Designated License Plate for Parks
This funding mechanism can be used to finance improvements or programs in the County or City through a designated license plate.

Cell Towers
Cell towers attached to existing light poles in game field complexes is another source of revenue the City could seek in helping support the system.

Private Developers
These developers lease space from City-owned land through a subordinate lease that pays out a set dollar amount plus a percentage of gross dollars for recreation enhancements. These could include restaurants, driving ranges, sports complexes, and recreation centers.

Benefit Assessment Act of 1982 (Government Code section 54703 et seq.)
This statute provides a uniform procedure for the enactment of benefit assessments to finance the maintenance and operation costs of drainage, flood control, and street light services and the cost of installation and improvement of drainage or flood control facilities. Under legislation approved in 1989 (SB 975, Chapter 1449), this authority is expanded to include the maintenance of streets, roads, and highways. As with most other assessment acts, cities, counties, and special districts that are otherwise authorized to provide such services may use it.

Facilities Benefit Assessment
The FBA ordinance establishes areas of benefit to be assessed for needed improvements in newly developing areas. Each parcel within an area of benefit is apportioned its share of the total assessment for all improvements (including those required for later development phases) which is then recorded on the assessment roll. Assessments are liens on private property as with the state assessment acts. Upon application for a building permit the owner of the parcel must pay the entire assessment (the payment is pro rated if only a portion of the parcel is being developed at one time). Payment releases the City's lien on the property. The funds that are collected are placed in separate accounts to be used for the needed improvements and do not

exceed the actual cost of the improvements plus incidental administrative costs.

The Mello-Roos Act

The 1982 Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act (Government Code Sections 53311 et seq.) enables cities, counties, special districts, and school districts to establish community facilities districts (CFDs) and to levy special taxes to fund a wide variety of facilities and services. The proceeds of a Mello-Roos tax can be used for direct funding and, in the case of capital facilities, to pay off bonds. Mello-Roos financing has similarities to special taxes and special assessments, and in some situations, it has advantages over both.

Licensing Rights

This revenue source allows the Department and City to license it name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sale clothing or other items with the cities name on it. The normal licensing fee is 6 to 10% of the cost of the resale item.

Sales Tax

The revenue source is very popular for funding park and recreation agencies either partially or fully. The normal sales tax rate is 1cent for operations and one half cent for capital. This tax is very popular in high traffic tourism type cities and with counties and state parks.

Food and Beverage Tax

The tax is usually associated with convention and tourism bureaus. However, since parks and recreation agencies manage many of the tourism attractions, they receive a portion of this funding source for operational or capital expenses.

Gaming Tax

This tax is very popular in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states that have gambling. These dollars come in a form of a percentage of what the City and state receive. This is a very popular revenue source that is typically shared with schools, libraries and parks.

Capital Improvement Fees

These fees are on top of the set user rate for accessing facilities such as golf, recreation centers and pools to support capital improvements that benefit the user of the facility.

Merchandising Sales

This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops and pro shops for either all of the sales or a set gross percentage.

Concession Management

Concession management is from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. The City either contracts for the service or receives a set of the gross percentage or the full revenue dollars that incorporates a profit after expenses.

Friends Associations

These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest.

Advertising Sales

This revenue source is for the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as in the City's program guide, on scoreboards, dasher boards and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent that exposes the product or service to many people.

Subordinate Easements – Recreation / Natural Area Easements

This revenue source is available when the City allows utility companies, businesses or individuals to develop

some type of an improvement above ground or below ground on their property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount to be received by the City on a annual basis.

Irrevocable Remainder Trusts

These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. They will leave a portion of their wealth to the City in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over a period of time and then is available for the City to use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs that are designated by the trustee.

Life Estates

This source of money is available when someone wants to leave their property to the City in exchange for them to live on their property until their death. The City usually can use a portion of the property for park purposes and then all of it after the person's death. This revenue source is very popular for individuals who have a lot of wealth and their estate will be highly taxed at their death and their children have to sell of their property because of probate costs. This allows the person to receive a good tax deduction yearly on their property while leaving a life estate. It is good for the City because they do not have to pay for the land.

Permits

These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The City either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service that is being provided.

Reservations

This revenue source comes from the right to reserve specific public property for a set amount of time. The reservation rates are usually set and apply to group picnic shelters, meeting rooms for weddings, reunions and outings or other type of facilities for a special activity.

Catering Permits and Services

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the City. Also many cities have their own catering service and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food.

Marine Slips/Permits

This revenue source is for a permit to store boats on public property for a set amount based on a lineal foot and service charges on an annual basis.

Volunteerism

The revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist the department in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the City's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy into the system.

Sale of Mineral Rights

Many cities sell their mineral rights under parks for revenue purposes to include water, oil, natural gas and other by products for revenue purposes.

Integrated Financing Act

This legislation creates an alternate method for collecting assessments levied under the Landscaping and Lighting Act, the Vehicle Parking District Law and the Park and Playground Act. This act applies to all local agencies. This act can be used to pay the cost of planning, designing, and constructing capital facilities authorized by the applicable financing act, pay for all or part of the principle and interest on debt incurred pursuant to the applicable financing act and to reimburse a private investor in the project. It serves two unique properties: (1) it can levy an assessment which is contingent upon future land development and payable

upon approval of a subdivision map or zone change or the receipt of building permits; (2) it allows the local agency to enter into an agreement with a private investor whereby the investor will be reimbursed for funds advance to the agency for the project being financed.

Parking Fee
This fee applies to parking at selected destination facilities such as beach parking areas, major stadiums and other attractions to help offset capital and operational cost.

Equipment Rental
The revenue source is available on the rental of equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, roller blades, boogie boards, etc. that are used for recreation purposes.

Entertainment Tax
This tax is on ticket sales for major entertainment venues such as concert facilities, golf tournaments, car races type of venues to help pay for traffic control and sports stars who come into the City based on the earnings they receive from their winnings. This tax also applies to video game machines.

Ticket Sales/Admissions
This revenue source is on accessing facilities for self-directed activities such as pools, ice-skating rinks, ballparks and entertainment activities. These user fees help offset operational costs.

Special Fundraisers
Many park and recreation agencies have special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects.

Utility Roundup Programs
Some park and recreation agencies have worked with their local utilities on a round up program whereby a consumer can pay the difference between their bill up to the even dollar amount and they

then pay the department the difference. Ideally, these monies are used to support utility improvements such as sports lighting, irrigation cost and HVAC costs.

Franchise Fee on Cable
This allows cities to add a franchise fee on cable to be designated for parks. The normal fee is $1.00 a month or $12.00 a year per household. Fees are usually designated for open space acquisition or capital improvements.

Solid Waste Fee
Cities are able to add cost for land fills and drop stations that are designated to provide space and facilities for both. Once these fees cover the cost of buildings and landfills they can designate a percentage to other City services and several cities have opted to finance park improvements from solid waste fees.

Water Utility Fee
Cities have added a special assessment on to water utility fees paid by homeowners and businesses to cover the costs of water street trees, landscaping, fountains, and pools. The fee is usually a percentage of the bill (2% or 3%).

Earnings Fee
This fee taxes communities who have high population of workers who do not live in the City but work in the City. The employees pay ½% of their total salary earned to the City to cover safety forces, streets, and public works services.

Insurance Tax
Cities can tax insurance payments as it applies to insurance premiums on homes, cars, inventory and equipment. Parks and Recreation Departments can receive a percentage of the cities tax collected on insurance premiums. This tax is for Parks and Recreation and is typically used for dedicated purposes to

reduce liability in Parks and Recreation Facilities but some cities have used it for new capital improvement.

Room Over Rides on Hotels for Sports Tournaments and Special Events

Cities have begun to keep a percentage of hotel rooms that are booked when the City hosts a major sports tournament or special event. The overrides are usually $5.00 to $10.00 depending on what type of room. Monies collected help offset operational costs for the City in hosting the events.

Leasebacks on Recreational Facilities Can Produce Revenue

Many cities do not have capital dollars to build revenue-producing facilities but they will hire a private investor to build the facility according to the specifications they want and the investment company will finance the project and the City will lease it back from them over 20 years. This can be reversed where by the City builds the facility and leases to private management to operate it for a % of gross dollars to pay off the construction loans through a subordinate lease.

Recreation Surcharge Fees on Sports and Entertainment Tickets, Classes, MasterCard, Visa, Golf

This fee is a surcharge on top of the regular sports revenue fee or convenience fee for use of MasterCard and Visa. The fee usually is no more than $5.00 and usually is $3.00 on all exchanges. The money earned is used to help pay off the costs of improvement or for operational purposes.

Family Tree Program

Many cities have worked with local hospitals to provide cash to the parks system to buy and plant a tree in honor of every new born in the City. The hospitals invest $250.00 to $300.00 and

receive the credit. The parks system purchases quality trees.

Gift Catalogs

Gift catalogs provide organizations the opportunity to let the community know on a yearly basis what their needs are.

Maintenance Endowments

Maintenance Endowments are set up for organizations and individuals to invest in ongoing maintenance improvements and infrastructure needs. Endowments retain money from user fees, individual gifts, impact fees, development rights, partnerships, conservation easements, and for wetland mitigations.

Alcohol Tax

A percentage of alcohol tax gain by the state is made available for individual cities and county park systems to retain support efforts to develop programs and services targeted for youth to assist in skill development programs, after-school programs, summer camps, and other family type programs.

Cigarette Tax

In some states, the sales tax gain by the state for cigarettes is redistributed to cities and counties for programs to teach and curb youth smoking through effective prevention recreation programs.

Subordinate Development Rights

Some cities and counties rent their development rights below park ground or along trails to fiber optic companies or utilities. The park agency collects a yearly fee on a linear foot basis.

Booth Lease Space

In some urban cities, the city sells booth space to sidewalk vendors in parks or during special events. For a flat rate based on volume received. The booth space can also apply to farmers' markets, art schools, and antique type fairs.

Lighting Fees

Some cities charge additional fees for the lighting charges as it applies to leagues, special use sites, and signature type facilities that require lighting above a recreational level.

Program Contractor Fees

Cities and counties receive a percentage of gross contractor fees for program held on City or county facilities. The percentages range from 25% to 40% depending on space, volume, and the amount of marketing the City does for the contractor.

Reverse Sponsorships

This revenue source allows agencies to receive indirect revenue from cross promoting their current sponsors with professional sporting events such as in racing with card and drivers and significant sports heroes. Indirect sponsorships provide up to 15% of the sponsorship value back to the City for linking their parks and recreation sponsors with professional sports.

Signage Fees

This revenue source taxes citizens and businesses with signage fees at key locations with high visibility for short term events. Signage fees range in price from $25.00 per signs up to $100.00 per sign based on the size of the sign and location.

Dog Park Fees

These fees are attached to kennel clubs for the right for their club to have their own dog park facilities for their exclusive use. Fees are on the dogs themselves and on people who take care of people's dogs.

Trail Fee

These fees are used for access to golf course trails and bike trails to support operational costs. Trail fees for golf carts are typically $200.00 a year and for bike trails $35.00 to $50.00 a year.

Manufacturing Product Testing and Display

This is where the city works with specific manufacturers to test their products in parks, recreation facilities and in program services. The city test the product under normal conditions and reports back to the manufacturer how their product is doing. Examples are in lighting, playgrounds, tires on vehicles, mowers, irrigation systems, seed & fertilizers (etc.). This city gets the product for free but must pay for the costs of installation and for tracking results.

**Grant Funding Sources &
Strategies for Land
Acquisition**

Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. RHR

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants

The federal government through the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service disburses North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants. Grant funds support acquisition, restoration, and enhancement projects involving wetland and wetland-associated uplands. Begun in 1989, the program provides matching grants to private or public organizations or to individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Funds for the grant have been increasing gradually almost every year since its inception. In 2001, $40 million was allocated for N.A.W.C.A. grants. Most of this money was matched on a 2:1 basis. A few were matched at 1:1. The N.A.W.C.A. small grant program provides funding up to $50,000. An average small grant amounts to just under $40,000. The N.A.W.C.A. large grant program provides between $50,000 and $1 million.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund supports environmental education and action-oriented conservation and restoration projects within Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed. The fund earns revenue by selling license plates with Chesapeake Bay designs on them. It disperses its earning through grants to state and local governments, as well as nonprofit entities. In 2001, the fund awarded more than $450,000 in grants to some 75 different projects.

Recreation Trails Program (Virginia Recreation Trails Fund

This is a small, competitive grant program that distributes monies from the ISTEA/TEA21 program. It is intended to aid the construction and rehabilitation of recreational trails. The funding, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is not restricted to non-motorized trails, but they are its focus. Grant monies cannot be used for planning, or for construction of "incomplete" trails (i.e., those that are designed to be a part of a future system.) Stand-alone trails, as well as connector trails, are the focuses of this funding. This is an 80/20 matching fund grant, with 20 percent of the total project costs required of the local organization. Grants range from $10,000 to $150,000, with typical grants amounting to $50,000 to $60,000. Total funds available in 2001 are $800,000 (2000 funding totaled about $1 million.) The grant is funded at least through 2003 and, if renewed at that time, would be funded for an additional six years. The W&OD trail in Northern Virginia has been a recipient of these funds in the past.

Virginia Land Conservation Fund

The Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) has been set up to provide matching grants to localities, public bodies, and nonprofit organizations for purchasing fee simple title to and interest in real property for land conservation purposes.
Grant categories are:

- Open Spaces and Parks
- Natural Area Protection
- Historic Area Preservation
- Farmlands and Forest Preservation

In the past, grants have been used to help the Nature Conservancy acquire 458 acres of land adjacent to the Commonwealth's Cleveland Barrens Natural Areas Preserve, to help Fairfax County acquire 2.9 acres of easement at three sites in Vienna and Oakton, and to help York County acquire nine easements on the York River beach to provide a continuous pedestrian linkage/trail along the riverfront.

Historically, VLCF grants have ranged in value from $30,000 to $1 million, with an average gift of $140,000. However, the Virginia State Assembly appropriated no funding for the VLCF in 2001, and the VCLF does not expect any new funding in 2002. The fund has suspended acceptance of applications for the time being.

Certified Local Government Grants
The Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant program establishes a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and a state's Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The program allows state DHR's, to recommend for certification local governments that have put key elements of a sound local preservation program in place in their communities. Designation as CLGs gives local governments a way to participate more formally in the state and national historic preservation programs. The City of Alexandria qualifies for CLG grants, as it is one of 24 CLG's in Virginia.

Because CLG grants use federally appropriated funds, the de-funding of CLG's is less likely than the de-funding of grants supported by the state General Assembly. Typically, Virginia's CLG budget is $85,000. Awards range in size from $5,000 to $25,000, with an average award of $15,000. Generally, there is a match of some sort, but no match is required. CLG grants may be

used for surveys of architectural or archaeological resources and historic preservation planning, among other things.

Historic Preservation Project Grant
In 2001, the General Assembly in the State of Virginia did not appropriate funds for Historic Preservation Project Grants. In the past, these grants were used to preserve/restore local historic sites and natural areas. In a "normal" year, the state legislature would award up to 75 grants ranging in value from $5,000 to $100,000.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife
These grants, administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, are primarily given for voluntary habitat restoration projects, as they are geared more toward restoration than toward acquisition. Most recipients are private landowners. Projects are extremely varied in nature, but can include restoration, planting, dam removal, outreach, habitat preservation and easements. This agency funds relatively few projects in urban areas. All grants are matching, and the ratio of federal to other funds ranges from 1:3 to 3:1, depending on the project and the number of partners involved. Total annual distributions range from $1 to $1.5 million, and the typical grant is $50,000 to $100,000.

Community Development Block Grants (CBDG)
Funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered at the local level. Focus is mainly in providing affordable housing for low and moderate-income families. Can be used for the development of recreational facilities and open space; however, since the city is dedicated to affordable housing, its limited funding available through CBDG is unlikely to be utilized for open space initiatives.

Urban and Community Forestry Grants
The U.S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture administers these grants. The funds promote improvements to urban areas and communities through the provision of forestry resources.

INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

The Virginia Land Endowment
The Virginia Land Endowment is an institutional grantor that uses its capital to encourage pollution prevention, open space conservation, and environmental education. In 2001, the endowment supported The Land Conservation Fund in Arlington, VA with a $100,000 matching grant.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was original established to promote open space preservation in Fairfax County. It has now expanded its geographical coverage and has undertaken projects in the inner and outer suburban counties and cities of Northern Virginia. Activities include providing grants to support partners in land acquisition and purchase of easements, advocacy and education.

CONCLUSION

To achieve the community's vision for parks and open space, the departments of planning, environmental quality, and recreation parks cultured activities are prepared to implement the recommendations outlined in the Strategic Master Plan. Many of the recommendations and strategies will require additional staff training to accomplish the desired impact.

Many operating policies need to be updated regarding the goals outlined in the *Community Values Model* and *Vision Matrix*. These policies are outlined throughout the Strategic Master Plan through land acquisition, purchasing changes, pricing of service changes, design of parks and facility changes, development of facility and program standards, holding staff accountable to meet those standards, and organizational design changes to hire the right employee for the right job. These policy changes need to be adopted as part of the Strategic master Plan Study to maximize the desired outcomes.

Performance measures have been established in the development of this plan. Quarterly performance measures update need to be tracked. These results must be communicated to the City Manager and to the City Council regarding the staff's efforts to implement the recommendations.

Leon Younger & PROS and Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. have appreciated the opportunity to develop the Strategic Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation services. The plan is implemental however; the City must act now to achieve the goals and vision of the community. This will require time, money, energy, and political will to make this Strategic Master Plan a reality.

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
Economics Research Associates

ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN

Prepared by:
Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
Economic Research Associates, Inc.

Under Contract To:
City of Alexandria, Virginia

2002

Successful long-range plans are usually created as the result of a comprehensive, collaborative effort reflecting a wide range of views. The Open Space Plan for the City of Alexandria, Virginia is no exception. As described in detail in this report, the plan had the benefit of input from the community at large, from many of its relevant organizations, and from appropriate City agencies and commissions.

However, the Open Space Steering Committee, appointed to guide the development of the plan, was involved most intensively in this effort. This group included:

- Judy Noritake and Bruce Dwyer: Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
- Eric Wagner, Larry Robinson, and Rick Leibach: Alexandria Planning Commission
- Tom Tyler and Cindy DeGrood, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission
- Mark Fields: Alexandria Archeology Commission
- Nancy Hicks: Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
- Jay Johnson: Alexandria Public Schools
- Staff from the Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Planning and Zoning; Transportation and Environmental Services; Office of Historic Alexandria; and the Office of the City Manager

This stalwart group met early in the morning, on a monthly basis, for over a year to help define the City's open space needs and guide the development of the plan. They deserve much thanks and credit for an outstanding effort. They have helped define Alexandria's open space legacy for many years to come.

Market Square facing Alexandria's
City Hall

Existing park at the Potomac River
waterfront

Four Mile Run

Streetscape at King Street

As one of the most densely populated cities in the nation, Alexandria faces a continuous struggle to provide enough open space for all its residents. With a growing and increasingly diverse population clamoring for open space options in the context of a dwindling supply of potential open spaces areas, the city must develop a strategy to respond to these conflicting pressures. The Open Space Plan presented in this document establishes a framework for addressing Alexandria's short and longer term open space needs. It defines an approach that maximizes the City's limited open space opportunities by creating a system that builds upon the City's dense, urban condition. It begins by acknowledging and protecting the City's existing open spaces, and goes on to identify additional open space opportunities for the future.

The plan was developed through a collaborative community process that included monthly meetings with an Open Space Steering Committee, three Planning District meetings, and a citywide Open Space Summit.

As the result of this process, a series of 15 open space goals were identified. In summary, these can be merged into the following seven goals, and appropriate sub-goals, that form the overall framework for the Open Space Plan:

Goal 1. Protect and enrich existing parks

Goal 2. Develop innovative opportunities for creating additional open space
- Define strategies to identify and actively pursue new open space opportunities
- Protect and expand stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive area
- Create an open space network in new development areas
- Create public open space from vacant land
- Link and expand pedestrian, bicycle and trail systems

Goal 3. Complete implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan

Goal 4. Protect and preserve institutional open space
- Establish a strategy for preserving and protecting the City's significant institutionally-owned open space areas
- Maximize use of public school open space areas to satisfy local needs
- Preserve and protect cemeteries
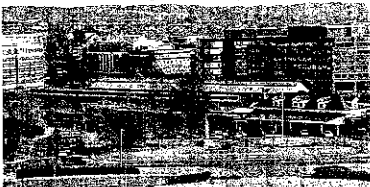
King Street metro and surrounding
urban fabric
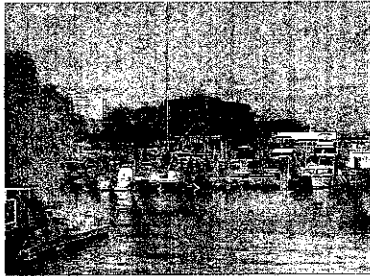
Potomac River waterfront

Holmes Run Stream Valley
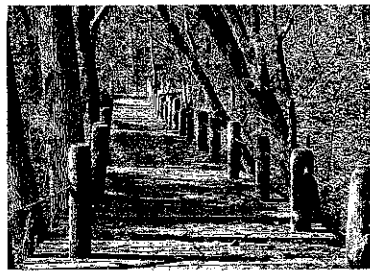
Existing trails

Potomac River waterfront

Goal 5. Enhance streetscapes and gateways
- Enhance the City's streets and gateways as open space opportunities and linkages
- Encourage the creation of Civic Parks at Metro stations
- Beautify interchanges and highway corridors

Goal 6. Expand citywide street tree program and protect existing trees and woodland areas

Goal 7. Protect privately owned open space

The plan presents recommended actions and implementation strategies for each defined goal. It also defines those actions that the City needs to make its first priority in implementing the Open Space Plan. These priority actions include:
- Creating an Alexandria Open Space Conservancy
- Hiring a full-time, professional grants writer to pursue public and private sector funding.
- Beginning completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan.
- Preparing a Greenway Management Plan for Holmes Run Stream Valley.
- Focusing on the protection and enhancement of the City's Resource Protection Areas.
- Beginning to preserve specific properties as open space areas (as defined in the Plan) through easements, acquisition, and other means of protection.
- Revising zoning requirements to achieve better open space in new developments.
- Considering the creation of additional active recreation opportunities on open spaces located east of Simpson Field.
- Developing a workable open space conservation strategy for the City's major institutional lands.
- Rehabilitating Commonwealth Avenue as a significant parkway.
- Implementing a system of new path/trail linkages at Holmes Run, at the eastern end of Eisenhower Valley, and from Booth Park to Fairfax County along Backlick Run.
- Establishing a streetscape and gateway enhancement program for Route 1.
- Implementing a CITY green analysis to assess the status of tree cover in the City.

Because all of these priorities cannot be tackled simultaneously, it is suggested that the City consider the following timeframe sequence as a guideline for implementing the above actions:

Year 1:
- Create the Alexandria Open Space Conservancy.

Potomac River shoreline

Mount Vernon recreational center

Historical Old Town, Alexandria

- Hire the grants writer.
- Begin to define a strategy that will allow the City to respond quickly to preserve "at risk" sites as open space as these become available.
- Revise zoning requirements for new developments.

Years 2-3:
- Work to achieve settlement on 1 and 2 King Street, and 0 Prince Street in order to begin completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan.
- Begin preparation of a greenway management plan for Holmes Run.
- Initiate a system of monitoring the City's progress on its protection and enhancement of RPA's.
- Begin a dialogue between the Open Space Conservancy and the City's major institutional landholders to develop a strategy for conserving such land.

Years 3-5:
- Establish new trail crossing of Holmes Run at Chambliss Street.
- Connect the off-street Eisenhower Valley path to Old Town at Payne Street.
- Develop a strategy for creating additional active open space near Simpson Field.

Years 5-7:
- Rehabilitate Commonwealth Avenue.
- Create a trail along Backlick Run, from Booth Park the Fairfax County line.
- Begin a CITYgreen analysis of Alexandria tree cover.
- Establish a streetscape and gateway enhancement plan for Route 1 (to be implemented in years 7-10).

Finally, the Open Space Plan identifies and describes potential funding sources and strategies. Operational funding strategies, as well as sources of public and institutional grants, are discussed. Funding/strategies include:
- Dedicated trusts (including land trusts and conservation/preservation funds, open space funds, and local service districts)
- Bonds (e.g., general obligation bonds, revenue bonds)
- Taxes and general fund money
- Easements
- Public and institutional grants
- Operational support mechanisms (e.g., corporate support, volunteer programs)
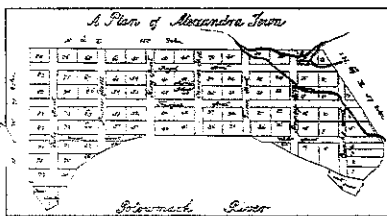
Plan of Alexandria shows original street grid pattern (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Alexandria Library, Special Collections)
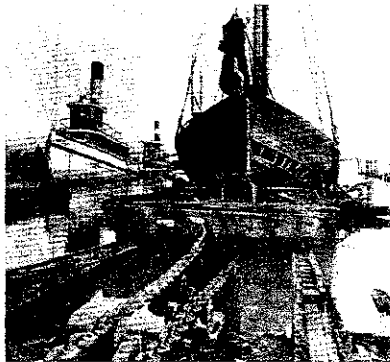
Goods were brought to Alexandria by ships and wagons (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from William Francis Smith Collection).

Market square, 1880 (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from Harper's New Monthly Magazine)

Since surveyors first laid it out in 1749, Alexandria has been a city that has struggled to provide enough open space for its residents. Because Alexandria originated as a mercantile center, where goods brought in by ship and wagon were bought and sold, it was a place that revolved around commerce. The streets of "Old Town" were laid out in a grid pattern, with every inch of land planned in a manner that would maximize economic interests, with lots intended for residences, stores, warehouses, and taverns. Because open spaces did not contribute to the burgeoning economy of the town, no parks were planned. Indeed, there was only one public place laid out in the entire community – Market Square, then facing Cameron Street – and that was for the conduct of business (Seale, 2000).

In the 253 years since its founding, Alexandria has expanded into a city that covers almost 16 square miles, and has grown to a population of more than 128,000 people. The city has one of the densest concentrations of population in the United States, with a mix of residential and commercial uses in both urban and suburban neighborhoods. While Alexandria is now an integral part of the regional economy of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area, the City has maintained its own distinctive heritage. Fortunately, as Alexandria has grown, so have its open spaces. The Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities now owns and maintains 127 parks, ranging in size from large citywide parks such as Fort Ward Park in western Alexandria (41 acres) to small neighborhood parks like Monticello Park in the central part of the City (4.7 acres). Several of these parks, such as Founders' Park in Old Town, provide the public with access to one of Alexandria's greatest natural resources: the Potomac River. Others allow residents access to the City's sensitive stream corridors that run throughout. Still others provide opportunities for both active and passive recreational pursuits in settings that range from completely urban to more suburban neighborhood in context.

The growth of the City's open space areas, however, has not been enough to overcome the bounds of history. Because Alexandria existed and continued to expand for over 200 years before the establishment of a park system, the City has always, in essence, been playing catch up. Added to that are the pressures of a present day population that has become more diverse and has increased by over 15% between 1990 and 2000, in a city with finite boundaries and an ever-dwindling supply of potential open space areas. Moreover, Alexandrians value open space and use it both heavily and extensively. This has placed enormous pressure on the City's existing open space areas, and underlines the need both to protect the open spaces that exist as well as to create additional open space opportunities that are equitably distributed throughout Alexandria to serve all of the City's population.

The Plan presented in this report establishes a framework for addressing Alexandria's short and longer term open space needs. It looks at ways to maximize the City's limited open space opportunities by creating an open space system that builds upon and responds to the City's dense, urban context. It is clear that Alexandria has entered the new millennium facing one of

its greatest challenges, that of providing open spaces, recreation areas, and a quality way of life for a citizenry that proudly reflects the diversity of the nation itself. This Open Space Plan offers a blueprint for accomplishing that task.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process that was established for developing the Open Space Plan combined the reality of assessing current conditions with the dreams and visions of what could be, and the definition of practical steps for getting there.

The process began with the establishment of an Open Space Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from those City commissions and departments with interests in open space issues, including the Parks and Recreation Commission; the Environmental Policy Commission; the Planning Commission; Office of Historic Alexandria; the Department of Recreation, Park and Cultural Activities; the Department of Planning and Zoning; the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; the Alexandria Schools; and the Office of the City Manager. This group worked closely with the consultant team throughout the process to establish a comprehensive definition of open space, review the existing conditions inventory, help plan community outreach activities, establish the open space framework and plan, and review implementation strategies.

The assessment of existing open space areas, as well as the definition of potential open space opportunities, were carried out in several ways. The process began with the analysis of the City's existing open space data regarding parks, other open space areas, environmentally sensitive areas, streets and roads, and public and private vacant land parcels. This data was obtained through aerial photos, the City's GIS mapping system and real estate data, and additional documentation from earlier studies and discussions. In addition, the consultant team carried out a systematic inventory of all of Alexandria's existing open space areas.

All of this baseline data was further enriched through a series of outreach efforts that included: interviews with various organizations and individuals with interest in open space issues in Alexandria; three Open Space Planning District meetings, and a citywide Open Space Summit. All of these outreach efforts are described in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this report. This multi-level process of community input provided both the vision and direction for the Open Space Plan.

The Open Space Plan report is organized as follows:

- It provides an overall picture of the current open space framework, including the history of open space in Alexandria, a definition of open space, and an analysis of current open space conditions.

- It defines Alexandria's current open space needs and issues.

- It describes the results of the community outreach process.

- It presents the Open Space Plan in terms of opportunities, overall framework, goals and recommendations.

- And, finally, it addresses a strategy for plan implementation.

A. HISTORY OF OPEN SPACE IN ALEXANDRIA
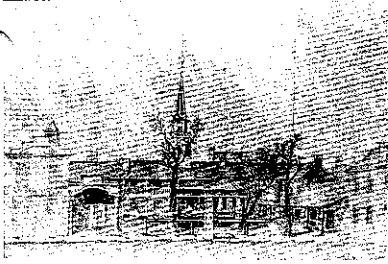
Market Square (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Alexandria Library, Special Collections)
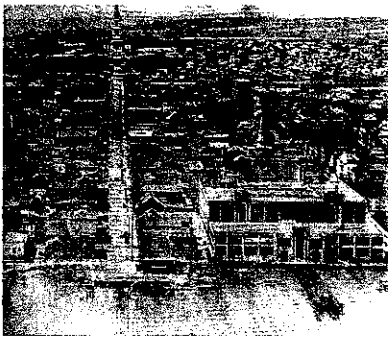
Aerial view of old town Alexandria looking up King Street c.1920 (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Alexandria Library, Special Collections)
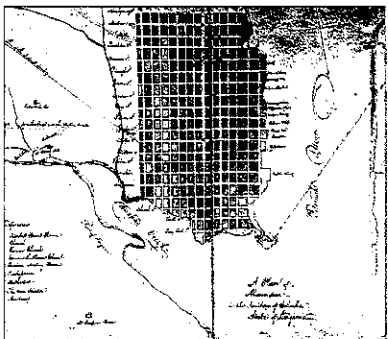
Plan of Alexandria (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Library of Congress)

The only open space originally planned for community use in Alexandria was Market Square. However, a number of informal open spaces were in existence throughout Alexandria in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of these "commons" were used for grazing cows, horses, and other livestock. Other open spaces were strictly for human use, and were known as "pleasure gardens." The most famous of these was Spring Garden, located on the northwest corner of Wilkes and Payne Streets. Alexandrians gathered here for entertainment and summer theater; George Washington himself attended a reception at Spring Garden in 1799 commemorating the 23rd anniversary of American independence.

Much of the open space in the original grid plan for Alexandria was intended for private use. With many of the houses and other structures sited directly on the street, without any setback, open space "dependencies" were located at the rear of these properties. This pattern of development has established the character of Old Town through the present day.

Other popular open spaces and pleasure gardens in the early days of Alexandria included Yeates' Garden (on Franklin between Royal and Pitt Streets), Broomilaw Point (on South Washington Street near the present-day Hunting Towers Apartments), Old Ice House Hill (on the east side of the 700 block of Lee Street), and Battery Rodgers (located on Lee Street between Jefferson and Green Streets). Battery Rodgers was, in fact, a Civil War fort that overlooked the Potomac River. It was used as a gathering place for citizens to watch parades of Union soldiers that occupied Alexandria during the war.

One of the most picturesque, and well-known, open spaces in the city was Windmill Hill, which [like the present-day park of the same name] overlooked the Potomac River between Gibbon and Wilkes Streets. Windmill Hill became the scene of many political debates and rallies after the war. In the later days of the 19th century, it became a fashionable place for Alexandrians to promenade during the warm summer months (*Alexandria Gazette, 7/21/1890*). It remained a popular place for festivities into the 20th century. After Charles Lindbergh flew his famous solo flight to Paris in 1927, he returned to the U.S. and made an excursion to Washington aboard the U.S.S. Memphis. On Saturday, June 11th, when the Memphis passed by Alexandria, a presidential 21-gun salute boomed out from Windmill Hill to welcome the American hero. (*Alexandria Gazette, 6/11/1927*). (Windmill Hill was eventually deeded to the city as a park).

An effort was also made to establish a city-owned park at Shuter's Hill in honor of George Washington. This site, at the western end of King Street overlooking Old Town (at the site of the present-day George Washington Masonic Memorial), was used often by the people of Alexandria as a gathering spot and vantagepoint. However, efforts to establish Alexandria's first public park were unsuccessful, and the site was eventually purchased in 1921
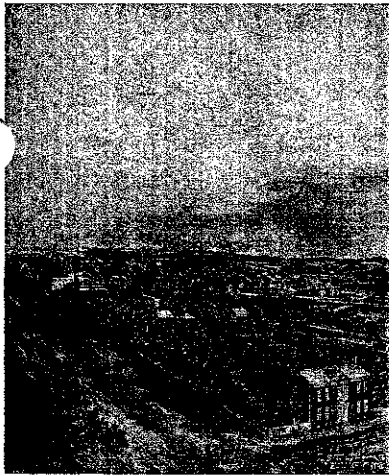
Alexandria, Virginia, 1853 (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Alexandria Library, Special Collections)

Occupying Yankees outside the Athenaeum (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from the Library of Congress)

Daily life c.1890 (from "A Guide to Historic Alexandria" by William Seale, originally from William Francis Smith Collection)

by the George Washington Masonic Memorial Committee. The structure itself was completed in 1932.

While there were a number of open spaces available to the people of the city, many of these were located outside the immediate boundaries of Alexandria and, therefore, did not provide relief in the daily lives of the city's citizens. In an 1851 editorial that appeared in the *Alexandria Gazette*, a citizen wrote, "… We hope in the improvements that we trust are to take place in town the project of securing some square, as a park or promenade ground for the public, will not be overlooked. Our gardens and river banks are delightful, but they are not enough." (*Alexandria Gazette, 6/14/1851*).

A similar sentiment was expressed in an 1882 *Alexandria Gazette* article that had originally appeared in the pages of the *Washington Star*: "… it is on days that draw the whole population out to enjoy the fresh air that the want of open squares, parks, or anything of that kind is felt. The trees and herbage then draw hundreds to the graveyard, not to be buried, but to enjoy the open air and the green grass, and catch a glimpse of the shining creek that flows by. There are no breathing places for children in the town. Fortunately now the edges are easily reached but if the town should grow much this deficiency would become unbearable. Even the court house lot planted with trees would be better than nothing…" (*Alexandria Gazette, 11/18/1882*)

It was not until 1948, almost 200 years after the founding of Alexandria that the city recreation department planned to build its first official park. Although by this time there were 15 operating playgrounds in the city, there still were no parks. This new park, which was planned for seven acres running from St. Asaph Street to Fairfax Street and bounded by Montgomery and First Streets, was never constructed, the reasons for which remain elusive.

It was, therefore, not until the later half of the 20th century that Alexandria began to establish its system of public parks. While the city now boasts an impressive collection of 127 parks ranging in size from several acres to almost fifty acres, it is still, in many ways, struggling against the history of a city where land was too valuable a commodity to be used as open space. While the City has come a long way in creating a livable, green community for its residents, it must still buck the trends of history to provide enough open space for future generations of Alexandrians.

B.   ADMINISTRATION OF ALEXANDRIA'S PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The vast majority of publicly owned open spaces and parks in the City of Alexandria are planned, maintained, and operated by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. The department is responsible for providing these facilities, along with programmed activities, for a broad range of city residents from infants to senior citizens, including those with special needs. The full range of departmental duties includes: maintenance of all

parks, ballfields, and publicly-owned flower beds in the City; tree care on public land; right-of-way maintenance; park planning and design; and the provision of organized activities such as games, sports, arts, crafts, hobbies, music, drama, and dancing..

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities currently maintains 127 parks totaling approximately 840 acres, with a staff of approximately 500 full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees. The department itself is broken down into three functional groups that represent its major program areas: 1) Administration; 2) Program Operations; and 3) Parks, Natural Resources, and Capital Projects.

Activities of the Administration division include strategic planning; development and execution of the department's budget; financial management of the department's revenue; general contract oversight and cooperation with outside contractors; coordination of personnel actions including hiring, recruitment, and payroll processing; and information technology planning and system maintenance.

The Program Operations division is responsible for the operation of all recreation centers, including Chinquapin Park Recreation Center and Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center, playgrounds, camps, athletic programs, therapeutic recreation programs, senior programs, special events, park rentals, cultural arts programs, and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts.

The Parks, Natural Resources, and Capital Projects division is in charge of many departmental functions. Perhaps the most visible of these functions are the repair and maintenance of all City parks, equipment, and facilities. The division is also responsible for designing park improvements; coordinating playground renovations; implementing the Bike Trails Master Plan (with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services); and designing, planting, and maintaining horticultural sites in street medians and public areas. There is also an arborist staff that oversees the planting and care of street trees. Lastly, a Capital Projects staff plans and coordinates the Department's capital improvements and oversees the City's marina.

All of the work that is done by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs is overseen by an eleven-member Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission. The Commission is an advisory committee that was created by the Alexandria City Council in March 1970 to study issues relating to park, recreation, and open space needs. Nine citizens are appointed to the Commission by City Council; they represent the three planning districts in the City. Two members are of high school age and are appointed to the Commission to represent the youth of Alexandria.

The Commission provides policy advice to City Council and offers City of Alexandria residents an opportunity to participate in planning activities. In addition to monitoring and making recommendations to improve the function

and diversity of existing and future recreation and park programs, the Commission works on issues pertaining to open space and advises City Council on all of these issues.

C.   EARLIER PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING EFFORTS

The first parks and recreation master plan for Alexandria was adopted in 1978 as one element of the City's master plan. The master plan was updated in 1992, and contained broad goals and objectives for parks and open space; it did not, however, address a specific open space plan. Thus, the current effort represents the City's first opportunity in 24 years to adopt a comprehensive park and open space plan.

The park and open space goals adopted in the 1992 master plan included:
• Providing a park and recreation system to serve all population sectors.
• Preserving and enhancing the natural and "developed amenities" of existing public open spaces, and adding "publicly accessible open space by creative and innovative ways."
• Integrating open space into the fabric of the City.
• Protecting remaining City open space and increasing the ratio of open space per capita.
• Encouraging the provision in new developments of both active and passive open space and recreational facilities.

In addition, the 1992 master plan called for the development of a "park system plan" that would define the types of open spaces to be provided throughout Alexandria, including "a park stream valley system to provide continuous linkage and access to recreational facilities."

The current plan acknowledges the framework established by these earlier efforts while, at the same time, recognizing the changing context resulting from the past decade. The overall goal, however, remains the same: to provide Alexandrians with exceptional open spaces and recreation opportunities, while protecting and restoring the natural environment, historic fabric, and sense of community that make Alexandria a special place to live, work and visit.

D.   DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING OPEN SPACE

Citizens and policy makers mistakenly assume that the term "open space" clearly communicates an image that is shared by everyone. However, this is likely not the case. Many people, and many jurisdictions, impart a wide range of meanings to this phrase. For some, the term implies any area that does not contain a building or other structure; for others it means a "park" and nothing else; and so on. At the outset of the process of developing an open space plan for the City of Alexandria, the first task was to establish a working defini-

tion of "open space" that could help establish a direction for plan development.

In the process of defining those "open spaces," to be included in the plan, the Steering Committee and consultant team concluded that the City has a complex system of significant "open space" areas that include parks, plazas, stream valleys, trails, easements, riverfront areas, streetscapes and so on. The group further decided that all of these areas made significant contributions to the overall character and livability of the City, and that a logical categorization of open spaces would be helpful in developing a plan. The resulting Open Space Classification System is based on factors of purpose or use, overall characteristics, area served, ownership status, and maintenance responsibility.

The subcategories that help to differentiate the variety of open spaces in the City are as follows:

1. **Primary Use**

   - **Active:** Typically encompasses more heavily programmed and organized activities, such as athletic activities, dog parks and other intensive programs.
   - **Passive:** Primarily consists of less structured and less formal activities. Examples include: tot lots, picnic areas, historic/cultural sites, amphitheaters and natural resource areas.
   - **Trails:** Open space corridors for conservation, recreation and alternative transportation; linear systems that may occur by streams and rivers, storm water corridors, utility corridors, abandoned rail lines, sidewalks and street medians. Trails are used for hiking, biking, walking, running, transportation, recreation, wildlife corridors, and heritage resource connections.
   - **Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways:** Can include boulevards, medians, plazas, sidewalks, interchanges, street trees and plantings that contribute significantly to the City of Alexandria's green space.

2. **Secondary Characteristics**

   - **Cultural / Historical:** Sites of historic, archaeological and/or cultural interest.
   - **Dog Exercise Area & Dog Park:** Spaces that are primarily dedicated to dog related activities. These include:
     - **'Dog Exercise Areas':** Areas of open space set aside for the specific use of dog owners/handlers to allow dogs to be off-lead. The city may provide posted rules, defined boundaries, covered trash receptacles/pick up bags, and shade where possible.
     - **'Fenced Dog Parks':** Fenced areas set-aside for dog owners/handlers to allow their dogs to be off-lead. The city may pro-

Trails at Oronoco Bay Park

Streetscape on King Street and Saint Asaph
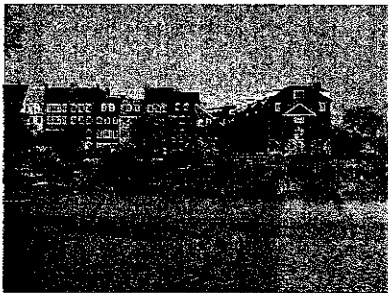
vide covered trash receptacles/pick up bags, posted rules, fencing and gates, water if feasible, and shade where possible.

- **Educational:** School sites, other educational facilities, and/or interpretive areas.
- **Environmentally Sensitive:** Areas with natural resource value that are protected by regulation. Examples include: wetlands, riparian areas, streams, rivers and riverbeds, 100-year floodplains, Resource Protection Areas (RPS's), slopes of greater than twenty-five percent, critical habitat and areas of endangered species.
- **Natural Resource Areas:** Including woodlands, habitat areas, streams, rivers, riparian areas, wetlands, RPA's and greenways. Activities may encompass passive recreational pursuits such as picnicking, fishing, boating and trail related activities.
- **Recreational:** Comprises areas with playing fields, courts, playgrounds, water sports or other active recreational activities.
- **Rivers and Streams:** Includes the Potomac River and its shoreline, major streams and streambanks, RPA's, and floodplains.
- **Urban Plaza /Streetscape:** Typically hardscaped/paved spaces that contribute to the open space character in the City. They typically provide for public access, circulation and gathering activities.

Potomac river shoreline

3. Service Area

- **Regional:** Natural, cultural or recreational attractions that draw users from beyond the City. Typically these areas are part of a larger open space network which goes beyond the City boundaries. Examples of programs may include athletic fields and courts, natural areas, swimming pools, fishing access, walking and biking trails. Parks included in this category generally have self-contained parking.
- **Citywide:** Contain programs that appeal to local interests and draw people from the City as a whole. Uses may include athletic fields, athletic courts, natural areas, pools, recreation centers, walking and biking trails. Recreational facilities included in this category typically have on- and off-site parking.
- **Neighborhood:** Multi-use facilities oriented to the surrounding neighborhood. These parks are most likely to include: garden plots, multi-purpose fields, picnic grounds and shelters, playgrounds, dog areas, small natural areas, and school fields and paths which reinforce the connections between the schools and the neighborhoods. These areas typically include a limited amount of on-site parking.
- **Block:** Intended to meet the needs of residents within a one or two block area. May include seating areas, landscaping and small-scale play equipment. Typically, these areas do not have on-site parking.

Mount Vernon Recreation Center

4. Ownership:

- **Public:** Owned by a governmental entity such as the City of Alexandria, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the Commonwealth of Virginia or the Federal Government (e.g., National Park Service). Public use and access are assured through public ownership.
- **Private with Public Access:** Private ownership with limited or unlimited public access.
- **Private with no Public Access:** Significant open spaces, the primary public value of which is to contribute to the visual benefit of the City; with no public access.
- **Private with Traditional Public Access:** Including areas of common usage and/or access, though with no guarantee of such.

5. **Maintenance:**

Includes the entity or individual with the primary responsibility for the upkeep, maintenance and protection of open space areas:
- **City of Alexandria:** Maintained by the City.
- **NVRPA:** Owned and/or maintained by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.
- **Commonwealth of Virginia:** Highway and interchange properties that are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation.
- **Federal Government:** Owned and/or maintained by a Federal Government entity, such as the National Park Service.
- **Private:** Owned, operated and maintained privately.

Open spaces in the City can be classified according to the above categories. For example, Cameron Run Regional Park would be classified in the following way: primarily active, recreational in character, serving a regional area, publicly owned, and maintained by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. On the other hand, Angel Park, located between Janney's Lane and Duke Street, adjacent to Taylor Run, would be classified as primarily passive, possessing both recreational and natural resource area characteristics, serving a neighborhood area, publicly owned and maintained by the City of Alexandria. By using this classification system to categorize the open space areas in the City, one can begin to comprehend the extent of those that are used for active versus passive use, the acreage that is used for primarily recreational purposes, the extent and location of the City's environmentally sensitive areas, and so on. This type of classification system provides the City with a useful analytical tool for understanding and working with existing open space areas, and defining the kinds of new open space areas that may need to be added to its inventory. It also provides a "snapshot" of the open space areas that may be at risk for future development. A matrix, listing the most significant open space areas in the City of Alexandria, classified according to this system, is provided in the Appendix.

A summary table of open space areas, broken down by the "active" and "passive" use classification categories, is included below for each of the City's

three Park Planning Districts (see Figure 2 for Park Planning District boundaries). A discussion of the issues related to distribution of open space throughout Alexandria can be found in Chapter 3.*Open Space Needs and Issues.*

Figure 1. Summary Table of Alexandria's Open Spaces by Active and Passive Use Classification Categories

Primary Use	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)
Active	121	155	214	490
Passive	183 *	76	183	442
Totals	304	231	397	932**

*Includes 107 acres for primarily passive use at Daingerfield Island Park (National Park Service)

**Note: This total acreage differs from that calculated by the city in 1998 (964 acres) since the City's data included a private parcel in its calculations. The 932 acres also includes several smaller public open spaces not included in the 1998 list.

E. OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

All of Alexandria's existing open spaces were inventoried, based on the classification system described above. The results of this process are summarized in Figures 3 to 9, and are described briefly below.
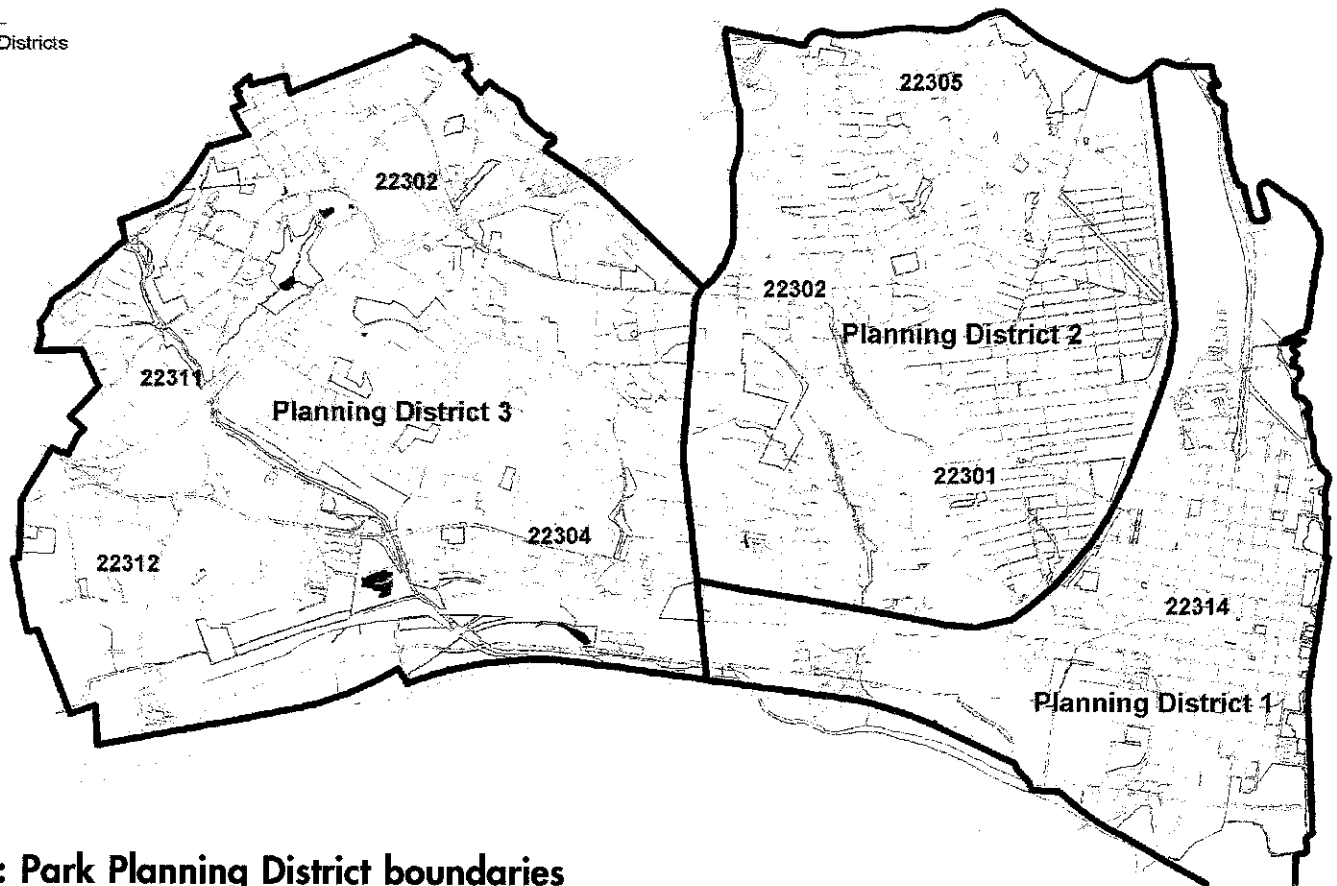
Figure 2: Park Planning District boundaries

- **Primary Use Areas**

  It is evident from Figure 3. *Primary Uses*, that many of the city's open space areas are small. In fact, for public open spaces, the average size of active open space areas is less than seven acres with many sites less than one acre. Alexandria's largest active parks include Four Mile Run Park (55.9 acres, including all active fields, trails and natural resource areas), Ben Brenman Park (50.37 acres, including active facilities and natural resource areas, Jones Point Park (52.3 acres, including active fields, trails, and natural areas; leased from the National Park Service), and Chinquapin Park (23 acres of active fields and courts). The City's larger passive open spaces are, in general, environmentally sensitive sites, natural resource areas, or cultural/historic sites. These larger areas include: Daingerfield Island Park (107 acres; owned and maintained by the National Park Service), Holmes Run and Dora Kelly Nature Park (46 acres), and Fort Ward Park (41.4 acres).

  In addition, Figure 3 also illustrates that the pattern of open space in Alexandria is scattered throughout the City, with few linkages between open space areas. This disconnected quality of the open space in Alexandria, combined with the small overall size of many sites, provides an impression of a City that is not very "green," and does not have a significant amount of usable open space to offer its residents and visitors. While

Legend
- Active
- Passive
- Trails
- Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways

Figure 3: Primary Use

this is would be an incorrect conclusion, the City could do more to maximize the utility and appreciation of its open space areas.

• **Secondary Characteristics**

The classification system lists eight possible secondary characteristics for Alexandria's open space areas: sites of cultural and/or historic interest, dog parks and exercise areas, sites that provide educational opportunities, environmentally sensitive areas, natural resource areas, sites dedicated primarily to recreational pursuits, sites along rivers and streams, and urban plazas and/or streetscapes. An open space may represent one or more of these characteristics; in fact, some spaces can be classified as having five or more. An example of this would be Windmill Hill Park, which can be considered cultural/historic, riverfront, urban plaza, environmentally sensitive, and recreational.

• *Cultural/Historic Sites:* It is not surprising in a City that prides itself on its cultural and historic heritage that Alexandria should contain many open space sites that reflect that legacy. Several of these sites are, in fact, among the City's largest open space areas: for example, Fort Ward Park, Chinquapin Park, Daingerfield Island Park, Jones Point Park, and Dora Kelly Park. For each of these cultural and historic sites, it is important for the City to provide interpretive opportunities so that

King Street historical streetscape in Old Town, Alexandria

Legend
Streams
Cultural / Historical
Parks
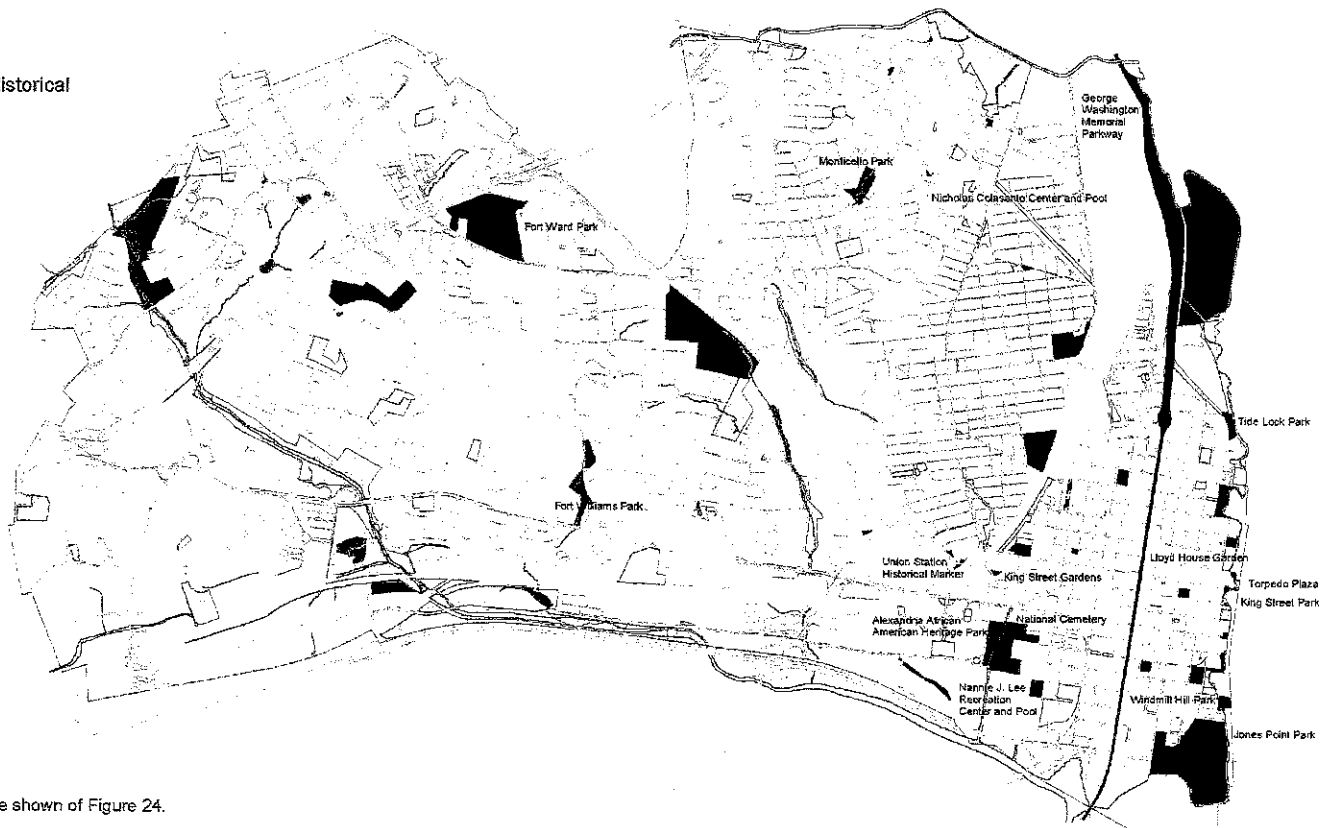
Note: Cemeteries are shown of Figure 24.

Figure 4: Cultural/ Historic Sites
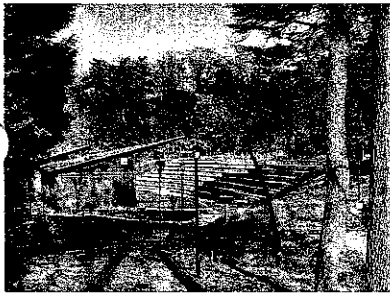
Fort Ward amphitheater
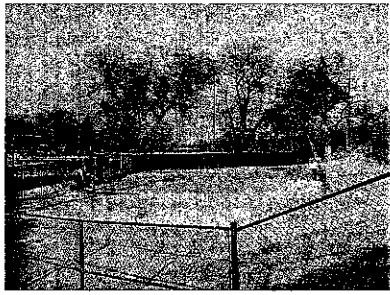
Fenced dog park

residents can understand, value, and protect these areas.

- **Dog Exercise Areas and Dog Parks:** Alexandria provides two types of dog-related open space areas – dog exercise areas and fenced dog parks. While these are scattered throughout the City, the eastern half of Alexandria contains the greatest number of such facilities – particularly in Old Town.

- **Educational Sites:** This category includes school sites – reflecting on the importance of open space in the learning process – and open spaces with interpretive opportunities. The City's largest open space areas connected to schools include: T.C. Williams High School (16 acres), Polk School (12 acres with its adjacent park), and Ramsey School and Recreation Center (18 acres). However, the average school open space is 4.5 acres; if you eliminate T.C. Williams High School from the calculation, the average school open space is only 3.7 acres. Most of the non-school related open space sites that currently provide some level of interpretation/education are those within either historic or environmental contexts. Many of the City's open space areas within these categories, however, do not currently offer interpretive/learning opportunities.

- **Environmentally Sensitive Sites:** These are areas that are protected

Legend

- Dog Exercise Areas & Dog Parks
- Parks
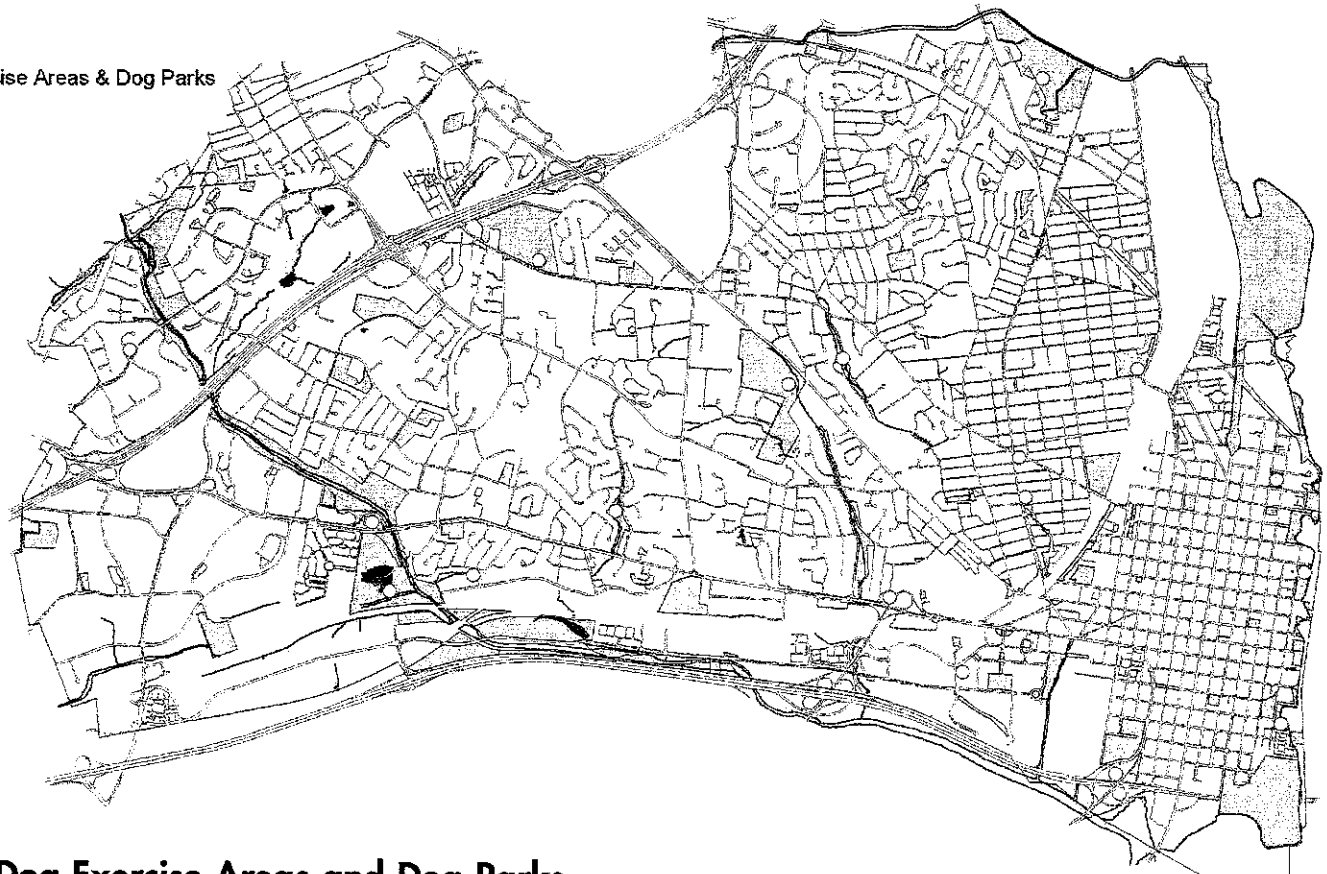
Figure 5: Dog Exercise Areas and Dog Parks

Holmes Run

Cameron Run

through environmental regulations and include wetlands, riparian areas, streams, rivers, 100-year floodplains, RPA's, significant vegetation, slopes greater than 25 percent, critical habitat and areas of endangered species. Some of the larger sites included under this category include the Potomac River shoreline, Four Mile Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Run, and the Dora Kelly/Ramsey School sites. There are excellent interpretive opportunities at these sites to make people aware of their sensitive status and possible actions for continued stewardship.

- **Natural Resource Areas:** These include areas that, while not under regulatory controls, are still important environmental resources for the City. They include woodlands, streams, wetlands, and greenways. The City contains many important natural resource areas, with some of the largest including Chinquapin Park, Fort Ward Park, Daingerfield Island Park and Jones Point Park. It is a goal of this Plan to encourage the City to strive to continue adding sites to its natural resource areas inventory as they are identified.

- **Recreational Sites:** Recreational open space is often thought of simply as athletic fields; however, it includes a much broader range of opportunities. In addition to fields, recreational open space includes: courts, playgrounds, facilities for water sports, and so on. Figure 9 illustrates

Legend

Educational - Schools
Educational - Interpretive Facilities
Parks

Figure 6: Educational Sites

Playground

Potomac River waterfront

the wealth of recreational space contained in the City. However, it also indicates that many of these sites are small, and that some areas of Alexandria (e.g., the far west end and the northeastern sector) do not contain as many recreational spaces as other parts of the City.

- *Rivers and Streams:* Areas included in this category comprise some of the City's most significant open spaces. One of Alexandria's major attractions, both for residents and visitors, is its beautiful Potomac River waterfront. Bounding this shoreline, both to the north and south, are several other significant waterbodies – Four Mile Run, Cameron Run and Holmes Run. Other stream valleys include: Taylor Run, Timber Branch, Backlick Run, Strawberry Run, Hooffs Run, Lucky Run, Great Hunting Creek, and Old Cameron Run.

- *Urban Plazas and Streetscapes:* In Alexandria, the eleventh densest city in the nation, urban plazas and park- like streets and boulevards represent important open space opportunities. These elements provide excellent venues for community activity, offer a sense of open space relief, provide attractive spaces and corridors, and encourage pedestrian use. Alexandria has not yet maximized its open space opportunities in this category (see Figure 11). The City contains only a few significant urban plazas, such as Market Square and King Street Station. In addition, it has a limited number of streets that could be de-

Legend
- Resource Protection Areas
- Streams
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Parks

Figure 7: Environmentally Sensitive Sites
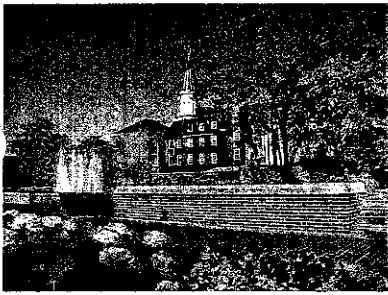
Market Square
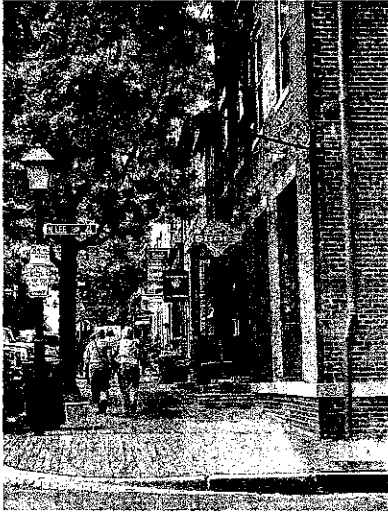
Streetscape in King Street

scribed as "park-like boulevards." Examples of the best of these include Commonwealth Avenue, Fort Williams Parkway, Seminary Road, Beauregard Street, Quaker Lane, and Jordan Street.

- **Service Areas**

The service area category describes the general range of users for each open space area. Some open spaces attract users from throughout the region (and often beyond), some primarily attract users from the City as a whole, and some attract mostly neighborhood or smaller block area users. Based on the open space inventory, it is interesting to note that each planning district has its own character with regard to the populations served by its open space areas. For example, Planning District 1 contains perhaps the greatest number of regionally- served open spaces (63 percent of all of the open space in this district); for Planning Districts 2 and 3, only 24 percent and 19 percent of their open space areas respectively are considered regional in scope. For those open spaces serving a citywide population, almost one third of the areas in District 1 fall into this category, as well as 32 percent in Districts 2, and 34 percent in District 3. On the other hand, almost half of the open spaces in Districts 2 and 3 (44 percent and 47 percent respectively) can be categorized as serving primarily neighborhood or block service areas, while only 5 percent of the open spaces in District 1 can be described in this way. On a citywide basis, it

Legend

- Resource Protection Areas
- Streams
- Natural Resource Areas
- Parks

Figure 8: Natural Resource Areas

appears that Alexandria offers a good mix of different types of open spaces areas intended to serve a variety of populations and purposes, although the focus of who is served varies significantly between areas.

- **Ownership and Maintenance**

  Most of the open space areas included for consideration in this planning study are publicly owned and maintained. Of the 22 significant privately-owned open spaces identified, only eight have been classified as "private with no public access." The remaining 222 acres, although privately owned, are typically made accessible to the general public, if even for limited use. There is no guarantee in place, however, for this practice to continue.

  Of the approximately 932 acres of public open space in Alexandria, more than three quarters of that land is owned and maintained by the City. The remaining quarter comprises land owned and/or maintained by the National Park Service, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

F. PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

The 116 public open space areas included in the Open Space Classification

Legend
- Recreational
- Parks
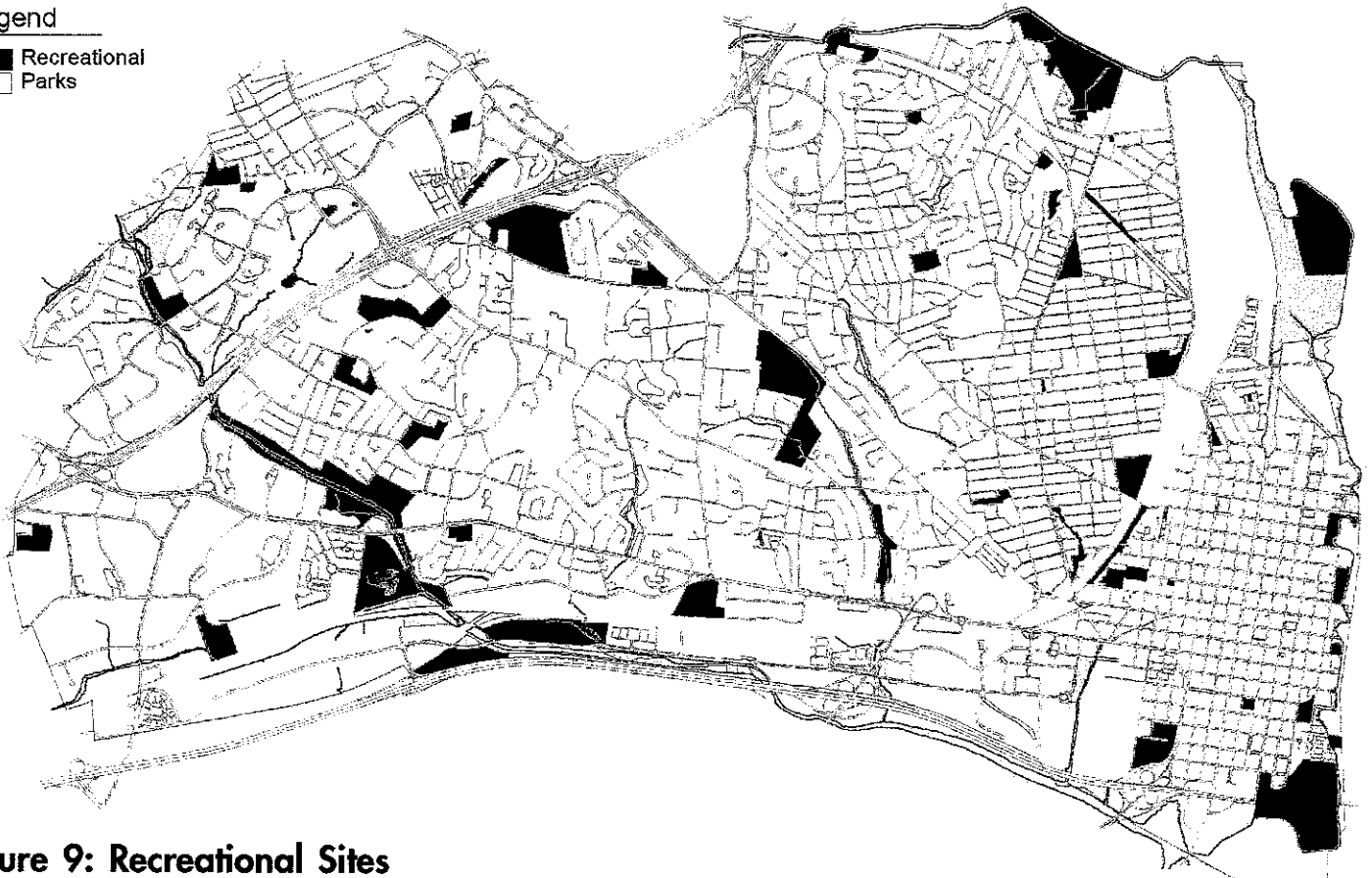
Figure 9: Recreational Sites

matrix were inventoried as part of the planning process. The inventory provided a more in-depth "picture" of the status and characteristics of each open space area. The inventory included the following specific elements:

- **Site Overview:** a general description of the area including its location, site characteristics, and uses
- **Cultural and Viewshed Features:** a description of views both into and from the area, view-related issues, cultural elements both within and visible from the area, and social/cultural functions of the site for its community
- **Areas of Concern:** observations related to issues such as accessibility, parking availability, the need for fencing/buffering, site conditions, and so on.
- **Additional Comments and Observations**: comments vary from the notation of positive features of the site, to suggestions regarding improvements that might strengthen the use, appearance, and connection of the site to its surrounding area.

An inventory form was completed for each site, as well as a locational map and site photographs. The completed inventory is contained in a separate volume, *City of Alexandria Open Space Inventory, 2001*, available through the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

Among other factors, the inventory assessed current site conditions and suit-

Legend
- Resource Protection Areas
- Streams
- Open Space adjacent to rivers and streams
- Parks

Figure 10: Rivers and Streams

ability of the site to meet its programmatic intent. Nearly three quarters of the sites inventoried were evaluated as either "excellent" or "good" at meeting their intended programmed uses. The remaining quarter were assessed either as demonstrating a mismatch between site program and surrounding context (e.g., a play area for children that requires access from a heavily trafficked street, with no adequate crosswalk to the facility), or a disconnect between existing facilities and intended programmed uses (e.g., a passive park that provided a setting in which to sit and linger but did not provide an adequate number of benches).

In terms of overall condition, four general issues emerged as important to consider in improving the status of existing open space – particularly public parks — in the City. These include:

1. **Locational Issues:** many of Alexandria's smaller parks, particularly those in the City's more dense areas, are located close to busy streets. This presents both noise and potential safety issues. New parks, where possible, should be set back or buffered from busy streets. The challenge for existing parks is to buffer them from these adjacent streets while still allowing for visibility into the sites for security. In addition, locations adjacent to busy streets, without adequate crosswalks near the park, often present access problems, particularly for children. Broader locational issues related to the distribution of parks throughout

Legend
- Urban Plazas
- Streetscapes
- Parks
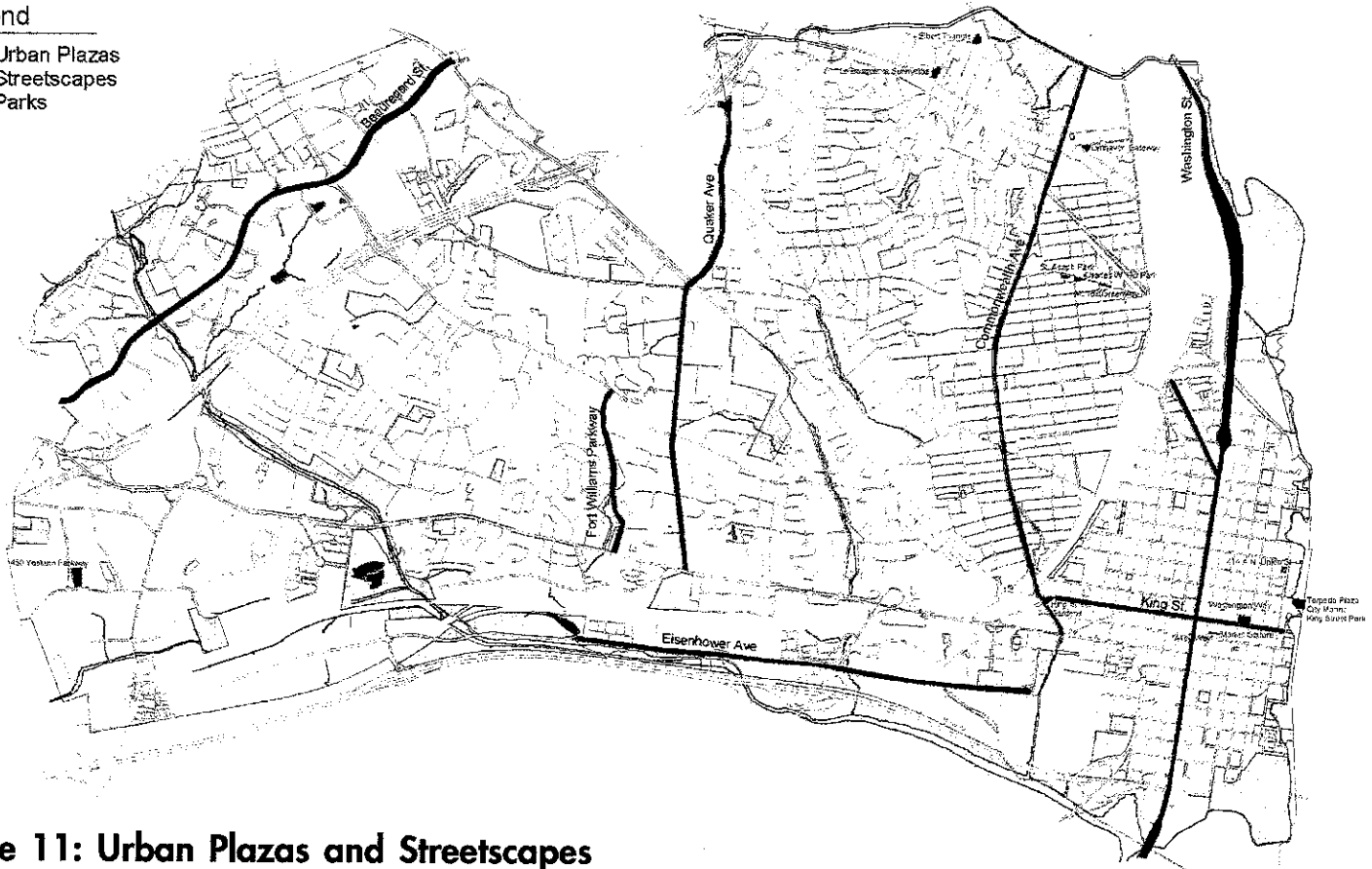
Figure 11: Urban Plazas and Streetscapes

the City are discussed in Chapter 3. Open Space Needs and Issues.

2. **Design Issues:** a number of the City's older parks present problems related to their current designs. For example, one of the traditional concerns about urban parks is the degree of visibility they afford from surrounding areas in order to minimize crime, vandalism, and the occurrence of illegal activities. In a number of the parks inventoried, visibility problems were noted, related to several factors: location (e.g., in interior areas that do not permit adequate views into the park), elevation level (e.g., parks that are sunken or elevated), areas that are surrounded by dense vegetation without compensating security measures (such as increased lighting), and inadequate lighting in general.

The inventory also identified instances where additional amenities would strengthen a park's program, such as improved seating (particularly in shaded locations), fencing, interpretive signage, and facilities that allow for greater accessibility by handicapped persons. Site design issues that were also apparent included: maximizing linkage opportunities for connecting parks to nearby trails and to other community open space areas; clearly defining park entrance locations; and configuring the site so that its programmatic uses are apparent to all and so one use area does not conflict with another.

3. **Environmental Issues:** Several environmental issues were noted during the public open space inventory, including erosion problems along stream banks and on steep slopes, as well as potential water quality and drainage issues. In addition, many of the City's public open spaces contain wonderful natural resources. The general public should be made more aware of these elements through interpretive/educational and preservation programs.

4. **Maintenance Issues:** While many of the City's parks are in outstanding condition, maintenance issues were noted in a number of instances. These included: old and worn play equipment, overused turf areas (particularly on athletic fields), overgrown trails and streambanks, cracked pavement areas and, in more natural areas, the need to remove invasive plants.

Overall, the City's parks are in good condition, but an open space plan must begin by maximizing existing resources. Hence, the inventory of public open spaces provides Alexandria with input regarding those aspects of its current open space that could be improved.

A.   DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

•   Population Profile

In October of 1998 in a presentation to Agenda Alexandria, Ken Billingsley, Director of Information and Development at the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission, traced the fascinating demographic profile of the City. In his remarks, he stated that:

> *Like the Potomac River at Great Falls, outwardly calm on the surface, there are powerful undercurrents flowing which are about to turn this city inside/out.*

Those "currents" included many factors that impact both the need for open space, and types of open space needed, in Alexandria. Mr. Billingsley predicted that the upcoming 2000 census would indicate the following:

- A large infusion of jobs, as well as retail and office development
- A significant shift in the age composition of the City
- A redistribution of the City's population
- A recomposition of population along ethnic lines
- The replacement of family households by non-family units

Major retail and office development along King and Washington Streets attract diverse population groups

Ken Billingsley also predicted that the population in the nation's 11th densest city would have grown by approximately 1,000 people per year between 1990 and 2000. In reality, Alexandria's population in the year 2000 far exceeded Mr. Billingsley's prediction, with the census showing a total population of 128,283, a growth of 17,000 persons in ten years.

Mr. Billingsley's other predictions have, in large measure, proven to be right on target. While the City's population under the age of 18 years old grew by almost 26 percent, it represents approximately 17 percent of the City's total population. One third of the population, however, is between the ages of 20 and 34, while another third is between 35 and 54 years old. The latter group represents a 27 percent increase in the last decade. The median age in the City of Alexandria was 33.5 in 1990; in the year 2000, it is 34.4.

Household composition has also changed significantly. Non-family households comprise 55 percent of all households in the City (a 17 percent growth over 1990). Moreover, there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of householders living alone, so that this population now represents over 43 percent of all households in Alexandria. The City, in fact ranks third in the nation for number of single-person households. Finally, while family households comprise nearly 45 percent of the City's household population (a 15 percent growth rate), the percent of families with children under the age of 18 remained constant at 18.6 percent. Overall, however, households with children under the age of 18 increased

by 25 percent in the ten year period. Average household size in Alexandria is 2.04 persons, and average family size is 2.87 persons.

While the balance between owners and renters has remained about the same, with City residents renting (60 percent) more often than owning (40 percent), there has been growth in both sectors. Therefore, over the past decade, there has been a 17 percent increase in the number of residents renting their housing units, and a 14.7 percent increase in the number owning their units.

The City has also continued to experience major changes in population composition with regard to racial and ethnic diversity. According to the 2000 Census:

- The White population, currently comprising 59.9 percent of the City's population, has decreased. In 1990, this population made up 69% of the City's residents (a 0.1 population decrease)
- The African American population grew by 18.8 percent, and currently comprises 22.5 percent of the City's total population
- The Hispanic population grew by a remarkable 75.2 percent. While, in 1990, this population represented 9.7 percent of the total City population, in 2000 it represents 14.7 percent.
- The Asian population, while still relatively small, grew in the decade from 1990 to 2000 by 60.8 percent. Asian residents currently comprise 5.7 percent of the City's population.

Many of the City's new residents, reflected in the statistics described above, are part of an influx of newly arrived immigrants who are making Alexandria their American home. This influx has, in fact, resulted in Alexandria being one of the most racially and ethnically diverse locality in Northern Virginia.

The area of the City that has experienced the greatest growth as a result of both the population influx and new development has been the west side, generally included within the City's Planning Area 3. Other areas that have undergone significant population growth in the last decade include the area north of Glebe Road comprising Census Tract 12.3 and within Planning Area 2, and the Eisenhower Valley area spanning Planning Areas 2 and 3.

Finally, the City overall has one of the highest per capita income rates in the region. With Alexandria's per capita income at $46,290 as of the 2000 Census, the only jurisdiction with a higher per capita rate is Arlington County ($46,677). For the City, this represents a 46 percent growth in the decade since 1990. In addition, Alexandria ranks among the top cities in the nation with regard to the percent of population with college degrees and advanced degrees.

What does all of this mean with regard to open space? The changing demographic profile of the City reflects changing expectations and demands for various types of open space opportunities. If one considers, for example, that Alexandria is largely a fairly young "adult city" – that is, a city in which two thirds of the population is between the ages of 20 and 54 – with a large proportion of single residents, it is likely that there will be significant demand for open spaces that can accommodate a full range of adult activities. These will range from active sports, including team sports as well as biking and jogging, to more passive endeavors such as hiking and strolling, picnicking, and sunning.

At the same time, the City's growing population of children under the age of 18 will demand a significant amount of active open space. This is compounded by the fact that many of the rental options in Alexandria, as elsewhere, do not contain usable open space areas. Hence, those families with children living in rental units must rely completely on the City for their open space opportunities. Similarly, the City's increasing population over the age of 55 will also be seeking a broad range of open space opportunities, both passive and active in nature.

Alexandria's ethnic diversity will also reflect a diversity in expectations and demands regarding the kinds of open spaces needed. This might range from a greater emphasis on specific types of active recreational pursuits — such as soccer — and an increasing need for fields that can accommodate these activities, to open spaces as settings for strolling and gathering, as is more common in some cultures than it may be in the United States.

Finally, as assessment of the distribution of open space in the City is critical in order to determine the extent to which this matches and responds to the needs of the current and projected population. The Needs Assessment Study that is currently underway will provide the City with information that will allow for a more precise response regarding the distribution and types of recreational facilities – including open space facilities – required. The current Open Space Plan looks at more general open space needs and opportunities, providing the framework for both active and passive uses.

- **Density**

In 1990, Alexandria was ranked as the 11th densest city in the United States. Over the last decade, our density has increased from 11.0 persons per acre in 1990 to 12.7 persons per acre in 2000, a 15 percent increase. For comparative purposes, based on 1990 Census figures, Alexandria's per acre density ranked with other major U.S. cities as follows:

- New York: 37.3[1]
- Boston: 18.0
- Philadelphia: 17.1

View of King Street metro station and surrounding urban fabric

- Baltimore: 13.1
- Detroit: 11.3
- Alexandria: 11.0
- Minneapolis: 10.2
- Cleveland: 10.1
- Seattle: 9.8
- Pittsburgh: 9.8
- St. Louis: 8.9

On a regional level, the City of Alexandria at 8,145 persons per square mile is more dense than either of its immediate neighbors: with Arlington County at 7,315 persons per square mile and Fairfax County at a mere 2,385 persons.[2]

It is not surprising, given this density, that open space is a valuable and limited asset in the City of Alexandria. Viewed in another way, the City offers 7.3 acres[3] of active and passive public open space for every 1,000 persons living within its boundaries. This is the same as in 1990. Yet, how does this compare with other cities? In his book, *Inside City Parks*, Peter Harnik provides a comparison between open space provisions in select high and medium density American cities. (Note that this comparison is based on 1990 Census figures and has not yet been updated). Some of these comparisons are noted below:

Figure 12. Open Space Comparison between Select American Cities[4]

Alexandria	11.0	7.3	10.7%	111,183
High Density Cities:				
Baltimore	13.1	7.5	9.8	675,000
Boston	18.0	8.7	15.7	558,000
Chicago	18.7	4.3	8.0	2,722,000
Los Angeles	11.8	8.5	10.0	3,554,000
Miami	16.0	3.6	5.8	365,000
New York	37.3.	7.2	26.8	7,381,000
Philadelphia	17.1	7.2	12.4	1,478,000
San Francisco	24.6	10.3	25.4	735,000
Average, High		7.2	14.2	
Medium:				
Cincinnati	7.0	21.4	15.0	346,000
Cleveland	10.1	5.8	5.9	498,000
Detroit	11.3	5.9	6.6	1,000,000
Minneapolis	10.2	16.0	16.2	359,000
Pittsburgh	9.8	7.8	7.7	350,000
Portland, OR.	6.0	26.2	15.8	481,000
Seattle	9.8	11.8	11.5	525,000
St. Louis	8.9	9.6	8.5	352,000
Average, Medium		13.0	10.9	

Once again, Alexandria is " betwixt and between" other American cities — in terms of total population, it is considerably smaller than any of the cities listed while, on the other hand, it is comparable in density to cities such as Los Angeles, Detroit, Minneapolis and Cleveland. In terms of the provision of open space per 1,000 residents, however, Alexandria is generally on par with the "high density cities," while being significantly below the average open space per 1,000 residents provided for "medium density cities." In terms of quality of life indicators, the cities that are generally lauded as "livable" and providing a high quality of life often include: San Francisco, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Portland (OR), and Seattle. All of these cities provide substantially more open space per resident than does the City of Alexandria, and all have a significantly greater percent of overall city acreage devoted to parks than does Alexandria.

B. OPEN SPACE ISSUES

In order for Alexandria to address its future open space needs, it must first assess and confront current issues regarding the City's existing open space resources. As discussed below, these include:

- The lack of open space continuity and connection
- The diminishing availability of open space
- The uneven distribution of open space
- The need for open space stewardship and protection, particularly with regard to natural areas

- **Open Space Continuity and Connection**

    Over the past decade, recreation specialists and urban policy decision-makers have begun to recognize the critical importance of providing connected open spaces within dense urban settings. Not only does the provision of continuous open space opportunities provide more usable and useful open space, but it also strengthens residents' perception of a "green city," a city that offers both a human scale and a desirable quality of life.

    The current pattern of open space areas within the City of Alexandria is scattered and disconnected (see Figure 3). While these open spaces provide residents with a variety of recreational and visual opportunities, the current dispersed pattern does not maximize the use of these spaces; nor does it enhance the image of Alexandria as a "green city." Given the high density of the City, it is particularly important that existing open space opportunities be maximized to the greatest extent possible by means of a connected, continuous open space system.

    Many communities across the country have been enhancing their open spaces through the creation of greenways, connected green linkages that wind through a city, tie it together, and allow residents access to, and

movement between, a variety of open space experiences. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in its publication *Conserving Virginia's Natural and Recreation Resources*, recognizes that each city's greenway will be unique. In general, however, DCR defines "greenways" as:.

> ...*open space corridors that [typically]... connect recreational, natural, cultural, and/or historic areas.*

Some of the benefits to be accrued from the creation of greenways, as documented by DCR, include:

- Connecting people and communities
- Providing important open space resources
- Enhancing public awareness of existing parks, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources
- Providing attractive alternative transportation routes for bikers and pedestrians
- Softening urban landscapes
- Enhancing economic development and tourism
- Increasing real property values
- Improving water quality in adjacent rivers and streams, and providing natural wildlife corridors
- Providing close-to-home access to a greater proportion of the population than can be accomplished through traditional, scattered parks
- Improving the overall quality of life in the community

All of these benefits would likely apply to the development of a strong, clearly defined and linked open space network within the City of Alexandria. The physical connections created as a result of this system would bring together people and open space areas throughout the City. The development of this open space system become, therefore, one of the more critically important strategies in the City's Open Space Plan.

- **Open Space Availability**

There is an apparent inverse relationship between development and open space since an increase in one results in a decrease in the other. For most urban areas within Northern Virginia, rapid development has dramatically decreased the availability of open space for recreational and other purposes. The paradox is that, as more people move into an area and demand high quality open space amenities, the greater the constraints are to find adequate space to accommodate their needs. This is certainly true in the City of Alexandria where an already dense municipality has accommodated a 15.4 percent increase in population over the decade between 1990 and 2000; and where approximately 4,176 new housing units and approximately 50 to 60 development plans were approved in the two year period from FY '98 to FY '00.

Moreover, the pressure for identifying new sites for public use is divided between those who are seeking opportunities for additional open space and those who must address the need for new and expanded school sites and other public facilities, as well as affordable housing opportunities. At present, these groups often compete with one another to identify and claim right to each new land parcel as it becomes available.

These trends indicate the need for several actions with regard to open space in Alexandria:
- Making optimal use of all currently existing open space opportunities through the development of the connected open space system, described above, as well as through the careful stewardship and, where needed, renovation and re-design of existing open space areas.
- Identifying prime candidate sites as additions to the City's open space system. These might include vacant land parcels, underutilized land, open spaces as part of new residential and commercial developments, and private parcels that become available over time. (The criteria for identifying critical parcels, and the tools that can be used to add these to the City's open space inventory are discussed in Section 6 of this report).
- Establishing strategies that will allow for collaboration, rather than competition, between public agencies in their pursuit and development of available opportunity sites.

In the on-going competition between development and open space, many jurisdictions have had to address the belief that the economic benefits to be accrued from development outweigh those attributable to open space. It is relatively easy to quickly dismiss open space as "nice to have" but not as important to a city's economic health as new development. Research and empirical evidence indicate, however, that this is not true. All things considered, development is not always the highest and best use for a piece of property.

There are important qualitative, as well as documented quantitative, benefits that flow from a community's open space resources. These benefits include:
- Retaining population in a city, and attracting new population and businesses to it, based on quality of life judgements, among which open space ranks significantly high.
- Increased assessed and actual real estate values for properties located near or adjacent to open space areas.
- A lower overall cost to local government for land that is developed as open space rather than for residential use.
- Growing public support for open space funding through general obligation bonds and/or increased taxes.

On the qualitative side, open space does provide important social and quality of life assets for communities. In studies conducted throughout the

United States, open space has been increasingly recognized as a critical element determining residents' assessments about the quality of life in their communities. For example, in a 1995 poll conducted by the Regional Plan Association and the Quinnipac College Polling Institute, the two major factors named as most important for determining a satisfactory quality of life were low crime and access to open space. Such findings have been repeatedly confirmed in additional studies by other groups.[5] Moreover, open space resources are typically touted in the economic development, business recruitment, and tourism promotion efforts of many communities. The lack of such resources can place a community at a competitive disadvantage vis a vis other communities, in this era of increasingly active population sectors and growing public support for open space preservation.

In studies focused on determining the critical factors considered in business relocations, open space and recreational opportunities have been found to rank significantly in defining a "good quality of life" for a locality. For example, in a survey conducted in 1997 by *Fortune* magazine regarding the best cities for business, they asked participants, "If you had virtually identical career opportunities in multiple cities, what would be the most important quality of life factors that would determine your choices." Education ranked first on the list, followed by recreation, culture, crime and safety.

On the quantitative side, reasons to promote open space typically fall under two general categories. The first is the value impact on adjacent properties. The second is the relative "costs" of open space versus development options that might prove to be a fiscal drain on public coffers.

Many studies have been undertaken to document the impact of open space on properties that are near, adjacent to, or fronting on such areas (i.e., "proximate properties").[6] Based on a significant body of research, it has been found that open space areas tend to enhance the value of such proximate properties. The general rule of thumb is that attractive open space can enhance the value (and hence property tax yield) of adjacent or fronting properties by approximately 20 percent. As distance from the open space resource increases, the value premium declines, but the area of impact is thought to be possibly as great as 500 feet for a smaller park, and up to 2,000 feet from a community park.

As with most rules of thumb, there are important limitations and conditions that should be noted: the open space resource must be well kept up and attractive; and, generally, larger open space areas and open spaces devoted to passive uses tend to carry greater value premiums. Proximity to active, rather than passive, recreation areas may actually have negative impact on values for properties that are immediately adjacent due to potential issues such as traffic, congestion, and noise. However, proximity to active open space and park resources can have a positive impact on

values of properties in close proximity to, but not immediately adjacent to, such resources.

The second benefit of open space preservation is based on the premise that retention of a piece of property as open space can preempt development that could require the sometimes-costly provision of public services. This situation is particularly relevant when the alternative use is residential development that would require the full spectrum of public services including schools, public safety, etc. These services typically exceed the value of property tax receipts associated with such development. Combined with the value impact on proximate properties, the net fiscal impact can often enhance the overall positive impact of open space retention for a community. Thus, John Crompton, one of the individuals who has researched the economic impacts of open space versus residential development has concluded that:

> *The evidence clearly indicated that creating parks and preserving open space can be a less expensive alternative to development. A strategy of conserving parks and open space is not contrary to a community's economic health, but rather is an integral part of it (p.75).*

Finally, the economic value of open space has recently been underscored through a series of public referenda supporting funding for parks and open space issues. In the year 2000, for example, the Trust for Public Land reported that 40 communities throughout the nation passed measures that generated $3.3 billion to protect parks and open spaces. Similarly, the Land Trust Alliance, also in 2000, stated that a total for 141 out of 165 referenda concerning open space and land conservation issues were passed, providing over $6.9 billion in new funds for these issues. As stated by Ernest Cook, director of the Public Finance Program for the Trust for Public Land:

Voters across the country have demonstrated real commitment to preserving open space in their communities. We are seeing strong support for measures that provide financing for parks and open space even in places where tax measures for other purposes have failed.[7]

- **Distribution and Access**

Hand in hand with Alexandria's changing demographic picture is its shift in overall population distribution. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the population of Alexandria has been changing both in terms of overall characteristics and where people choose to live. If the City wishes to make its open space resources available to all residents on an equitable basis, it will be important to analyze the current population patterns with regard to existing open space availability.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, population growth has occurred in

all three of the City's planning districts. However, the growth has been greatest in District 3, the west side of the City (i.e., there was a 21 percent increase in population in District 3 between 1990 and 2000; over the same time period in Districts 1 and 2, growth was 17 percent and 4.6 percent respectively). Viewed in terms of open space acres per thousand residents, District 1 has approximately 12.24 acres per 1,000 persons; District 2 has approximately 6.7 acres; and District 3 offers approximately 6.9 acres. However, many of the open space acres, particularly in District 3, comprise environmentally sensitive sites (such as Holmes Run) that are not suited or intended for active recreational pursuits.

In terms of open space available for active recreation, District 1 contains approximately 4.8 acres per 1,000 residents; District 2 comprises 4.5 acres; and District 3 offers 3.0 acres. Given the fact that the greatest growth in children aged 17 and under occurred in District 3 (44 percent, as compared to 14 percent in District 1 and 8 percent in District 2), it is not surprising that the need for additional recreational open space in District 3 has been identified by the City as an issue requiring attention. In response to this issue, the City has undertaken a Recreation Needs Assessment study that will analyze recreational needs in terms of population characteristics and distribution.

- **Open Space Stewardship and Protection**

  As Alexandria continues to grow, and to attract new residents and businesses, the overall need to protect the City's few remaining open space areas becomes even more critical. One need only look at a map of existing vacant lands (see Figure 13) to underscore how little open land remains within Alexandria's boundaries. Therefore, building an open space system that will adequately provide for a growing population requires that we protect and enhance the open spaces we currently have, and maximize opportunities for creating new open spaces when these become available.

  Perhaps the largest potential for open space resources in Alexandria lies in its natural, environmentally sensitive, and cultural/historic areas. These include the City's riverfront, stream valleys, steep slopes, wooded sites, historic landscapes, and other natural resource areas. Care for, and protection of, such areas will be critical to any open space plan for the City since these areas comprise a major portion of Alexandria's green infrastructure. Moreover, they represent a key opportunity for making those open space connections that are essential to the establishment of a working open space network throughout the City. Those opportunities include:

  - Connecting Alexandria's residents to both the natural and historic landscapes in their City — areas easily overlooked since many are neither well known nor readily accessible.

- Helping to create a linked, usable open space network within the City that has, at its core, these natural and historic sites.
- Educating the public to appreciate and value these sensitive resources through enhanced access and interpretation.

C.   OPEN SPACE NEED

A separate *Recreation Needs Assessment Study* has recently been completed by the firm of Leon Younger and PROS. This study has analyzed the City's current and projected recreational needs, in terms of programs as well as indoor and outdoor facilities, and has recommended specific improvements to the City's recreational system. The reader is referred to this document for further details.

[1] Based on data from *Inside City Parks* by Peter Harnik.

[2] Based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census, includes both water and land area.

[3] Based on 932 acres of public open space, divided by 128,283 persons divided by 1,000.

[4] Also based on data from *Inside City Parks* by Peter Harnik, using 1990 Census figures.

[5] See, for example, *The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space* by Steve Lerner and William Poole, which discusses a series of studies related to open space and quality of life issues.

[6] See, for example, references by John L. Crompton, John Tibbetts, and Elizabeth Brabec.

[7] The Trust for Public Land: *Newsroom: 82 Percent of Referenda Passed.*

Open space is a community amenity, and many residents of Alexandria feel passionate about the City's open space areas. They fight to protect the open spaces currently in place and are eager to point out opportunities for improving them. In addition, many residents are often the first to know about new open space opportunities, or potential opportunities that may become available in the future. Moreover, the open space planning process presented the City with an excellent occasion to bring residents together to have a role in planning those areas that contribute significantly to the quality of life in Alexandria.

Park Planning District 1 meeting

A. A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The community involvement process was designed to accomplish three general goals:

- To engage residents of Alexandria in defining an open space vision for the City
- To encourage residents to think about, and express their views regarding, the appropriate role for, and adequate provision of, open space in the City
- To educate the community with regard to defining open space, and to thinking about ways in which to maximize open space opportunities

A multi-tiered involvement process was used to engage a broad range of key stakeholders, community groups, and residents in the planning process. This process included:

- Interviews with key open space stakeholders to understand their views of current conditions and their ideas for the future. Those interviewed included representatives from:
- Office of the City Manager
- Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Department of Planning and Zoning
- Transportation and Environmental Services Department
- Alexandria School Board
- Alexandria Beautification Commission
- Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations
- Environmental Policy Commission
- Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission
- Historic Alexandria Restoration Commission
- Alexandria Soccer Association
- Parker Gray Community

Park Planning Distrct 1 meeting

- **Community sessions in each of the three Park Planning Districts** to explain the open space planning process, review the existing conditions inventory, and develop preliminary plan goals and visions. These sessions were held in April and May 2001, and were all well attended.

- **A citywide Open Space Summit**, a half-day session to refine the vision and develop a conceptual open space plan. Approximately 150 people participated in the Summit event, held in June 2001.

This community involvement strategy allowed the planning team to reach a large and diverse number of residents, and enabled those who participated to have more than one opportunity to express their views on the issues discussed. The ideas to emerge from all of this input have served as the basis for the Open Space Plan.

Park Planning District 2 meeting

B. THE PRELIMINARY VISION

Each of the Planning District meetings began with a presentation of the open space categories defined as part of the planning process, and findings of the inventory of existing conditions for each category. The meeting was then turned over to the community participants present, in the form of small group discussions. The purpose of these discussions was to allow opportunities for residents to think about their open space needs, and to develop ideas that would contribute to an open space vision for their communities.

While those attending each Planning District session focused specifically on the open space needs within their own district, many also addressed broader citywide needs. What was most remarkable about the input received from these meetings was the similarity of goals expressed by participants from all three districts.

The major discussion points noted by participants, comprising the beginning of an open space vision for the City, indicated need for the following (not in any order of priority):

- Achieving a continuous public open space corridor along the Potomac River in Alexandria
- Maximizing open space connections throughout the City through pedestrian-friendly streets, trails and enhanced streetscape corridors. Tied to this concept is the goal to establish Alexandria as a key link in a regional trail system.
- Placing a high priority on protecting and enhancing the City's stream valleys and other natural resource areas. This includes the creation of clean stream channels, "less engineered" stream banks ("re-green all streams"), and using parks as buffers along river and stream banks to the greatest extent possible.
- Retaining as much usable open space as possible within the most rapidly developing areas of the city. Moreover, within these areas, ensure that established design guidelines and maintenance standards are rigorously enforced.
- Maximizing the use and visual quality of all open space parcels — make the most of what we have.
- Protecting our existing parkland.

- Acting quickly to "capture" open space opportunities, as they become available; having the mechanisms in place to allow the City to act rapidly.
- Securing open space easements on key, privately held and institutional open space areas as these represent some of the largest remaining open space parcels in the City.
- Recognizing the value of streets in an urban open space system and enhancing existing streetscapes so they become a secondary park system for the City.
- Maximizing vacant lands as open space opportunities, particularly where they provide changes to link to other open space areas.
- Preserving areas of significant tree cover.
- Seeking opportunities to create additional open space areas in sections of the City where this is most needed (e.g., the west end, and the northeast portion of Old Town)
- Identifying and enforcing all existing public easements; these could provide some important trail linkages and, perhaps, small open space areas.
- Developing easier and more attractive Metro access for pedestrians.
- Minimizing surface parking lots; locating parking underground where possible and using the surface areas as open space opportunities.
- Undergrounding utilities to the maximum extent possible.
- Defining and developing attractive gateways to the City, along streets,

Legend
- Beautify Interchanges
- Pedestrian & Bike Linkage
- Gateways
- Metro Civic Parks
- Vacant Land - Private
- Vacant Land - Public
- Open Space Preservation / New Parks
- Tree Cover Protection
- Slaters Lane Plan
- Trails
- Stream Valley Protection & Enhancement
- Streetscapes
- Highway Corridors
- New Development Areas
- Potomac River Waterfront Program
- Cemeteries
- Schools
- Public Open Space
- Institutional Land

Figure 14: Open Space Vision

highways, and trails.
- Providing additional multipurpose fields.
- Improving the appearance of highway corridors through Alexandria.
- Making better use of open space areas around school properties for habitats, gardens, educational and community opportunities.
- Creating a new zoning classification: a horticultural zone.
- Encouraging scenic easements; identifying valuable properties not currently protected by easements and creating those easements before such sites become developed, or to prevent or limit further development.
- In addition, there were numerous comments regarding the kinds of spaces in residential and commercial developments that should and should not be counted as open space (e.g., parking lots, balconies, roof tops). This issue is, however, being addressed by a separate study of zoning requirements for residential and commercial areas, being prepared under the auspices of the Department of Planning and Zoning. This issue is, therefore, not discussed in the Open Space Plan.

Based on the input provided as a result of the three Planning District meetings, a conceptual Open Space Vision was compiled (see Figure 14). This vision served as the discussion starting point for the Open Space Summit.

C.   CITYWIDE OPEN SPACE SUMMIT

Approximately 150 people gathered together on a Saturday in June 2001 to discuss the future of open space in the City of Alexandria. The agenda for this event is provided in the Appendix. In brief, after greetings from Mayor Donley, and remarks from the chairs of the Park and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Environmental Policy Commission that placed the open space planning effort in the context of other ongoing efforts in the City, the group listened to a presentation by Peter Harnik (author of *Inside City Parks*) regarding the importance of open space for dense urban cities, such as Alexandria. The consultant team presented the results of the planning process up to that point, and described the conceptual Open Space Vision that was developed following the Planning District meetings. Each of the 15 tables in the room was provided with a copy of the Open Space Vision diagram and participants were asked to work in small group sessions, led by facilitators, to address the following questions:

- The plan presents a wide variety of concepts regarding open space opportunities for Alexandria. Which are the concepts that you feel it will be important for the City to include in its open space plan?
- Are there any concepts that you feel should not be included?
- Can you think of any additional opportunities that we should consider including?
- We have talked about a broad range of open space opportunities. If you were to advise the City on which three to implement first, which would you choose? You have each been given three dots. Please place

Group presentation at the Summit

Group work was mediated by a landscape architect
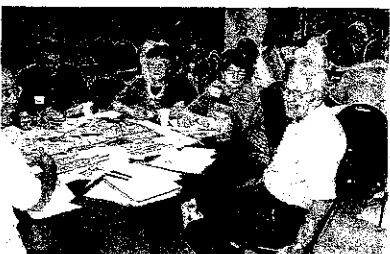
Community participants at the Summit

these on the plan on the three opportunities you believe the City should focus on first.

All groups were given an hour to complete the questions. At the end of that time, a representative from each of the groups was asked to come forward and present its responses. In general, respondents resoundingly supported the overall concepts shown in the Open Space Vision diagram. They did, however, feel that the Open Space Plan should emphasize the following actions:

- Stream valley protection and enhancement throughout the City, including the restoration of stream banks to their natural state and removal/control of invasive plants; continuous public access within stream valley greenways
- Creation of a continuous open space along the Potomac River waterfront
- The creation of significant public open space opportunities in the Eisenhower Avenue corridor and other development areas
- Acquisition of private vacant land for open space use and as scenic easements
- Creation of a linked system of pedestrian and bicycle trails throughout the City to connect parks and neighborhoods, and to link older neighborhoods to new development areas
- Creation of significant, usable public open space areas in the Potomac Yards development area
- Preservation of institutionally-owned open space areas, and improved public access to those areas where possible
- Tree protection and maintenance; possible creation of tree cover protection zones
- Creation of new open space opportunities in the west end and the northeast portion of Old Town
- Enhancement of streetscapes to encourage a positive pedestrian experience ("think of sidewalks as the connecting fabric between open spaces"); conversion of the City's major streets into "greenways;" enhancement of Commonwealth Avenue as a model for this
- Improvements to the areas around the Metro stations, ideally into civic parks
- Research into new major open space opportunities (e.g., the power plant)
- Beautification of the highway interchanges through the City; consideration of highway areas for future decking over, to create new open space areas
- Definition of the City's entrances and beautification of these
- Emphasis on vacant land around schools as potential open space opportunities; balancing the needs for both open space preservation and school growth

The groups designated three recommendations as the top priorities for immediate action: protection of the City's stream valleys, creation of a continuous

public open space corridor along the Potomac River waterfront, and the creation of connected public open space opportunities in the Eisenhower Corridor.

The information gained from the Summit was used to develop the goals and strategies for the Open Space Plan. These are described in the next chapter of this report.

Unlike many important cities, in the late 19th and early 20th Century, Alexandria did not set aside large swaths of open space or adopt a comprehensive open space plan that would guide the creation of a park system with interconnected linear and stream valley parks, waterfront parks and other open spaces, large and small. Alexandria's current park system includes a broad range of open space facilities, ranging from neighborhood parks and playgrounds to national parks. Some parks are linear in character, such as those that follow water courses. Others are located along the Potomac River and provide dramatic vistas up river to the U.S. Capitol and down river toward broad views of the Potomac River shoreline. This section of the report describes the current opportunities available to the City to conserve open space; a conceptual planning framework for the plan; and a description of 15 goals and associated plan recommendations.

A. OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Numerous open spaces throughout the City have potential to remain as open space through various methods of protection. These open spaces are currently not designated as parks or public open spaces. Some are privately owned, but designated as open space open to the public; for example, the Winkler Botanical Garden in the West End. Others are open spaces on properties owned by institutions such as the Virginia Theological Seminary property at Seminary Road and Quaker Lane.

Legend

- Resource Protection Areas
- School Sites
- Cemeteries and Botanical Garden
- Institutional Properties with Open Space Resources
- Large Lot Residential Properties
- Undeveloped Areas with Natural Features
- Vacant Land, Under Development Consideration
- Vacant Land - Public Ownership
- Vacant Land - Private Ownership
- Open Space to be Delineated in Future Development Areas
- Planned Open Space in Development Areas
- Required Common Private Open Space
- Planted Medians
- Wooded Buffers Adjacent to Highways and Railroads
- Streetscapes
- Parks

Figure 15: Open Space Opportunity Sites
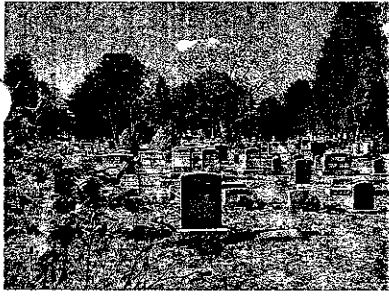
Alexandria National Cemetery

Fort Ward

The open space opportunities have been organized into the following categories and are illustrated in the Open Space Opportunities Sites map.

- Parks and Public Open Spaces—provide the framework of the existing park system and upon which future open spaces will be added.
- School Sites—usually have important open space resources. Numerous school sites are adjacent to parks and public open spaces.
- Cemeteries and Botanical Gardens—are valuable open space resources that are generally privately owned.
- Institutional Properties—typically have valuable open space and natural resources on a portion of their land holdings.
- Large Lot Residential Properties—a number of residential properties have extensive open space, that usually include valuable vegetation or other natural resources.
- Undeveloped Areas with Natural Features—are typically located adjacent to stream valleys
- Vacant Land Under Development—certain vacant sites are under consideration for open space or recreation uses.
- Vacant Land, Public Ownership—these properties typically don't possess natural resources but can be developed into valuable open spaces.
- Vacant Land, Private Ownership—these properties also typically don't possess natural resources but can be developed into valuable open spaces.
- Open Space to be Delineated in Future Development Areas—these areas are usually large and are currently being studied by the City's Department of Planning and Zoning for future development potential including open space uses.
- Planned Open Space in Development Areas—these open spaces have either been built or are approved for construction.
- Required Common Private Open Space—are sites that have been approved by the City for open space uses.
- Streetscapes—these streets have potential to be further enhanced with streetscaping.
- Planted Medians—are green islands in the middle of streetscapes.
- Wooded Buffers—these areas provide attractive settings or buffers to roads or railroad rights of way.

B. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Alexandria has numerous opportunities to create a significant network of interconnected and linked open spaces throughout the City in order to create a meaningful and workable green infrastructure. Since the City lacks large undeveloped tracts of vacant or underdeveloped land to target for open space protection or enhancement, this plan has identified a framework for making the most of the small amount of available land for open space use. This framework includes the following:

New development areas should support the open space linkages throughout the city

The Green Crescent connects primary rivers and streams in Alexandria.

Large institutional properties become the Central Open Space Conservation Area

Linear parks are a part of the Open Space Corridors

1. The overall objective of the Open Space Plan is that of **making connections**. Alexandria's current pattern of open space areas primarily consists of isolated parks and open spaces in all sectors of the City. Linking open spaces to each other, expanding open spaces to provide better linkages and creating continuous parks along roadways and waterways will enable the City to finally have a park system built on Olmstedian principles of park planning. Basic to such principles is the concept of a linked system connecting a city's major open spaces through parkways, greenways, trails, and smaller open areas. One famous example of this is Olmsted's "Emerald Necklace" open space system in Boston.

2. The creation of a **Green Crescent** of open spaces that follows the alignment of the City's primary rivers and streams: Potomac River, Four Mile Run, Cameron Run and Holmes Run. The Green Crescent would be created by building upon the existing parks, natural areas and other open spaces, and by adding unprotected key sites to provide greenway and trail linkages and interconnected parkland. Utilizing Holmes Run as a model, the existing open spaces in the Green Crescent would, over time, require environmental remediation and ecological revitalization to restore, rehabilitate or create natural landscapes as well as recreation areas that are compatible with these natural areas. Hiker and biker trails and natural landscapes would be the predominate characteristics of the Green Crescent.

3. **A second segment of the Green Crescent** creates a linear park generally parallel to the existing railroad rights-of-way of WMATA and CSX and extends from Four Mile Run at Route 1 to Ben Brenman Park in the West End. This Crescent builds upon the existing open spaces of Simpson Field, George Washington Middle School, and others with new open spaces and linkages in areas that are currently vacant or underutilized. Dramatic vistas of the U.S. Capitol and the George Washington Masonic Temple will become orientation elements for this Crescent.

4. A **Central Open Space Conservation Area** is established in the heart of the City through the preservation of land owned by Episcopal High School, the Episcopal Theological Seminary and the Second Presbyterian Church. These institutions have protected their woodlands, specimen trees, streams and rolling open fields over many decades. Through a variety of protection mechanisms, these open spaces can be protected in perpetuity and, possibly, certain areas made accessible to the general public for many years to come.

5. **Open Space Corridors** can be created in various neighborhoods of the City. The Open Space Corridors build upon existing stream valley corridors – Hooffs Run, Taylor Run, Timber Branch, etc. – streets and existing parkland (public- and privately – owned) to create linear

greenways that link to the Green Crescent and the Central Open Space Conservation Area. These corridors are aligned along the following streets or stream valleys:

- Van Dorn Street
- Jordan Street
- Howard Street
- Fort Williams Parkway
- Quaker Lane
- Taylor Run
- King Street
- Timber Branch
- Hooffs Run
- Braddock Road

6. **Major Thoroughfares** in the City can be upgraded to become more pedestrian-friendly and attractive urban open spaces. Many of Alexandria's streets can become the backbone for improved streetscapes, bikeways and greenways, and can stimulate urban revitalization of adjacent communities and businesses. These thoroughfares include:

- East and West Glebe Roads

Legend

- Green Crescent
- Green Connector
- Open Space Conservation Areas
- Parks
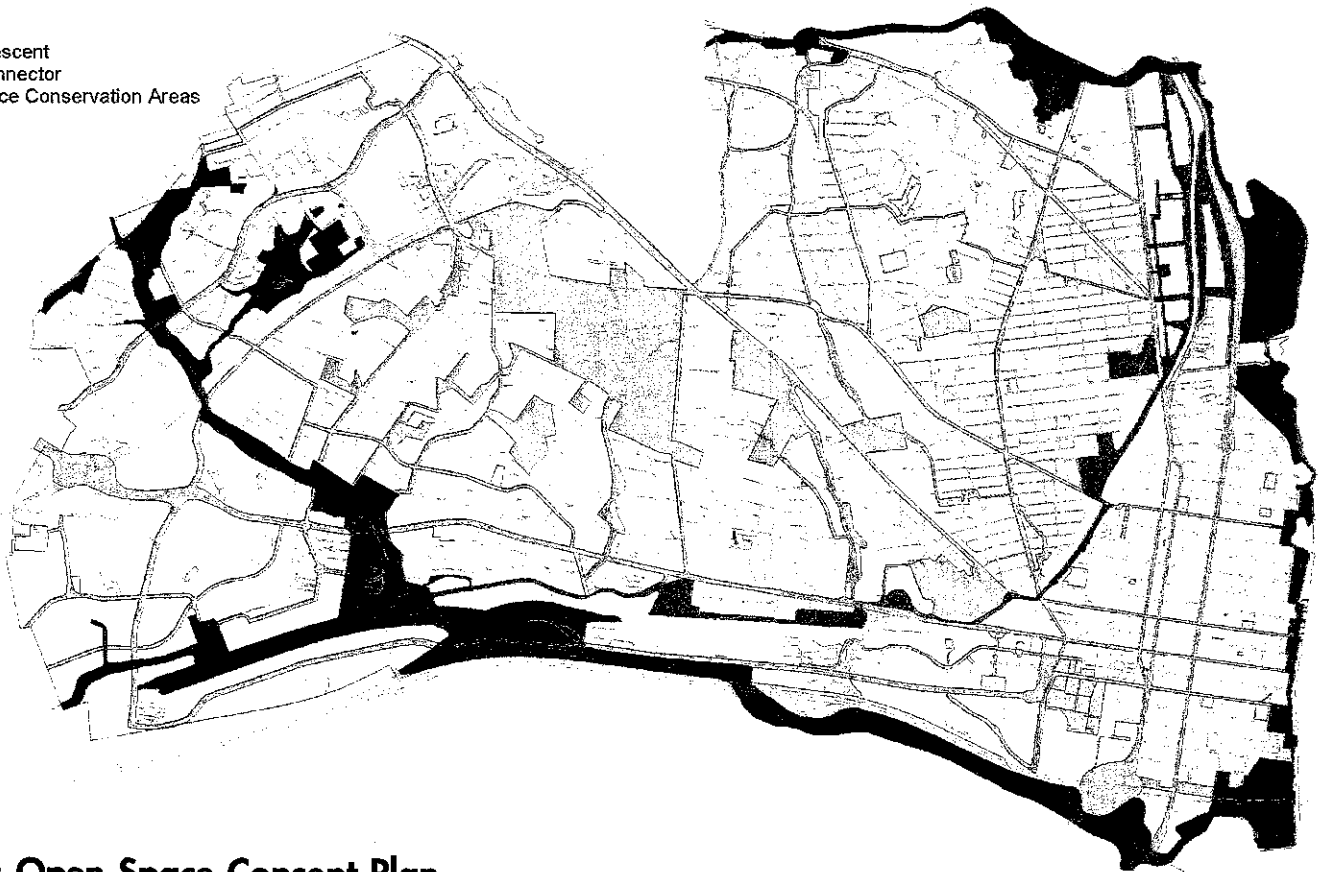
Figure 16: Open Space Concept Plan

Beauregard Street

- Braddock Road
- King Street
- Duke Street
- Eisenhower Avenue
- Beauregard Street
- Van Dorn Street
- Commonwealth Avenue
- Russell Road
- U.S. Route 1
- Washington Street

C. GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

During the planning process for the preparation of this Open Space Plan, 15 goals were formulated. Through discussions at the three Planning District meetings, the Citywide Open Space Summit and Steering Committee meetings, the 15 goals and associated plan recommendations were defined, analyzed and finalized. The 15 goals and associated recommendations provide the overall framework for the plan. These goals include:

1. Protecting and enriching existing parks
2. Developing innovative opportunities for creating additional open space
3. Completing implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan
4. Protecting and expanding stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas
5. Creating an open space network, The Green Crescent, in new development areas
6. Protecting and preserving institutional open space.
7. Maximizing use of public school open space areas to satisfy local needs
8. Preserving and protecting cemeteries
9. Creating public open space from vacant land
10. Linking and expanding the pedestrian, bicycle and trail system
11. Enhancing streetscapes and gateways
12. Expanding citywide street tree program and protecting existing trees and woodland areas
13. Encouraging the creation of Civic Parks at Metro Stations
14. Beautifying interchanges and highway corridors
15. Protecting privately-owned open space

The next section of this chapter describes each goal, along with its associated plan recommendations and strategies for implementation.

GOAL 1. PROTECT AND ENRICH EXISTING PARKS

Alexandria's existing public parks are the armature of its open space system. They provide both passive and active recreational amenities for neighbor-

Existing park

hoods and districts as well as for the City and the region. The existing parks are the focal points of communities and the locations for important civic events. As parks become more intensively used, the need for increased maintenance, management and planning becomes greater. In addition to identifying opportunities, the City should provide a strategy to continually protect the existing park system and identify opportunities to enhance park resources. An important component of this work will be in defining opportunities for park renovation, expansion and linkages to create a comprehensive open space network. Participants in the planning process were unanimous in their concern to protect remaining natural resources in existing parks.

The Plan defines opportunities for park renovation, expansion and linkages to create a park/open space network.

In addition, the Plan encourages the protection and enhancement of remaining natural resources in existing parks.

Recommendations for Goal 1

- Integrate the findings of the Open Space Inventory with those of the Needs Assessment Study.

- Continue the recent emphasis on increased maintenance of the existing park system and other public open spaces.

- Carefully assess existing heavily used parklands and recreation facilities in the Needs Assessment and determine methods for minimizing overuse (e.g., reprogramming or planned expansion).

- Look to the Needs Assessment to identify program needs (e.g., active recreation, passive activities, educational activities, etc.) and define potential areas for accommodating these.

- Inventory cultural and natural resources in the parks to protect existing resources and expand public education and enjoyment. Identify natural resource needs and define potential opportunities for accommodating these.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 1

- Work with Alexandria's business and residential communities to create an open space conservancy and stewardship program that can: (1) accept financial and property donations, (2) support renovation and expansion of parks and other public open spaces, and (3) create new parks and preserve existing open spaces and natural areas.

- Establish an open space endowment for the purchase and development of public open space. (Possible funding sources for this action are

Existing park by the Potomac River

discussed in Chapter 6.)

- Continue to seek increased City funding and other sources of funding for park maintenance, renovation and expansion, as well as for staff training and professional management to improve use of existing resources.

- Develop a master plan for each of the City's existing parks to guide short and long-term needs.

- Expand the City's volunteer programs, such as Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Garden and Tree Stewards, to encourage organized groups to help with the maintenance of open space resources. (See Chapter 6 for additional discussion of this issue)

- Develop a management/stewardship plan for cultural and natural resources in Alexandria's parks.

GOAL 2. DEVELOP INNOVATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING ADDITIONAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The overarching concept for the Alexandria Open Space Plan includes: protecting existing parks, other publicly-owned open spaces and natural areas;

Legend

Parks
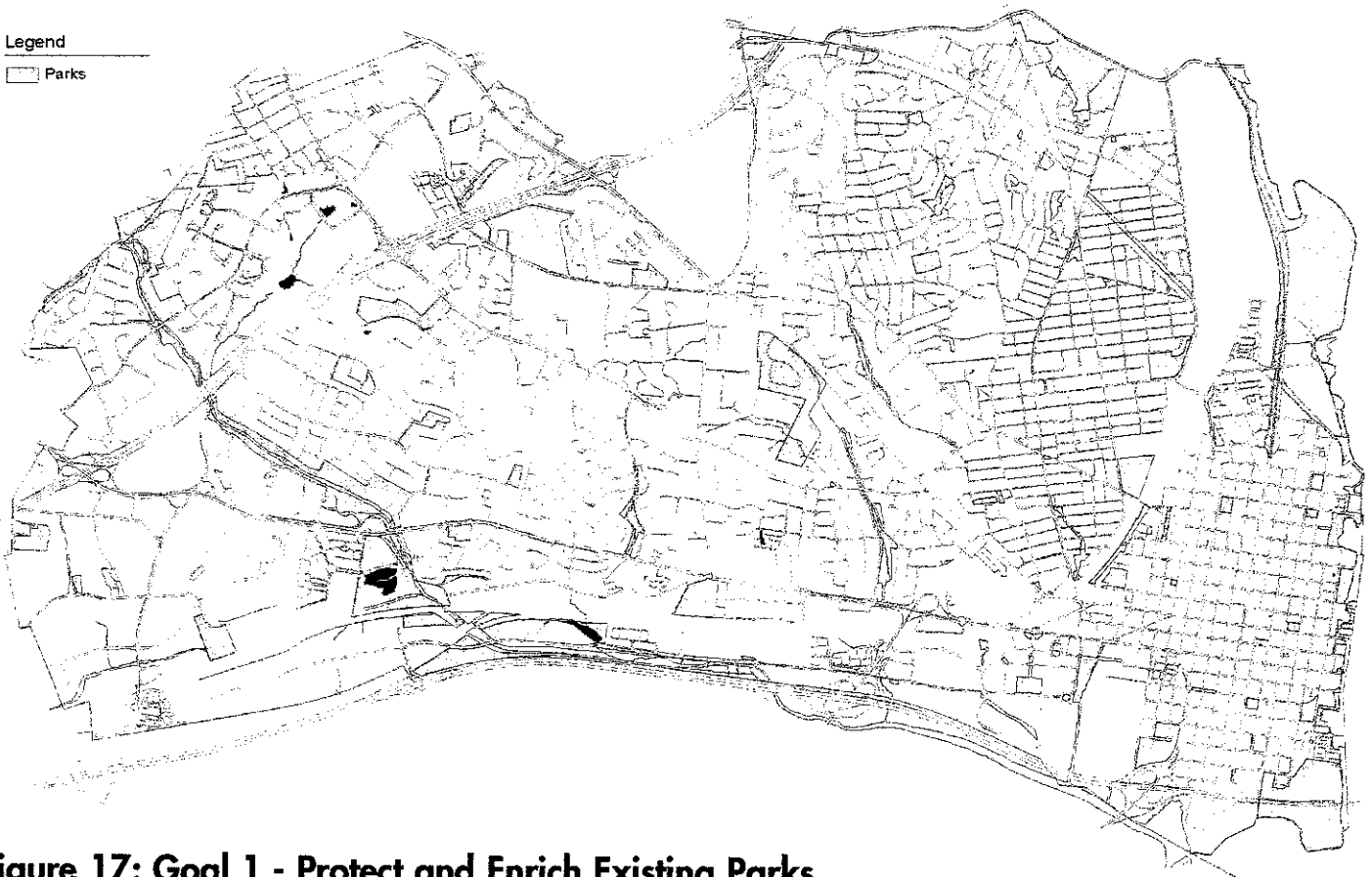
Figure 17: Goal 1 - Protect and Enrich Existing Parks
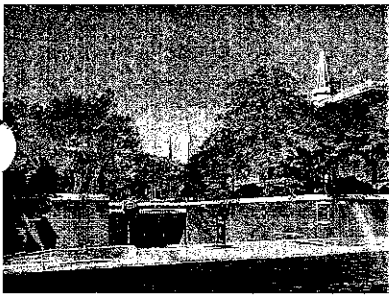
Innovative parking

linking existing parks and open space areas; creating continuous open space systems along the Potomac River and the City's stream valleys; creating a continuous open space system in a former industrial area, "The Green Crescent;" and creating a series of new small parks in under-served, high density communities. While the creation of additional public open space areas presents a challenge to the City in terms of cost, development trade-offs, and so on, it will be critical for the City to pursue these options in order to accommodate the increasing need for open space for the City's growing population. The Plan recommendations highlighted below identify a number of innovative methods for creating public open spaces.

Recommendations for Goal 2

- Seize opportunities quickly when land suitable for open space usage becomes available, including developed commercial or industrial land that could be converted to open space uses.

- Plan strategically for future opportunities to create, expand, or improve parks and publicly-owned natural areas and open spaces.

- Convert channelized stream valleys and other modified natural resource areas into verdant open spaces.

- Create parkland as well as recreational facilities atop new below-ground parking structures.

- Create new open spaces, and link existing open spaces, by bridging over roads (e.g., open space deck linking Fort Ward Park, NOVA campus, and the Episcopal High School).

- Utilize air rights over roadways to create new open space, recreation, habitat, and educational facilities.

- Expand sections of existing roadways to create traffic-free bike trails, pedestrian paths, and landscaped medians and sidewalks (e.g., King Street, Duke Street, Commonwealth Avenue and Telegraph Road).

- Utilize the following selection criteria for identifying privately-owned land suitable for acquisition by the City for parkland/open space use:
  - Privately owned land near or adjacent to existing parks and trails
  - Near or adjacent to existing schools
  - Near or adjacent to natural resource areas
  - At street endings to provide neighborhood linkages
  - Next to institutional properties with extensive open space, valuable natural resources, and/or potential public access
  - Adjacent to or linking existing / proposed trails or greenways
  - Small lots in dense urban neighborhoods for pocket parks, gardens, green spaces, and playgrounds (Old Town; Rosemont; western

sector of the City; Del Ray; etc.)
- Privately owned lands with significant trees, sloping terrain, and other natural resource features
- Privately owned properties of known or potential historic or cultural significance
- Privately owned land in areas identified in the Needs Assessment as those with a high need for open space
- Excess rights-of-way
- Open space and trail connections adjacent to or linking open spaces, natural areas, greenways and trails in Arlington and Fairfax Counties

Implementation Strategies for Goal 2

- Create a City Hall "Action Team" comprised of representatives from the City Manager's office; the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Department of Planning and Zoning; Department of Transportation and Environmental Services; Office of Historic Alexandria; and others as needed to create a coordinated strategy for rapid action on land disposition.

- Enhance existing requirements for open space in new development and make amendments as needed to ensure that new projects will provide

Legend

■ Green Crescent
▨ Green Connector
▫ Open Space Conservation Areas
▫ Parks

Figure 18: Goal 2 - Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open

sufficient usable open space.

- Develop specific plans for strategies for all stream valleys in the City, and target agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and EPA as funding sources for this effort. Build upon the City's on-going environmental efforts regarding these areas.

- Develop plans and strategies for natural areas in the City.

- Strategically seek and develop additional funding sources that will allow the City to realize the recommended strategies for creating new open space opportunities (see Chapter 6).

GOAL 3. COMPLETE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POTOMAC RIVER WATER-FRONT PLAN

Potomac waterfront

As identified in public meetings, the Potomac River with its beautiful shoreline is the premier open space for the City of Alexandria. People from across the City, as well as the region, are attracted to the parks along the Potomac River because they are generally linked, are expansive, have great views and, at certain times during the year, offer exciting programs and festivals. Throughout the planning process, participants emphasized the need to establish a strategy for acquiring the "missing links" of the waterfront open space system and seize open space opportunities along the entire waterfront.

The Plan urges the City to continue to implement the City's earlier Waterfront Plan from Jones Point Park to Four Mile Run, to link with the open spaces of the Mt. Vernon Trail along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the District of Columbia.

Recommendations for Goal 3

- High priority should be given to protecting and creating continuous public access to and along the Potomac River. The following parcels, if protected for open space access and use, will fill in the gaps along the Potomac River shoreline:
  - 501 North Union Street
  - 1 King Street
  - 0 Prince Street
  - 204 Strand Street
  - 210 Strand Street
  - 1 Wharf Street
  - 700-708 Kahn Street
  - 2 Alexander Street

- Provide natural and historical education/awareness of the Potomac River.
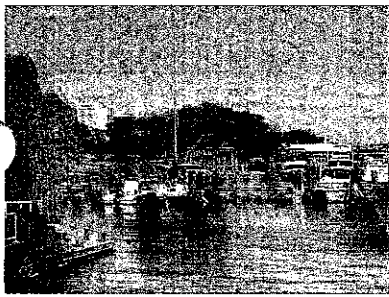
Boats at the Potomac River

- Link the Potomac River parks with other stream valley water resource areas (Four Mile Run, Cameron Run, etc.) through both land and water-based trails and open spaces.

- At a minimum, continue to require implementation of the existing 25-foot wide easement or zone for open space linkages along the Potomac River waterfront as represented in zoning and settlement agreements.

- Strive to restore the 100-foot RPA buffer along the shoreline as opportunities to do so arise.

- Require significant open space areas for all new development along the riverfront.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 3

- The City should seek and encourage all available opportunities to add missing parcels to the Potomac River Waterfront Plan. These strategies include: acquisition, gifts of land, easements, purchase of development rights, etc.

Legend
- Potential Sites
- Parks

Figure 19: Goal 3 - Complete Implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan

- The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, the Department of Planning and Zoning, and the Office of Historic Alexandria should collaborate to develop an Alexandria Waterfront Education Plan, including interpretive and directional signs, written and electronic materials, and interpretive events.

GOAL 4. PROTECT AND EXPAND STREAM VALLEYS *AND* OTHER ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Holmes Run stream valley

The City of Alexandria has begun to identify and protect its stream valleys as important natural resources and significant open space amenities. In the past, these natural resource areas were industrialized, degraded and avoided as places for public use and access. Today, we recognize the important open space benefits to be derived from protecting, conserving and restoring stream valleys in the City.

To achieve this goal, the Plan urges the City to establish its existing stream valleys as significant open space resources. In addition, the City should ensure protection of its wetlands, stream buffers, and other natural resources, including those outside the limits of existing RPA's.

Four Mile Run stream valley

Recommendations for Goal 4

- Protect, conserve, and expand the following stream valleys:
  - Four Mile Run
  - Holmes Run
  - Cameron Run
  - Taylor Run
  - Old Cameron Run
  - Timber Branch
  - Backlick Run
  - Strawberry Run
  - Hooffs Run
  - Great Hunting Creek
  - Lucky Run
  - The stream through Monticello Park
  - The streams in Chinquapin Park
  - Potomac River

- Provide opportunities for environmental and historical education and interpretation. Consider each stream valley as an educational resource.

- Coordinate existing stream management programs including: flood control, stormwater management, urban habitat, recreation, etc.

- Look for opportunities for stream valley protection and educational programs near school sites.

- Upgrade the health of stream valleys by developing a citywide stream protection strategy as part of a Watershed Management Plan that includes maintaining streams, springs and seeps in a natural condition; encouraging cluster development and green infrastructure; prohibiting buildings, structures and impervious surfaces (except for necessary trails) in stream buffers; increasing vegetation and other beneficial watershed features; keeping inappropriate uses away from stream edges (i.e. dog parks, fertilized ball fields, etc.); and promoting effective and innovative methods for stormwater management and erosion control.

- Actively explore and implement, as appropriate, current urban stream restoration techniques in order to create more natural stream valleys that contribute to a positive open space character and improved water quality, while still protecting public health and safety.

- Develop significant reforestation and forestation programs along stream buffers, emphasizing the planting of appropriate native species and the removal of exotics. This effort will provide increased infiltration and/or uptake of pollutants, nutrients and sediments, thereby increasing wildlife habitat and minimizing temperature impacts on streams.

- Encourage wetland creation and protection projects throughout the

Legend

- Undeveloped Lands
- Resource Protection Area
- Open Water
- Parks
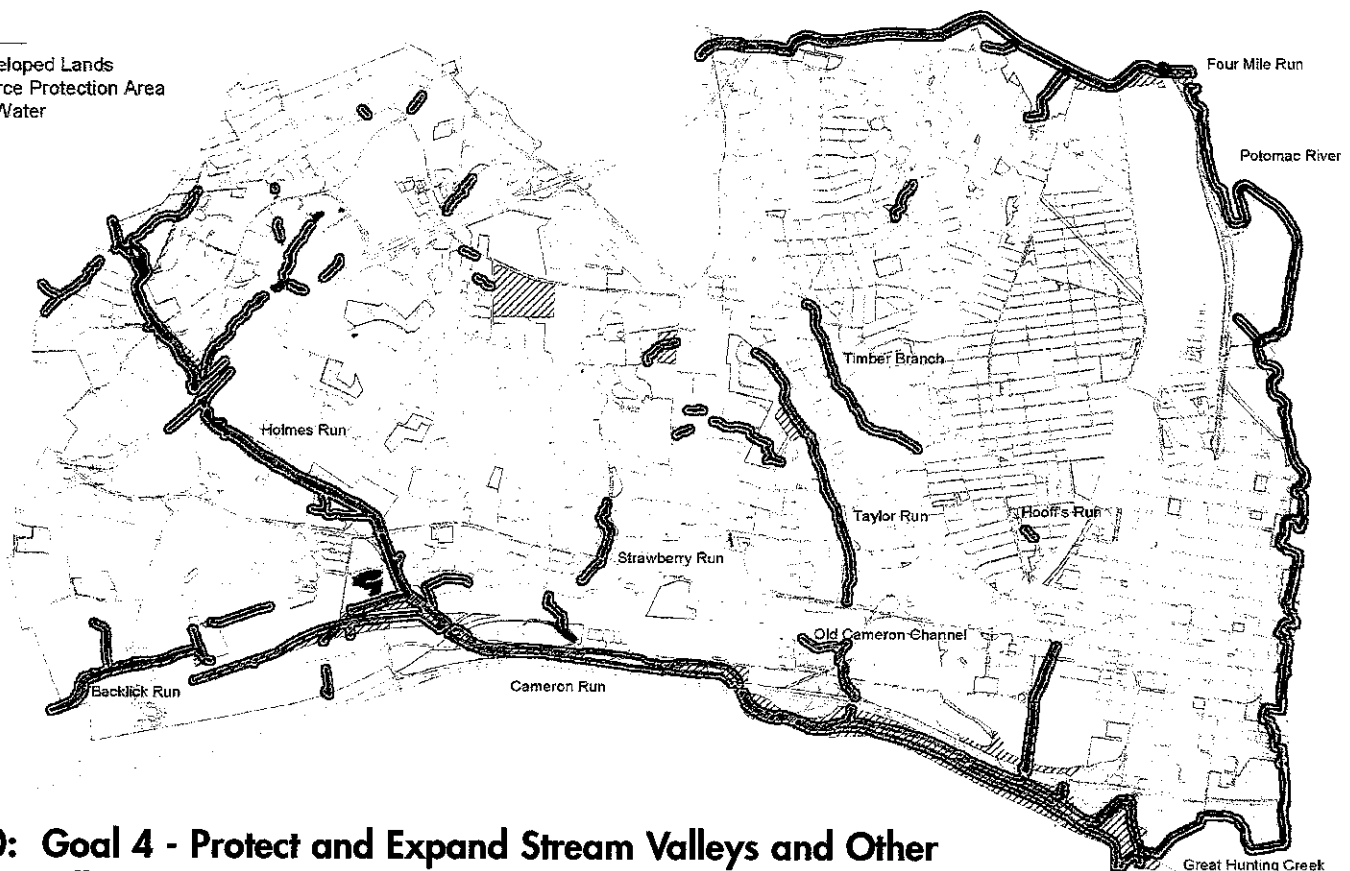
Figure 20: Goal 4 - Protect and Expand Stream Valleys and Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

City to help clean our streams and increase wildlife habitat.

- Do not allow variances to RPA buffers.

- Strive to achieve more than the 100-foot wide buffers for the purpose of protecting natural resource areas.

- Improve habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 4

- Seek funding from State, Federal and other sources for site protection, demonstration projects, and environmental education programs (see Chapter 6).

- Curtail or eliminate the granting of encroachments in stream valley RPA's and adjacent areas. Enhance identified RPA's with natural area buffers.

- Require the restoration of RPA's when sites are redeveloped.

- Establish on-going regional coordination with Arlington and Fairfax Counties for stream valley and natural resource protection, building on the model established for Four Mile Run.

- Conduct a detailed survey of the City's streams and woodlands, threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes in coordination with the Environmental Policy Commission. The survey should include preparation of specific recommendations for the protection of these resources.

- Develop financial and other incentives for private property owners within watershed areas to protect the natural resources of those areas (e.g., by reducing impervious surfaces, reusing rainwater on site, etc.)

- Continue to set aside City monies for stream valley restoration projects. Where possible, leverage those funds with grants and other monies in order to restore our streams and stream valleys.

- Undertake carefully monitored Adopt-a-Stream and/or similar programs to increase implementation resources and educate citizens about the significance of our stream valleys.

GOAL 5. CREATE AN OPEN SPACE NETWORK IN NEW DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A broad swath of open, under-utilized land forms a "green crescent," a crescent-shaped area that generally follows the CSX railroad right-of-way from

Four Mile Run to the West End at the Fairfax County border. One of the "last remaining frontiers" for creating and preserving open space in the City, this area is rapidly being lost to development. Newly developing or redeveloping areas present one of the only opportunities for the City to achieve new, large, significant open spaces.

Although pressures will be great to maximize development on any remaining sites in the City, there are numerous opportunities to create a meaningful open space system that meets a variety of needs and connects open space areas both within the area represented within the "green crescent" and elsewhere in the City.

Recommendations for Goal 5

- Plan for potential development and redevelopment sites to include open space areas in overall plans.

- Consider both significant large, green areas, as well as smaller parks and visual linkages as part of any development area.

- Utilize design guidelines to make the City's objectives clear and ensure development sites achieve coordination of open space areas among separate developments in adjacent areas.

Legend

▨ Open Space to be Delineated in Future Development
▨ Potential sites
☐ Parks
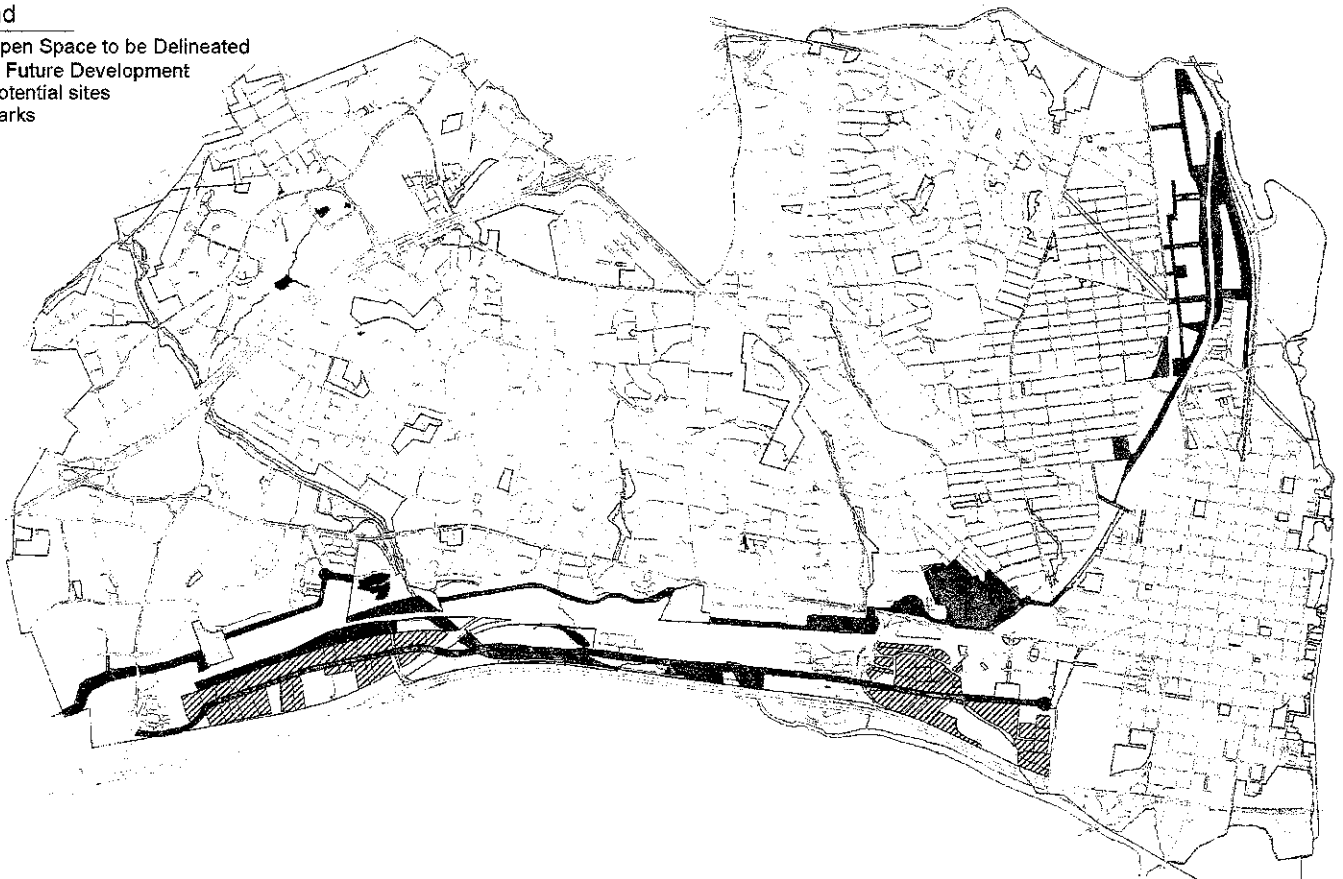
Figure 21: Goal 5 - Create and Open Space Network in New Development Areas

New development areas

Potomac Yards, new development areas

- Encourage use of conservation easements to the maximum extent appropriate.

- Incorporate historical and archeological resources in planning for open space and new development projects, where appropriate.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 5

- The City should consider using all available planning tools to create an open space network in new development areas. Such tools might include:
  - Developer fees for open space
  - Conditional zoning (proffers)
  - Targeted development areas
  - Master plans for development areas
  - Transit-oriented development neighborhoods
  - Conservation and scenic easements
  - Taxation-incentive programs
  - Design guidelines
  - Stream valley setbacks

- Require coordination in the planning and design of open space areas for new developments in order to maximize and link spaces in a definable, usable manner.

- Evaluate all new development proposals in the context of their impact on Alexandria's public and private open space.

- Review existing zoning and development standards and requirements in order to achieve adequate open space in all developments citywide; make revisions as necessary. Consider the following zoning concepts:
  - Require that open space serve a public function
  - Establish that all required open space be at ground level
  - Require open space for commercial as well as residential developments
  - Create a fee system as a requirement for small sites inappropriate for open space, and for modifications
  - Develop an open space component for each planning study area, and require consistency with that open space plan as part of the zoning requirement

- Require significant open space areas that are large, connected and green as part of any discretionary approval. In addition, require the creation and maintenance of visual linkages among open spaces and key vistas.

- Create requirements for the maintenance of proffered open spaces in

new development areas that may include the creation of endowments for such purposes.

- Investigate the transfer of density among adjoining or nearby parcels in exchange for open green areas.

- Where development has already occurred, consider conservation and scenic easements, taxation programs, and other techniques for the creation, preservation and maintenance of open spaces on these sites.

- Coordinate with Arlington and Fairfax Counties to implement the plan to protect and connect open space linkages in new development areas, where applicable.

GOAL 6. PROTECT AND PRESERVE INSTITUTIONALLY-OWNED OPEN SPACE

Some of the most significant open spaces in the City are institutionally owned. The greatest aggregate of these open spaces is located in the geographic center of the City, between Quaker Lane, Seminary Road, N. Howard Street and Braddock Road. These open spaces, as well as others, include significant natural and environmental, as well as historical and archeological,

Legend

■ Institutional Land - Private Ownership
☐ Parks

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School

Alexandria Country Day School

Episcopal High School

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School

Alexandria Hospital

Episcopal Theological Seminary

First Baptist Church

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School

Temple Beth El

Second Presbyterian Church

Bishop Ireton High School

George Washington Masonic Memorial

Alexandria Water Company
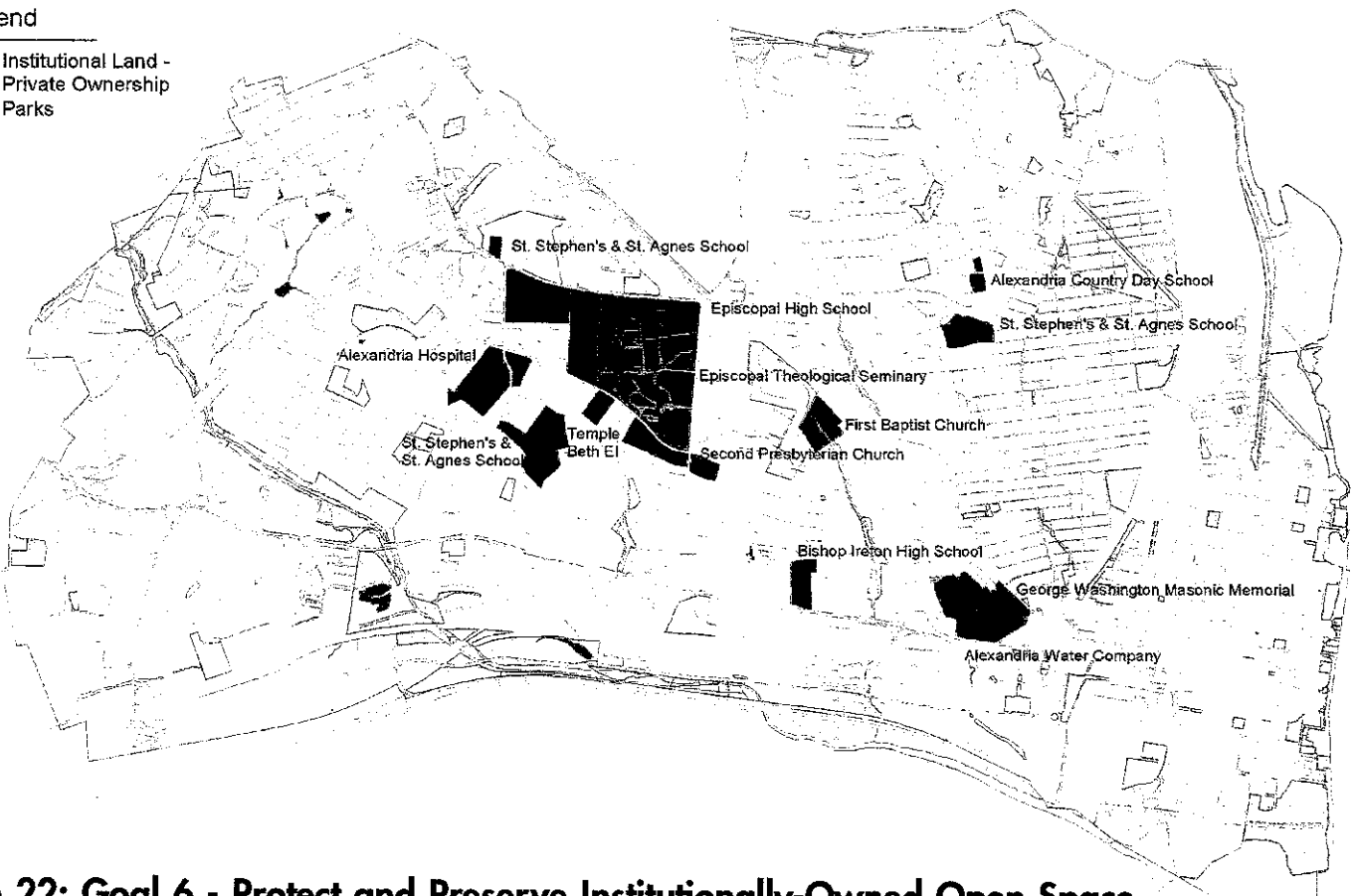
Figure 22: Goal 6 - Protect and Preserve Institutionally-Owned Open Space

Institutional open space with large woodland areas

Institutional open space

Institutional open space

Episcopal High School

resources. The City, together with these institutions, should collaborate on protecting, in perpetuity, these important open spaces. The Plan should develop strategies to preserve and protect these resources.

Recommendations for Goal 6

- Preserve and protect all, or significant parts, of the following sites:
  - Northern Virginia Community College/Alexandria Campus
  - Episcopal High School
  - Episcopal Theological Seminary
  - Second Presbyterian Church
  - Diocese Church School
  - First Baptist Church
  - Bishop Ireton High School
  - George Washington National Masonic Memorial
  - Virginia American Water Company
  - Sts. Agnes and Steven's Schools
  - Winkler Botanical Preserve
  - INOVA Alexandria Hospital

- Inventory historical and natural resources in these open spaces and assist in writing stewardship plans. Create a mechanism to identify additional properties that should be included in such plans.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 6

- Establish a strategy for working collaboratively with the institutions owning such land in order to establish an appropriate approach to open space preservation and public benefit.

- Encourage conservation easements or other similar actions, with benefits to institutional and nonprofit organizations.

- Encourage the City to explore additional actions, some of which might include:
  - Rights of first refusal (should be the City's first line of action when land becomes available)
  - Gifts of land
  - Conservation restrictions
  - Tree cover protection measures
  - Trail, scenic and/or historic easements
  - Fee simple acquisition
  - Purchase of development rights

- Consider zoning institutional open space sites with an Open Space Overlay Protection Zone to require significant preservation areas and

MacArthur School

MacArthur School playground area

discretionary review of future development proposals.

GOAL 7. MAXIMIZE USE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL OPEN SPACE AREAS TO SATISFY LOCAL NEEDS

The open spaces associated with the City's elementary, middle and high schools presently serve both students and neighborhood residents. Most of the spaces around schools are utilized for recreation; however, some of the school sites have significant natural resources that are worthy of preservation. The City should partner with the Alexandria School Board to achieve an open space strategy that recognizes the educational, recreational, and environmental purposes of open space areas around school facilities. This strategy needs to define ways to preserve, maintain and, where possible, expand open space and natural areas around schools for both the schools and the community at large, without adversely affecting the school's ability to provide sufficient space for instructional purposes.

In addition, school sites are important civic landmarks and should have well-landscaped grounds that contribute to the quality of the built environment.

Recommendations for Goal 7

Figure 23: Goal 7 - Maximize Use of Public School Open Space Areas to Satisfy Local Needs

- Continue to upgrade school open space properties to serve the local needs of the surrounding communities.

- Where appropriate, link school open space areas to the City's other open space resources.

- Recognize the educational qualities provided by well-designed open space areas.

- Continue to coordinate the planning of parks and schools with the goal of making efficient use of these important public resources.

- Where appropriate, cluster active recreation uses near school properties to serve local needs.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 7

- Establish a team for each school project that is representative of the Alexandria School Board; private institutions; the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; the Department of Planning and Zoning; and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in order to identify innovative and effective solutions for use of school open space areas by neighborhood residents while satisfying outdoor school programs. This working relationship should extend to the planning and design of both new and renovated school properties.
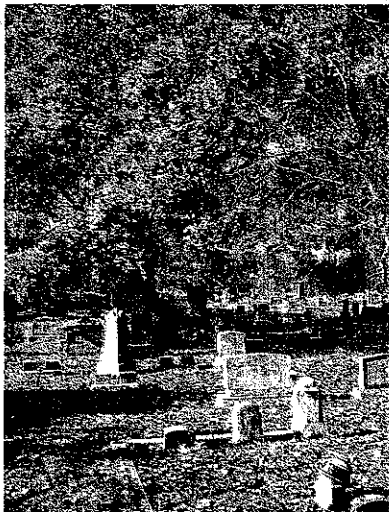
GOAL 8. PRESERVE AND PROTECT CEMETERIES

Cemeteries provide important open space, visual and cultural resources. Some communities have collaborated with cemeteries to establish trails and protect natural resources. Arlington National Cemetery is a notable nearby example. The Cemetery staff worked with Arlington County to create a scenic bike trail linking Memorial Bridge with Route 50 and to protect natural and archeological resources. Alexandria's Plan should recognize that cemeteries are important open space and scenic resources for the neighborhoods in which they are located and for the City as a whole. The cemeteries in Alexandria are in critical locations and can provide outstanding linkages to other open spaces. Figure 24 indicates those cemeteries that contribute most significantly to the open space system in Alexandria.

Alexandria National Cemetery

Recommendations for Goal 8

- Consider cemeteries as educational resources. Develop interpretive signage and, possibly, tours describing the history and significance of each of the City's key cemeteries.

- Protect natural and cultural resources (e.g., trees and streams) in cemeteries, recognizing that some may be important also as features of the

Alexandria National Cemetery

cultural landscape.

- Protect cultural resources that define the character of cemeteries (e.g., gravestones, fences, etc.).

- Increase public awareness that behavior in cemeteries should be different than that which is appropriate in other open spaces.

- Support the restoration and commemoration efforts at Freedmen's and other historic cemeteries.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 8

- Work with owners and administrators of the cemeteries within the City to protect the sanctity of these sites while still allowing for visual access, open space linkages, natural resource protection, and interpretation where appropriate.

- List, map, and create a guide to Alexandria's cemeteries in order to heighten public awareness of their extent and location.

- In cemeteries with unique natural resources, consider developing public/private partnerships for the maintenance of sensitive environmental

Legend
- Cemeteries
- Parks

Dove Family Cemetery
Fort Ward Cemetery
Terreti Family Cemetery
Theological Seminary Burying Ground
Lebanon Union Church Cemetery
Auld Family Cemetery
Ivy Hill Cemetery
Trisler Family Cemetery
Christ Church Cemetery
Trinity United Methodist Church Cemetery
Alexandria National Cemetery
Black Baptist Cemetery
First Presbyterian Church Cemetery
St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery
Methodist Episcopal Church South Cemetery
Agudas Achim Cemetery
Independent Meeting House Cemetery
Christ Church Burying Ground
Douglass Cemetery
Methodist-Protestant Church Cemetery
Bethel Cemetery
Home of Peace Cemetery
Penny Hill Cemetery
St. Mary's Catholic Church Cemetery
Contraband Cemetery

Figure 24: Goal 8 - Preserve and Protect Cemeteries

and cultural resource areas, including use of tools such as historic and scenic easements, where appropriate.

GOAL 9. CREATE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FROM VACANT LAND

Vacant properties tend to be small in size (less than three acres). However, some of these sites are situated adjacent to existing parks or other open space sites identified in this study and, therefore, have potential to link to or expand those existing open spaces. Others include modified natural resource areas, such as diverted streams or cleared woodlands. Precedents abound where vacant land has been rehabilitated into parkland through creative planning and design.

Recommendations for Goal 9

- Preserve, protect and enhance vacant lands as public open space amenities. Priority sites include those meeting the following criteria:
    - Vacant land near existing parks (e.g., vacant land near Monticello and Four Mile Run Parks)
    - Next to existing schools
    - Next to natural resource areas
    - At street endings to provide neighborhood linkages
    - Next to institutional properties
    - Adjacent to or linking existing/proposed trails

Legend
- Vacant Land (Private Ownership)
- Vacant Land (Public Ownership)
- Parks
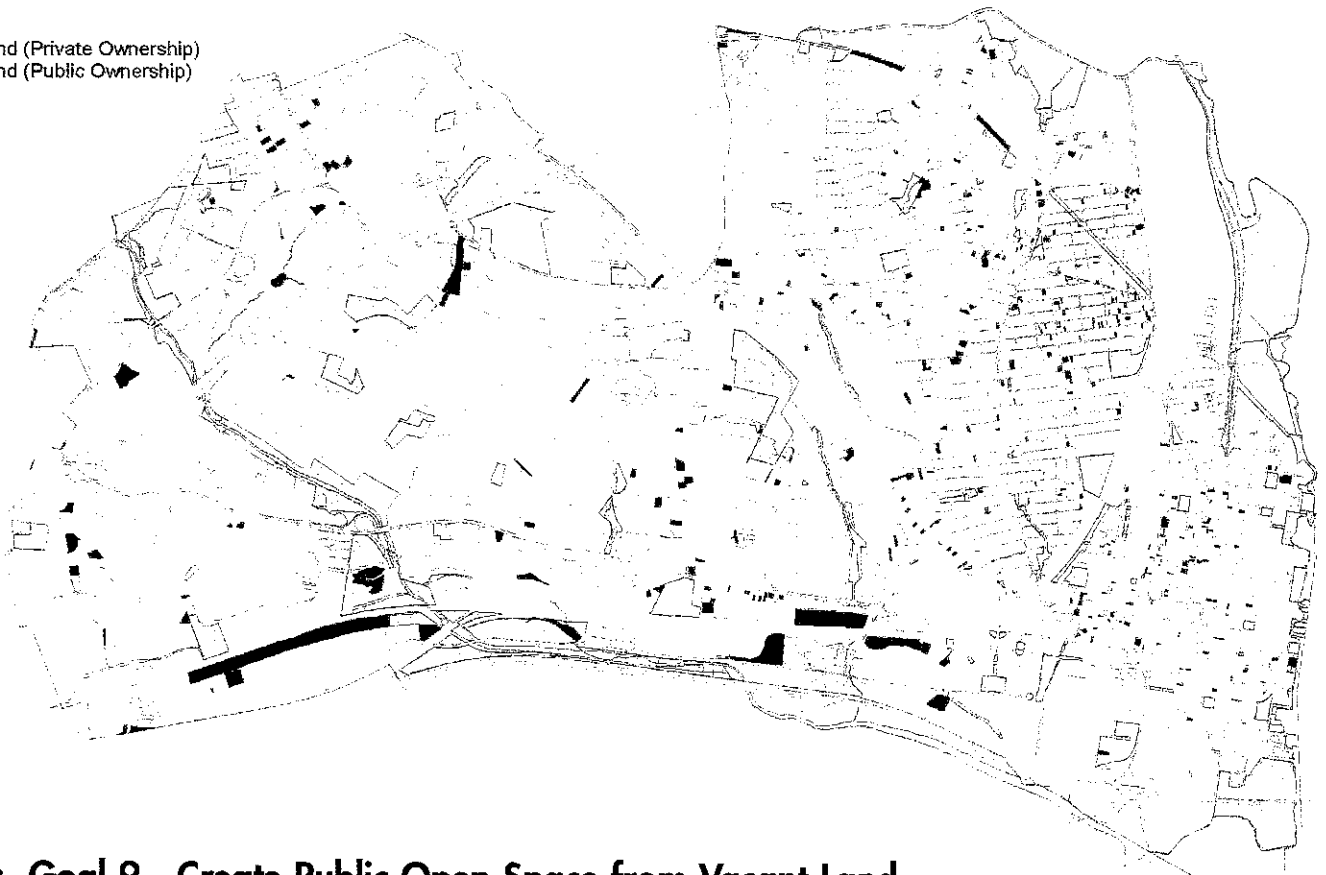
Figure 25: Goal 9 - Create Public Open Space from Vacant Land

- Small lots in dense urban neighborhoods for neighborhood parks, gardens, playgrounds (Old Town, Rosemont, the west end of the City, Del Ray, etc.)
- Vacant lands with significant trees, sloping terrain, and other natural resources
- Land with historical and cultural resources
- Underutilized building sites that could be converted to recreational open space uses where open space is limited (i.e., west end of City)
- Land with the potential to become easements

Implementation Strategies for Goal 9

- Undertake a detailed survey of all vacant lands, rights-of-way, and alleys/street ends in order to understand the City's potential open space opportunities for these sources.

- For public vacant lands:
  - Establish a vacant land program to convert underutilized and vacant land into public open space.
  - Transfer critical vacant land sites to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (see criteria established earlier in this chapter for determining critical sites).

- For private vacant lands:
  - Actively identify "key" vacant parcels or portions of larger vacant parcels according to criteria listed earlier in this chapter.
  - Purchase or otherwise acquire strategic sites for open space purposes.
  - Actively seek grants and other funding sources to ensure that resources other than those of the City can be used for this purpose.

- Work collaboratively with other citywide interests (e.g., schools, and affordable housing advocates) to define a strategy from which everyone stands to gain in the definition/use of vacant properties.

- Reference conservation easements and other protection measures as a precursor to acquisition.

Existing trails

GOAL 10. LINK AND EXPAND PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAIL SYSTEM

The City of Alexandria has established a strong initial system of trails through its Bicycle Transportation and Multi-use Trail Master Plan adopted by City Council in 1998. This City needs to fully implement this plan and maximize non-vehicular, City-wide trail linkages connecting neighborhoods, public facilities and parks, retail establishments, and employment centers in order to encourage healthful recreation and non-motorized transportation. Many of the open spaces identified in this study are suitable for inclusion in the bicycle and

trail system. This goal is crucial in the framework concept of "making connections," particularly in the stream valleys, along the Potomac River, and in the Green Crescent areas.

Recommendations for Goal 10

- Fully integrate the City's multi-use trail system into the City's transportation planning process, thereby recognizing bicycling and walking as important components in addressing Alexandria's transportation needs. Special consideration should be given to those segments of the population without access to personal vehicles, principally children, the economically disadvantaged, and the physically challenged.

- Expand the City's multi-use trail system to address the objective of the City's bicycle and trail master transportation plan to "reduce the rate of increase of vehicle trips."

- Expand the City's multi-use trail system to address the need to expand recreational opportunities to improve the physical health of the citizens of Alexandria.

- Implement the Alexandria Heritage Trail as a component of the multi-use trail plan to promote historical and cultural understanding of the

Legend
/\/ Existing and Planned Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Routes
/\/ Proposed Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Routes
☐ Parks
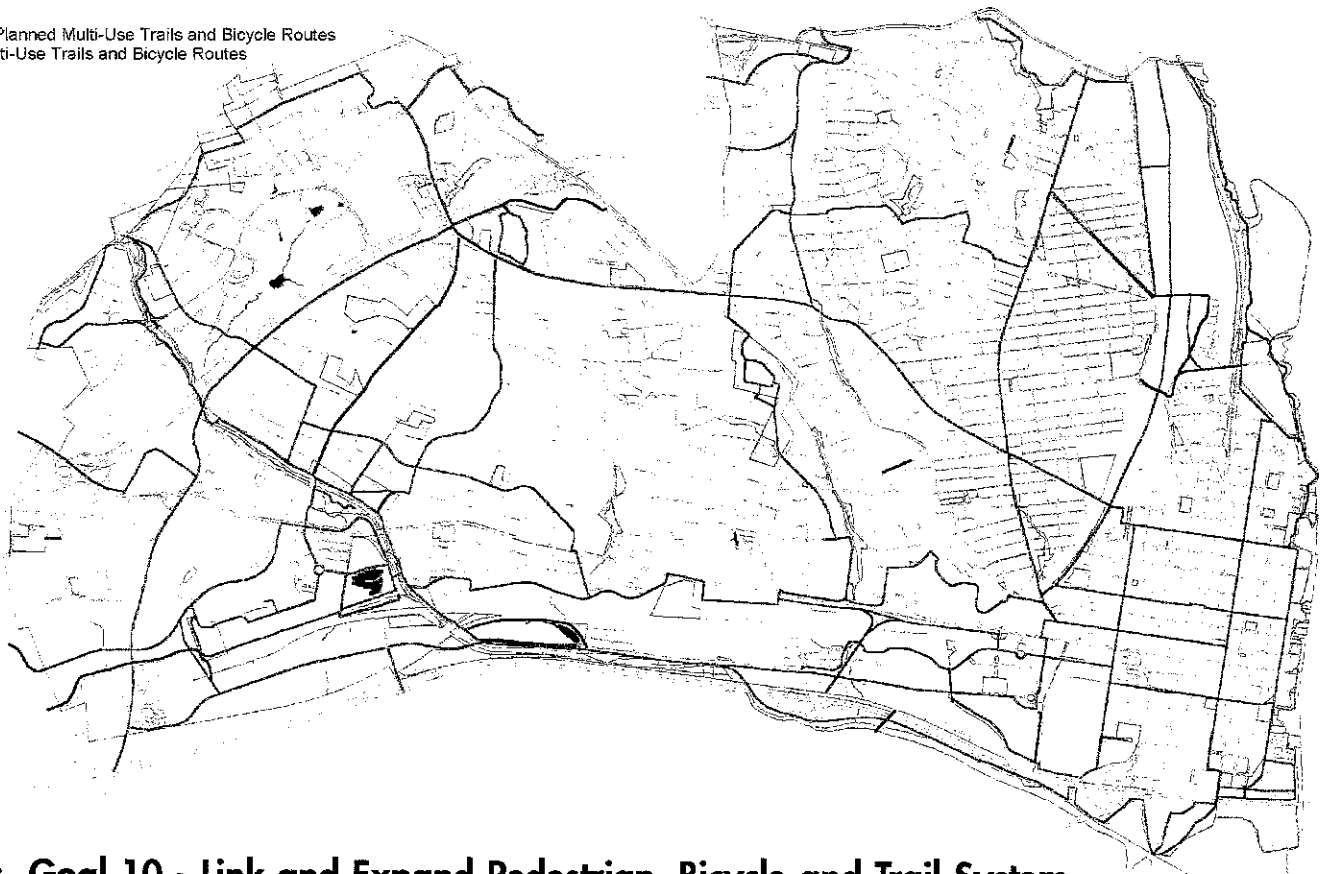
Figure 26: Goal 10 - Link and Expand Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail System

Trail at Oronoco Bay Park
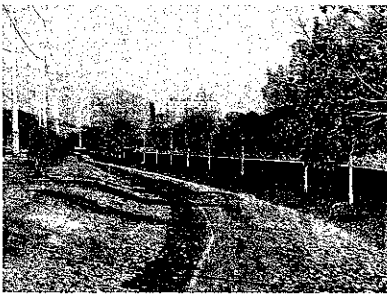
Trail at Oronoco Bay Park

City, thereby promoting educational and tourism opportunities.
Implementation Strategies for Goal 10

- Work with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services to implement bike trails in public rights-of-ways (e.g., streets)

- Work on a site-by-site basis with private property owners to seek easements for trail development and expansion.

- Reassess and revise the Alexandria Trails Plan to provide the connections identified in the Open Space Plan.

- Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Department of Transportation and Environmental Services should coordinate regional planning efforts for trail linkages with Fairfax and Arlington Counties, VDOT and the National Park Service.

- The City should aggressively seek private, state, and Federal funding for continued trail development (see Chapter 6).

- The Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services; Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; and Office of Historic Alexandria should work together to improve trail signage, provide public education through pamphlets, maps, and web sites, mark historic sites and natural resources, and create events to encourage trail use by both walkers and riders.

- Evaluate the City's network of public alleys and define those most appropriate for use as trail and open space connectors.

- The Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services should collaborate with the School Department to identify "Safe Routes to School" using the trail system and other public streets. Coordinate with the proposed "Safe Routes" national effort and seek funding when it becomes available.

- The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Department of Planning and Zoning should encourage developers to include facilities for bicyclists and walkers in their Transportation Management Plans.

- The Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services should develop a multi-lingual public education campaign to promote bicycling and walking as effective and healthful ways to get around town while reducing traffic congestion.
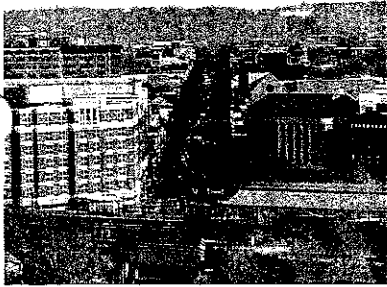
King Street metro functions as a major gateway to the city of Alexandria

GOAL 11. ENHANCE STREETSCAPES AND GATEWAYS

Streets, and their associated streetscapes and gateways, are crucial open space resources for a community. They function as places of trade, play, communication and gathering. They are the front doors for our neighborhoods. King Street, recently improved with brick sidewalks, trees and furnishings, is Alexandria's main street and a memorable place to gather for important events. Commonwealth Avenue is a desirable address because of its tree-lined median and attractive streetscape. With few opportunities for open space development, we need to look to our streets as places for beautification and linkage.

The Plan encourages the City to develop an interconnected network of pedestrian friendly streets. In addition, the City should create entrance gateways that provide a positive image of arrival.

Recommendations for Goal 11

- Enact comprehensive streetscape enhancements on the following roadways:

Commonwealth Ave streetscape

Protect:
- Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Commonwealth Avenue
- Braddock Road
- King Street
- Quaker Lane
- Jordan Street
- Howard Street
- Beauregard Street
- Seminary Road
- Russell Road

Enhance:
- Washington Street
- Route 1
- Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Braddock Road
- King Street
- Beauregard Street
- Duke Street
- Eisenhower Avenue
- Van Dorn Street
- West Glebe Road

- Create entranced gateways at the following locations:
  - **Highway intersections:**
    - I-395 at:
      - King Street
      - Quaker Lane
      - Seminary Road
      - Duke Street
    - I-495 at:
      - Telegraph Road
      - Mill Road
      - Clermont
      - Route 1
      - Washington Street
      - Van Dorn Street

— At Major Street Entry Points:
- Van Dorn Street
- Telegraph Road
- Route 1 at Jefferson Street
- Washington Street at Hunting Creek & Memorial Circle
- Edsall Road
- Beauregard Street at Lincolnia Road
- Leesburg Pike at Beauregard Street
- Seminary Road at Colfax Avenue
- West Glebe Road at Four Mile Run
- Mount Vernon Avenue at Four Mile Run
- Route 1 at Four Mile Run
- Washington Street at north end of City

— At entry points along trails:
- Trail at Green Crescent and Fairfax County
- Holmes Run at Fairfax County
- Seminary Road at Fairfax County
- Four Mile Run at Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Mt. Vernon Trail/Potomac National Heritage Trail
- Potomac River Waterfront Walk
- Metro pedestrian gateways
- King Street at the Potomac River
- Alexandria Heritage Trail hubs- Chinquapin Park, Jones Point, Dangerfield Island

Legend

- Gateways
- Beautify Interchanges
- Metro Station Gateways
- Streetscape Improvements
- Parks
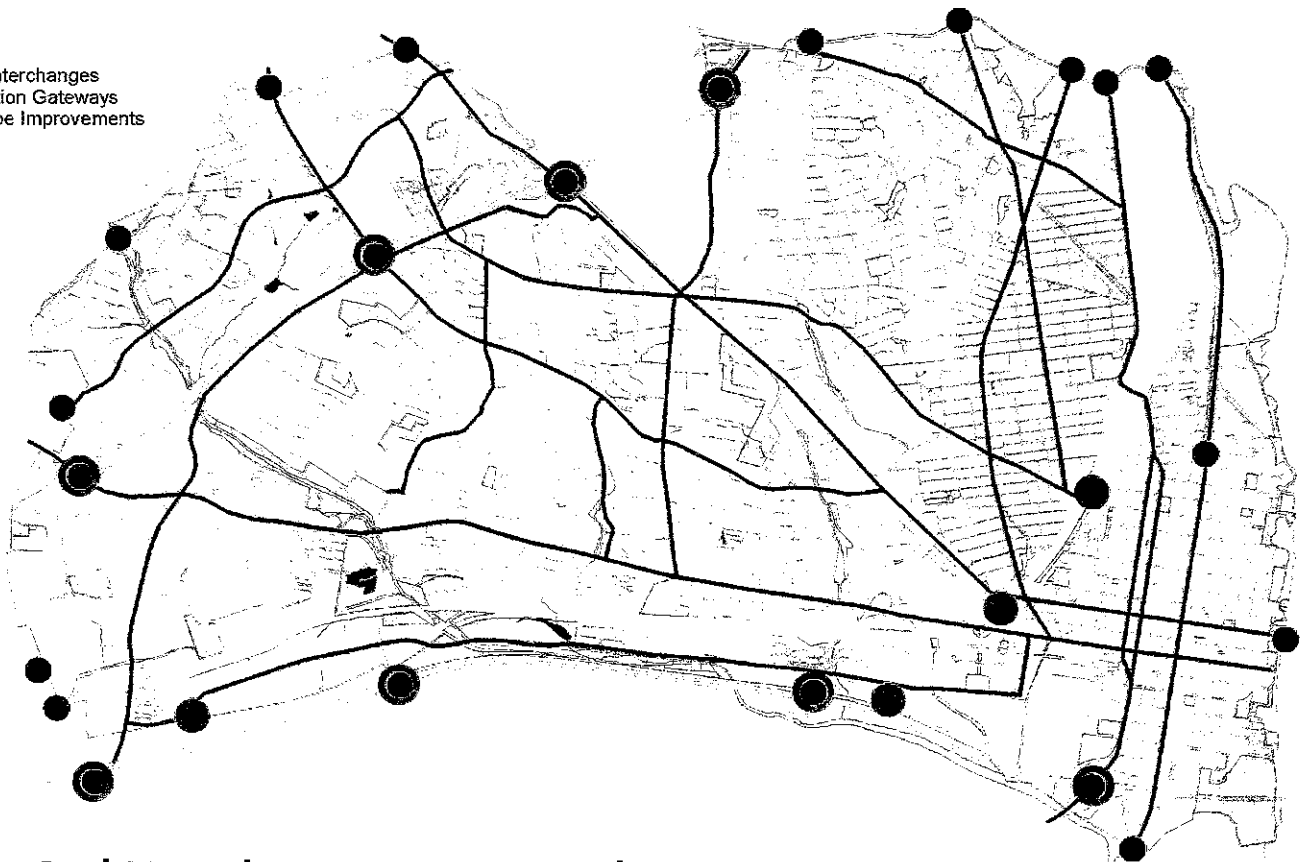
Figure 27: Goal 11 - Enhance Streetscapes and Gateways

- Produce a guide to historical buildings and open space features to strengthen the development of a street/gateway enhancement plan.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 11

- Establish an interagency working group with representation from the Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Transportation and Environmental Services; and Planning and Zoning as well as from the Office of Historic Alexandria and VDOT, and other relevant commissions and groups to create and implement a comprehensive streetscape program for the City. This should encompass:
  - Signage
  - Sidewalks
  - Intersections/crosswalks
  - Lighting
  - Street furniture
  - Landscaping and street trees
  - Historical sites
  - Undergrounding utilities
  - Median treatment

- This interagency group should also consider implementation of a gateway improvement program, to include:
  - Special planting
  - Lighting
  - Signage
  - Paving
  - Historic overviews
  - Irrigation and maintenance
  - Improvements to highway interchanges within the City's limits

- Establish design guidelines for streetscape elements that recognize and reflect the individual character of each neighborhood or area of the City. These might be derived, in part, from the historical features of each area.

- Require adherence to design guidelines for development applications and other approvals affecting streetscape.

- Provide adequate levels of infrastructure to support and maintain these streetscape/gateway programs. In addition to City funding, consider calling upon volunteer programs such as Tree Stewards, Adopt-a-Park, and Adopt-a-Marker programs for heritage trail sites in order to support these efforts.

GOAL 12. EXPAND CITYWIDE STREET TREE PROGRAM AND PROTECT EXISTING TREES AND WOODLAND AREAS

Our City's beauty is created, in part, through its street trees, wooded properties and environmental corridors. The City has an active program to continue planting street trees and protect vegetation in its parks. The City should maximize opportunities to enhance its tree coverage and protect its natural woodland resources.

Recommendations for Goal 12

- Protect significant tree-lined arterials, parkways, thoroughfares, and boulevards, including:
  - Holmes Run Parkway
  - Taylor Run Parkway
  - Timber Branch Parkway
  - North Beauregard Street
  - Commonwealth Avenue
  - Ft. Williams Parkway

- Identify and address potential tree cover protection areas, including:
  - Beverly Hills
  - Episcopal Seminary / High School site

Legend

- Streetscape Improvements/Street Tree Program
- Significant Tree Cover
- Parks
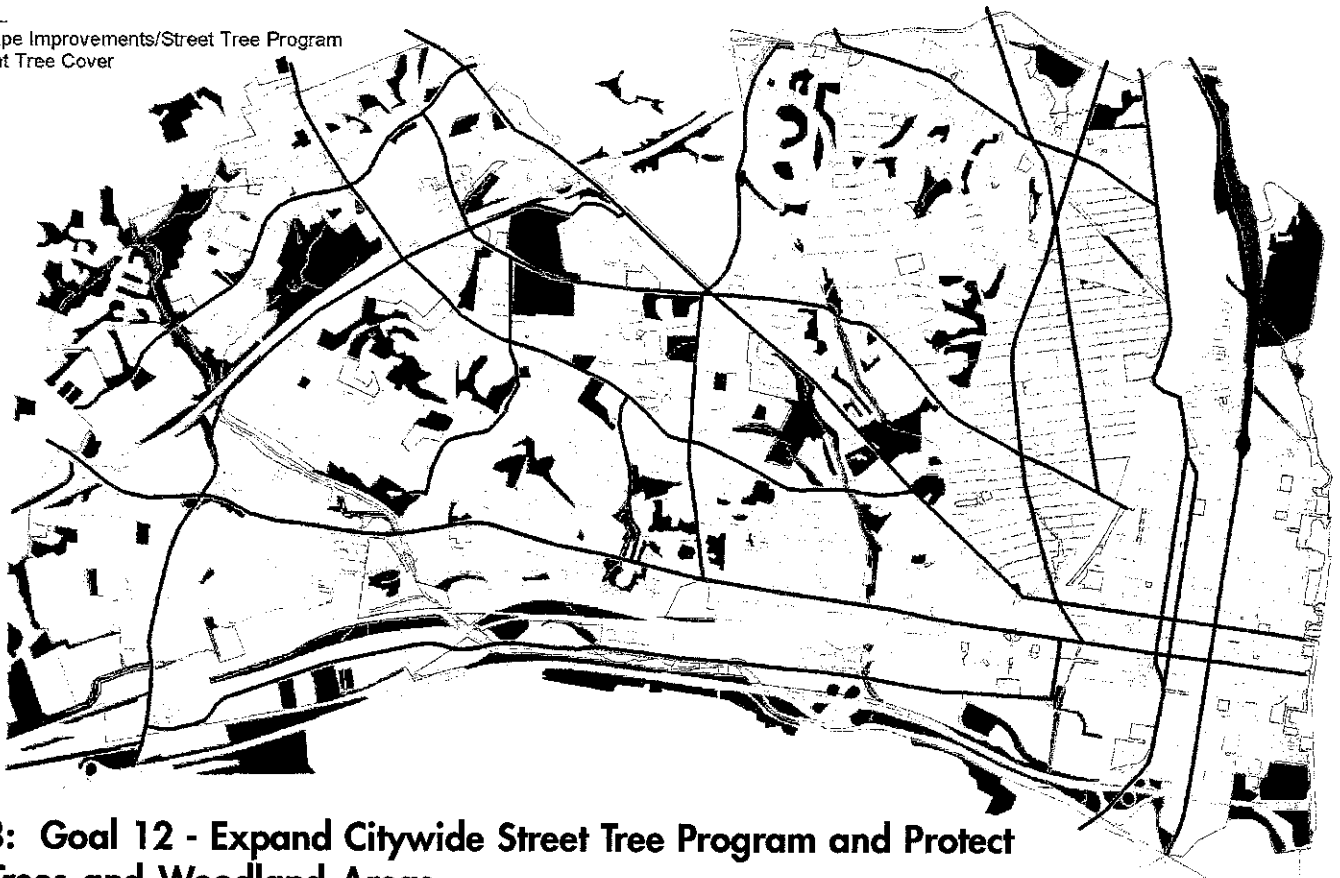
Figure 28: Goal 12 - Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas

Woodland area

- Inova Hospital
- St. Agnes / St. Steven's School sites
- Rosemont
- Del Ray
- Park Fairfax
- Old Town
- Neighborhoods bordered by:
  - Seminary Road, I-395 and Fairfax County
  - I-395, King Street, Quaker Land and Seminary Road
  - Braddock Road, Russell Road, Quaker Lane and Janney's Lane
  - Quaker Lane, West Glebe Road, Cameron Mills Road and Crestwood Drive

- Address stream valleys protection areas including:
  - Four Mile Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Run, Taylor Run, Old Cameron Run, Timber Branch, Backlick Run, Strawberry Run, Hooffs Run, Great Hunting Creek, and Lucky Run

- [See recommendations for specific streetscape programs below.]

Implementation Strategies for Goal 12

- Establish an aggressive campaign to involve community organizations in protecting existing trees and planting new trees within each neighborhood. Provide incentives for the planting and maintenance of trees on private property.

- Strengthen existing tree protection regulations. Establish a City Tree Plan and identify areas for increased forestation.

- Support and strengthen the newly established Arlington and Alexandria Tree Steward Program to assist in tree maintenance, planting, and public education.

- Request the Department of Planning and Zoning to research the feasibility of establishing a Tree Cover Overlay District. This designation would provide an additional means of protection for trees in areas of the City where these are essential to their quality and character. Distinguish between areas where tree crown cover is provided on private versus public lands.

- Amend City's landscape and streetscape guidelines to improve tree planting areas (e.g., continuous trenches, enlarged planting areas, greater soil volumes, irrigation and drainage) and increase tree coverage requirements for new developments where possible.

- Strengthen the City's ability to maintain its existing tree inventory (e.g., institute a watering program for new trees, etc.).

- Evaluate existing City tree crown cover based on current American Forests recommended standards for residential and commercial areas.

- Create specific agreements with VDOT for maintenance of wooded areas along highways through the City.

GOAL 13. ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF CIVIC PARKS AT AND ADJACENT TO METRO STATIONS

King Street metro station

Open spaces adjacent to Metro Stations can serve as important civic spaces; they should function as welcoming spaces to our community. Currently Metro Station areas consist primarily of roads, parking lots and bus shelters. As these areas become sites for redevelopment, civic parks should be key elements in the development program that can accommodate civic gatherings, events and other formal and informal outdoor uses.

Recommendations for Goal 13

- Coordinate with WMATA to enhance opportunities at each Metro station area, to create and upgrade civic spaces, and provide safe pedestrian connections.

- Provide open space/greenway linkages between Eisenhower Avenue

Legend

- Potential Metro Civic Parks
- Parks
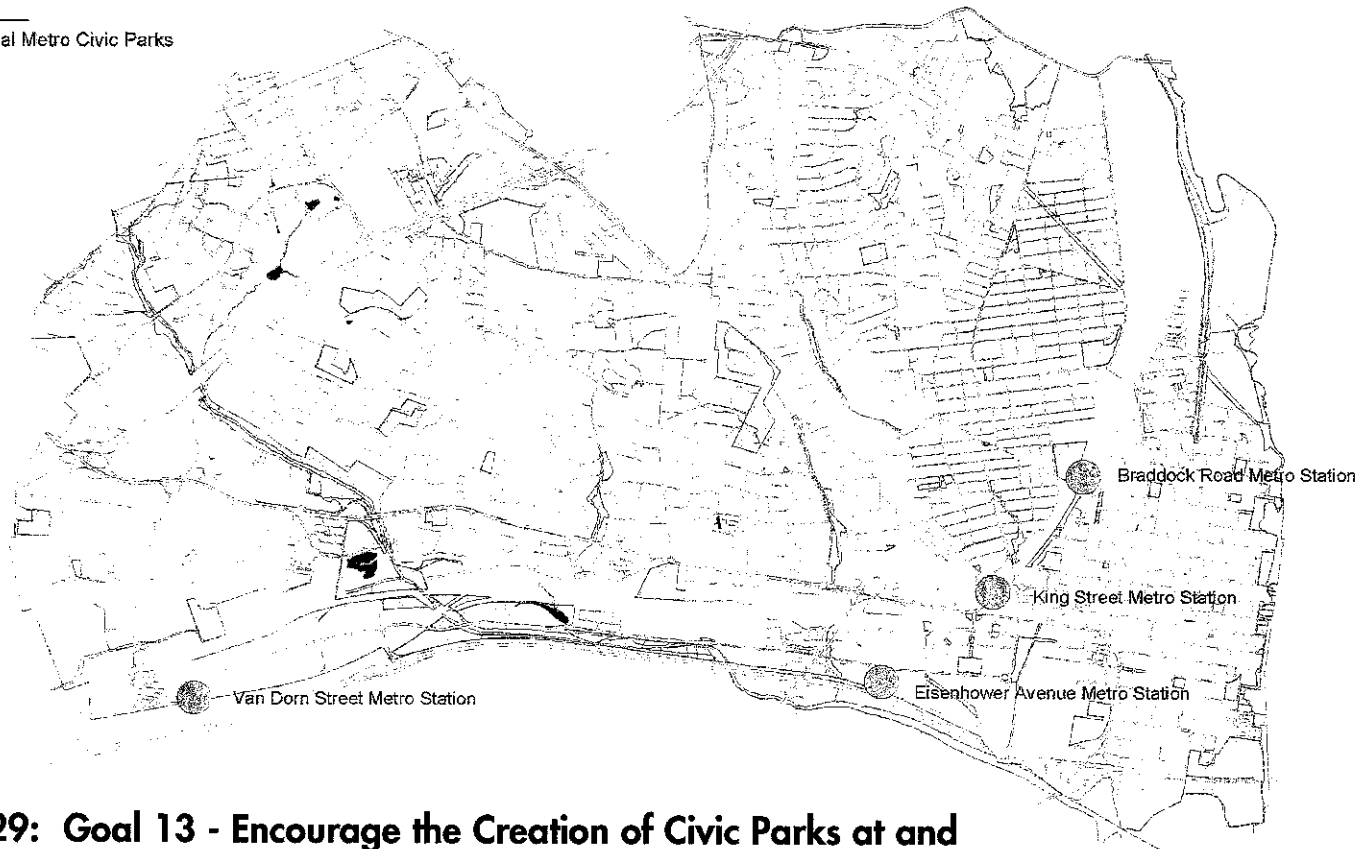
Figure 29: Goal 13 - Encourage the Creation of Civic Parks at and Adjacent to Metro Stations

Metro Station and Cameron Run Stream Valley.

- Provide a new, safe open space/greenway linkage between the Parker Gray / Slaters Lane areas and the Braddock Road Metro Station.

- Provide a new, safe open space/greenway linkage between the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station and the Potomac River waterfront.

- Develop signs for Metro Stations to mark access to trails and open spaces.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 13

- Establish a collaborative relationship with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to develop a program for upgrading open space at Metro stations.

- Establish a working relationship between the appropriate City departments and WMATA to maximize opportunities to create additional civic space in new joint development efforts in and around the City's four Metro stations.

- Seek opportunities to link Metro stations to Alexandria's trail network.
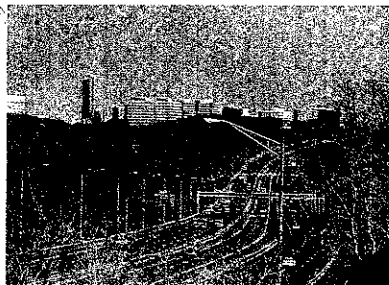
Interstate 395

GOAL 14. BEAUTIFY INTERCHANGES AND HIGHWAY CORRIDORS

Like civic spaces at Metro Stations, interchanges and highway corridors function as the front doors to our community for the driver. Interstate—395 has a narrow but significant strip of vegetation along its edges and I-95 runs parallel to Cameron Run. The City should work with VDOT to ensure protection of vegetation along Interstate highway corridors that traverse and bound the City, and to upgrade the landscape qualities of all of these highway interchanges and corridors.

Recommendations for Goal 14

Interstate 395

- Enhance and protect conditions at the following locations:
  - Interchanges:
    —I-95 at:
    - Route 1
    - Telegraph Road
    - Eisenhower Avenue
    - Van Dorn Street

    — I-395 at:
    - Duke Street
    - Seminary Road
    - King Street
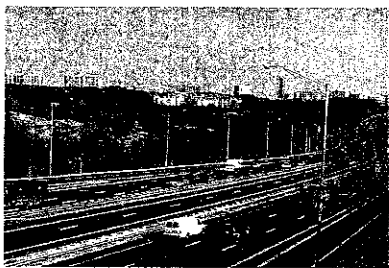
- Quaker Lane

- Highway Corridors:
  — I-95, from Wilson Bridge to Van Dorn Street
  — I-395, from Quaker Lane to Duke Street

- Roadway enhancements should maximize opportunities for forestation and reforestation where appropriate.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 14

- The Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities should collaborate with VDOT on upgrading maintenance of, and developing design standards for, highway interchanges and corridors throughout Alexandria.

- The City should monitor all highway expansion programs proposed by VDOT to ensure protection of existing landscape plans.

GOAL 15. PROTECT PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE

Most of Alexandria's open space is privately owned and inaccessible to the general public. Nevertheless, this land provides valuable green space for its

Legend
- Interchanges
- Highway Corridors
- Parks

I - 395

I - 95
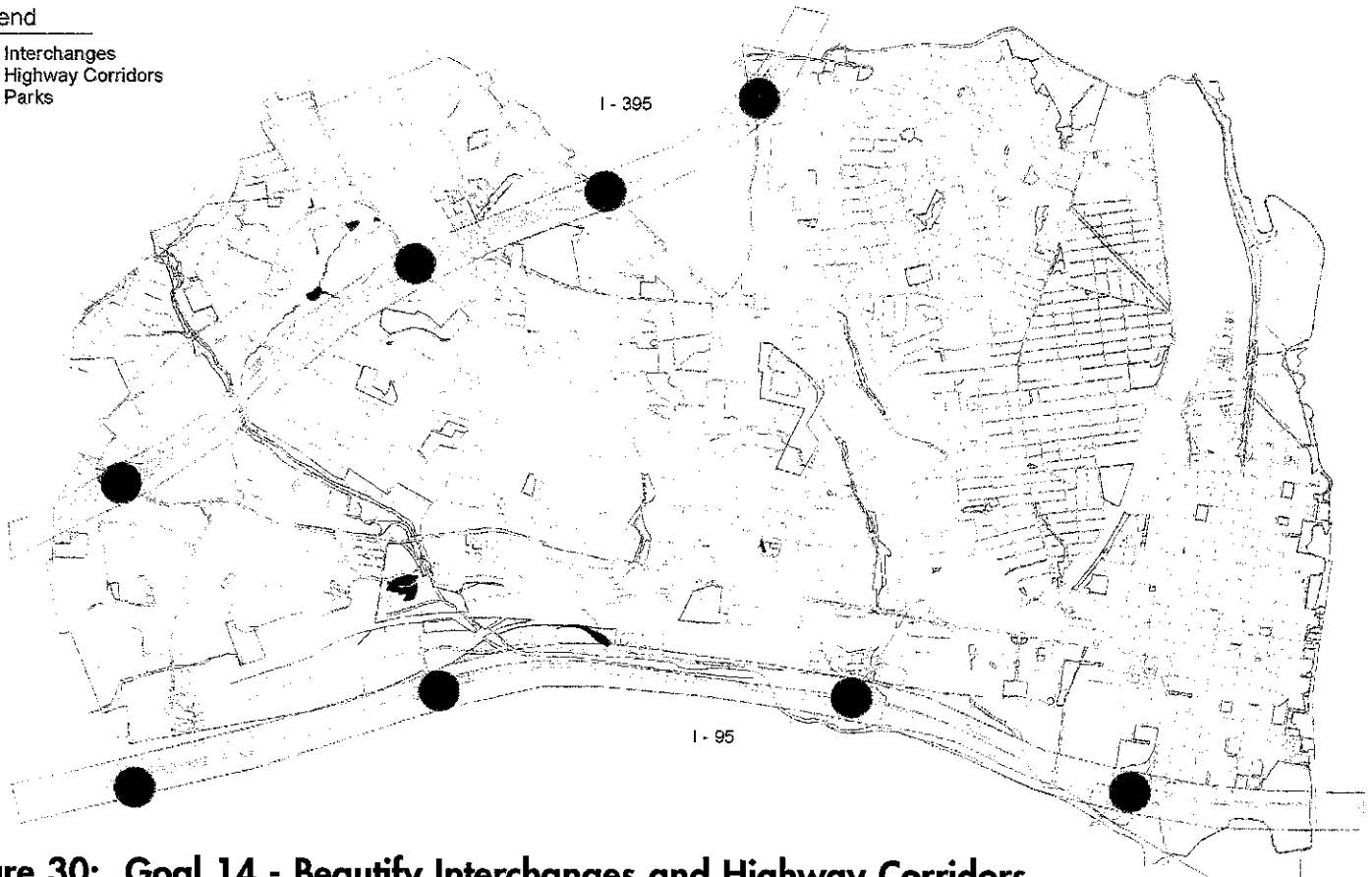
Figure 30: Goal 14 - Beautify Interchanges and Highway Corridors

surrounding community, creates a significant visual amenity, and contributes to the control of microclimatic conditions in the City. Individual property owners, even those with relatively small amounts of open space, can participate in efforts to retain that open space by making careful land use decisions on the need for home additions, for subdivision of large lots to create additional dwellings, on the creative use of easements to provide protection as well as some tax benefit for retaining open space.

Recommendations for Goal 15

- Educate private landowners on the importance (economic, aesthetic, environmental) of their open spaces, and on available tools for preserving and protecting that space (e.g., easements, etc.).

- Explore legal and planning strategies to encourage private landowners to preserve and protect their open space areas.

- Request that the Office of Real Estate Assessment undertake a study comparing the values of private properties in Alexandria adjacent to/ not adjacent to open space in order to document the quantitative value of open space for the City.

Implementation Strategies for Goal 15

- Provide a biannual seminar on easements that are currently available to all residents of the City. Such easements are available through the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, and through other organizations accepting easements. Individuals owning properties highlighted in or close to those identified in the Open Space Plan, as well as representatives from the real estate and development communities would be specifically invited to attend these sessions.

- Actively support the request for an amendment to Article 4 of Chapter 32,Title 58.1 of the Virginia Code, which would decrease to one-quarter acre the minimum acreage required to receive the tax benefit for creation of an easement.

- Request authorization of City Council to enact an ordinance to increase the recordation tax for real property deeds recorded for conveyance of land within the City. If then approved by the General Assembly, this authorization could provide the beginning of an open space purchase fund.

- Consider zoning mechanisms to address the problem of infill development and the incremental loss of open space as a result of home additions and individual land use decisions.

A. PRIORITY ACTIONS

It is evident from the list of actions described in Chapter 5, that the implementation of the Open Space Plan will be a long-term effort on the part of the City. However, that effort needs to begin with a few meaningful steps. At the Open Space Summit, participants were asked to identify the three actions that they considered to be top priorities for the City to accomplish in the short-term. The Open Space Steering Committee took these responses into account when developing the list of priority actions for the City to undertake first in its implementation of the Plan. As a result of this process, the following eleven priorities were identified (in no specific order):

- Work with the community to **create the Alexandria Open Space Conservancy**

- Employ a full-time, professional grants writer to pursue public and private sector funding for open space and trails related activities. It is possible that this position could be shared between the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES).

- Work actively to achieve settlement on the following properties in order to **begin completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan**:
  - 1 and 2 King Street
  - 0 Prince Street

- The Departments of Parks and Recreation, T&ES, and Planning and Zoning should collaborate in the **preparation of a Greenway Management Plan for the Holmes Run Stream Valley** to serve as a model for other stream valley plans. This should be developed in conjunction with the proposed Watershed Management Plan to be undertaken by T&ES, as well as the planning project for Four Mile Run being carried out in conjunction with Arlington County.
  - This plan should address the protection and enhancement of open space, as well as issues of acquisition/easements, rehabilitation, and interpretation of the full range of site resources.
  - Once the Greenway Management Plan model is established, plans should be undertaken for the city's remaining stream valleys, as listed in the Open Space Plan (i.e., Cameron Run, Holmes Run, Taylor Run, etc.).

- Focus on **RPA protection and enhancement**:
  - Do not allow encroachments in the RPA buffers
  - Focus on vacant land immediately adjacent to RPA's for protection
  - Focus on RPA's for environmental restoration

- **Strongly consider the following properties for easements, acquisition, or other methods of open space preservation** within the short term.

These sites are critical to achieving the goals of the open space plan: *(Note: Specific addresses will be added, where applicable)*

- Episcopal High School west tract (at Braddock Road and North Howard Street, south to Maple Tree Court and east to approximately Marlboro Drive)
- Second Presbyterian Church site (at Janney's and Quaker Lanes)
- Series of open spaces east of Seminary Plaza and Library Lane, between Braddock and Seminary Roads
- Land in the southwest quadrant at the intersection of North Beauregard and Armistead Streets
- Multiple small linear sites on the south side of East and West Glebe Roads, between Route 1 and I-395, that would allow for the creation of a linear park in the Del Ray area
- Multiple sites, west of Holmes Run, north of Eisenhower Avenue between Clermont Avenue and Burnside Place (west of Van Dorn Street)
- A site to the west of Telegraph Road between Longview Drive and the railroad right-of-way
- As much as possible of the power plant site at the north end of Old Town (at Slaters Lane, east of the George Washington Memorial Parkway) as the plant's operations become reconfigured over time
- Exxon/Mobil-Freedmen's Cemetery site at South Washington and Church Streets

Legend
- Priority Actions - Potential Sites
- Parks

Figure 31: Priority Actions

- **Revise the City's existing zoning requirements** to achieve better open space in new developments.

- **Consider the open space opportunities east of Simpson Field** for the creation of active recreational facilities.

- The Open Space Conservancy should, as one of its initial tasks, work with the Episcopal Church, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, and possibly other large institutional landholders, to **develop a workable Open Space Conservation Strategy for institutional land** within the Episcopal High School, the Theological Seminary, St. Agnes and St. Stephens Schools, and Masonic Memorial properties.

- **Rehabilitate Commonwealth Avenue** as a significant parkway and model for future parkways in the City. Rehabilitation tasks would include:
  - Clearing of dead/diseased vegetation, replacement and infill with new vegetation, replanting of median strips and extension of medians where feasible, and on-going maintenance activities.

- **Implement the following new path/trail linkages:**
  - A new stream crossing of Holmes Run at Chambliss Street to connect neighborhoods to the north and south of Holmes Run. This route will also provide a safe, non-motorized commuter connection and will link to the proposed Fairfax County path to Columbia Pike as well as the Holmes Run trail. (Note: the City is about to begin a design feasibility study on this trail)
  - An off-street path through the eastern end of Eisenhower Valley to connect the off-street Eisenhower Valley path (which ends at Telegraph Road) to the streets of Old Town at Payne Street.
  - A multi-use path from Booth Park (west end of Cameron Station) to the Fairfax County line, along Backlick Run. Also, work with Fairfax County to extend this to the west. This project would allow for the reclamation of Backlick Run.

- **Establish a streetscape and gateway enhancement program for Route 1** through the City.
  - Once this program has been completed, carry out a similar program for the Duke Street corridor.

- **Implement a CITYgreen analysis** [1] to assess the amount of tree cover currently in the City. Define a legally enforceable strategy for protecting existing tree cover, preventing substantial reduction to this tree cover, and enhancing the tree cover throughout the City.

B.   FUNDING SOURCES AND STRATEGIES

This section addresses various funding mechanisms related to implementation

of the Alexandria Open Space Plan. The discussion is organized around four general categories:

1. **Organization for Fundraising and Stewardship**
2. **Funding for Acquisition and Development**
3. **Funding for Operations**
4. **Use of Public and Institutional Grants**

It should be noted that while individual approaches to funding are identified in terms of one of these four categories, there is often overlap among categories with regard to specific implementation strategies that the City might wish to adopt.

The funding strategies described below can be applied, at different levels, to each of the goals set forth in the Open Space Plan, as presented in Chapter 5 of this report. Therefore, accompanying the discussion of each funding option is a listing of those goals to which these options are most applicable. This arrangement should assist the City of Alexandria in developing an open space strategy that achieves the open space goals that it has defined, within a realistic time frame.

The funding strategy is an important element of the open space plan, because it seeks to identify a variety of tools that can provide sustainable, practical funding support for protecting, expanding and promoting Alexandria's open space resources. Currently, the City uses some tools, such as proffers, and in one instance, land use assessment abatement techniques, to fund open space land acquisition. It uses other tools, such as a volunteer program to provide operational support. The tools discussed below will expand these current efforts.

• ORGANIZATION FOR FUNDRAISING AND STEWARDSHIP

Applicable Goals: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15

One of the lessons learned from the study of successful open space and land preservation efforts elsewhere is the need for a strong advocacy/support group. Examples abound. At the national level, the Nature Conservancy performs this function, and at the regional level, the Potomac Conservancy is active. Functions can include education, lobbying, funding support to others, direct funding of land and easement acquisitions, holding title to open space properties, as well as operational support. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, the creation of a locally focused Open Space Conservancy is a key recommendation.

Typically such a group is established as a 501(c)(3) not-for profit organization, which enables it to engage in extensive fundraising efforts. In this way, the 501(c)(3) advocacy/support group can act as an intermediary between donors and government. Contributors do not feel that they are giving their

money to the government per se, but to a benevolent organization, and they often have a higher level of confidence that their funds will be protected and used in the manner intended. In addition, donations of either land or cash are tax deductible to the donor.

While some advocacy/support groups limit themselves to fundraising, education and non-operational activities, other groups, which are typically "friends" groups, take more active roles in operations. Involvement can include input on management and staffing decisions, participation in concessions and programs, and/or management responsibility for specific facilities or services.

For the City of Alexandria, the Historic Alexandria Foundation can serve as a model for what can be accomplished by a strong support/advocacy group. The Foundation has been active in protecting and preserving the city's historic resources. It partners with individual residents and corporate citizens, raises funds, and is a funding source for small grants (typically between $2,000 and $5,000 annually). It educates, facilitates, and coordinates.

Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, the private Potomac Conservancy and the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust perform many of the same functions as the Historic Alexandria Foundation. These kinds of functions are critical to the successful implementation of the Open Space Plan and may best be performed by an Alexandria Open Space Conservancy dedicated to open space preservation within the Alexandria community. Such an entity may need to partner, from time to time, with other groups (e.g., the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust) when the need arises.

• FUNDING FOR ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Applicable Goals: 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10

This section outlines funding mechanisms for the expansion of existing open space and developing new open space opportunities. Acquisition and development of open space may involve dedicated funding, other city funding mechanisms, balanced development schemes, and/or the purchase of easements on available property. In addition to their usefulness as tools for acquisition and development, these funding strategies may also be useful for preservation and maintenance purposes.

Dedicated Trusts and Funds

One characteristic of successful programs dealing with open space land acquisition is the presence of a dedicated structure that serves to protect incoming funds and to ensure that monies go for the specified use(s), such as land acquisition, open space recreation, natural resource protection, cultural/ historic open space resource protection or other uses identified in this plan. Types of organizational structures include land banks, land trusts, or land preservation funds. Names are less important than the functions they provide,

and their (perceived) independence from government. Several local jurisdictions have established dedicated structures for collecting and dispersing funds for open space land acquisition. Based on these successful models and other models within the City and elsewhere, the City of Alexandria should consider the establishment of a dedicated open space fund to support many of the goals set forth in the open space plan.

Alexandria-based and other local examples of dedicated structures and funding mechanisms include the following:

Land Trust – The Fairfax County Park Authority Land Trust is a dedicated fund into which residents and community interests can make voluntary donations intended for the purposes of land acquisition. Initially, the fund received limited promotional support and, consequently, its success was also limited. As of June 2001, the trust fund had received $130,000 in donations. Subsequent to that date, a full time director was hired and the expectations for much stronger fundraising are high.

Conservation Fund – The Fairfax City Open Space Conservation Fund is a dedicated fund for land acquisition that has been established by the City of Fairfax. It provides for an increase in the local real property tax rate on residential and commercial properties, of up to $.05 per $100 of assessed valuation. There is a five-year term limit. Voter support was high in the non-binding referendum that passed by a 2-1 margin. For the current year, the incremental tax rate has been set at $.03 per $100, and it is anticipated that receipts for the year will total some $1 million. An equivalent tax of $.03 per $100 applied to residential and commercial property in Alexandria could generate almost $5 million.

A similar funding model for the open space plan could involve the dedication of a portion of other taxes to the purchase of open space property. An option that was initiated by and endorsed by the Alexandria City Council is the implementation of a local Recordation Tax. This increased tax would require approval from the Virginia General Assembly which, in the past, has been reluctant to pass the necessary legislation. However, for the current year, the assembly has agreed to include this funding mechanism in a study of funding issues. Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, the Town of Vienna has been considering an increase in the local meals (restaurant) tax for a set number of years to fund the purchase of land for a new park.

Historic Alexandria Preservation Fund - A precedent for a dedicated fund already exists in Alexandria in the form of the Historic Alexandria Preservation Fund of the Historic Alexandria Foundation. Resources in this fund are generated through the Foundation's annual antiques sale. A total of $5,000 is used annually to support the successful grants program of the organization.

Local Service District – The Code of Virginia (15.2-2400) permits localities to establish service districts for the purposes of providing enhanced services and/or facilities. Districts typically focus on transportation services, fire services, or sewer and water services. They are funded by a special property tax surcharge. In Northern Virginia, special service districts are used to support facilities such as the Reston and McLean Community Centers. Legislation was recently passed to allow the establishment of service districts for the purpose of purchasing land and maintaining open space areas.

Open Space Fund (developer fees) – A program providing for developer fees and contributions can be established that would be dedicated to funding the acquisition and development of additional open space. Many communities have been successful in implementing this source of funding. Individual development sites are often not large enough, or are inappropriately located, to supply valuable open space for public use and enjoyment. Hence, a developer fee, either in lieu of, or in addition to, the provision of on-site open space would add to other funds, and would make purchases and development of desirable sites possible.

Other Funding Mechanisms

1. Bonds:

- **General Obligation Bonds** – General Obligation bonds are instruments of local government capital finance. The government sells the bonds to raise funds, and then pays back the principal and interest on the bonds after a period of time has elapsed, usually 20 to 30 years. Bonds are often used to fund parks and open space projects. Depending on state or local law, bonds either require voter approval (such as in most Virginia counties) or city council authorization (such as in Alexandria and most Virginia cities.) For example, the 1998 Fairfax County Bond issue, which was supported by over 70 percent of the voters, included some $20 million out of a total of $75 million for land acquisition. Arlington County schedules a bond referendum package every two years and always includes proposals for parks bond funding. Arlington voters have approved these bond issues by substantial margins in all but one instance over the past two decades.

- **Revenue Bonds** – Unlike General Obligation bonds, capital improvement bonds (such as revenue bonds) are not subject to levy limits and require only a public hearing, not a referendum. However, revenue bonds are typically used only on projects specifically included in a capital improvement plan, and when a dedicated source of funding is identified as the source of repayment. Dedicated funding sources can include certain taxes, utility fees, and other fees and revenue streams.

Examples:

- In Virginia, transportation revenue bonds have been issued using part of the existing state recordation tax as a revenue source.

- In 1998, Austin (Texas) citizens voted to apportion part of their rising property tax coffers to acquiring more open space. Citizens approved a $40.45 million bond offering to be repaid over 30 years. Thus far, 500 acres of open space have been purchased with the bond money.

2. Taxes and General Fund Money:

- **Property Taxes** – In Virginia, local governing bodies can approve an increase in the local property tax rate to finance a bond issue or to provide cash for open space acquisition, create a community-managed open space trust fund, or pay for a specific open space purchase. Typically, the increases can range from 1 to 2 cents on every $100 of assessed valuation. The City of Fairfax advisory referendum mentioned above and subsequent Fairfax City Council action present a good example of how a community-supported increase in property taxes can be utilized for the acquisition of open space.

- **Sales Taxes** – In some communities, the local sales tax rate has been increased to finance bonds for open space acquisition, create a trust fund, or pay for the acquisition of a specific piece of property. This approach is typically very beneficial for cities. Large sums of money can be generated from a very small tax increase on purchased goods and, in many cases, a large proportion of a city's retail sales typically comes from non-residents and visitors who end up paying for a share of the city's open space acquisition projects. In Virginia, the extension of the sales tax would require approval from the general assembly. In the immediate future, transportation and education capital projects are likely to be the only candidates for sales tax increase; however, if a sales tax increase is approved for education and/or transportation, it will make it easier financially for open space acquisition projects to be included in Alexandria's Capital Improvement Program.

- **General Fund Support** – A community may also choose not to raise tax rates, per se, when financing a bond or providing funds for direct purchase for open space land. In the 1990's, many governments used General Fund surpluses to support such initiatives. The City of Alexandria's large annual contribution to capital reserves from the General Fund ($14 million is proposed in FY 2003) is a good example of this reallocation.

Easements

A tool that is growing in acceptance by non profit organizations and govern-

ments is the conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legally recorded agreement by which landowners may voluntarily restrict the use of their land. Provided that certain conditions are met, donors of easements may be eligible for certain income, estate, and property tax benefits. The income and estate tax benefits can be substantial, while the property tax benefits may or may not be substantial, depending largely on the relinquishment of development rights.

To gain preferential tax treatment, the land to be protected must often provide a recognizable public benefit, such as protecting rare species, public water supplies, or scenic vistas visible from roads. Public access is not necessarily a requirement. Although the duration of a conservation easement can vary depending on the desires of the landowner, tax benefits generally are available only for perpetual easements. A landowner that conveys a conservation easement retains all rights to use the land for any purposes that do not interfere with the preservation of the property as stated in the terms of the easement.

In 2002, the Commonwealth of Virginia enacted new legislation that will allow landowners who provide substantial easements to "sell," or transfer for cash, the value of the resulting tax deduction, provided that their income is too low to benefit from the deduction. This significant legislation will mean that landowners on fixed, or other limited, incomes who could not formerly take advantage of the tax credit incentive would be able to obtain cash in lieu of this credit. The law was also changed to allow a minimum of one-quarter acre (versus the one acre previously required) to be eligible for conservation easement tax credits.

Examples:

- Fairfax County's land acquisition plan involves approaching owners about putting easements on their property. Since 2000, 241 acres have been protected through easements.

- The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust has been working with private landowners in Fairfax, Loudoun and Arlington Counties, as well as recently in the City of Alexandria, to secure conservation easements. Successes include a 12-acre residential parcel in Great Falls and a wooded 13-acre parcel near Waterford.

- In Alexandria, this approach was recently used to secure Civil War era fortifications and adjacent open space at Battery Heights.

The use of conservation easements will be an excellent tool in making the linkages/connections recommended in the Open Space Plan, in order to achieve a continuous open space system within the city, and the use of easements will supplement implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan.

Working with landowners and development attorneys to secure conservation easements will be an important part of the overall strategy for preserving

Alexandria's open space. Much of the effort here will be locating willing landowners and educating them about the benefits of this action. A key part of the strategy will be to position the City so that it has the Right of First Refusal on large parcels of land and other critical properties, as they become available.

The purchase of easements, rather than voluntary conveyances has also been a viable preservation tool in the past. However, this approach is subject to the ups and downs of economic cycles, and in the near term, may be somewhat more difficult given the current economic climate. Availability of funding through private and institutional sources has been adversely impacted by the recent performance of the stock market, and one important source of public funds has been curtailed. In the latter case, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (V.O.F.), the state-sponsored vehicle for the purchase of easements for large expanses of land, was de-funded in 2001. (Also, it should be noted that Alexandria has not established a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, so the V.O.F. reports that the City is unlikely to benefit from V.O.F. programs even when funding is available.)

Balanced Development

Balanced development can be loosely defined as financing the preservation of open space by developing only a portion of the property in question. Normally, balanced development initiatives are undertaken when a desirable tract of land becomes available on the open market. The balanced development approach allows the government to guide the development of the property and ensure the enhanced and continuing value of the property in question, as well as surrounding properties.

Often, because of the economic highest and best use valuation, local government cannot financially or technically compete with the private sector when it comes to bidding for new land. The balanced development approach makes competition with the private sector easier for local government, by enlisting a third party entity to purchase the land for it. The third party then resells its land to the different entities involved. It may sell 20 percent of the land to an interested developer and the remaining 80 percent to the government. Because the third party is often a non-profit group or a conglomeration of local business, citizens, and environmental groups, the governmental entity is charged little for its portion of the land. In this way, a large percentage of the open space is preserved at a reduced cost to the public. However, this approach requires a private entity with significant financial capabilities.

Within the City of Alexandria, the balanced development approach might be most applicable in areas such as Eisenhower Valley, where substantial new development is likely to occur and where preservation of open space as part of the development planning process will help preserve and enhance the city's "last remaining open space frontier."

• FUNDING FOR OPERATIONS

Applicable Goals: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12

This section presents examples of funding mechanisms that can offset the operational costs of parks and open space. Most of the programs below aid in the maintenance/preservation/restoration of open space – a focus of the above goals.

Volunteer Programs

Volunteer programs have been used successfully to reduce budgetary requirements, enhance parks system operations, and generate a base of support for private contributions. Specific examples of volunteer applications include docent living history activities, security, gardening and landscaping, event registrations, and so forth. As a mechanism for preserving, protecting, and expanding open space in Alexandria, volunteer groups can organize as friends groups or be managed by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. They can help with environmental clean-up activities, education awareness, administrative work, and other activities.

The Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities has already experienced success with the use of volunteers. However, by placing greater emphasis on volunteer programs, the City will likely achieve an even greater level of success. To this end the following actions should be considered: greater attention to volunteer recruitment and training, establishment of well-defined volunteer responsibilities and guidelines, and performance monitoring. It is also important to continue to give feedback and recognition to the volunteers.

Based on the experience of other programs, it is estimated that Alexandria could expect to generate some 10,000 to 15,000 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of some five to eight full time employees, by utilizing volunteers. Savings from these volunteer hours could be used for other necessities or the hours could be used to maintain/preserve existing open space.

Another benefit of active volunteer programs is the use of volunteer hours to fulfill certain matching requirements on grants. Valued at, say, $15 per hour on average, the potential hours identified above could be worth $150,000 to $225,000 for the purposes of matching grant applications. (Note: depending on the type of service or activity, the value of labor contributions might range from $7 to $50 per hour).

Corporate Funding Support

The use of corporate resources in supporting parks & recreation activities and open space preservation initiatives is a relatively new phenomenon, and there are mixed opinions as to whether tapping corporate support is appropriate,

---

and if so, under what circumstances. Nonetheless, it is a potential funding resource, and one of the early tasks in the implementation of the Open Space Plan should be, in concert with others in City government, to make a final determination regarding its desirability. With this caveat, the subject of corporate funding support is discussed in the paragraphs below.

Corporate funding support could apply to both operations and acquisition; however, because of the generally short term nature of the commitment and magnitude of funding that might be generated, it is perhaps most practical to address corporate support under the operational funding heading.

Corporate support can also be either direct or indirect. Direct support, which includes sponsorships, advertising and naming rights, is typically done by the corporation itself through its marketing or public affairs functions. Direct support is discussed below. For the purposes of this discussion, indirect support refers to funding through a corporate foundation, which is discussed later.

Corporate sponsorship and advertising involve funds paid to a parks agency in return for establishing a linkage between the corporation (or in some cases, institution) and park users. This linkage can be achieved through identification of the corporation as an underwriter of an event, such as a concert. Placement of advertising materials in event brochures or advertising on scoreboards are examples of this identification strategy. The same linkage and corporate exposure can be achieved through identification of the corporate donor as a sponsor of the agency or designation of corporate products as the "official" products of the agency. Examples of the latter could range from exclusive pour rights for a soft drink company to exclusive suntan lotion for aquatic facilities. Ultimately, the value of corporate sponsorship or advertising is a function of exposure, or number of people who will receive the message. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, a global, comprehensive approach to corporate sponsorship would make sense. By including the total recreational budget of the Recreation and Parks Department, the level of exposure would be maximized, thus maximizing the corporate income potential. Including trails and other open space assets is important to this strategy because of the high levels of utilization that can be achieved in this manner.

The second approach to tapping into corporate funding is through the sale of naming rights. Typically, this approach involves funds paid to a public agency/facility owner by a corporation in exchange for the right to affix the company's name to the facility. This funding approach is most common for large sports venues such as stadiums and arenas; however, it is making its way into other types of facilities, and it appears likely that it is just a matter of time before naming rights reach into the public recreation domain. For example, several public recreation providers have sponsorship agreements with product and service providers, and in a related area, the Fairfax County School Board is actively investigating the issues of naming rights for its facilities. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, trailhead signage, benches, parks and other recreational facilities could all lend themselves to this approach.

• USE OF PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

Applicable Goals: 1 through 15

Public and institutional grants may be used for both acquisition of open space and funding of operations. Historically, grants have ranged in value from as little as $100 to over $1 million. As noted previously, the resources available for grants are subject to normal economic cycles. Currently, the amount of awards and the frequency with which grants are awarded is decreasing. State governments across the country have de-funded many open space-related grants as public coffers shrunk in response to a slowing economy. However, as the economy strengthens, the level of grant funding should bounce back, and as part of a long-term strategy, grants should continue to be useful sources of funding.

In the face of shrinking resources and increased competition for grant funding, knowledge of and experience with grants will be increasingly important for success. The retention of a full-time professional grant writer, and perhaps a development consultant, focused on open space and trails grants will be critical since specific experience and skill sets are useful in the grant writing and implementation processes. As well, success in tapping corporate and institutional funding most often involves understanding the donor's requirements and needs, and tailoring a responsive proposal that links these requirements and needs to a <u>specific</u> project or program.

With both public and institutional grants, separation of the recipient from government through establishment of an open space conservancy to receive the donations may, at times, also be important.

Sources of public and institutional grants that could be pursued in the implementation of the Alexandria Open Space Plan are identified below.

Public Grants

Public grant programs are typically administered at the state level, and include programs that disperse funds coming from the federal government, as well as from programs that originate at the state level. A smaller number of programs are administered directly by the federal agency controlling the funding.

<u>Land and Water Conservation Fund</u> (Applies to goals: 1, 4, 5, 9, 15)
The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund is administered through the Virginia Outdoor Foundation. It is available for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities and requires a 50/50 match from localities.

<u>North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants</u> (Applies to goals 3 and 4)

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants are disbursed by the federal government through the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Grant funds support acquisition, restoration, and enhancement projects involving wetland and wetland associated uplands. Begun in 1989, the program provides matching grants to private or public organizations or to individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Funds for the grant have been increasing gradually almost every year since its inception. In 2001, $40 million was allocated for N.A.W.C.A. grants. Most of this money was matched on a 2:1 basis. A few were matched at 1:1. The N.A.W.C.A. small grant program provides funding up to $50,000. An average small grant amounts to just under $40,000. The N.A.W.C.A. large grant program provides between $50,000 and $1 million.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (Applies to goals 1, 3 and 4)
The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund supports environmental education and action-oriented conservation and restoration projects within Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed. The fund earns revenue by selling license plates with Chesapeake Bay designs on them. It disperses its earning through grants to state and local governments, as well as nonprofit entities. In 2001, the fund awarded more than $450,000 in grants to some 75 different projects.

Recreation Trails Program (Virginia Recreation Trails Fund)(Applies to goals 5 and 10)
This is a small, competitive grant program that distributes monies from the ISTEA/TEA21 program. It is intended to aid the construction and rehabilitation of recreational trails. The funding, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is not restricted to non-motorized trails, but they are its focus. Grant monies cannot be used for planning, or for construction of "incomplete" trails (i.e., those that are designed to be a part of a future system.) Stand-alone trails, as well as connector trails, are the focuses of this funding. This is an 80/20 matching fund grant, with 20 percent of the total project costs required of the local organization. Grants range from $10,000 to $150,000, with typical grants amounting to $50,000 to $60,000. Total funds available in 2001 are $800,000 (2000 funding totaled about $1 million.) The grant is funded at least through 2003 and, if renewed at that time, would be funded for an additional six years. The W&OD trail in Northern Virginia has been a recipient of these funds in the past. The City of Alexandria is also a current recipient of TEA21 funding for the Eisenhower Bike Trail project, and has applied for additional funding under this program.

Virginia Land Conservation Fund (Applies to Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9)
The Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) has been set up to provide matching grants to localities, public bodies, and nonprofit organizations for purchasing fee simple title to and interest in real property for land conservation purposes. Grant categories are:

- Open Spaces and Parks
- Natural Area Protection
- Historic Area Preservation
- Farmlands and Forest Preservation

In the past, grants have been used to help the Nature Conservancy acquire 458 acres of land adjacent to the Commonwealth's Cleveland Barrens Natural Areas Preserve, to help Fairfax County acquire 2.9 acres of easement at three sites in Vienna and Oakton, and to help York County acquire nine easements on the York River beach to provide a continuous pedestrian linkage/trail along the riverfront.

Historically, VLCF grants have ranged in value from $30,000 to $1 million, with an average gift of $140,000. However, the Virginia State Assembly appropriated no funding for the VLCF in 2001, and the VCLF does not expect any new funding in 2002. The fund has suspended acceptance of applications for the time being.

Transportation Enhancement Activities (Applies to goals 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)
Transportation enhancement grants are administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation and are available for a wide range of activities defined in 12 categories, some more specific than others. Examples of projects eligible for grant funding include trails, streetscapes (pedestrian amenities), landscaping, preservation of scenic easements, billboard removal, and restoration of historic properties related to transportation (train depot, lighthouse, etc.) This is an 80/20 matching fund grant, and allows for the local 20 percent to be in the form of cash, or donations of land, materials, or in-kind services. There is no minimum, but the agency will only pay up to $1 million annually to a single entity. Total grant funding available in the State of Virginia for 2001 was $18.5 million, and is expected to remain at or above this level. Typical grants total $150,000 to $250,000, but projects as small as $5,000 to $6,000 are frequently funded.

Certified Local Government Grants(Applies to goals 1, 2, 6, 8)
The Certified Local Government(CLG) Grant program establishes a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and a state's Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The program allows state DHR's, to recommend for certification local governments that have put key elements of a sound local preservation program in place in their communities. Designation as CLGs gives local governments a way to participate more formally in the state and national historic preservation programs. The City of Alexandria qualifies for CLG grants, as it is one of 24 CLG's in Virginia.

Because CLG grants use federally appropriated funds, the de-funding of CLG's is less likely than the de-funding of grants supported by the state General Assembly. Typically, Virginia's CLG budget is $85,000. Awards range in size from $5,000 to $25,000, with an average award of $15,000. Generally, there is a match of some sort, but no match is required. CLG grants may

be used for surveys of architectural or archaeological resources and historic preservation planning, among other things.

Historic Preservation Project Grant (Applies to goals 1, 3, 4, 6, 8)
In 2001, the General Assembly in the State of Virginia _did not_ appropriate funds for Historic Preservation Project Grants. In the past, these grants were used to preserve/restore local historic sites and natural areas. In a "normal" year, the state legislature would award up to 75 grants ranging in value from $5,000 to $100,000. The Historic Alexandria Foundation received $10,000 in 2001, and $28,500 in 2002 from this source for two sites in the City.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Applies to goals 6, 7, 15)
These grants, administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, are primarily given for voluntary habitat restoration projects, as they are geared more toward restoration than toward acquisition. Most recipients are private land-owners. Projects are extremely varied in nature, but can include restoration, planting, dam removal, outreach, habitat preservation and easements. This agency funds relatively few projects in urban areas. All grants are matching, and the ratio of federal to other funds ranges from 1:3 to 3:1, depending on the project and the number of partners involved. Total annual distributions range from $1 to $1.5 million, and the typical grant is $50,000 to $100,000.

Community Development Block Grants (CBDG) _(Applies to goals 1, 7, 9)_
Funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and adminis-tered at the local level. Focus is mainly in providing affordable housing for low and moderate-income families. Can be used for the development of recre-ational facilities and open space; however, since the city is dedicated to affordable housing, its limited funding available through CBDG is unlikely to be utilized for open space initiatives.

Urban and Community Forestry Grants (Applies to goals 11, 12, 13, 14)
These grants are administered by the U.S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. The funds promote improvements to urban areas and communities through the provision of forestry resources.

Other Public Grant Programs: In addition to the programs identified above, there are several additional programs that could benefit Alexandria's Open Space program. These include:

- _The National Park Service's Gateway program_, which provides funding for trail markers and interpretive signs.
- _Chesapeake Bay Foundation grants_, that provide support for educa-tional programs and materials such as brochures.
- _Virginia Tourism Corporation matching grants_, provide up to $10,000 for the promotion of special events and educational programs.
- _Urban Park and Recreational Recovery (UPARR) grants_ from the Fed-

eral government to improve recreation facilities in urban areas.
- *Federal Brownfield/Grayfield grants* to help clean up open space areas that were formerly occupied by polluting uses.

Institutional Grants

The Virginia Land Endowment (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)
The Virginia Land Endowment is an institutional grantor that uses its capital to encourage pollution prevention, open space conservation, and environmental education. In 2001, the endowment supported The Land Conservation Fund in Arlington, VA with a $100,000 matching grant.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)
The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was originally established to promote open space preservation in Fairfax County. It has now expanded its geographical coverage and has undertaken projects in the inner and outer suburban counties and cities of Northern Virginia, including the City of Alexandria. Activities include providing grants to support partners in land acquisition and purchase of easements, advocacy and education.

Various Foundations (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)
There are a number of private foundations that directly and indirectly support objectives of this plan including education, land acquisition and support for general operational and administrative expenses. Some of these foundations are national in scope, but located in the region. This geographical proximity could be advantageous in working to secure funding. Examples of foundations with national coverage based in Washington, DC include: The Moriah Fund and the Wallace Genetic Foundation. Examples of funds that focus exclusively or primarily on Virginia include the Virginia Environmental Endowment, and the Mark and Catherine Winkler Foundation. The latter is based in the City of Alexandria and actively supports land acquisition and O&M expense coverage. In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, which has been identified as a potential funding source, is involved in the acquisition of open space lands and conservation easements under its own name.

C.   CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of Alexandria's Open Space Plan will result in the creation of a connected open space system that accomplishes several objectives. It maximizes the accessibility of the City's open spaces for all of its residents. In addition, it enhances and protects the City's significant existing open space assets, such as its waterfront, its stream valleys, and its institutional lands. And, through the creation of the Open Space Conservancy, it establishes a mechanism for adding to the City's open space assets as opportunities arise.

The provision of an outstanding open space system will serve Alexandria well, for a long time to come. It will attract new residents to the City, it will encourage those living here to remains, and it will illustrate how a dense and diverse

community can be tied together through its varied and beautiful open spaces.

[8] CITYgreen, a software program developed by American Forests, uses Graphic Information Systems (GIS) technology to assess the changing structure of a landscape over time, with particular emphasis on tree cover issues.

Alexandria Department of Planning and Community Development. *Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Design Guidelines*, October 16, 1993.

_____. *Summary of Small Area Plans.* Adopted 1992.

Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, 1978.

_____. *Bicycle Transportation and Multi-use Trail Master Plan, for Alexandria, Virginia*, 1998.

_____. *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (not adopted), 1994.

American Forests. *Regional Ecosystem Analysis Chesapeake Bay Region and the Baltimore-Washington Corridor: Calculating the Value of Nature. 1999.*

Arendt, Randall G. *Conservation Design for Subdivisions.* Island Press, Washington, D.C.: 1966.

Arlington County, Virginia. *Open Space Master Plan.* Adopted September 10 1994

Billingsley, Ken. "Let's Talk Demographics," Speech Presented to Agenda Alexandria, October 19, 1998.

Bleam, Gregg. *The City as a Park. A Citizens' Guide to Charlottesville Parks.* Gregg Bleam Landscape Architects, 1998.

Cooper, Robertson & Partners, et al. *Potomac Yards Urban Design Guidelines.* March 12, 1999, reissued April 28, 1999. Amended by Alexandria City Council Sept. 8, 1999.

Crompton, John L. *The Impact of Parks and Open Space on Property Values and the Property Tax Base.* National Recreation and Park Assoc. Ashburn, VA, 2000.

_____. "The Impact of Parks on Property Values," *Parks and Recreation Magazine.* National Recreation and Park Association, January 2001.

_____. "To Keep the Bills Down, should the Community Build Homes or Parks," *Parks and Recreation Magazine.* National Recreation and Park Association, January 2001.

Fairfax County, Virginia. *Policy Plan: The County Wide Policy Element of the Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County, Virginia*, 1990 , as amended 1997.

Flink, Charles A., and Robert M. Searns. *Greenways. A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development.* The Conservation Fund. Island Press, Washington, D.C.: 1993.

Gaithersburg, Maryland. *Parks, Recreation and Open Space for the 21st Century*, 1999.

Garvin, Alexander. Gayle Berens. *Urban Parks and Open Space.* Urban Land Institute. Washington DC, 1997.

Harnik, Peter. *Inside City Parks.* Urban Land Institute. Washington D.C., 2000.

Historic Alexandria Foundation. Final report from the Task Force on Open Space Easements, June 18, 1987.

Jones Point Park Recommendation Chronicles, May 27, 1999.

Lerner, Steve, and William Poole. *The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space.* The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

Maryland Atlas of Greenways, Water Trails, and Green Infrastructure. Prepared by the Maryland Greenways Commission, August 2000. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Annapolis, Maryland.

Mertes, James D. Ph.D., James R. Hall, CLP. *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, 1996.

Land Trust Alliance. *Land Banks* (undated article).

Lawrence, Kathleen W. and Ronald L. Hedlund. *Virginia Outdoors Plan,* Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Director, 1996.

National Capital Planning Commission. *Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Open Space, Natural Features Element.* Draft for Commission Authorization to Circulate, August 15,2000.

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. *Policy Plan.* Adopted February 20, 1992.

Parsons Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc. *The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox.* VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Trails Association. Richmond, VA, May 1999.

PKF Consulting. *Draft Recreation Master Plan* for the City of Alexandria, Virginia, June, 1998.

Prince William County, Office of Planning. *Comprehensive Plan,* 1998, amended 2000.

_____. *Policy Guide for Monetary Contributions,* June 1999.

Recreation Facilities and Trails Map. Alexandria, Virginia: Alexandria Drafting Company, 1997.

Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. and ERA. *Stafford County Comprehensive Master Plan for Parks and Open Space,* 1989.

Salem, Oregon. Comprehensive Park System Master Plan. April 1999.

Tibbetts, John. *Open Space Conservation: Investing in Your Community's Economic Health.* Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Cambridge, 1998.

Virginia Beach, Virginia. *Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan,* 2000.

Water Quality Management Supplement. City of Alexandria Master Plan. Adopted January 13, 2001.

Washingtonian Magazine. "Who We Are," April 2001.

Articles from the Web:

Alexandria, Virginia. Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities. *Recreation Facilities and Parks Location Map.* Last Modified: Wednesday, 09-Aug-2000. http://ci.alexandria.va.us/rpca/rpca_gi_location_map.html

Cambridge, Massachusetts. "Green Ribbon Open Space Committee." March 2000. www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~CDD/commplan/greenribbon/pdfs/gr_ribb_report.pdf

Great Public Spaces, Great Community Places. http://www.pps.org/GPS_New/index.html

Hermosa Beach. "Open Space Zone." No date given. www.hermosabch.org/1730.htm

National Association of Counties. Research Surveys, *Parks Survey.* Web site copyright 1999 by National Association of Counties. www.naco.org/counties/surveys/parks.index.cfm

The Trust for Public Land. "Federal Funding,...", dates vary. www.tpl.org/tier2_re2.cfm?&folder_id=191

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation. "Greenways: Conserving Virginia's Natural & Recreational Resources." http://www.dcr.state.va.us/prr/greenway.htm

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation. "Trails . . .Conserving Virginia's Natural & Recreational Resources." http://www.dcr.state.va.us/prr/greenway.htm

Western Governors' Association. "The Open Lands Initiative: Economic Benefits of Open Space," April 1998. www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/tpl/ecoben.htm

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-01	African American Heritage Park	500 Holland Lane	Passive	Cultural/Historical Educational	Regional	Public	7.60
1-02	Alexandria Schools Rowing Facility (Oronoco Bay Park)	1 Madison Street	Active	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Educational Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	0.73
1-03	"Alley Way"	Pitt St. to St. Asaph St. 200 South Block	Trails Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Block	Public	0.31
1-04	Armory Tot-Lot	200 block of South Royal Street	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.20
1-05	Charles Houston Community Center	901 Wythe Street	Active	Educational Recreational	Citywide	Public	1.3 open space
1-06	Chetworth Park	810 Chetworth Place	Active	Dog Park Recreational	Block	Public	0.28
1-07	City Property	First and Payne Streets	Passive	Dog Park	Block	Public	1.37

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-08	Daingerfield Island Park	George Washington Memorial Parkway (1 Marina Drive)	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Natural Resource Area Riverfront	Regional	Public	130.03
1-9	Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center	1605 Cameron Street	Passive	Recreational Educational	Citywide	Public	1.76
1-10	Ford's Landing	99 Franklin Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	0.59
1-11	Founder's Park	351 Union Street	Passive	Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	4.70
1-12	George Washington Memorial Parkway	Northern Section between 1st Street and Four Mile Run	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Cultural/Historical	Regional	Public	45.50
1-13	Helen Miller & Bernard Hunter Park (formerly Fayette & Queen Park)	224 North Fayette Street	Active	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	0.32
1-14	Interior Park	1321 Oronoco Street	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.30

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
October 2002
DRAFT

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-15	Jefferson Houston School	1501 Cameron Street	Active	Recreational Educational	Citywide	Public	4.68 open space
1-16	Jones Point Park	100 Jones Point Drive	Active Passive	Cultural/Historical Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	52.30
1-17	King Street Gardens	1806 King Street	Passive Streetscapes/Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza / Streetscape Cultural/Historical	Citywide	Public	0.15
1-18	King Street Park	King Street at the Potomac River	Passive	Cultural/Historical Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Citywide	Public	0.19
1-19	Lee Center	1108 Jefferson Street	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	4.10
1-20	Lloyd House Garden	220 North Washington Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical Educational	Citywide	Public	less than 1.0
1-21	Lyles-Crouch Open Space (adjacent School)	530 South Saint Asaph Street	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	1.27 open space

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
October 2002
DRAFT

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-22	Market Square	300 King Street	Passive	Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Citywide	Public	0.75
1-23	Metro Linear Park	1607 Suter Street (Buchanan to Braddock)	Passive Trails	Recreational	Citywide	Public	1.97
1-24	Montgomery Park	901 North Royal Street	Active	Dog Park Recreational	Neighborh	Public	2.00
1-25	Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center and Pool	1108 Jefferson Street	Active	Educational Recreational Cultural/Historical	Citywide	Public	10.00
1-26	Old Cameron Run Channel	2251 Mill Road	Passive	Natural Resource Area Environmentally Sensitive	Neighborh	Public	2.70
1-27	Old Town Pool (includes Buchanan Street Park)	1609 Cameron Street (west side of Durrant Center)	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	2.51
1-28	Oronoco Bay Park (also contains Alexandria Schools Rowing Facility)	701 North Lee Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	4.50

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-29	Pendelton Park	1333 Pendelton Street	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.30
1-30	Point Lumley	East End of Duke Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Riverfront	Regional	Public	0.15
1-31	Portner Park	1400 Portner Road	Passive	Dog Park	Block	Public	0.24
1-32	Potomac Yards (City's open space component only)	Jefferson Davis Highway	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	70.0
1-33	Powhatan Park	1009 Douglas Street	Active	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	1.47
1-34	"Rivergate" Park	2 Montgomery Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Riverfront Cultural/Historic	Regional	Public	1.97
1-35	Roberdeau Park (includes Shipyard Park)	End of Wolfe and Wilkes Streets at Potomac River	Passive Trails	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	0.86

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #1

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-36	Tide Lock Park	Canal Center Plaza	Trails	Cultural/Historical Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	6.7
1-37	Torpedo Plaza	End of King Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical Riverfront Urban Plaza / Streetscape Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Natural Resource Area	Regional	Public	1.50
1-38	Washington Way	120 North Pitt Street	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Block	Public	0.01
1-39	Waterfront Park	1 A Prince Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Recreational Natural Resource Area Riverfront	Regional	Public	1.50
1-40	West's Point (connected with Founder's Park)	1 Oronoco Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Regional	Public	0.07
1-41	Wilkes Street Tunnel	Wilkes Street (between Royal and Fairfax Streets)	Streetscapes/Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza/Streetscapes	Neighborh	Public	0.21
1-42	Windmill Hill Park (includes Potomac View Park and Old Town Yacht Basin)	501 North Royal Street	Active	Recreational Cultural/Historical Environmentally Sensitive	Neighborh	Public	3.48

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

City of Alexandria

Open Space Classification Overview

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
1-43	Wythe Street Plaza	701 N. Fairfax Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Recreational	Neighborh	Public	0.37
2-01	Angel Park	201 West Taylor Run Parkway	Active	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Neighborh	Public	10.34
2-02	Beach Park (Maury School adjacent)	201 Rucker Place	Active	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	1.30
2-03	Beverly Park	620 North Overlook Drive	Passive	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	1.90
2-04	Braddock Field (George Washington School adjacent)	1005 Mount Vernon Avenue	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	6.6
2-05	Braddock Road Dog Park	5 East Braddock Road	Passive	Dog Park	Block	Public	0.22
2-06	Charles Barrett Open Space (Charles Barrett School adjacent)	1115 Martha Custis Drive	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	4.87

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

City of Alexandria

Open Space Classification Overview

Planning District #2

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
2-07	Charles W. Hill Park	300-304 East Oxford Avenue	Passive	Dog Park	Neighborh	Public	0.37
2-08	Chinquapin Park and Recreation Center (TC Williams HS adjacent)	3210 King Street	Active	Dog Park Educational Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	22.80 open space; 0.07 center
2-09	Cora Kelly School and Recreation Center (Four Mile Run noted separately)	25 West Reed Street	Active	Recreational Educational	Citywide	Public	01.41 open space
2-10	Elbert Triangle	511 Four Mile Road	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways Passive	Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Neighborh	Public	0.13
2-12	Forest Park	1099 Frances Hammond Parkway	Passive	Natural Resource Area Recreational	Neighborh	Public	15.9
2-13	Four Mile Run Park (Cora Kelly School adjacent)	3700 Commonwealth Avenue	Trails Active	Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Regional	Public	55.90
2-14	Gentry Park	Guthry Avenue and Mosby Street	Passive	Recreational Streetscapes/Scenic Roadways	Neighborh	Public	0.21

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #2

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
2-15	George Mason Open Space (George Mason School adjacent)	2601 Cameron Mills Road	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	8.20
2-16	George Washington Middle School	1105 Mt. Vernon Avenue	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	12.90
2-17	Goat Hill Park	33 Kennedy Street	Passive	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	1.50
2-18	Hillside Park	264 Burgess Avenue	Passive	Dog Park	Neighborh	Public	0.55
2-19	Hooff's Run Park and Greenway	18 A East Linden Street	Trails Passive	Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Neighborh	Public	2.40
2-20	Hume Springs Park	100 Dale Street	Passive	Dog Park Recreational	Neighborh	Public	0.50
2-21	Landover Park	3301 Landover Street	Passive	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	0.80

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
2-22	Lynhaven Gateway	Lynhaven and Wesmond Drives	Passive Streetscapes/Scenic Roadways	Recreational Urban Plaza/Streetscape	Block	Public	0.05
2-23	Lynhaven Park	5 East Reed Avenue	Passive	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	0.30
2-24	Mac Arthur School (Forest Park noted separately)	1101 Janney's Lane	Active	Educational	Neighborh	Public	3.30
2-25	Mason Avenue Mini Park	10 East Monroe Avenue	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.30
2-26	Maury School (Beach Park noted separately)	600 Russell Road	Active	Educational	Neighborh	Public	1.60 open space
2-27	Monticello Park	320 Beverly Drive	Passive	Cultural/Historical Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	6.20
2-28	Mt. Jefferson Park and Greenway	301 Hume Avenue	Trails	Dog Park Recreational	Neighborh	Public	6.70

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #2

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
2-29	Mt. Vernon School and Recreation Center (Colasanto Center noted separately)	2601 Commonwealth Avenue	Active	Educational Recreational	Citywide	Public	5.87 open space
2-30	Nicholas Colasanto Center and Pool (Mt. Vernon School adjacent)	2404 Mount Vernon Avenue	Active	Recreational Cultural/Historical	Citywide	Public	0.20
2-31	Robert Leider Park	3002 Valley Drive	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Block	Public	1.30
2-32	Russell Open Space	10 Russell Road	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways		Neighborh	Public	0.30
2-33	Simpson Stadium Park	426 East Monroe Avenue	Active	Recreational Dog Park	Citywide	Public	13.70
2-34	St. Asaph Park	215 East Ida Avenue	Passive Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza / Streetscape	Neighborh	Public	0.44
2-35	Sunset Mini Park	4 Sunset Drive	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.20

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #2

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
2-36	T.C. Williams High School (Chinquapin Park noted separately)	3300 King Street	Active	Educational	Citywide	Public	15.90 open space
2-37	Taylor Run Park	Between East and West Taylor Run Parkways	Passive	Natural Resource Area Environmentally Sensitive	Block	Public	10.40
2-38	Timberbranch Parkway	Island dividing E. and W. Timberbranch Parkway	Passive	Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Block	Public	5.96
2-39	Timberland Park	access between #66-68 Kennedy Street	Passive	Dog Park Recreational	Block	Public	0.25
2-40	Union Station Historical Marker	1900 King Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical	Neighborh	Public	n/a
2-41	Warwick Pool	3301 Landover Street	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	0.25 open space
2-42	Woodbine Park	1509 Woodbine Street	Passive	Recreational	Block	Public	0.10

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #3

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
3-01	270 South Reynolds Street Open Space	270 South Reynolds Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Block	Public	1.0
3-02	Armistead L. Booth Park/Samuel W. Tucker School	5500 Edsall Road	Active	Recreational Environmentally Sensitive Educational	Neighborh	Public	12.52
3-03	Backlick Run (includes Resource Protection Area)	Adjacent to Eisenhower Avenue	Passive Trails	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	approximately 1.5
3-04	Ben Brenman Park	5000 block of Duke Street	Active	Dog Park Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	50.37
3-05	Brookvalley Park (part of Holmes Run)	5599 Holmes Run Parkway	Trails	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Riverfront	Citywide	Public	35.90
3-06	Cameron Run (includes Resource Protection Area)	Eisenhower Corridor	Trails Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	approximately 3.0
3-07	Cameron Run Regional Park and Great Waves Water Park	4001 Eisenhower Avenue	Active	Recreational Environmentally Sensitive	Regional	Public	33.50

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
October 2002
DRAFT

Planning District #3

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
3-08	Chambliss Park (John Adams School adjacent)	2505 North Chambliss Street	Passive	Dog Park Natural Resource Area Recreational	Neighborh	Public	6.00
3-09	Duke Street Dog Park	5000 block of Duke St. East of Beatley Library	Passive	Dog Park	Citywide	Public	1.41
3-10	Clermont Nature Park	access from Clermont Drive	Passive	Natural Resource Area Environmentally Sensitive	Citywide	Public	5.49
3-11	Dora Kelley Nature Park and Buddie Ford Nature Center (William Ramsay School adjacent)	1525 North Chambliss Street	Passive Trails	Educational Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	34.26
3-12	Ewald Park and Pool	4454 Duke Street	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Public	4.00
3-13	F.C. Hammond Middle School	4646 Seminary Road	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	21.50 open space
3-14	Fort Ward Park	4401 West Braddock Road	Passive Active	Cultural/Historical Dog Park Educational Natural Resource Area Recreational	Regional	Public	41.40

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #3

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
3-15	Fort Williams Park	501 Fort Williams Parkway	Passive Trails	Cultural/Historical Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	7.80
3-16	Hensley Park	4200 Eisenhower Avenue	Active	Recreational Riverfront	Citywide	Public	14.80
3-17	Holmes Run Scenic Easement	311 North Pickett Street	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Citywide	Public	2.80
3-18	James Marx All Veterans Park (part of Holmes Run Parkway)	311 North Pickett Street	Trails	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Recreational Riverfront	Citywide	Public	9.60
3-19	James Mulligan Park	3300 28th Street	Passive	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	3.50
3-20	John Adams School and Recreation Center (Chambliss Park noted separately)	5651 Rayburn Avenue	Active	Educational Recreational	Neighborh	Public	5.35 open space
3-21	Lake Cook	4001 Eisenhower Avenue	Passive	Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	7.10

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
3-22	Luckett Field	Duke Street and Quaker Lane	Active	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	5.60
3-23	Minnie Howard School & Field	3801 West Braddock Road	Active	Recreational	Neighborh	Public	9.00
3-24	Patrick Henry School/ Park and Recreation Center	4643 Taney Avenue	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	17.00
3-25	Polk School and Open Space	5000 Polk Avenue	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Public	11.70
3-26	Rynex Nature Area	300 Rynex Drive	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	8.50
3-27	Stevenson Park	300 Stultz Road	Active	Natural Resource Area Recreational	Neighborh	Public	9.50
3-28	Strawberry Run (Includes Resource Protection Area)	Adjacent to Fort Williams Parkway	Passive Trails	Environmentally Sensitive Dog Park Natural Resource Area Recreational	Citywide	Public	approximately 1.0

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Planning District #3

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
3-29	Taney Avenue Park	4149 Taney Avenue	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	2.59
3-30	Tarleton Park	4420 A Vermont Avenue	Passive Trails	Dog Park Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Public	6.03
3-31	William Ramsay School and Recreation Center (Dora Kelley Park noted separately)	5700 Sanger Avenue	Active	Educational Recreational	Neighborh	Public	18.30
4-01	Alexandria Country Day School	2400 Russell Road	Active	Educational Recreational	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	3.89
4-02	Alexandria Hospital	4320 Seminary Road	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	65.18 open space; 4.22 buildings
4-03	Alexandria House Park	400 Madison Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	0.50
4-04	Alexandria Water Company	2223 Duke Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Private with no Public Access	10.02

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Significant Private Open Spaces

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
4-05	Bishop Ireton High School	253 Cambridge Road	Active	Educational Recreational	Citywide	Private with no Public Access	9.94 open space; 1.89 building
4-06	Carlyle Crescent Park	2121 Jamieson Ave	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Dog Park	Block	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-07	Carlyle Towers Open Space	2121 Jamieson Ave	Streetscapes / Scenic Roadways	Urban Plaza/Streetscape	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-08	Christ Church Yard	121 North Columbus Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-09	Episcopal High School and Virginia Theological Seminary	1200 North Quaker Lane 4200 Braddock Road 3737/3630 Seminary Road	Active	Educational Natural Resource Area Recreational Cultural/Historical	Regional	Private with no Public Access	190.34
4-10	First Baptist Church	2932 King Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Regional	Private with no Public Access	16.20
4-11	George Washington Masonic National Memorial	101 Callahan Drive	Passive	Cultural/Historical Urban Plaza / Streetscape Educational Recreational	Regional	Private with Public Access	39.87

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Significant Private Open Spaces

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
4-12	Lee Fendall House Garden	614 Oronoco Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical Educational	Regional	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-13	Park on Wythe and Payne	Wythe and Payne Streets	Passive	Recreational	Block	Private with no Public Access	less than 1.0
4-14	Presbyterian Meeting House Yard	316 South Royal Street	Passive	Cultural/Historical Educational	Citywide	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-15	Second Presbyterian Church	1400 Janneys Lane	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Citywide	Private with Public Access	7.70
4-16	St. Martin de Porres Senior Center	4650 Taney Avenue	Active	Recreational	Citywide	Private with Public Access	less than 1.0
4-17	St. Mary's School	400 Green Street	Active	Recreational Educational	Neighborh	Private with no Public Access	1.63
4-18	St. Stephens & St. Agnes School	400 Fontaine Street 4401 W Braddock Road 1000 St Stephens Road	Active	Educational Recreational	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	47.69

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Significant Private Open Spaces

Ref. #	Park Name	Location	Primary Use	Secondary Characteristics	Service Area	Owner	Acreage
4-19	Temple Beth El	3830 Seminary Road	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Neighborh	Private with Public Access	3.12
4-20	Trans Potomac / Canal Center Plaza	1033 North Fairfax Street	Passive	Recreational Cultural/Historical	Neighborh	Private with no Public Access	0.84
4-21	Winkler Botanical Preserve	5400 Roanoke Avenue	Passive	Environmentally Sensitive Natural Resource Area Educational Recreational	Regional	Private with Public Access	42.0
4-22	Woodbine Nursing Home	2729 King Street	Passive	Natural Resource Area	Regional	Private with no Public Access	5.31

Reference Number key:
1 - Planning District #1
2 - Planning District #2
3 - Planning District #3
4 - Significant Private Open Spaces

Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated
October 2002
DRAFT

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN
Meeting for Planning District #1 (April 16, 2001)

Public Comments

A. OPEN SPACE DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS
- Look at what should be counted as open space, especially for development purposes
- Do not consider parking lots as open space
- To extent possible, use current vacant lands as open space
- Maximize use and visual quality on all open pieces of land
- The use of open space is secondary to the identification of open spaces opportunities
- Need to preserve institutional open spaces (e.g., Episcopal Seminary)

B. SPECIFIC PARCELS, AREAS AND PARKS
- *Old Town*
    - Retain attraction of Old Town for visitors and residents with more and better quality shops
    - Balance types of shops
- Protect *Masonic Temple* lands —an open space icon
- *Carlyle* development —open space must be maintained by City
    - Current open space has maintenance issues
    - Standards should not be allowed to be "gotten around"
- *Portner Park* —
    - Not to be a dog park
    - State owned
    - Private citizen maintained
- *Slaters Lane* —
    - Realignment as proposed by Al Cox most desirable
    - Want a ' modified T' street end to maximize open space potential
- *Vacant Parcels* —(Bashford Lane and Powhatan Street)
    - State owned
    - Could be unfenced open space
    - Five-year plan has been established, corporate sponsors obtained for plantings, donations gathered, State
            Representatives contacted
    - Kept in poor condition now
- *Chetworth Park* —
    - Historically a Victory Garden
    - Move all dog usage out of Chetworth Park to Slaters CAP property
- *The NE* —
    - Has the lowest percent of open space (2.8%) in the entire City
    - Needs even the smallest of ' pocket parks'
    - Needs open space areas without dogs and tot lots
    - Has few streets, is very dense which increases any green or open space value, regardless of size
    - Town homes too intensely developed

C. RIVER FRONTS, STREAMS, WETLANDS, AND NATURAL AREAS
- Habitat Areas
    - Open space areas should be viewed as a way to preserve wildlife corridors
- *Potomac River* —
    - Continuous open space along river needed —with public access
    - Create a buffer zone for water quality
    - Take advantage of all opportunities as they arise
- *Hooff's Run* —
    - Create a continuous access-way along stream

- ˙ Need wilderness where children can play

D. STREETSCAPES AND PARKING
- Sidewalks —
    - Serious encroachment from signage, utility poles combined with a lack of width
    - Bike lanes encroach onto sidewalk due to narrow streets or poor planning
    - Create easier Metro access for pedestrians
    - Pedestrian access (convenient and safe) from NE to Potomac Yards
    - Implement the Northeast Pedestrian Plan (Al Cox)
    - Total pedestrian access for the NE
    - Powhatan Street –do not widen, maintain setbacks, and maintain open space
- Commonwealth Avenue to remain single lane, tree-lined boulevard
- Parking
    - Do not consider parking lots as open space
    - More underground parking garages, with open space over them
    - Patent and Trademark Office should have had underground parking, with a park above

E. BIKE USE
- Bike lanes encroach onto sidewalk due to narrow streets and/or poor planning
- Bikes trespass on non-bike corridors and into parks

F. THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
- Open space seems to lose out when development money is involved
- The City too often sells or develops vacant lands
- What is being done with the City's Open Space funds?
- Extensions to existing buildings and the addition of new buildings need to be monitored -- look at zoning ordinances, be more diligent at enforcing codes, and do not allow so many variances
- Establish commercial open space regulations
- Develop program to buy lands
- Find more open space
- GIS Mapping
    - Add BMP's and RPA's to GIS layers
    - Add an impervious surfaces layer

G. DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPERS
- On non-City maintained open space, the City needs to establish and enforce maintenance standards for developers
- Stop development until open space plan can be approved
- Standards should not be allowed to be "gotten around," they should be adhered to (e.g., Carlyle)
- Better height restrictions needed on all development-ne e d more human-scaled development
- Provide a greater number of public easements/access in new developments
- Greater level of public/private cooperation for all open space areas, including schools

H. MAINTENANCE
- Emphasis on open space maintenance needed
- Some street lights have been out for more than 2 years
- BMP's need to be open space amenities not mosquito breeding grounds

I. ADDITIONAL DESIRES
- Community Spaces
    - Indoors: meeting rooms with capacity for 50-100 people
    - Outdoors: picnic areas and recreation programs
    - Find opportunities for additional Farmers' Markets

- Look for opportunities to create additional Community Gardens –with programmed activities, educational components
- Create additional Open Space Recreation Programs —
  - Parks staffed with recreation leaders, classes, and multi-age appeal
- Gateway Market / Sodibar systems (Rt. 1 & Franklin Streets)

J. FAVORITE OPEN SPACES (When asked this Q.)

- Waterfront –including Jones Point
- Old Town Yacht Basin
- Windmill Hill Park
- Masonic Temple

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN
Meeting for Planning District #2 (April 23, 2001)

Public Comments

A. OPEN SPACE DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS
- Review City set-back policies
    - Feeling of being enclosed – buildings too close to sidewalk
    - Old Town vs West End – create a different design criteria
    - Narrows perspective
- Too many privacy fences
- Open space without public access should not count
- Establish Alexandria as a place in a regional trails system
- Attempting to create a park which is something to everyone may result in a park in which nothing is done well

B. SPECIFIC PARCELS, AREAS AND PARKS
- *I-495 —:*
    - Area at Church Street exit could be beautified
- *Braddock Road Metro —*
    - Preserve current open space; plans to put in a "kiss-n-ride" and carve up what is now open space are a problem
    - The sense of open space will be jeopardized by selling air-development rights
    - The neighborhood desperately needs pedestrian access
- *Commonwealth Avenue —*
    - Should be recognized as a park and maintained as such
    - It can be Alexandria's "biggest park"
    - Could tell history of the electric train/trolley in Alexandria; also the substation at Mason may be one of the first in the area
    - Maintenance is currently lacking: curbs are broken, utility projects overrun the median, there is poor pedestrian accessibility, and the plants that die are not replaced
    - Capture opportunities through this boulevard's connection to *Four Mile Run*
    - Install signage for recreational distance measurements
    - It has become a utility conduit and maintenance is spotty
    - It is evolving into a commuter highway
    - Needs: re-greening, granite curbs, street tree replacement, streetscape improvements, preservation of median character, re-establishment of bike trails, and installation of traffic-calming measures
    - Enhance street character with highly articulated connections, and trail accessibility (jogging, walking, and pedestrian)
- *George Washington School —*
    - Needs commuter pedestrian path to Braddock Metro
    - Needs lighting for safety
    - Needs weekend recreational access between parking and sports fields
- *Mt. Jefferson Parkway —*
    - Connect the total park
    - Reassure neighbors regarding area safety; improve visual access to adjacent industrial uses; create noise barriers to Route 1
    - Problems with inadequate maintenance, crime, and flooding
- *Potomac Yards —*
    - Provide additional soccer fields
- *Route 1*
    - Possible gateway park / open space (at Franklin Street)
    - Provide boulevard treatments
    - Transform western side into a boulevard gateway for City
    - Create a park over Route 1

- *Vacant Lot* —(W. Masonic and Russell)
    - Create a pocket park for Garden Club to teach children about gardening
- *Vacant Lot* —(east side of Mt. Vernon, north of Del Rey)
    - Possible pocket park
    - Positioned in the heart of Del Rey
- *Vacant Lot* —(corner of Raymond and Mt. Vernon)
    - Currently a private lot
    - Large amount of foot traffic on Mt. Vernon; a park would be well used

C. RIVERFRONTS, STREAMS, WETLANDS AND NATURAL AREAS

- *Potomac River* ---
    - Connect waterfront for contiguous access
    - Create parks along remaining waterfront parcels
    - Articulate the connection with Four Mile Run
- *Cameron Run* —
    - Enhance aesthetics
    - Improve habitat
    - Widen land area for better public use
    - Improve habitat areas
- *Daingerfield* —
    - Facility is underutilized by the NPS
    - Create a visitor's Center and seaport foundation on Daingerfield Island
    - Could be shared with other uses/users
    - Enhance connections to nearby neighborhoods
- *Four Mile Run* —
    - Coordinate with logical points of interface, such as the schools and Commonwealth Avenue
    - Offers multiple educational opportunities
    - Could have active boating
    - Missed trail opportunities
    - Connect bike path with other trails (Arlington has plans to do just this)
    - Improve connections to the Potomac River
    - Provide facilities for kayaks, fishing, a boathouse, and educational programs
    - Enhance its natural state
    - Re-green
- *Hooff's Run* —
    - Create a continuous open space corridor in this location
    - Enhance streetscape
    - Complete connections
- *Old Cameron Run Channel* —
    - Make more natural, less engineered
    - Enhance aesthetics overall
- Emphasize both Greenway and Blue-way connectivity
- Improve wetland areas (mitigation sites) in stream valleys
- RPA's
    - Should be counted
    - City was 41% impervious (way over the desired < 20%)
    - Install other more pervious surfaces in parking lots etc.
    - City has been bargaining away RPA's
- Non-compatible uses –dog parks, RPA's, and environmentally sensitive areas can't all be in the same open space area
- Re-green all streams
- Maintain parks as water quality buffers along all rivers, streams, and wetland areas

D. STREETSCAPES AND PARKING

- Regulate/limit trees cut by the utility companies or the developers
- Improve all sidewalks in need of repair
- Underground utilities; undergrounding of utilities should be both more uniform and more equitably done throughout the City
- Establish tree planting program for alleys
- Limit or eliminate use of Bradford pears as street trees; use more durable species of street trees
- Del Rey
    - Improve quality of streetscape
    - Save the many large shade trees that we are currently losing
    - Bump-out sidewalks
    - Streetscape improvements are needed in southwest quadrant as well
- View sidewalks as transportation corridors
- Remove signs and posts from the middle of the sidewalks
- Improve connectivity
- Reconnect and use the alleyways
- Enhance street character with highly articulated connections, trail accessibility – jogging, walking, and pedestrian
- Slow down the traffic
- Emphasize the pedestrian
- Create signage for recreational distances

E. BIKE USE

- Connections are needed at:
    - Route 1 Bridge
    - Slaters Lane
    - Beverly Hills / Arlandria
- Improve Four Mile Run connections
- A network of commuter trails and lanes is needed
- Bike lanes are not just recreational
- Create a bike network for children to use to navigate the City

F. ROLE OF THE CITY

- Build on public lands only in cases where a very high need can be demonstrated
- Preserve existing public land to greatest extent possible
- Make better use of school properties
    - Habitat / nature center
    - Gardens/educational and community opportunities (Arlington Co. provides good example, e.g. Tuckahoe Elementary School program)
- Swap City lands for more desirable lots
- For new trails and parks, provide planning for access, funding and maintenance, as well as appropriate safety features such as lighting

G. DEVELOPERS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Regulate / limit trees removed by utilities or developers
- Ensure green, usable and beautiful open space for Carlyle
- Make developers accountable for their park maintenance
- Developers should provide open space for employees
- Open space should be tied to proffers

H. MAINTENANCE

- Upgrade existing parks
- Regulate/limit trees removed by utilities or developers
- Plant 'in-fill' street trees in older areas, such as Rosemont, etc.

126

- Underground utilities
- *Provide irrigation for new trees and shrubs*
- Provide watering trucks for all three planning areas
- Improve the maintenance standards of existing trees
    - Do not mow or weed whack too closely
- Emphasize use of native plants
- *Linear park on railroad right-of-way needs nice trees*
- Design BMP's to prevent mosquitoes and improve aesthetics
- Sidewalks are in need of repair throughout the City .
- Park maintenance stinks --the City needs to commit more resources and manpower

I. ADDITIONAL DESIRES
- Provide additional multi-use fields
- Upgrade existing parks
    - Provide new equipment
    - Improve grading and drainage
    - Provide erosion control
    - Increase funds for maintenance
- Create parks along remaining waterfront parcels
- New open space opportunities
    - Warehouse on Eisenhower
    - Police station on Eisenhower
    - PEPCO site
    - New developments must provide open space
    - Accept CAP property on Slaters Lane as open space
- New open space should be of many types and sizes --not all pocket parks
- Meet with Eisenhower Valley Partnership to see their plans
- Organize volunteer activities
    - Create a more active adopt-a-park program
    - Foster stewardship programs
- Provide more tot lots
- Parks should be beautiful as well as functional
- There are problems and conflicts between age groups
    - Parks should be used by all age groups and at all times of the year
    - Create age specific parks

J. FAVORITE OPEN SPACES (When asked Q.)
- Dora Kelley Park
    - Beautiful and natural
- Waterfront
    - Entire length
- Fort Ward
    - History and variety of uses
- Winkler
    - Well-maintained
- Jones Point
    - Underdeveloped
- Wood lot on Chinquapin to Mac Arthur School

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN
Meeting for Planning District #3 (May 2, 2001)

Public Comments

A. OPEN SPACE DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS
- Create interconnected parks system
- Harness opportunities
- New zoning classification
    - Horticultural zone
    - Land trusts
- Protect existing wildlife preserve habitats (fox, deer)
- Capture open space which has potential for intensive development
- Don't count balconies
- Need publicly accessible wild spaces
- Traffic calming (Jordan St.)
- Refine what open space means. It should be greenspace on the ground. Not rooftops.

B. SPECIFIC PARCELS, AREAS AND PARKS
- *I-395*—improve exit at Landmark, needs tree preservation and beautification
- *West End* —
    - Playscaped areas
    - Off leash dog parks
- *Yoakum Parkway* —
    - Median could be fenced dog park
    - More trees
    - Acquire the two lots with trees (one on either side of cascade)
    - Playground
- *Theological Seminary and Episcopal High School—*
    - Encourage them to allow trail easements
    - Create benefits of greenspace
- *Edsall Road* —
    - Playground

C. RIVERFRONTS, STREAMS, WETLANDS AND NATURAL AREAS
- Cameron Run needs revitalization
- Maintain natural stream edges –no concrete, remove existing concrete (Four Mile and Taylor Runs)
- More care in drainage and storm water management for those downhill
- Stream channel damage
    - Stabilize erosion and run-off
    - Control evasive species
    - Clean-up
    - Restoration
- Educate homeowners about what they can do on their own properties (trees, contiguous open spaces)
- Clean up toxic areas

D. STREETSCAPES AND PARKING
- Traffic calming (Jordan St.)
- Underground utilities

E. BIKE USE
- Backlick Run connection to Fairfax County. It needs a plan/study for a bike/pedestrian trail

F. ROLE OF THE CITY

- Special use permits undermine open space and are easy to obtain
- The City does not listen to neighbors over special use permits
- District 3 underrepresented
    - Change boundaries
    - or Make a fourth district
    - Redistrict
    - Another Representative on Parks and Rec. Commission
- Correct City tax maps with correct park labels
- Solicit appropriate public input
    - Bridge at Holmes Run – not good example of open space
    - South end of Duke Street – no public input
- Advertise fund for acquisition of parkland
- Find small home/large lots to acquire and/or preserve
- Respect parks in areas of long-term residents, not only new developments
- Don't use open space in Eisenhower Valley for fire station – build a bridge over Cameron Run
- Don't build in existing parkland – for example Ben Brenman Park (revisit this decision)
- Identify properties not currently protected by easements and which are developable—create easements on more of these (tax incentives, donation or purchase)
- Identify all properties with current easements
    - Pedestrian trails
    - Bike trails
    - Greenways
    - Small parks
    - ROW easements (utility and road)
- City doesn't capture opportunities as lands become available
- City needs ability to purchase land and hold for future use
- Too much on-lot infill
- Identify special needs areas that shouldn't be built upon
    - Areas of marine clay
    - Areas of steep topography
    - Significant tree cover
- Encourage scenic easements (Hospital, ravines, St. Stephen's hillside)
- High density development degrades the quality of life
    - Too many cars
    - Fewer trees
    - Degraded aesthetic quality
    - Traffic gridlock
- Monitor overbuilding on Theological Seminary and Episcopal High School lands

G. DEVELOPERS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Preserve open space over development
- Developments are too intense
- Special use permits undermine open space
- Set design standards
- Focus future development in high density areas, major corridors and metros
- Protect open space in areas of density
- Too large of house allowed on too little land
- Not all development is bad

H. MAINTENANCE

- Improve maintenance standards (e.g. end of Latham Street on Holmes Run)
- Better park signage

129

- Clean up stream channels (tires behind Foxchase)
- West fork of Strawberry Run is polluted —needs cleaned
- Don't ruin existing parkland
- Plant hard to find native plants
    - Favorites: weeping willow, osage orange, persimmon, paw paw, chinquapin
- Protect I-395 exit at Landmark
- Improve paths
- Utilize a variety of tree species, not just ornamentals
- Place the correct tree in the correct space for its requirements

I. ADDITIONAL DESIRES
- Keep area on waterfront at Cameron Run open —connect to Holmes Run and Columbia Pike (through Fairfax County) —all of the way to Jones Point
- More active recreation fields —softball
- Connect Strawberry Run with Old Mill Run
- Protect open spaces between hospital and St. Stephens School
- Better attention, maintenance and amenities for Forest Park and Chinquapin Park
- Grass, trees, benches, passive space and improved entrance access
- Enhanced natural atmosphere
- Multi-age play equipment (with shade)
- More tree planting
- Allow organized youth associations to use parks for camping (in designated areas)
- Keep Stevenson Park as a park —not more school lands
- Don't let the land behind Hammond High School become a parking lot
- Newton Asphalt site could be the nucleus for a development that has open space
- Don't put Eisenhower connector near the Holmes Run Greenway

J. FAVORITE OPEN SPACES (When asked Q.)
- Holmes Run
    - Pretty
    - Water
    - Ducks and beaver
    - Incredible to explore
- Fort Ward
- Dora Kelly
- Waterfront
  - Great, but must walk there

OPEN SPACE SUMMIT: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS
June 23, 2002

1. Beautify Interchanges
- Interchange areas: not so much planting, more natural landscaping, disguise, and hide roads, sound barriers for traffic noise.
- Consider places where deck parks can be created over I-495 or 395.
- Highway & interchanges issues important but lower priority.
- Add deck park over 95/495 behind Carlyle, and over 395 where Holmes Run intersects.
- Opportunities for public open space along highway corridors – more need for linkages across corridors.

2. Pedestrian & Bike Linkage
- Continuous space connecting trails & parks.
- Open space development w/ walking access at Landmark
- Connectivity of parks for safer pedestrian & bike access between east and west end of town.
- Places to walk – connecting through cul-de-sacs, etc. (easements) to parks.
- Connecting corridors for people and wildlife.
- Tie into existing/proposed parks in Arlington and Fairfax.
- Bike & walkways not always compatible, wider is better.
- Need pedestrian walkways and connectors between parks & neighborhoods, linking old neighborhoods and parks with development areas.
- In general - take into account more bicycle and pedestrian linkages to transit in plan.
- Bike trail connecting city E to W then N to S (continuous) with pedestrian linkage/multi-use trail
- More bike trails.
- Create better bike and pedestrian linkages at Telegraph Road/495 gateway.
- Recreate "Dora Kelly" bike development along Cameron Run & Four-Mile Run.
- Increase east-west bike and pedestrian linkages between Old Town and the West End.
- It is faster for Eisenhower Valley residents to shop in Maryland than to get to Alexandria's shops.
- Mt. Jefferson Park and Greenway - support for increased pedestrian and bike linkages.
- Connecting parks: Federal property @ AMC as opportunity, Wilson Bridge staging area, Clermont area behind Cameron Station.
- Create connections between Duncan Branch Library, Warwick Pool, and Hillside Park.
- Connectivity increases value of park.

3. Gateways
- Define the City's entrances & exits, with revitalization of old commercial areas and respect for history.
- Gateways do not need to be elaborate but require beautification

4. Metro Civic Parks
- Open space that is accessible along the railroad right-of-way.
- Linking open space and trails along rail corridors.
- Metro integration with other forms of transportation and open space.
- Connections for Metro stations; Metro is an opportunity.
- Lack of transportation taking its toll in Old town.
- Improve areas around Metros to make them more truly "civic parks."
- Increase public transportation to recreation centers.
- Use Metros as a tool for open space linkages.
- Create new Metro stop at Potomac Yards.
- Improve underpass at King Street Metro (already a plan).

131

- Add Rail to new Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- Add rail connections to Jones Point Park and the Wilson Bridge.
- Add connection across railroad from Ben Brenman Park.
- Metrorail/Monorail connections from Alexandria to the west (Dulles/Tysons).
- Monorail connection to Fairfax County & South
- Limit any rights-of-way that would limit future expansion of transportation to DC (any open space plan that chokes expansion.)

5. Vacant Land – Private
- Plan city budget to have funds available to purchase private land immediately as it becomes available.
- Active acquisition of land in central Alexandria and the west end: under served. areas
- Acquire private parcels along Hooff's Run. Connect all of the parcels & convert all vacant & poorly utilized parcels into landscaped passive open space.
- Investigate acquisition of private vacant land for public open space. (Identify key parcels now, so that they can be purchased later).
- Urgency to acquire available land
- Acquire the Washington Post property.
- Consider creation of a Conservancy to procure and manage gifts of land for protection within the City.
- Get private owners involved in planning process.
- Retain private landowner's rights for best use and development within zoning laws.
- Preserve private institutional land as open space(e.g., Episcopal Seminary, Masonic Temple), using easements, open space guarantees, and/or acquisition.
- Possibility of allowing public access to Episcopal High School, some is available presently.
- Work with private landowners/developers to provide quality new open space and improve existing spaces.
- Increase the amount of open space available within private developments through zoning and/or easements.
- Target vacant land near schools for new open space.
- Make existing vacant private spaces available for use, i.e. community gardens, open space trust, easements, and pocket parks.

6. Vacant Lands – Public
- Inventory underutilized properties and locate vacant buildings to acquire.
- Potomac Yard: Bring Metro to the Yard; needs funding for redevelopment of retail center or possible redevelopment at higher level.
- Reinvigorate adopt-a-park and community gardens.
- City should promote land gift giving wills, etc. or houses that can be used or sold to raise money for open space.
- Bond issue or tax to provide money for open space land acquisition.

7. Tree Cover Protection
- Tree ordinance plan, apply to city as a whole.
- Need to look more closely at tree preservation areas.
- New tree cover protection zone for additional areas.
- Tree preservation.
- Need more trees. Give trees to homeowners.
- Preserve and plant more trees (even ones in-parking lots).
- More trees good for environment (e.g. heat)
- Tree ordinance.
- Tree protection, extending to areas without as many trees. Ex. Del Ray losing large shade trees due to power lines
- Tree protection and enhancement is important - in areas shown on plan as well as in Del Ray/Rosemont.
- Consider instituting a site specific or citywide tree ordinance.
- Better maintenance of street trees.
- Plant more trees and preserve existing mature trees.
- Tree protection area in Rosemont and Del Ray needed.

132

8. Open Space Preservation / New Parks

- City needs to adopt a clear definition of Open Space.
- Add more vest pocket parks citywide.
- More open space that is passive in neighborhoods.
- Encourage multi use of parks & open space.
- Need more dog parks.
- Build a parking garage (below ground) in Old Town and put a park on top of it.
- More parking opportunities under open spaces (especially at Landmark Mall and Old Town)
- Below ground parking garages
- Make more connected open spaces for wildlife corridors (remove fences, add habitat, etc.).
- Consider wetland preservation when determining open space areas (esp. Jones Point).
- Old Town – convert as much existing surface parking to underground and replace with surface park above.
- More parks in affordable housing areas & better maintenance.
- Many small parks – even ½ acre.
- Concentrate on small area neighborhood parks.
- Activate space within neighborhoods through ideas such as pocket parks
- Give as much importance to passive as active use, all interests must be considered (passive aspects of active parks).
- New parks should include multi-use: passive, active, dog run, etc.
- Create additional parks along Four-Mile Run.
- More community gardens and open spaces in west part of Alexandria.
- 16-acre opportunity for open space at AMC Building and parking lot (in Eisenhower Valley); also at VDOT Clermont site.
- Power Plant - explore opportunities for use as open space.
- Add more small pocket parks in Del Ray/Rosemont Area.
- Consider acquisition of land for a destination park in the West End - none currently exist.
- Passive open space desired in neighborhood behind Minnie Howard School.
- Dulaney Gardens should be public open space.
- Create open space linkages –-"natural connectivity"
- Be watchful of VDOT expansion into open spaces along roadway corridors.
- Create spaces for open land and wildlife.
- Habitat/redevelopment zones – identify, preserve, expand natural habitat areas.
- Identify on map wildlife, bird zones. Identify existing wildlife, & habitat that supports them.
- Encourage open space that provides natural "sound proofing" / environmentally preferable options, such as trees or ivy covered walls.
- Green beltway around city
- Develop green infrastructure
- Plant native species of plants.
- Look into creative approaches to parking - potential for multi-use with open space.
- Consider closing sewage treatment plant and reservoir and replacing with open space.
- Consider a bond issue to provide financing for more open space.
- Encourage creation of easements and their use as open space.
- Publicize parks better - both locations and programming.
- Use all native plants in City planting programs.
- Interagency collaboration is important - not just Parks & Rec, but also Transportation & Environmental Services, Planning, Housing, and Human Services.
- Need someone to regulate and monitor park maintenance.
- Management of existing parks is critical.
- Maintain and enhance existing open space. (Increase quality/value).
- Keep eye out for "hobo camps"
- Use the Pepco Plant as park space.
- Improve the level of safety around parks.

9. Slaters Lane Plan
- Implement the Slaters Lane Plan -- more open space is needed in the Northeast quadrant.

10. Trails
- Maximize the connectivity of the Potomac Heritage Trail.
- Create multi-use trails.
- For multi-use trails, walking and biking should be separated for safety.
- More trail connectivity needed from northeast to southwest across King/Braddock/Seminary/Duke corridors.
- Create continuous trail (both bike and pedestrian) along the waterfront.
- Lock in trail plan for Eisenhower Valley before it is developed.
- Create more connections (walkways, paths, trails, and bike paths) through neighborhoods to provide more access to parks (possibly through easements, cul-de-sacs, or access to private land.
- Emphasize connectivity between parks.
- Trails on former and soon-to-be-former rail beds and power plant etc.
- Sufficient width of trails & sidewalks and hard-pack/gravel alongside paved trail.

11. Stream Valley Protection & Enhancement
- Aggressively approach converting Four-Mile Run and Cameron Run into stream valley parks.
- Four Mile Run — not utilized or accessible; sewage discharged.
- Four Mile Run stream restoration.
- Development of Four Mile Run re-naturalization plan and Cameron Run.
- Improve and preserve stream valleys (ESP. Four Mile Run and Cameron Run)
- Create a holding pond or provide a way to have a natural creek bed at Four Mile Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Run.
- Day-light streams to a natural state with habitat restoration.
- Differentiation between storm drainage channels & streambeds is important consideration.
- Consideration of FEMA issues.
- Get rid of invasive plants, enhance quality of open spaces
- Stream valley system watershed protection very important (Chesapeake Bay Protection Act)
- Linkage for wildlife habitat, continuity of habitat, expand
- Increase public access to river both linearly (north to south) and from Old Town (east to west).
- Focus efforts on water bodies and making them into parklands. Make these a priority for easements and trail development.
- Storm drain day-lighting to increase environmental quality.
- Visualize the streambeds as open space.

12. Streetscapes
- Create more successful urban plazas.
- Underground telephone poles throughout the City.
- Put utilities underground as much as possible to improve existing open space.
- Traffic calming citywide - enhancement of streetscapes and safety.
- Landscape traffic islands and medians.
- Better street tree choices along curbs
- Enhance streetscape with trees.
- Add sidewalks where there are not any to aid pedestrian flow.
- Need accessible open space (sidewalks)
- Make use of open space linkages — rerouting roads, etc.
- Need to go beyond protecting pedestrians when considering linkages. Remove fear elements (cars, bikes, etc.); improve personal safety.
- Linkages to traffic calming

134

- Provide for the psychological wellbeing of pedestrians.
- Enhance streetscape as it relates to pedestrian experience.
- Turn Commonwealth Ave. into a real "Greenway" - enhance the median! Replace trees as they die and add additional trees. Have double row of trees encouraging a canopy over both sides of the street. Walkways down the middle of the median. Extend the medians & reduce the size of the intersections (reduce asphalt). Ramp each end of each median strip. Selectively place benches. Perhaps site specific monuments along the median.
- Develop Commonwealth Avenue as a historical connector -- important street with missing pieces.
- Commonwealth Avenue as a connector to Arlington.
- On Beauregard Street, King Street and Seminary Road - keep an eye on VDOT plans —don't destroy our streetscape opportunities.
- Underground Route 1, or another solution.
- Increase street tree planting programs to enhance connectivity between areas.
- Think of sidewalks as connecting fabric between open spaces.
- Incorporate transportation issues when looking at streetscapes.
- Consider implementing a Route 1 Streetscape Plan.
- Better timing of lights/improving traffic movement.
- Safety —lighting, police patrols, increasing connectivity in pocket parks.
- Reinvigorate the "Adopt a Park" program and consider establishing a similar "Adopt a Median" program to improve look of medians, strips of land by roads and intersections.
- Use Eisenhower Avenue corridor to tie City together.
- Plan for the development along Mt. Vernon Avenue in Del Ray.
- View sidewalks as open space.

13. Highway Corridors
- Improve 395/Shirley Highway interchanges —make them pedestrian friendly.

14. New Development Areas
- Connectivity through the Green Crescent.
- Development in Eisenhower corridor is too dense.
- Address in-fill development effects and cumulative impact.
- Eisenhower Corridor as a connector for the east and west parts of City.
- Connected crescent is great idea, but how would it be implemented.? Come up with implementation plans/strategies.
- The Crescent - take integrated approach: combination of development, parks, trails, etc.
- Need to enforce proffers and keep records of them.
- Eisenhower Valley needs pedestrian/bicycle friendly path to shopping & other functions.
- Look at proffers for Ford's Landing.
- Public access at Ford's Landing is unclear. It needs signage.
- Acquire developable land in Cameron Run as public open space park.
- Potomac Yards development -- create 'central' park
- More parkland / open space in Potomac yards, Braddock area.
- Landmark Mall - open space opportunities: consider converting some area to public open space by creative approaches to parking (underground or "green").
- Need to make sure to provide large amount of accessible open space and tree cover in Potomac Yard. Take advantage of this opportunity before it is too late! Consider creating a large central park here.
- Do not allow Crescent to encroach too close to Cameron Run - must make sure these areas are kept open as parkland and not developed.
- Make sure there are north-south connections through Eisenhower Valley. Currently access is only east-west at ends.
- It should not be solely up to developers where money is spent.
- The "Crescent" is a good idea in concept. It needs to be put into action.
- Sewer system has to be improved. All new development should provide compatible infrastructure that can just be hooked up.

- Keep crescent concept, including integrated parks, trails to the commercial and residential developments.
- Add affordable housing as part of the crescent concept.
- Minimize building on open space, such as subdivision development, by tightening up zoning.
- City must follow S.U.P.s – e.g., Delaney Gardens park (if leave dead spaces, no vitality at night)
- Noise pollution control.
- Green print development.
- Opportunity now to designate open space in Eisenhower Valley before developments are in.
- Pay attention to neighborhood opportunity area. Build the open space connectivity piece by piece.
- Should be more open space requirements for new developments (like Braddock or Carlyle)
- Sewage treatment plants –close them in the future. They discourage riverfront parks.
- Create bike and pedestrian linkages (multi-use) through crescent (esp. Carlyle, Eisenhower Ave. area)

15. Potomac River Waterfront Program
- Connect open spaces along Potomac, need for "historic' parkland along Riverfront.
- Provide connectivity to waterfront throughout Old Town for both commuters and. leisure biking/walking.
- Minimize riverfront development; keep pristine as possible at Waterfront Park, seaport, keep available to public consider all users/uses.
- Make sure there is public access to water at Ford's Landing.
- Improve active city access to Potomac waterfront esp. Potomac yacht basin.
- Linear parks not the best for wildlife habitat.
- Open public waterfront. The waterfront has high value. Connect waterfront with the "crescent."
- Fix up waterfront; take down concrete blocks.
- Connect Potomac waterfront
- Waterfront as public land
- Warehouse district as a connector –to be connected to waterfront.
- Water parks / water front
- Connect waterfront along the Potomac River - integrate with history.
- Increase access to Potomac River, esp. for non-motorized boat usage.
- Potomac development should not be part of open space plan if it will interfere with/limit public access to waterfront; caution esp. with Robinson Terminal if it ever is sold.
- Connector district from Braddock metro area to river.
- Need a public boat launch in City
- Maximize access to Potomac River; deal with National Park Service resistance to concept; promote non-motorized activities.

16. Cemeteries
- Cemeteries –maintain, but clarify as "limited use."
- Cemeteries should not be included in open space calculations.

17. Schools

- Use open space for schools; additions needed and planned
- Make better us of school property.
- Target vacant land around schools for potential open space opportunities.
- Remove schools from open space definition.
- Include schools as shared open space facilities.
- Balance the need for open space preservation and school growth (compromise).
- School grounds should be shared open space with opportunities for community gardens.
- Develop George Washington Middle School into a higher quality open space.
- School property at Hammond for local uses – lease as parking.
- School areas should be more available for community use after hours.

18. Public Open Space

- Need a definition of true open space -- include parks streetscape, tree friendly, buffers; do not include public schools.
- Do not count balconies and rooftops as open space.
- Do not define rooftops as green space.
- City needs to establish a percentage goal for open space and work toward that goal.
- Take unified approach to open space priorities - include all areas of city and all user groups.
- Preserve existing open space.
- More community gardens.
- Emphasis on "Greening" of public rooftops (not to be included in inventory or in definitions.)
- Consider instituting a dog tax to pay for dog parks.
- Need additional parking @ parks, rec. areas, and destination open space areas.
- Provide adequate parking at both existing and new parks.
- Better inter-city coordination.
- Regionalism – work w/ Arlington and Fairfax Counties.
- Public properties/open space not to be sold to developers.
- Beautification of existing parks – native plantings.
- Make sure open space plan is integrated with existing feasibility studies, pedestrian plans, upper Potomac plan, etc. with input from other agencies.
- Look into a connected linear park along stream valley leading to Winkler Botanical Preserve.
- Need to have a separate master plan for dog park development - needs to be examined neighborhood by neighborhood.
- Cameron Run -- clean up neighborhood.
- Maintain existing natural resource areas such as Dora Kelley Nature Park and Monticello Park.
- Rework design of existing Four Mile Run Park - Arlington side is much better and more effective.
- Surround city with a green band.
- Maintain open vistas/natural estuary at Four-Mile Run.
- Increase view sheds through conservation easements (e.g. Monticello Park); makes park more viable for wildlife.
- Cameron Run – preserve and restore, but with public use.
- Add wetland boardwalk at Four Mile Run.
- Extend Four Mile Run Park west into Arlington to create a more continuous linear park.

19. Institutional Land

- For institutional land, gain public use and rights through easements/ leases.
- Preserve and enhance the Masonic Memorial site to serve as a civic anchor for the crescent and the City as a whole.
- Army (Tauber) site - recapture parking lots as open space (there may be HAZMAT issues).
- Explore possibility for public access to institutional sites such as Episcopal Seminary and School.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Introduction to Process

One of the most successful approaches toward attaining a qualitative assessment of an organization is to conduct small focus group meetings with key community stakeholders. This approach allows the consultant to glean from a cross section of citizens the strengths, weaknesses and perceived opportunities with regard to the current and future operations of the organization. This method of soliciting input has been used in a variety of settings with a multitude of public and private sector agencies.

The staff of the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities created a list of key community stakeholders to invite to the focus group sessions. Typically, key community stakeholders are defined as anyone having a vested interest in the outcome of the agency's mission. A broad list of stakeholders was developed and personal invitations were sent from the Mayor to each stakeholder requesting their participation in the process.

Methodology

Key stakeholder focus group meetings were conducted on six separate days during October, November, December 2001, and February 2002. A total of twenty-three separate focus group interviews were conducted, involving 204 individuals. These interviews were conducted with various staff, community leaders, City Council members, Steering Committee members and interested citizens in Alexandria. The purpose of the focus group meetings was to identify the key issues to be resolved in the

Recreation Needs Assessment and to develop an understanding of community perceptions regarding the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

These meetings were typically conducted in groups of ten to twelve people. There were a few occasions where the groups were smaller in number. The interviewers asked all groups the same set of questions, which were designed to cover a variety of topics representing all facets of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural activities.

The findings from these interviews served as a foundation for the development of the Public Opinion Survey, which was distributed in March 2002.

Summary

In general, the community is pleased with the department and the level of service provided. The staff is recognized as supportive and professional. Facilities are clean, and the recent attention given to renovations and facility upgrades is recognized as a key attribute of the park system. The community acknowledges the department's efforts to be responsive to citizens' needs. The community recognizes that the department is attempting to satisfy a variety of divergent interest groups. It was acknowledged that the department should establish achievable levels of service instead of trying to be all things to all people. There is significant interest in having the department identify a variety of new ways to fund capital development and operations. There is also an expectation that the

department identify and develop new partnerships to help solve existing and emerging issues. It is expected that some of these new partnerships could provide additional methods for funding capital development and operations.

Citizens were particularly interested in seeing the department find solutions to the lack of open space and park space. They expect the department to adequately project the emerging needs of the community and to position the delivery of future services accordingly.

There is much interest in identifying the appropriate configuration of indoor programming space for senior citizens and teens. The increased demand for facilities to accommodate organized sports has put a unique burden on an already heavily developed park system, and citizens are interested in solving the demand issue without jeopardizing existing open spaces.

Key Findings

The key issues to be resolved in the plan include:
- Maintenance of existing facilities.
- Addressing the changing demographics of the community.
- How to Manage with the limited park space available while addressing a growing demand for facilities and park space.
- The lack of parking at existing facilities.
- The need to create more designated space for athletic facilities.
- How to involve the business community and other partners in solving key park and recreation issues.
- Transportation access for youth.

- The need for programs and facilities for youth and seniors.

- Use of school facilities as community assets.
- Providing more after-school programs.
- Adaptive re-use of facilities that receive little use, such as swimming pools.
- Managing the amount of cultural and special events held every year in the city.
- Finding a balance between active and passive park space.
- Positioning the park and recreation system to tap into new sources of funding while providing inclusion for all who want to participate.
- Addressing the needs of the single adult population.
- How to deal with the perceived need for more dog parks.
- How to manage the provision of new types of recreation such as skate parks, trails, and connectivity to places of public value.
- Ensuring the safety of young people at recreation facilities.
- How to fund operational and capital needs.
- Working with developers to create public spaces, appropriate land uses, and to provide public amenities.
- The need to protect existing open space in the city.

The greatest recreation program needs were identified as:
- Finding strategies to keep teens engaged in productive activities beyond the early teens.
- Addressing the increased demand for organized sports programs.

- Aquatic programs that meet the needs of all age groups.
- Nature-based programs.
- Serving the special needs of people with disabilities.
- Providing adequate space and programs for senior citizens.
- Providing arts and festival programs.
- Effectively dealing with the before and after-school needs of young people.

The greatest facility needs were identified as:

- Managing an aging infrastructure.
- Finding more open space and park space.
- Elevating maintenance standards at some locations.
- Providing new types of facilities as demands emerge.
- Development of indoor facilities that address the multi-generational make up of the community.

There was a broad perspective of perceived mandates in the community. The key themes included:

- Identifying and establishing achievable levels of service versus trying to be all things for all people.
- Achieving acceptable levels of maintenance at all facilities.
- Development of more trails.
- Beautification of the city.
- Water and stream cleanup.
- Adequately funding the park and recreation system.
- Finding appropriate partners.
- Staying current with citizens' needs and finding effective methods to meet those needs.
- Better care of the environment.

- Creating relationships with other service providers and parks agencies.
- Better coordination with the school system.

The vision for the future includes:

- A well-balanced agency that commands respect from the community.
- An agency that is proactive to the needs of citizens.
- Solving the open space and park space needs of the community.
- Demonstrating the value of recreation to citizens.
- A Department that is adequately funded and provides well-developed and maintained facilities.
- An agency that acts as exceptional stewards of the natural environment, providing equitable services and facilities for all residents.

The following is a listing of the questions and responses from the focus groups

1) What are the most pressing issues that should be addressed in this plan?

- Keep up existing facilities.
- Respond to needs of populations.
- Resolve children playing on properties
- Keep up with feeder programs and changing sports demand
- Limited amount of space versus growing interest in team sports.
- Do you focus on demand or supply?
- How do you involve business community?
- Be sure you have a wide variety of activities, especially for kids.

- How to get diverse population serviced.
- Distribution of the space, i.e., Kids need to be in their neighborhood, e.g., skateboarding, need a place to have the activity that is legal, and appropriate.
- Youth accessibility to programs and facilities.
- Transportation
- Recreation center for the Cameron Station, area is highly concentrated with people without cars or transportation, (Southport is ideal location), may need more cooperation with Dash, school system accessibility
- Trails connectivity, cost needs to be a consideration. Swimming at Chinquapin is expensive for some families and should be affordable for all through discounts, sliding scales or some other way to include them.
- Some parks are compartmentalized, e.g., Landover Park is disconnected from the pool – should be better connected to make them useable
- Concept of anchors – pools, libraries, parks, ball fields, use them as anchors and connect everything between them together – maybe with trails: should reduce maintenance cost, could affect how you program for different ages at different times also, important to use facilities more fully
- Need a drop-in program for youth, Look to be able to meet the needs of the future
- Need cross-cultural programs; the prime emphasis is now on traditional American sports.

- Take appropriate advantage of technology and other leisure opportunities.
- Availability of outdoors space and indoors space; use indoor as efficiently as possible. The location of the facility determines the type of programs offered, and the hours of operation, etc.
- Need to look at additional space in the schools; find a way to enhance the offerings in schools to be used as recreation centers.
- Look at enlarging the geographic areas for program delivery and plan together with schools.
- Need in the George Mason area for more time and space
- No track on west end now and they need one. Transportation is a concern and the city should be able to make an arrangement with private schools for track and additional field space.
- Need for better maintenance on existing facilities, such as tennis courts; some tennis courts are being used for other activities such as soccer and roller hockey.
- We need to address the facilities we are losing.
- We need to decide who we are – urban, suburban, etc. and then have the community recognize who we are.
- The amount of cultural events is huge – we need not be so insular.
- Our school system is an untapped resource. This needs to be addressed.
- We don't have the luxury of having activities in every neighborhood, therefore transportation to facilities is an issue

- Fees need to be addressed; we should establish a baseline of services and build fees around the baseline while ensuring inclusion.
- Identify and meet the requests of the community. Need to be determine how to meet the program and infrastructure needs of the community.
- Maintain existing facilities to an acceptable standard.
- Need to find a balance with active and passive areas, the natural and developed areas.
- Is the city getting sufficient space for recreation?
- The next priority is how to use that space.
- Management of the open space. How to use that land?
- Dog parks and soccer fields.
- Be very specific on the land uses regarding parks.
- Build in more active recreation space.
- The city is at the crossroads on the key decisions.
- Want to be a key friendly city.
- The council will follow the plan if we identify the key issues and we provide them the road map for them to follow.
- Manage the future, not the immediate.
- Can we be forward looking, looking toward twenty years from now?
- Seniors need to be addressed.
- Young people who are not involved in a sport
- Are the recreation centers not providing the right programs?
- Multi-generational center is needed.
- Pack in what is not offered in the other centers.
- An Olympic size pool is needed

- Seniors are going to Fairfax as their outlet.
- A dog park is a key issue that needs to be addressed.
- Bike trails review.
- Multi-purpose game fields are needed.
- Field use policies need to be addressed.
- Teens needs should be addressed, especially the possibility of a roller rink.
- A skate park is needed.
- More small neighborhood gathering places that are passive.
- Identify common space for neighborhoods.
- More parks that are passive versus active.
- Lobby groups that advocate for single use.
- A lot of racial polarization of activities.
- Find ways to provide programs and facilities that demonstrate fairness and move away from entitlement.
- Pulling away from a traditional population and the needs are different. The worker population is changing and they are so constrained for staff.
- Mounting demands for parks needs to be managed. They don't do a lot for workers in the city.
- What do they have to serve them?
- Multi-generational facility on the west end; yes or no, and how to manage for the future.
- Recreation centers have catered to specific segment of the population; should we move away from that and move toward a more general use? Political

and cultural issues related to the current use.

- Recreation centers that need some work and what to do with them. What do they need to have the recreation center look like, i.e., Patrick Henry?
- More fields, yes or no?
- Evaluation of who is being served.
- Recreation Department in general and how it is managed and financed.
- A lot of internal politics in the recreation center.
- Need to accelerate change in the department. It needs to move to a new level.
- The after-school programs in the recreation centers.
- Would like to see that the existing recreation facilities have enough operational and capital monies to keep them updated.
- Recreation centers should evaluate the staff loads versus the number of people who use the centers.
- Evaluate staff deployment.
- School age populations, age banding from to K-5, and after-school vendors: the competition with private enterprise needs to be addressed. What are the areas that are amenable to fees and how to deal with free or subsidized programs and people?
- Phase timeline and recommendations need to be included.
- Geography and equity of recommendations need to be addressed.
- Make programs more inclusive rather than single focused.

- Make the recreation centers more specialized and use more of a magnet approach.
- Evaluate the demographics of the area as we make decisions.
- The adult population that is single needs to be addressed in this community; early morning and weekend programs for this age group.
- The centers sit quite empty during the day: how effectively are they deploying the resources in the recreation centers?
- Weekend offerings are geared toward the youth versus single adults.
- The competition between other service providers and the city needs to be evaluated regarding fitness facilities.

2) **What are the key policy issues that need to be addressed in this plan?**
- Fees and how they are applied to levels of service, somehow we need user fees to support infrastructure.
- The use of development impact fees, open space requirements and other tools to spread the responsibility to more members of the community.
- Need to look at sponsorships to "adopt a space".
- Initial capital and ongoing maintenance needs to be addressed.
- Youth participation in decision-making.
- Funding.
- Day care v. recreation centers.
- Senior programs, what is the balance, i.e., costs v. services?
- What restrictions should we (the city) put on private developers when they develop?

- Need no net loss policy on open space; what incentives can you build in for private landowners to create more open space?
- Developers should be required to provide recreational amenities as a part of development, such as dog parks, playgrounds; should have integrated effort-requiring developers to work together when they develop new sites.
- Adopt policy that links recreation with health; involve schools with that initiative.
- Adults should be able to pay for their recreation; not feasible to expect parents to pay for all recreation – should have subsidies, scholarships.
- Inclusion is important – need equity in charging for access to facilities.
- Quality of life should be included in the health aspect.
- Wider demographic appeal – facility is targeted to minority kids.
- Basketball is the most diverse program in the city.
- Middle school nights has been the most successful program.
- The lost segment is the high school children that need attention.
- Acquire land set-asides from developers.
- Public easements will be a key acquisition strategy for the city to focus on.
- A large tract of land – should that be the center of recreation complex?
- Like complexes versus families traveling all over the city.
- The long-term strategy is most important; they need to look for the long term in the city.

- Facility buildings versus land development.
- Patrick Henry facility needs to be expanded.
- Improve the facilities you have first.
- School partnerships need to focus first on the fact that this is a public building.
- School parks.
- More after-school programs in school are needed; keep in mind safety and security issues.
- More structure at after-school programs to help them on schoolwork, etc.
- New urbanism is well entrenched here.
- School park designation is okay; it should be established and designated for priority of use by schools and city as needed.
- Chinquapin High School renovation is critical.
- Dog parks versus kids are a big issue.
- The council gets a bad rap on land preservation that is unwarranted because of their efforts to develop and preserve space.
- Multi-generational centers are a concern financially.
- More trails; trails are costly but needed.
- The bike plan is good.
- Too focused on citizen input.
- Field schedules.
- Non-residents rates.
- Get a list of the policies.
- Park maintenance standards.
- Funding for parks maintenance is a problem.
- Active areas need a lot of maintenance.

- Off-leash dog areas are needed versus having dogs on soccer fields.
- After-school policies need to be addressed in the plan.
- Standards for program needs to be addressed.
- Beautification in the city and the quality of the fields is a problem. Are they getting their money's worth?
- Recreation programs are significantly segregated and this is a problem.
- Evaluate recreation program
- 13 and older can't be in recreation centers until 6pm.
- Are we doing a good job dealing with youth?
- What are other programs could be created to attract teens?
- Rotation of staff in centers.
- Certification of staff is a good thing even if staff is resistant.
- What is the appropriate training for staff to make them more marketable?
- More staff who can speak Spanish is needed.
- Watering and maintenance of soccer fields is needed.
- Sustainability is an issue on fields; match what they can reasonably handle and the study needs to have a basis to say no.

3) **What is your perspective on the competition for open space? Active vs. passive?**
- Open space is essential.
- We will have to look at it differently and creatively; there are other ways to provide open space through things like easements.
- When redeveloping land we need to give careful consideration on how to

preserve open space; proper planning is the key.
- In the long term we need to look at areas such as rooftops, highways, buildings, planters, etc.
- Public buildings landscape should encourage usage, not be sterile.
- Better, more comprehensive management.
- Incorporate sustainability, four mile run is more than drainage, it's also wildlife habitat. Cannot lose anymore open space, tie together to maximize for total benefit, more tracks.
- More interactive open space.
- Need bigger fields.
- More lighted fields.
- They must have sources of revenue to acquire and maintain land.
- School parks need to be developed and maintained for recreation use.
- They are a land-locked city and have competing problems for land.
- How do you deal with the land that is left?
- 40% of city residents are singles.
- A real estate transfer is needed.
- Save areas that can't be developed like the waterways.
- More passive areas are needed in the multi-family areas.
- Managed regional partnerships need to be established.
- It will not work in the city to provide more natural areas.
- Fencing of dog parks has created the problem.
- Standards need to be developed for all parks.
- Do you feel the city needs to establish acreage guidelines for population and land?

- Be very protective of what land is left.
- Waterfront access and open space is needed.

4) What are your feelings regarding a teen center, senior center, multi-generational center?

- Likes the multi-generational center idea.
- Likes the idea of stand-alone center – but the program will really drive the success; e.g., if teen center is just a hang out, then trouble will follow; needs to be comprehensive and well planned; more in favor of multi-generational center – should also have good programming for seniors.
- Transportation is an issue for many seniors.
- Do not need a designated teen center.
- Predominately needs to be in the neighborhood for seniors.
- Prefer multi-generational center over a stand-alone teen center.
- Need to reach into the community – diverse, low number of youth, many single, transient people who need recreational opportunities, the constantly changing dynamic of the community makes it a challenge.
- No real sense of equity issues like there used to be regarding the east and west end of the cities.
- Teen center is an interesting concept.
- They have to demonstrate that safety issues are addressed.
- 12, 13, and 14-year-old children need to have a safe environment.
- Stand-alone for teens.

- They should use the facilities they already have rather than build new.
- They have not taken advantage of the design alternatives that could create more cooperation.
- A renovating approach to T.C. Williams for teens is needed.
- Senior population growth is flat. A center west of town is needed.
- The department has a severe lack of open space, and they feel they tend to build mediocre facilities instead of building a great space.
- Make smaller centers specialty centers.
- The city should work with malls for senior walking.

5) What are the greatest recreation program needs in Alexandria?

- Teens (middle school).
- Senior citizens.
- More sports than are offered at high schools.
- Basketball is of high interest.
- Health, wellness, dietary.
- Computers for the children.
- A balance in programs is needed for seniors and activities that are not based around sports.
- After-school programs need to be developed.
- Computers labs and roller hockey.
- Programs for teens and seniors need to be addressed.
- Create festivals for young people.
- The arts are very important for the department.
- Concerts are very supported by the community.
- Children, teenagers, and young children are the biggest need.
- The city's programs need to be in concert with school programs.

- Service the needs of people with disabilities.
- Environmental education, nature based programs.
- Swimming.

6) What are the greatest recreation facility needs in Alexandria?

- Golf courses.
- Swimming pools.
- Teen centers.
- Sports complexes.
- Better use of schools.
- Ice rink.
- Facilities for youth, seniors, physically challenged.
- Flexibility of design for accommodation of many uses.
- Outdoor spaces need to be multi-use.
- Need off-road / safe places to ride bikes.
- Recreation facility needs for the future.
- The city and the YMCA have some disconnects in working together.
- Expand the pool at Chinquapin.
- Multiuse outdoor surface complex.
- Soccer, roller hockey, and basketball.
- Diversify the sports; lacrosse for instance.
- Field Hockey: can they develop these facilities?
- Expand into non-traditional sports.
- Women and sports.
- Girl's softball and volleyball are very important.
- More variety at the high school.
- Skateboard parks.
- A multi-generational is not needed and we need to cover this in our recommendations.

- Chinquapin needs to be redeveloped to hold swim meets.
- Use existing facilities by renovating them to address senior citizens.
- Computer labs in recreation centers.
- Irrigate all playing fields.
- Re-use of existing space.
- Charles Houston and Patrick Henry need to be updated.
- Indoor track is needed.
- Ice rink needed.
- Regional facilities shared and developed are a good idea.
- Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority needs to work with the city on development of facilities.
- National Park Service management with city needs to be established to meet on strategies for regional issues – maybe a regional planning retreat on updating facilities.

7) What are the community mandates in Alexandria?

- More places for off-leash dogs.
- Services must be accessible.
- Non-discrimination.
- Care of the environment.
- Removal of exotic and non-native plants.
- Stream bank restoration
- Wildlife habitat protection and enhancement.
- Children want their own teen center, access to school space, more recreation centers with Internet access.
- Does not think the community has an understanding of what parks and recreation is all about.
- Communication with the community.
- Better coordination with the school system.

- Some people were for a center in the west end in the past.
- Need to link with other parks and recreation service providers such as Fairfax County.
- Expect facilities that are truly recreational offerings; we don't have them in our part of the city.
- Number of fields and inability to rotate them; enhance the condition of fields and increase the number of them; involve the users in the maintenance.
- Mandate to improve the department by the council.
- Maintenance mandate is in plan.
- Pick up and improve the place, especially the after-school space.
- Operation and recreation staff issues are in place.
- Integrated uses need to be addressed.
- More open space, park issue.
- All needs to be met by the community expectations.
- More teen activities.
- More soccer fields.
- Do not take away what they have, but maintenance is very poor.
- Don't try to be all things for all people.
- Develop partnerships with other service providers.

8) Who are the potential partners for Parks and Recreation?

- Clubs.
- Service organizations.
- Create outreach opportunities for service clubs.
- Shopping malls.
- Retailers – use their facilities such as parking lots on weekends when they are not in use.

- Federal agencies such as the National Park Service, e.g., Huntley Meadows, schools, corporate neighbors use their open space.
- Private schools.
- Need to integrate with the NPS for use of properties (Dangerfield Island).
- Parking lots at Malls.
- YMCA, hospitals.
- Health Department.
- Extension service.
- Better relationship with the Y.
- Would like to see trying a partnership with use of fields on private schools.
- Funding partners should include more funding for capital and operations.
- They do not have a good relationship in the private sector with businesses and foundations.
- Park foundations and not-for-profit partnerships.
- Fee based for adult sports is okay for effective prices.
- Partnerships with youth organizations are good and need to keep going.
- Partnership with the department and the minority community needs to be better.
- Business community partnerships need to be developed.
- YMCA partnerships, hospitals.
- Sea Port Foundation.
- Police boys and girls camp.
- 4-H extension program.
- Senior partnerships.
- Transportation is needed for youth.
- Torpedo Factory is a partnership that could be developed and the art league.

- Civic stations need to be looked at.
- They don't ask community organizations to be a part of the solution.

9) What are your feelings about adaptive use of existing parks to meet the citizens changing recreation needs?

- Adaptive reuses are okay.
- Removal of community use needs to be done.
- It will take a lot of good statistical data to convince the public.
- Are we short of gym facilities?
- What are we short in?
- Yes, that is important and they need to be better at this.
- Respond to the activity changes.
- Skateboard parks are needed.
- Establish standards for use that demonstrate a need to decline in the plan.
- Not confident that the Council will follow the recommendations from the plan.
- School parks need to be made adaptive.
- Add benches to school parks.

10) What is your vision for the next ten-years?

- A well-balanced agency with a vision, goals, and responsibilities that commands respect.
- More education about the value of parks and recreation needs to occur in the community.
- The city having more input regarding how property gets used.
- Continue to grow and work with other agencies to put out the best product.
- Respect from citizens regarding department operations.

- Recognize department as proactive in meeting the needs of the community.
- Innovative approaches in solving open space needs.
- Demonstrating the value of recreation and open space.
- More partnerships and broader relationships with other service providers.
- Upgraded facilities and program opportunities.

11) Are there any other issues?

- Need to get Alexandria residents to use regional parks we pay to support.
- Need a way to attract more grant money?
- Recreation Department needs to decide its primary role or core business.
- Safety of people using recreation centers; children are getting hit by cars in the roads out in front of the building; need speed control devices.
- Parking is inadequate at some centers.
- Better coordination between recreation centers.
- Need transportation coordination with the DASH bus company.
- Need better transportation in general to all recreation facilities by existing bus system.
- Need to make more use of volunteers.
- Evaluate a process to do it right. It seems that everything is an issue.
- Sell the strategies and the fact that quality of life contributes to economic development.
- Highlight the amount of turnover of residents to marketing in order to get the public to know the city and recruit them to your sites.

How do we evaluate our success in recreation?

- Ask amount of recognition of residents for programs.
- What degree do we build in as part of marketing strategies?

The Following Questions and Responses are from the Focus Group Meetings with City Council, City Manager and the Mayor

1) What are the most pressing issues that should be addressed in this plan?

- Up to date technology needs to be in place.
- Training of staff is needed.
- Equipment needs should be assessed.
- Staffing levels and pay should be assessed.
- Addressing seniors' needs is necessary.
- Young people who are not involved in a sport need to be addressed.
- We need to evaluate the demographics of the area as we make decisions.
- The adult population that is single needs to be addressed in this community.
- The goals and objectives need to be followed tightly rather than following them to a point until there is a special project that pulls the attention away from what is being accomplished or worked toward. This takes away from the standards in the city and things don't get done efficiently.
- Standards for space management
- What are the areas that are amenable to fees and how

should we deal with free or subsidized programs and people?

- Maintenance facilities need to be addressed.
- Volunteers need to be addressed in the city and an appreciation event needs to be held.
- Lack of a labor pool for tree contractors needs to be addressed.
- Play equipment replacement scheduled needs to be in place.
- Recruiting efforts need to be more efficient – finding staff with the qualifications within the range of salary offered.
- There are 48 to 50 employees in park maintenance; there need to be more.
- The nature center staffing needs to be reviewed and increased if necessary.
- The pressing issue for the city is getting sufficient space for recreation. The next priority is how to use that space?
- Management of the open space is needed. Ask on the survey how to use that land?
- Diversity issues as well as political and cultural problems need to be addressed.
- A strong school partnership is needed.
- The department has a severe lack of open space and they feel they tend to build mediocre facilities versus great space.

2) What policies need to be addressed?

- Practice space is an issue versus game fields.
- There is a need to build in more active recreation space.

- Lack of written policy is a problem.
- There are field use policies that need to be addressed.
- Vandalism problems exist.
- Enforcing park policies is a problem with police.
- Create park rangers to cover park issues.
- Include in the survey issues of safety and citation problems in parks.
- The centers sit pretty empty during the day and how effectively are they deploying the resources in the recreations centers.
- Weekend offerings are geared toward the youth versus single adults.
- The competition between other service providers and the city needs to be evaluated as it applies to fitness facilities.
- Be very specific on the land uses as it applies to parks.
- Mounting demands for parks needs to be managed. They don't do a lot for workers in the city.
- Continue to review staffing levels in relationship to participants.
- The after school programs need to be addressed in relationship to licensing.
- Are they getting the right bang for the dollars?
- Rotation of staff in centers is needed.
- Certification of staff desirable

3) What is your expectation of the outcomes that are desired from this Master Plan?

- The Master Plan will pull together the vision, planning,

organizations, and recommendations.
- There is a feeling that the department will sit on the plan.
- The Master Plan will assist in long term capital improvement plan.
- An assessment of the recreation department in general and how it is managed and financed is needed.
- A phase timeline and recommendations over time needs to be included in our recommendations.
- Beautification in the city and the quality of the fields need to be addressed.
- Sustainability is an issue on fields and match what they can reasonably handle and the study needs to have a basis to say no.
- Plan recreation facility needs for the future.

4) What do you think the mandates are?

- It will establish the level of service that can be expected.
- Maintenance of fields will be priority.
- Keep trash out of parks.
- Mow parks.
- Respond to every call within 24 hours.
- Clean facilities.
- A certain level of recreation programs will be provided.
- Bike trials and multi-use trails will be promoted more.
- The parks and recreation facilities will serve all citizens equitably.
- Funding for parks maintenance is a problem.
- The beautification of the city will be a high priority.

5) What is your vision for the next 10 years?

- The Department will be a well balance agency with a vision, goals and responsibilities that has a lot of respect.
- Patrick Henry facility needs to be expanded.
- To manage the future, is there a need for a multi-generational facility on the west end.
- The staff feels that the city and residents view the park and recreation department as low level service and more educational efforts are needed. (Ask this on a survey).
- Off leash dog areas is needed versus having dogs on soccer fields.
- We need to continue to grow and work with other departments to put out the best product.
- There will be a respect from the citizens toward for the Department staff.
- Acquire land set-asides in the development game from developers.
- Public easements will be a key acquisition strategy for the city to focus on.
- They will have a vision and more proactive versus reactive to what parks and recreation and be recognized as a fighter for open space.
- More parks that are passive versus active are needed.
- There is a need for lobby groups that advocate for single use such as open space issues.
- There is a need to find ways to provide programs and facilities that demonstrate fairness and move away from entitlement.
- A multi-generational center is needed.
- An Olympic size pool is needed.
- The Dog parks is a key issues that need to be addressed.
- Bike trails review is needed.
- Game fields that are multi-purpose are needed.
- The department will increase respect inter-agency wise.
- Market the agency to the public.
- The City missed the boat on open space and now needs to do some innovative things to develop open space.
- We need to change the perspective on the value of recreation and make it an investment for people.
- As more commercial development grows, what kind of space needs to be provided and how many more partnerships are needed.
- Environmental issues are adequately prioritized and funded.
- There is a need to make the recreation centers more specialized and create a more magnet approach.
- Administrative staff be funded to the level that is required.
- We will need to upgrade the resources and add more manpower.

6) What do you think that people value?

- Open space.
- Game fields.
- Beautification and high standards.
- Natural environment.
- Neighborhood Parks – develop equity maps.
- Facilities, and programs that are provided by the Recreation Department.
- Safety

- Equity
- Responsiveness
- Tree canopy's that are left
- Waterfront.

7) Most pressing recreation needs

- Baseball, softball, and soccer fields are needed.
- Play grounds
- Hard Surface Trails
- Dog parks
- Pools
- ADA compliance
- Nature based programs
- There is a need for early morning and weekend programs for the adult singles.
- More staff that can speak Spanish is needed.
- Expand pool at chinquapin
- Multiuse surface complex that is outdoor is needed.
- Women and sports are important.
- Use existing facilities by renovating them to address senior citizens.
- All playing fields need irrigation.

8) What is the most important program needs of this city pertaining to youth, teens and adults?

- A balance in program needs for seniors and other activities that are not based around sports are needed.
- After school programs need to be developed.
- Computers labs and roller hockey are needed.
- Programs for teens and seniors need to be addressed.
- Create festivals for young people.
- The arts are very important for the department.

- Concerts are very supported by the community.
- Children, teenagers and young children are the biggest need.

The cities programs need to be in sync with school programs.

9) Are there partnerships outside of the school district the city should be developing that are not in place?

- We need a better relationship with the Y and the boys and girls club.
- Would like to see the Department try partnerships with use of fields at private schools.
- Funding partners should include more funding for capital and operational costs.
- Park foundations and not for profit partnerships are needed.
- Business community partnerships need to be developed.
- Sea Port Foundation partnership is needed.
- Transportation is needed for youth.

The Following Questions and Responses are from the Park and Recreation Commission Interviews

1) Needs Assessment:
- More soccer fields and open space land are needed.
- Facilities that can accommodate the older generation especially the older senior generation are needed.
- Adult soccer fields are lacking as well and practice spaces.
- There are a lot of single adults in the city that need to be served.
- The field space needs are the most pressing league issue.

- The teen's needs are high in the community.
- Skateboard parks are needed.
- High school rugby and girls football are growing sports.
- We need to tie recreation to health issues in the city.
- More women sports are needed in the city.
- Trails, pools, indoor tracks are needed.
- Transportation is needed for middle school aged children.
- Adult sports needs are high as well as youth.
- Safety of the children is a major concern in recreation centers.
- User fees should apply to adults and the youth should be subsidized.
- User fees are a major issue and should be put in effect and utilized.
- The commission needs to have a workshop on fees and charges.
- Ice Rink may need to be tested in the survey.

2) What is your expectation of the Master Plan/ Needs Assessment?

- They need to resolve the use recreation facilities.
- Recreation Centers need to be called community centers.
- What lines of businesses should we be in?
- What are our mandates, what standards should we abide by.
- How much are we willing to pay for maintenance levels.
- Public restrooms in parks are needed.
- Spray pools need to replace small pools in the city.
- Visioning is needed in the city.
- There is a huge lack of trust with the city.

- Use regional park authority and partner with them on services.
- What are the other trend amenities and programs that are missing in the city that we should address?

The Following Questions and Responses are from the Meeting With Arts Commission, Environmental Policy Committee, Waterfront Committee.

1) Areas to be resolved:

- How do we support a performing arts area at the Patient and Trade office?
- The parks and recreation department needs to provide neighborhood events and make them more proactive.
- The department needs to provide more structure in the arts.
- Specialty Arts Centers have become the most successful spaces for arts to work in the centers.
- Drama, dance, and music, as well as fine arts, need to be a part of the recreation department.
- Marketing of the arts needs to be developed.
- More arts venues need to be provided by the city.
- The arts need a strategic plan
- 1% or 2% arts commitment by developers need to be perused by the city.
- The name of the Department should be changed to the Department of Parks, Cultural Services and Recreation.
- The city and the Arts Commission need to have a larger staff and a partnership agreement.

- The city should reclaim underutilized facilities and redeveloped them into arts facilities.
- We need to ask questions on the survey that focus on: How often do you attend an arts event? How is important is the arts to you and your family? How well do you think that Alexandria serves the community?
- Martial arts are non-existent in the city and needs to be a part of the community.
- Advocacy seems to be a major issue with the arts commission.
- Arts education is needed in the city.

The Following Questions and Responses are from the Department Heads Meeting.

- The areas for children to play are a problem that needs to be addressed especially west of 395.
- The economically disadvantaged need more than the people can afford.
- Substance abuse is an issue that needs to address.
- Very few families have a parent at home after school.
- Some space for mixing groups with various age segments is needed.
- Multi-dimensional space is really needed to support programs.
- The small area plans of the city do not address parks and recreation.
- Cross communication and cross marketing needs are prevalent.
- There is a need for recreation for people with disabilities.
- Women and girls sports drop out rates are high – 11 to 14.

- What is the total amount of money spent on children in the city?
- Space changes need to be made in order to serve youth between 5 to 14 years of age.
- Most people can't pay to use facilities and the space needs to be dedicated per various user groups.
- A tiered level of fees is very difficult to obtain.
- There should be an incentive program for collection of fees.
- The department needs 501-C-3 organizations including friends groups.
- Does the department need to have working relationships?
- Levels of ground maintenance standards need to be communicated.
- The arborist gets pulled in many directions.
- The Parks and Recreation image is difficult to put your arms around.
- The department does not have enough staff.
- The department needs to include other departments in the planning processes.
- The 11 to 15 age groups need the most focus.
- There is a need for development of Regional facilities with Arlington and Fairfax County.
- Is the city into too many businesses?
- Rational allocation may not be acceptable in this political mindset.
- Diversity issues need to be addressed.
- Tree trimming is a tough issue here. Two-thirds are on contract and staff does one-third.

- A tree fund needs to be developed.
- After school care at the recreation centers is needed.
- Lack of supervision at day camps and after school programs needs to be addressed.
- Standards need to be in place.
- Computer centers and the city involvement need to be coordinated.

Responses From Seniors and Other Service Providers In the City

- Limited space is a tough problem.
- Low-income seniors need transportation to recreation events.
- Not a lot of support for seniors exists.
- Transportation for children is needed.
- More teen activities are needed.
- A skateboard park is needed.
- There is a need for benches in Old Town.
- Chinquapin should be a senior center because of where they live.
- More programs for children and teens are needed.
- The city's priorities for funding are in youth, people with disabilities, immigrants, and families.
- Summer is the problem for the seniors because of youth services.
- Comfortable space, food, places for music, and card rooms are needed.

- Chinquapin should be redesigned to accommodate seniors.
- Programming that stimulates the mind is needed.
- Senior Clubs need space where they can gather.
- The option of assistance in club development needs to be available.
- Marketing for seniors is an issue.
- Chinquapin prices should be freer for seniors.
- A review of fee schedules is needed.
- Look at mind, body and spirit in the broad sense, and look at what site-specific policy approaches are needed.
- There are playground equity issues in the city and an evaluation of the playgrounds is needed.
- Program equity needs evaluation in the city.
- Every program for seniors is free. This should not always be the case.
- The Seaport Foundation provides opportunities for seniors and youth for people to experience the resources as it applies to Potomac River.
- The city staff needs to be more involved in environmental programs and education.
- Parks and recreation staff should be mitigating some of the stream cover.
- The not-for profit organizations need a plan on how to work together.
- The city should take a lead on how not-for-profits are developed and how to manage duplication.
- Alexandria does not have a place for children to hang out.

- The Prime Time Page for seniors in the Gazette needs to have more programs that offer more stuff over the cable TV.
- The city needs to have a senior cable show that is dedicated to senior living and issues that seniors face.
- Partnerships are improving over the last five years in parks and recreation.
- Collaboration between the city and Campagna center for day camps and after school programs is needed.
- The need for drop in programs is no longer needed.
- T.C high school partners well.
- Partnering summits are needed and teaching people how to partner is key.
- Developing more uniform standards for partnerships is needed.
- The city does not use Federal Parks for recreation purposes.
- The city needs to have chess ands checkers boards in city parks.

The Following Questions and Responses are from the Meeting Notes with the Alexandria Program Staff

1) The current core businesses for the city are?

- After School programs/camps.
- Teens.
- Seniors.
- Aquatic.
- Sports.
- Cultural activities.

2) What are the key-issues that you are faced with in doing your jobs?

- Revenue producing programs at Chinquapin are hard to predict.
- City needs to support the recreational use of the parks even if they are in residential neighborhoods.
- The environment is politically charged but the staff has to uphold the policies and procedures.
- The city manager, director and city council need to support the policies in place.
- The squeaky wheel still gets what it wants.
- One indoor aquatic facility causes too much conflict between competitive and recreational use.
- Parking is a problem in many facilities and there is little consideration for parking in the design of the parks.
- Teens need to be involved in planning the activities they are involved in.
- Cyber cafés and designated space is needed for teens.
- Older age teens are hard to attract to existing centers.
- The staff feels they are understaffed.
- Lack of meeting space is a problem.
- A marketing division is needed to track feedback from users.

3) What do you measure?
- We measure numbers and attendance.
- We track budget costs.
- We measure customer satisfaction.
- We measure post evaluations and pre-evaluations.
- We send out surveys to the community.

- Not all staff evaluate the programs.
- We do program goals and activity goals.
- Program standards are inconsistent and not all written.
- Chinquapin is expected to recoup 80% of expenses of direct costs.
- Adult sports are responsible for recovery of 100% of direct cost.
- Admission fees cannot be changed or discounted.

4) **Residents and non-residents use:**

- We rely on non-residents to fill out teams.
- Pricing decisions on programs are inconsistent across the city.
- We are not charging for therapeutic services.

5) **What earned income opportunities do you create?**

- There is no incentive for going after earned income and they can't keep it in the programs.
- We have some base line programs but no tiered programs in place.
- Revenue Philosophy needs to be consistent across the city.
- Although we have advisory councils that can raise money, we really don't utilize this very much.
- Customer service plans and business plans are not in place.

6) **What are your training needs?**

- Customer service needs to be ongoing.
- Computer training in Activities Based Costing is needed.
- Evaluation and customer feedback is needed.

- Communication training is needed.
- Business plan training is needed.
- Training in human interaction and conflict with youth development and how to positively deal with youth is needed.
- Volunteer training is warranted but they do not have a system for training.

7) **What is your vision for the future for the recreation program section of this department?**

- Therapeutic section should incorporate a wider demographic of people.
- There is a need for more staff and resources to address therapeutic needs.
- Youth sports diversity is needed
- Need more space for youth sports.
- More recreation facilities – both indoors and outdoors – are needed.
- A weight room for Core Kelly and small pool and tennis court are needed.
- There is a need for a master plan of action for participants who use the services and for staff to plan for what they need to do.
- There is a need for more trust in the department.
- There is a need to ensure the lower income people don't get left behind in the economic engine of the city.
- The department staff has a significant role and holds an understanding of what people do in the department. The race issue has been addressed in the department

- The balance between the free and pay programs is needed.
- The recreation department should be the informal education piece of people's lives.
- Invest in excellence as it applies to processes and systems. We need to plan our work and work our plan.
- We would like to see the department prosper and that the staff understands what each other does.
- Space for programs in the department is needed.
- Training for staffing at all levels in the department is needed.
- More Hispanic programs in the centers are needed.
- The expectation of the plan is that it will be accessible and usable for all staff and the plan gets instituted into the system.
- There is a need for the cultural arts to be integrated into the department at a higher level.
- There is a need for more money for the arts to grow and more contracting of staff to do the programming in the city.
- Better ways to address special diversity needs and blend them into programs developed is needed.
- Re-structure our operational procedures to bring comprehensive focus to specific areas such as a marketing section. A program section, for teens, special events, and adults is needed.
- Core businesses are defined.
- A visionary environment is needed.
- We need to re-evaluate our policy and procedures and make them less restricted. We need to have fewer forms.

- There is a need for better partnerships with the schools on use of facilities.
- Be more involved in corporate America as it applies to delivery services.

PUBLIC FORUM SUMMARY ANALYSIS REPORT

PROS facilitated four public forum meetings in the City of Alexandria focusing on each planning area of the city. Approximately, 80 residents in total attended the four workshops. PROS asked all attendees the same set of questions. PROS opened each public forum by introducing the Master Plan process and discussed the key issues to be addressed in the Master Plan.

The key issues the public felt relevant and to address in the Master Plan are as follows.

- Better communication needed with citizens regarding park maintenance and development.
- Police presence is needed within parks.
- More funding is required for land acquisition and park improvements.
- A community technology center is needed to better serve citizens and to provide training for the workforce and for youth after school programs.
- Partner with schools for facility development.
- Correct the litter problem within the city and educate the public regarding recycling and keeping the city cleaner.
- Multi-lingual signage communicating littering is needed.
- There is a need for more city trails. Survey the public for their interest in foot and bike trails.

- Conduct community forums to resolve conflicts between competing interest in parks and trails.
- Recreation departments and area businesses should partner together to move the city through the re-development transition.
- The city needs to place economic value on preserving natural areas and promoting more programming focusing on nature and education.
- The community needs additional indoor swimming facilities.
- Create balance between the development of dog parks and its turf care.
- When developing new trails, determine the various trail users and their needs.
- Create more recreational services in the realm of special events, programs for youth and seniors.
- Equity of access to parks and programs is required.

PARKS AND RECREATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CITIZENS SURVEY RESULTS

Overview of the Methodology

The City of Alexandria conducted a community attitude and interest survey during March and April of 2002 to help determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Alexandria.

Leisure Vision/ETC Institute worked extensively with City of Alexandria officials and Leon Younger and Pros in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

The goal was to obtain at least 600 completed surveys. This goal was more than accomplished, with 731 surveys being completed, including at least 200 completed surveys from each of the three Parks and Recreation Planning Districts. The results of the random sample of 731 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.6%.

This draft report contains: 1) an executive summary; 2) cross tabular analysis for survey findings by gender, age of respondent, and the three Parks and Recreation Planning Districts; 3) cross tabular analysis for survey findings by race/ethnicity; 4) benchmarking comparisons of City of Alexandria to National Benchmarks and Importance-Satisfaction ratings for programs and parks/facilities; and 5) a copy of the survey document.

The following pages summarize major survey findings:

Participation in Recreation Programs or Special Events

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had participated in any recreation programs or special events offered by the City's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Forty-two percent (42%) of respondent households indicated they had participated in recreation programs offered by the City of Alexandria during the past 12 months,** and the other 58% had not participated.

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

Yes
42%

No
58%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)
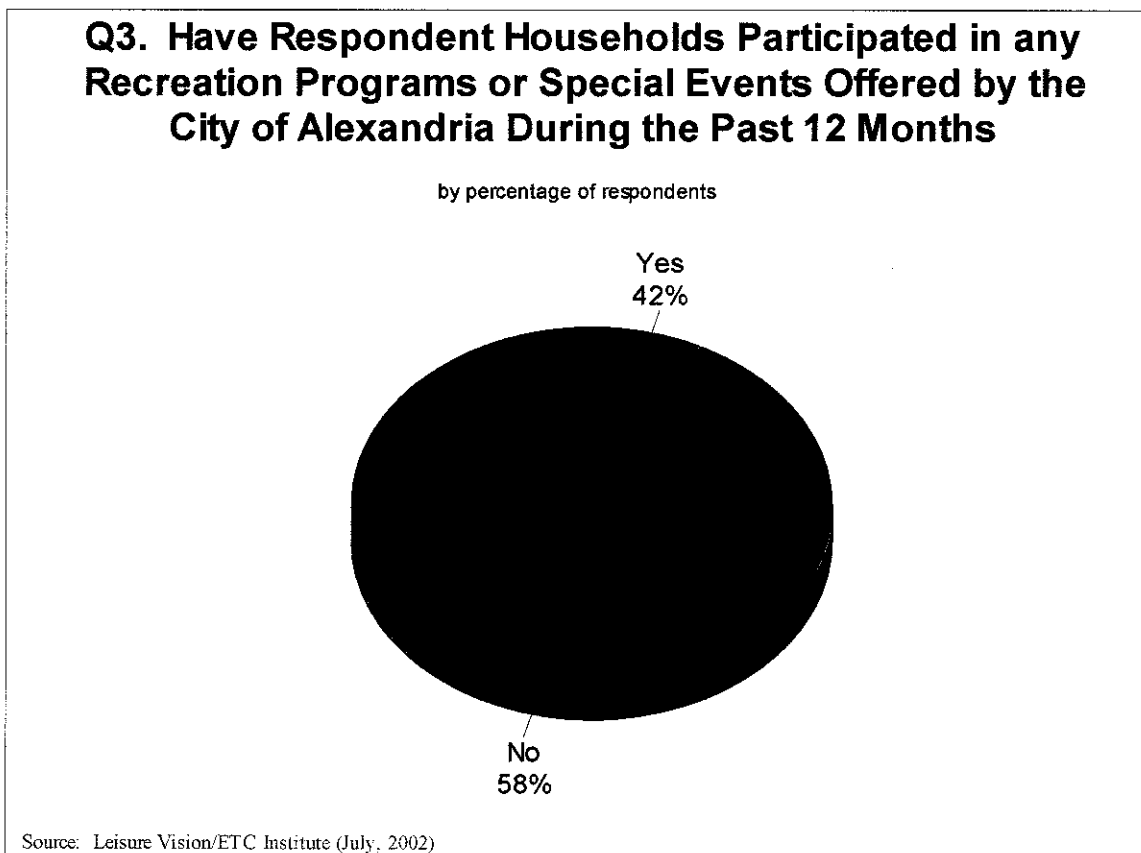
How Citizens Learned About Parks and Recreation Programs

Household respondents who had participated in City of Alexandria recreation programs during the past 12 months were asked where they learned about the City's parks and recreation programs. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Flyers/brochures (48%) was the most frequent way that respondents learned about the City's parks and recreation programs.** Other frequently mentioned methods of learning about parks and programs included word of mouth (36%) and newspaper (32%).

Q3a. Where Respondent Households Learned About City Recreation Programs

by percentage of respondents who have participated in
City recreation programs or special events during the past year (multiple choices could be made)

Category	Percentage
Flyers/brochures	48%
Word of mouth	36%
Newspaper	32%
Department "In Your Neighborhood" brochure	19%
Visited or called a parks/recreation office	18%
Website	7%
Radio	4%
Cable television	3%
Other	10%

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

Quality of Recreational Programs

Household respondents who had participated in City of Alexandria recreation programs during the past 12 months were asked how they would rate the quality of the City programs they had participated in. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   **Nearly 90% of respondents rated the programs as either excellent (28%) or good (60%).** An additional 9% of respondents rated the programs as fair, and just 1% rated them as poor. The remaining 2% indicated "don't know".

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

Excellent
28%

Don't know
2% Poor
1%

Good
60%

Fair
9%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)
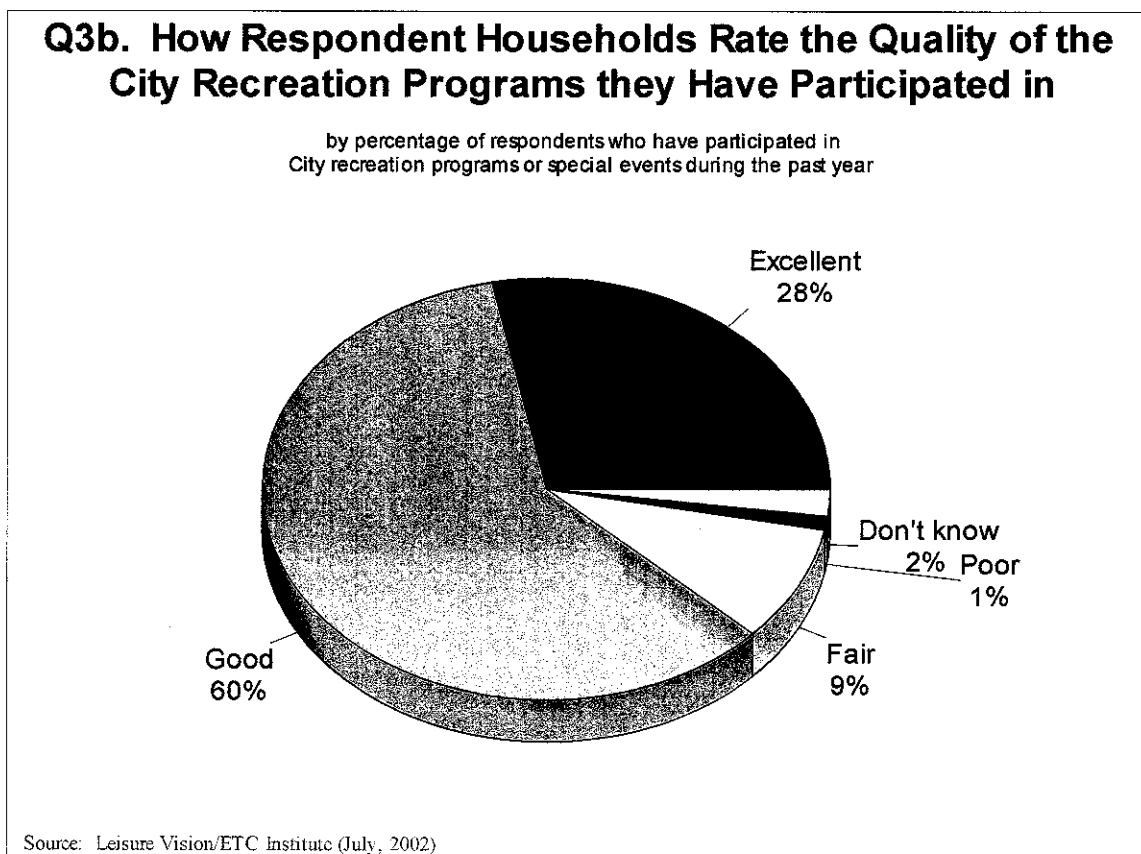
Visitation of City Operated Parks

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had visited any City operated parks in the City of Alexandria during the past year. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Two-thirds (66%) of respondent households indicated they had visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year.** In addition, 21% indicated they have not visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year, but they <u>do know</u> where parks are located in the City of Alexandria. Thirteen percent (13%) indicated they have not visited a City operate park and they <u>do not know</u> where any parks in the City of Alexandria are located.

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

by percentage of respondents

Yes
66%

Q4a. Parks in Alexandria Visited Most Often

Fort Ward Park, Chinquapin Park, Jones Point Park

No, but I know where parks in Alexandria are located 21%

No, because I do not know where parks in Alexandria are located 13%

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

Overall Physical Condition of Parks

Households respondents who had visited a City operated park in the City of Alexandria during the past year were asked how they would rate the physical condition of all the City operated parks they had visited in the City of Alexandria. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   **Over three-fourths (79%) of respondents rated the physical condition of City operated parks they had visited in the City of Alexandria as either excellent (27%) or good (52%).** An additional 19% of respondents rated the parks as fair, and just 2% rated them as poor.

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

by percentage of respondents who have visited City operated parks during the past year
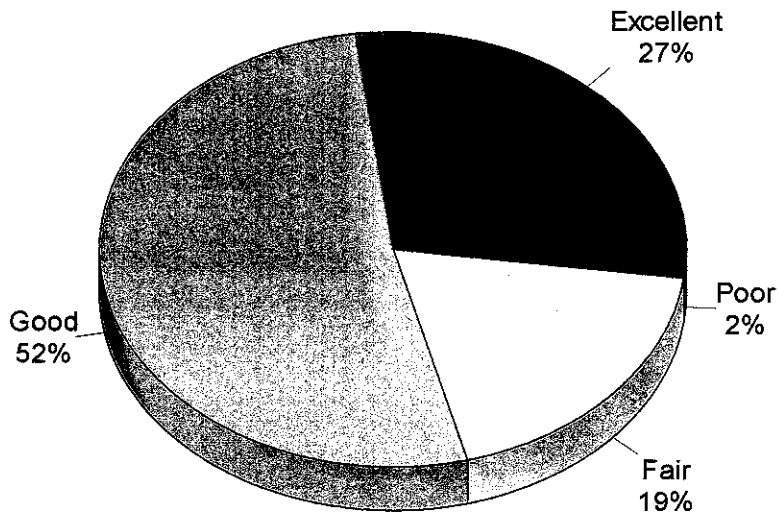
Excellent
27%

Poor
2%

Good
52%

Fair
19%

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

Satisfaction with Various Recreational Programs

Based on a list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each one. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Festivals/special events is the program that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate being either very satisfied (44%) or somewhat satisfied (42%) with it.** There are three other programs that over two-thirds of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with. They are: walking/jogging (79%); swimming (71%); and biking (68%).

Q5. Overall <u>Satisfaction</u> with Various Recreational <u>Programs</u> Offered by the City of Alexandria

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

Program	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Festivals/special events	44%			11%	
Walking/jogging	46%			12%	
Swimming	34%		20%		
Biking	31%		21%	8%	
Fitness/aerobics	30%		26%	9%	
Summer camps	30%	30%	34%		
Exercising dogs	33%		18%	12%	12%
Dance/Music	31%		33%	7%	
Baseball	17%		42%	6%	
Softball	25%	26%	39%	9%	
Tennis	23%		33%	10%	6%
Environmental education	22%		40%		
After school care	30%		42%		
Soccer	26%		35%	10%	5%
Basketball	21%		41%		
Boating/canoeing & kayaking	30%		43%		
Gardening	20%		40%	5%	7%
Football	19%		50%		
Senior activities	21%		47%	9%	
Fishing	21%		46%	7%	6%
Racquetball	14%	25%	50%	10%	
Preschool	23%		56%	6%	
Programs for people w/ disabilities	18%		64%		
Volleyball	13%		63%	9%	

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Very Satisfied ▨ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Neutral ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied ■ Very Dissatisfied

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

Participation in Various Recreational Programs

From the list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household had participated in during the past two years. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   **Festivals/special events (48%) was the program that the highest percentage of respondent households had participated in during the past two years.** Other programs that a high percentage of respondent households had participated in during the past two years include: walking/jogging (44%); swimming (22%); biking (19%); exercising dogs (17%); and fitness/aerobics (16%).

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

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Program	%
Festivals/special events	48%
Walking/jogging	44%
Swimming	22%
Biking	19%
Exercising dogs	17%
Fitness/aerobics	16%
Tennis	11%
Dance/Music	10%
Soccer	8%
Boating	7%
Environmental education	7%
Basketball	7%
Senior activities	6%
Softball	5%
Summer camps	5%
Gardening	5%
Baseball	5%
After school care	5%
Football	4%
Fishing	4%
Preschool	3%
Volleyball	3%
Racquetball	3%
Programs for people w/ disabilities	2%

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

Most Important Recreational Programs

From the list of 24 various recreational programs offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate the four that are most important to them and their household. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Walking/jogging (50%) had the highest percentage of respondent households rate it as one of their top four most important programs.** There are three other programs that had at least 20% of respondent households rate it as one of their top four, including: festivals/special events (42%); swimming (22%); biking (21%); and fitness/aerobics (20%). It should also be noted that walking/jogging received by a wide margin the most first choices as the most important program.

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

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

Program	Percentage
Walking/jogging	50%
Festivals/special events	42%
Swimming	22%
Biking	21%
Fitness/aerobics	20%
Exercising dogs	15%
Dance/Music	12%
Boating/canoeing & kayaking	11%
Senior activities	10%
Tennis	9%
Soccer	8%
Basketball	7%
Summer camps	7%
Gardening	6%
Environmental education	6%
After school care	5%
Fishing	5%
Baseball	4%
Preschool	3%
Softball	3%
Volleyball	3%
Programs for people w / disabilities	2%
Football	2%
Racquetball	2%
None chosen	18%

■ Most Important ▨ 2nd Most Important ■ 3rd Most Important ▢ 4th Most Important

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

Reasons For Not Using Parks, Facilities and Programs More Often

From a list of 15 options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the reasons that keep them or members of their household from using parks and recreational facilities and programs in the City of Alexandria more often. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **The most common reason that kept respondent households from using parks and recreational facilities and programs more often was ▢we are too busy or not interested" (41%).** Other reasons that kept a high percentage of respondent households from using parks and recreational facilities and programs more often included: "I do not know what is being offered" (25%); and "I do not know locations of parks/facilities" (19%). It should also be noted that only 4% indicated "poor customer service by staff" as a reason they don't use parks and recreational facilities and programs more often, and only 6% indicated "lack of quality programs."

Q7. Reasons That Keep Respondent Households From Using Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs in the City of Alexandria More Often

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Reason	Percentage
We are too busy or not interested	41%
I do not know what is being offered	25%
I do not know locations of parks/facilities	19%
Use facilities provided by other agencies	14%
Program times are not convenient	14%
Facilities are not close to our residence	13%
Facilities do not have the right equipment	8%
Fees are too expensive for program	7%
Hours of operation are not convenient	7%
Security is insufficient	7%
Facilities are not well maintained	6%
Lack of quality programs	6%
Poor customer service by staff	4%
Lack of transportation	4%
Registration for programs is difficult	2%
Other	14%
None chosen	11%

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

Organizations Used for Recreation and Parks Programs and Facilities

From a list of 10 organizations within the City of Alexandria, respondent households were asked to indicate all of the ones they use for recreation and parks programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **The City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department (45%) is the organization used by the highest percentage of respondent households.** There are five other organizations that at least one-fourth of respondent households use, including: National Parks (40%); churches (31%); Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Parks (25%); neighborhood association/apt. condominium (25%); and private clubs (25%).

Q8. Organizations Within the City of Alexandria that Respondent Households Use for Recreation and Parks Programs and Facilities
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Organization	Percentage
The City of Alexandria Parks & Recreation Dept.	45%
National Parks	40%
Churches	31%
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Parks	25%
Neighborhood association/apt. condominium	25%
Private clubs (tennis, health & fitness)	25%
YMCA/YWCA	13%
Community Education Programs in Schools	10%
Private youth sports leagues	6%
Boy's and Girls Club	1%
Other	6%
None, do not use any organizations	20%

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

Organizations Whose Programs and Facilities Respondents Use the Most

From the list of 10 organizations within the City of Alexandria, respondent households were asked to indicate which one they use the most for recreation and parks programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **The City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department (22%) is the organization that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most.** There are two other organizations that at least 10% of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most. They are National Parks (10%) and private clubs (10%).

Q9. Organization Within the City of Alexandria that Respondent Households Use the Most for Recreation and Parks Programs and Facilities

by percentage of respondents

Organization	Percentage
The City of Alexandria Parks & Recreation Dept.	22%
National Parks	10%
Private clubs (tennis, health & fitness)	10%
Churches	7%
YMCA/YWCA	6%
Neighborhood association/apt. condominium	6%
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Parks	4%
Private youth sports leagues	2%
Community Education Programs in Schools	1%
Other	3%
None, do not use any organizations	11%

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

Satisfaction with the Number of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities

Respondents were asked if they thought there were enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities near their household. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Over half (57%) of respondents indicated that there are enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities near their home.** Twenty-four percent (24%) indicated there are not enough parks, trails, and recreational facilities, and the remaining 19% indicated "don't know".

Q10. Are There Enough Parks, Trails & Recreation Facilities Near Respondent Households?

by percentage of respondents

Yes
57%

Don't know
19%

No
24%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)
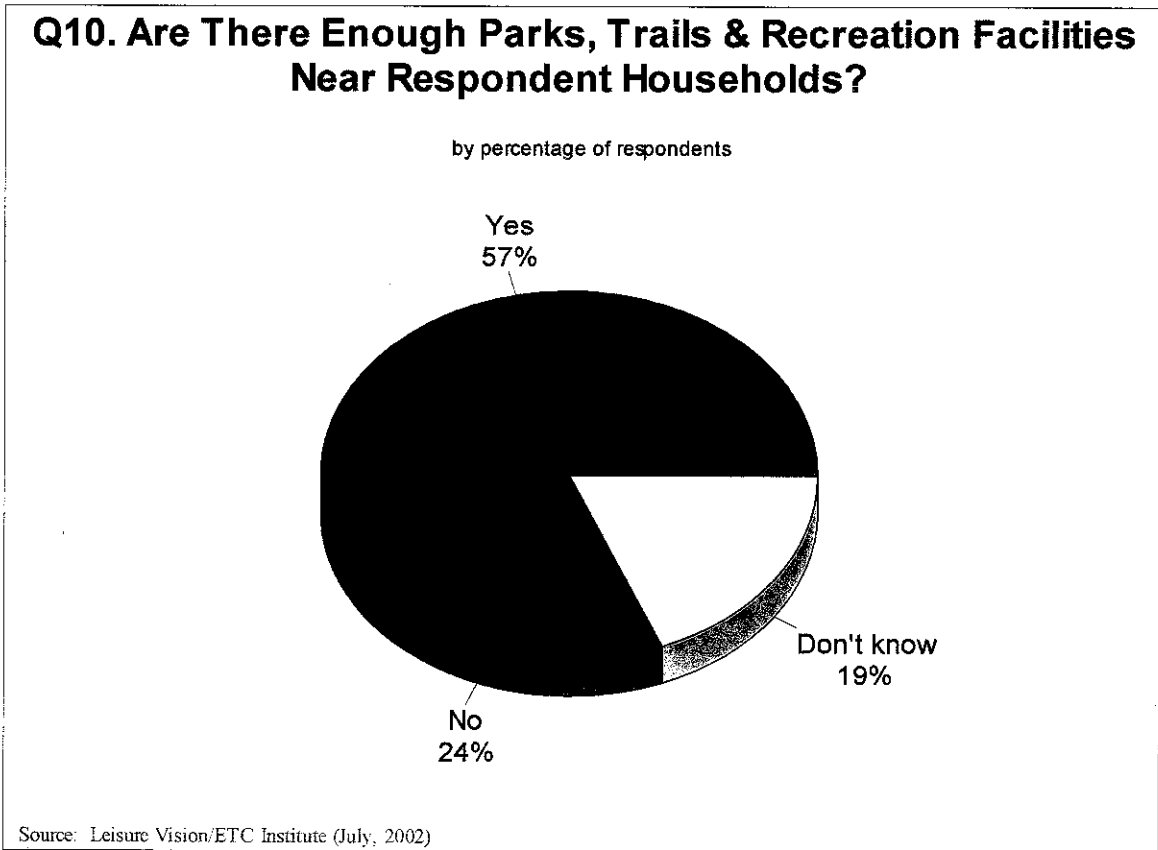
Well Maintained Park's Enhancement on the Property Value of Homes

Respondents were asked if they thought that well maintained parks enhance the property value of surrounding homes. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   **Nearly all (90%) respondents indicated that well maintained parks <u>do</u> enhance the property value of surrounding homes.** Only 2% indicated they <u>do not</u> enhance property value, and the remaining 8% indicated "don't know".

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

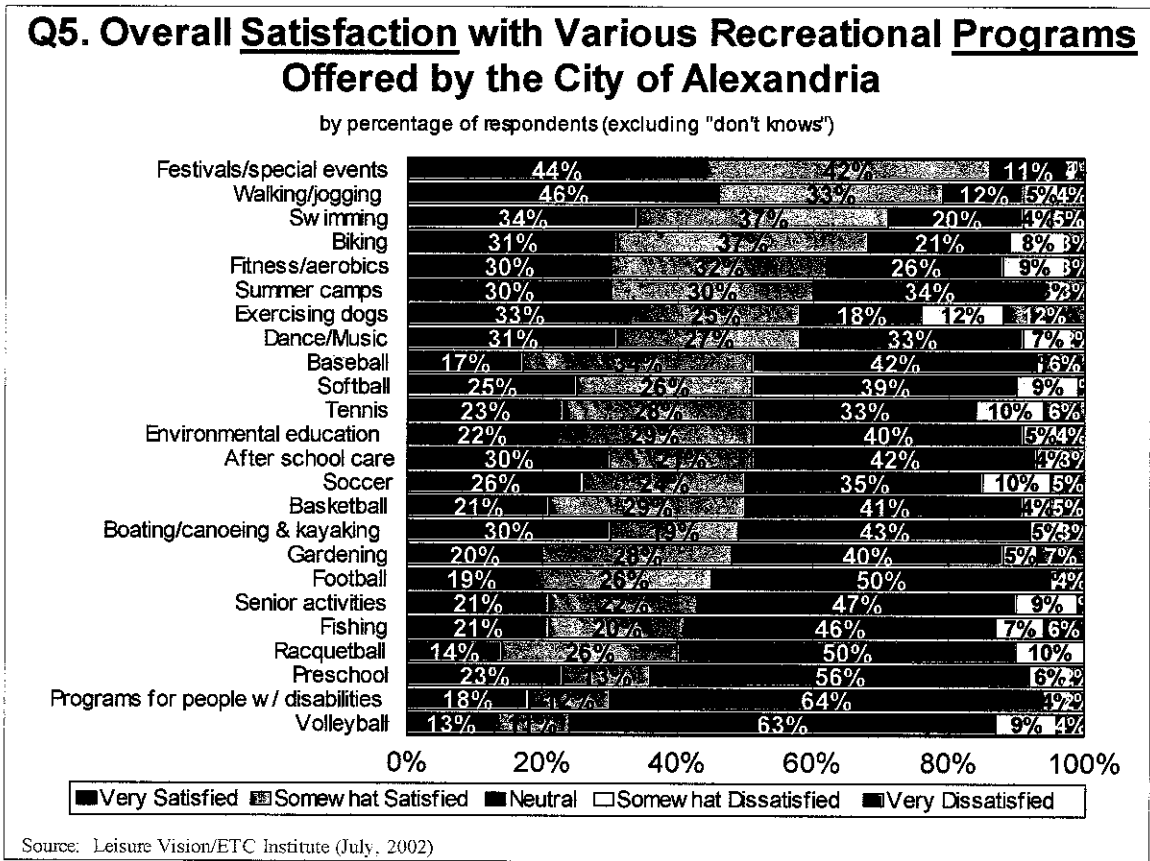by percentage of respondents

Yes 90%

Don't know 8%

No 2%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July 2002)
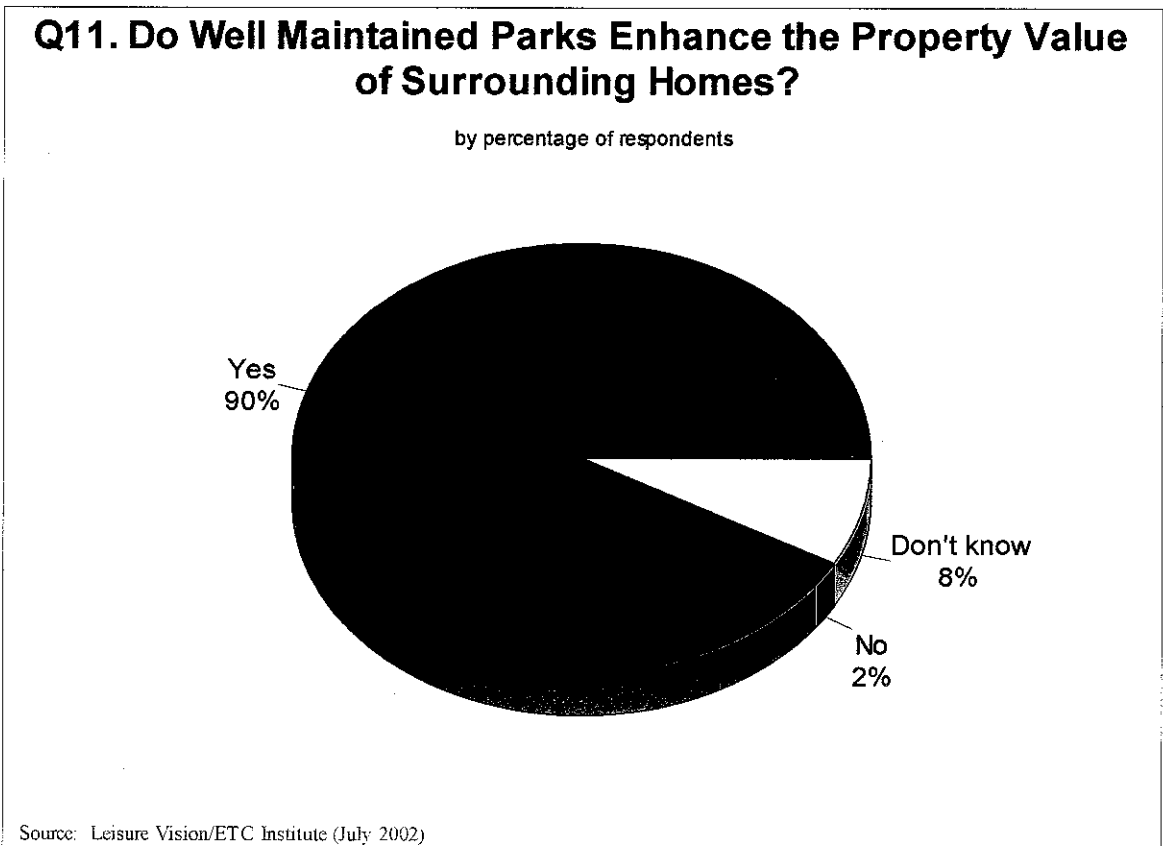
Satisfaction with Various Recreational Facilities

Based on a list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each one. The following summarizes key findings:
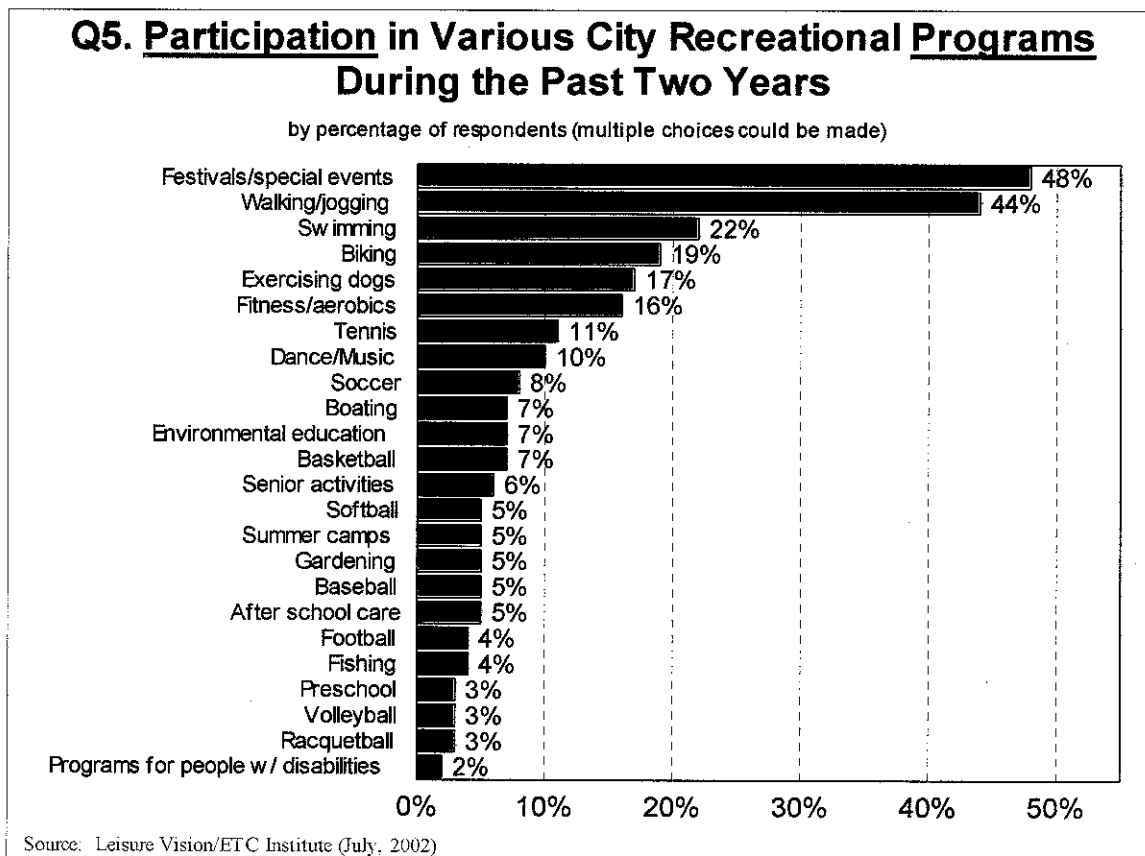
\#   **Walking and biking trails is the facility that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate they are either very satisfied   (38%) or somewhat satisfied (44%) with it.**   There are six other facilities that over two-thirds of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with.   They are: neighborhood parks (74%); natural resource parks (69%); multi use parks (69%); playgrounds for children (69%); indoor swimming centers (68%); and community recreation centers (67%).

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

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

Facility	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Walking and biking trails	38%	44%	8%	7%	3%
Neighborhood parks	31%	43%	15%	7%	4%
Natural resource parks	30%	39%	21%	7%	3%
Multi use parks	26%	43%	21%	8%	2%
Playgrounds for children	29%	40%	18%	8%	5%
Indoor swimming centers	34%	34%	21%	5%	6%
Community recreation centers	30%	37%	23%	5%	5%
Picnic facilities/shelters	27%	39%	21%	9%	4%
Cultural arts facilities	31%	35%	27%	4%	3%
Marina	28%	31%	28%	7%	6%
Softball fields	23%	32%	32%	10%	3%
Dog parks	23%	30%	23%	14%	10%
Youth baseball fields	23%	30%	35%	7%	5%
Soccer fields	23%	26%	29%	12%	10%
Lighted sports fields	22%	27%	33%	12%	6%
Tennis courts	16%	33%	27%	16%	8%
Athletic complexes	19%	29%	35%	11%	6%
Outdoor swimming facilities	18%	26%	34%	11%	11%
Football fields	22%	21%	48%	6%	3%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■Very Satisfied   ▨Somewhat Satisfied   ■Neutral   □Somewhat Dissatisfied   ■Very Dissatisfied

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

Usage of Various Recreational Facilities

From the list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, respondent were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household had used during the past two years. The following summarizes key findings:

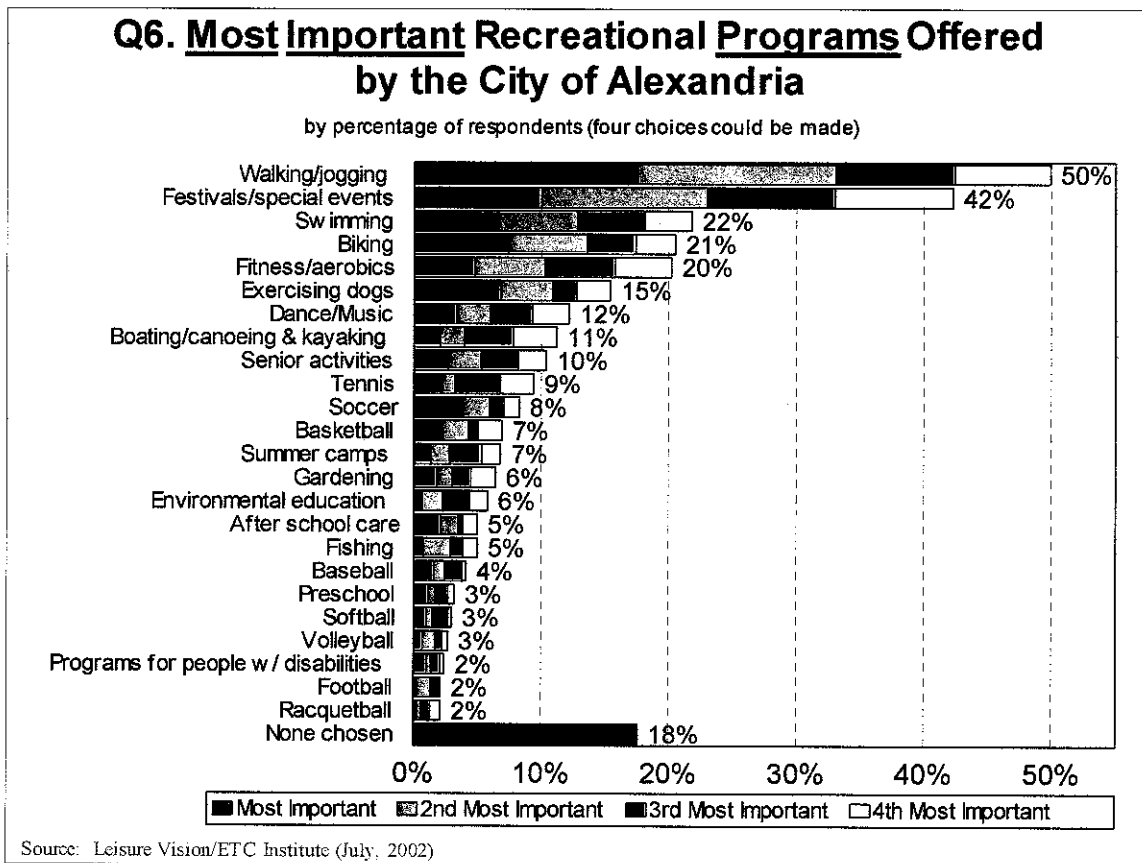\# **Walking and biking trails (61%) is the facility that the highest percentage of respondent households had used during the past two years.** There are three other facilities that over one-third of respondent households had used during the past two years. They are: neighborhood parks (54%); picnic facilities/shelters (36%); and multi use parks (34%).
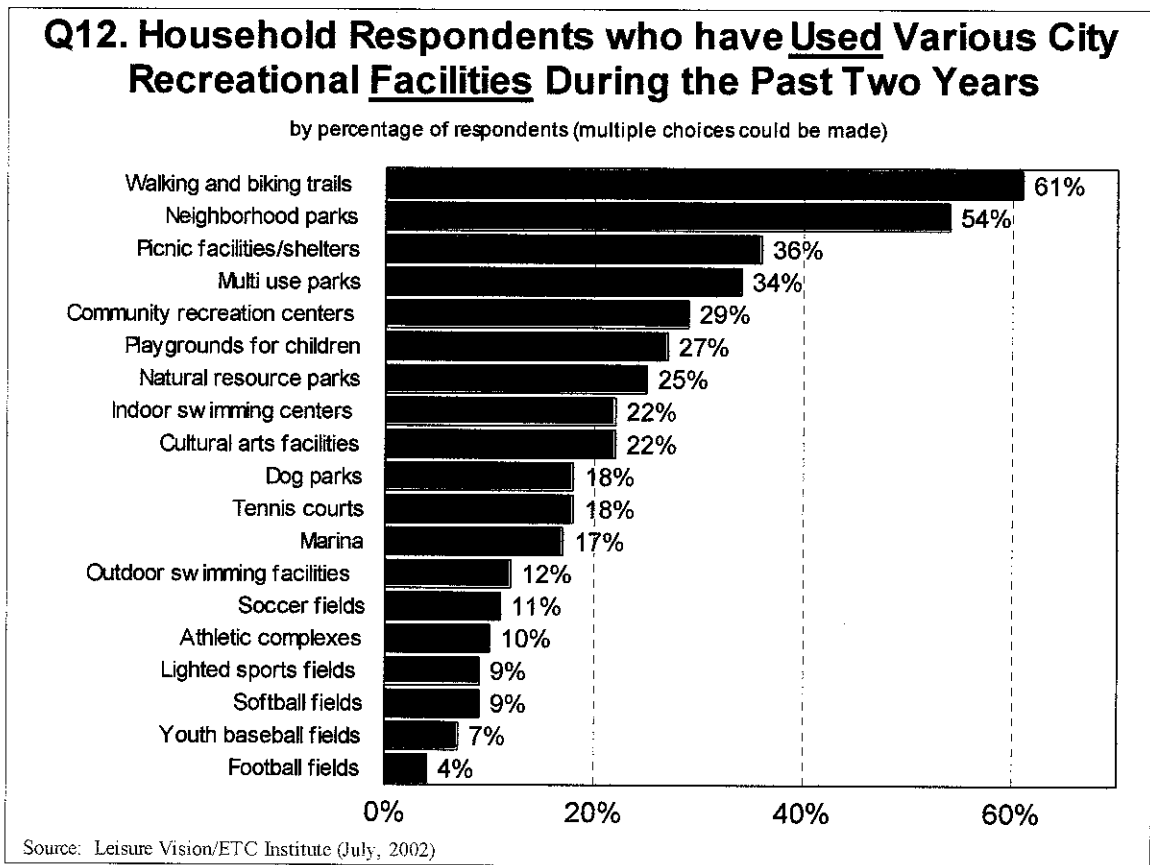
Q12. Household Respondents who have <u>Used</u> Various City Recreational <u>Facilities</u> During the Past Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Facility	Percentage
Walking and biking trails	61%
Neighborhood parks	54%
Picnic facilities/shelters	36%
Multi use parks	34%
Community recreation centers	29%
Playgrounds for children	27%
Natural resource parks	25%
Indoor swimming centers	22%
Cultural arts facilities	22%
Dog parks	18%
Tennis courts	18%
Marina	17%
Outdoor swimming facilities	12%
Soccer fields	11%
Athletic complexes	10%
Lighted sports fields	9%
Softball fields	9%
Youth baseball fields	7%
Football fields	4%

0%   20%   40%   60%

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

Most Important Recreational Facilities

From the list of 19 various recreational facilities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, respondents were asked to indicate the <u>four</u> that are most important to them and their household. The following summarizes key findings:
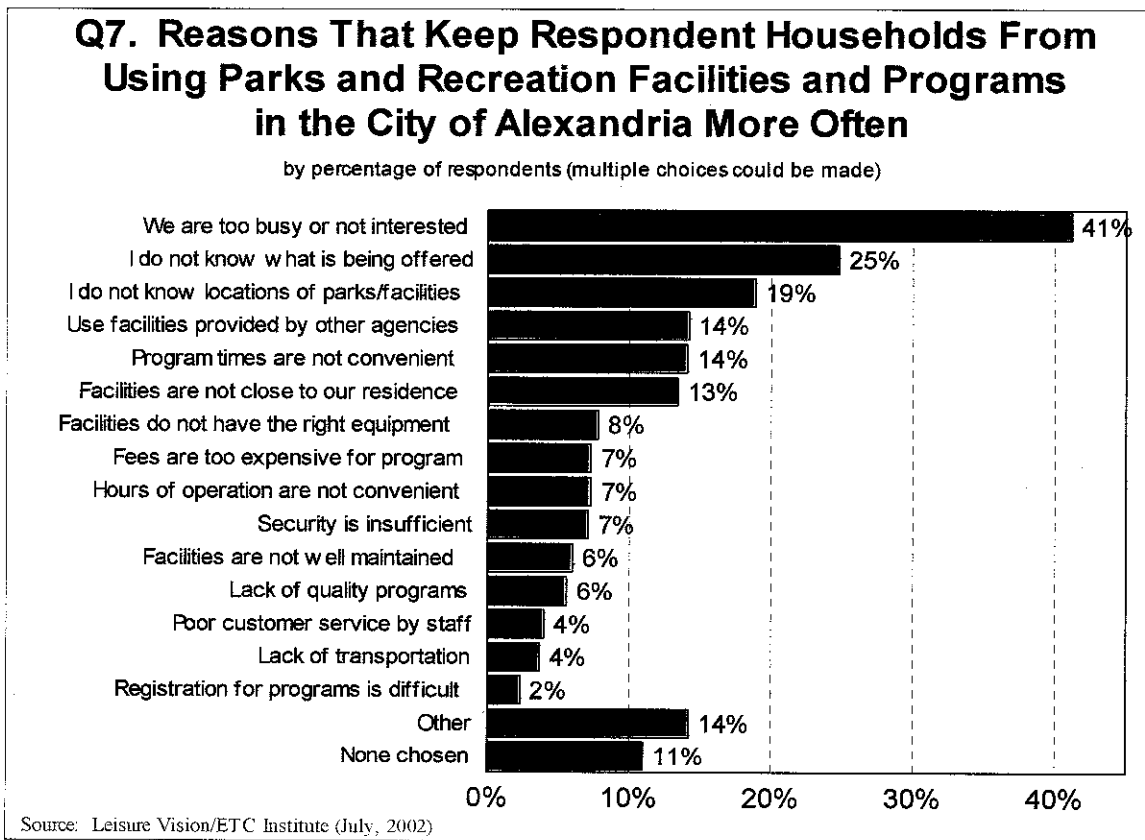
\#   **Walking and biking trails (55%) had the highest percentage of respondent households rate it as one of their top four most important facilities.** There are four other facilities that at least 20% of respondent households rated as one of their top four, including: neighborhood parks (40%); playgrounds for children (20%); picnic facilities (20%); and multi use parks (20%). It should also be noted that walking and biking trails received by a wide margin the most <u>first choices</u> as the most important facility.

Q13. <u>Most Important</u> Recreational <u>Facilities</u> Offered by the City of Alexandria

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

Facility	Percentage
Walking and biking trails	55%
Neighborhood parks	40%
Playgrounds for children	20%
Picnic facilities	20%
Multi use parks	20%
Indoor swimming centers	19%
Natural resource parks	16%
Community recreation centers	14%
Dog parks	14%
Cultural arts facilities	14%
Tennis courts	12%
Marina	10%
Athletic complexes	8%
Soccer fields	8%
Outdoor swimming facilities	7%
Youth baseball fields	4%
Softball fields	4%
Lighted sports fields	3%
Football fields	2%
None chosen	17%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

■ Most Important   ▩ 2nd Most Important   ■ 3rd Most Important   □ 4th Most Important

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

Various Options for Acquiring and Developing Open Space

Based on a list of 7 various options regarding acquiring and developing open space for parks and recreation purposes, respondents were asked which two options they and members of their household would support the most. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Nearly half (44%) of respondents indicated that open space should be acquired and <u>dedicated for natural resource purposes</u>.** Other open space options that a high percentage of respondent households indicated as one of the two they would most support include: open space should be acquired and developed for <u>both passive and active uses</u> (42%); and open space should be acquired and <u>developed for passive usage</u> (36%).

Q14. Open Space Options for Parks and Recreation Purposes that Respondent Households Support Most

by percentage of respondents (two choices could be made)

Option	Percentage
Open space should be acquired and <u>dedicated for natural resource purposes</u>	44%
Open space should be acquired and developed <u>for both passive & active uses</u>	42%
Open space should be acquired and <u>developed for passive usage</u>	36%
Open space should be acquired and <u>left undeveloped for future parks and recreation purposes</u>	24%
Open space should be acquired and <u>developed for historic purposes</u>	16%
Open space should be acquired and <u>developed for active youth & adult sports</u>	13%
<u>No new open space should be acquired</u>	5%

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

Do Parks Provide Economic Benefits to the City of Alexandria

Respondents were asked if they thought that parks provide economic benefits to the City of Alexandria. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   **Over three-fourths (78%) of respondents indicated that parks <u>do</u> provide economic benefit to the City of Alexandria.** Only 7% indicated that parks <u>do not</u> provide economic benefit, and the remaining 15% indicated "don't know".

Q15. Do Parks Provide <u>Economic</u> <u>Benefits</u> to the City of Alexandria?

by percentage of respondents

Yes
78%

Don't
15%

No
7%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)
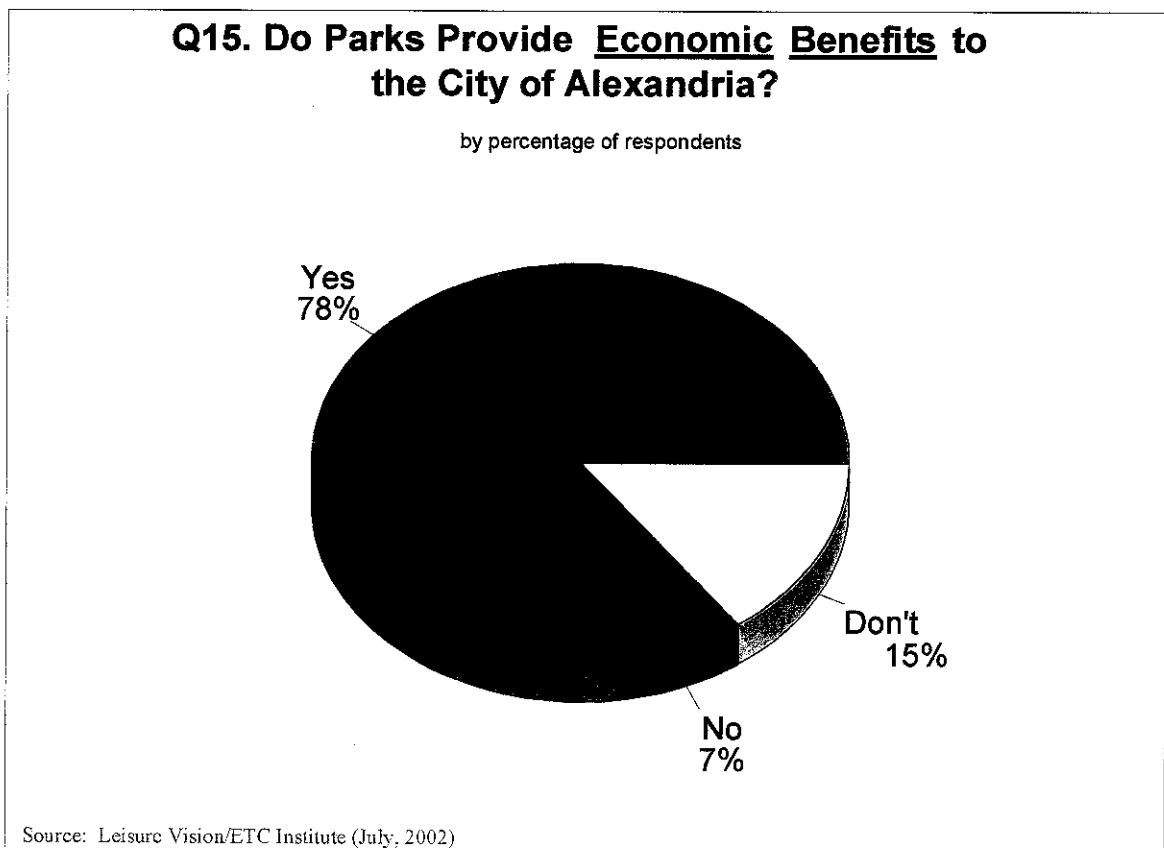
Support for Users of Recreation Programs Paying User Fees

Respondents were asked how supportive they would be of having users of recreation programs and special events pay user fees to help support the costs to offer and operate these programs and events. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Nearly three-fourths of respondents were either very supportive (28%) or somewhat supportive (44%) of having users of recreation programs and special events pay user fees.** Thirteen percent (13%) were not supportive, and the remaining 15% indicated "don't know".

Q16. Support for Having Users of Recreation Programs and Special Events Pay User Fees to Help Support the Costs to Offer and Operate these Programs

by percentage of respondents

Very 28%

Somewhat 44%

Not 13%

Don't 15%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)
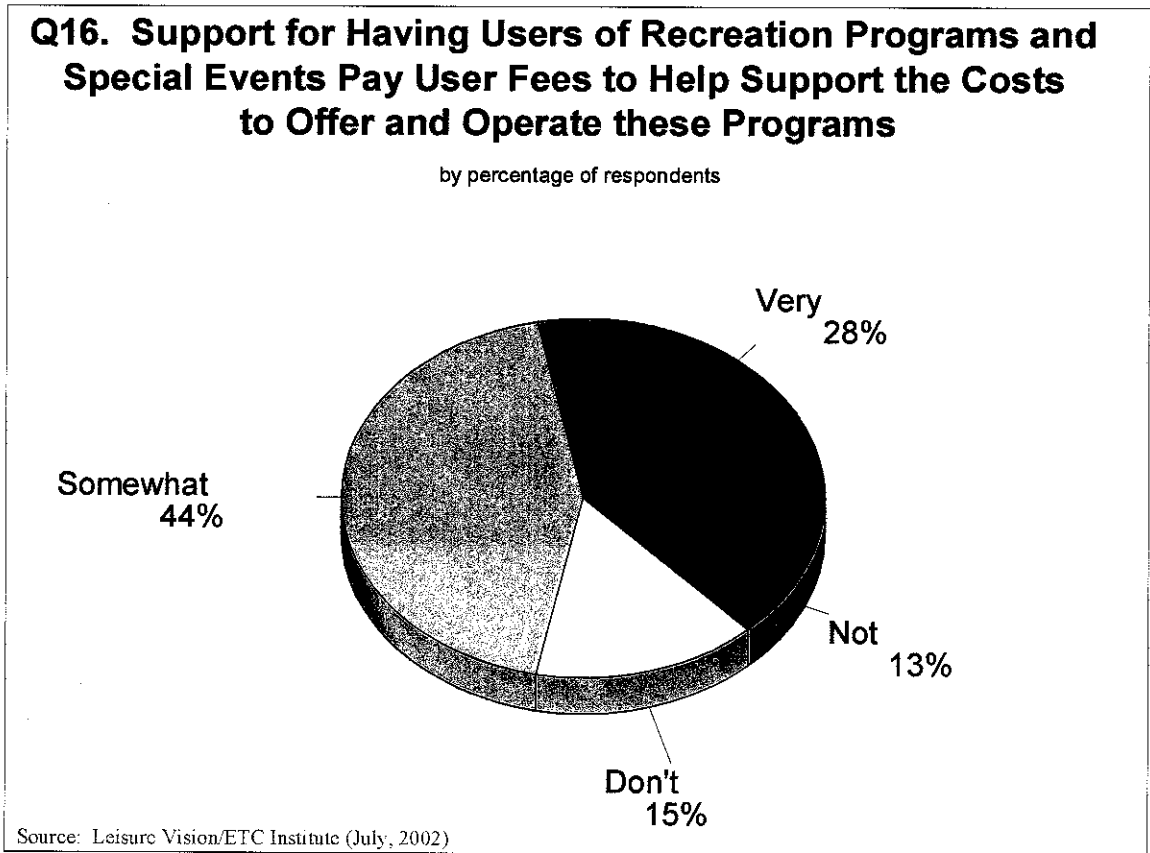
Importance of Developing Various New Parks and Recreational Facilities

Based on a list of 16 various new parks and recreational facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each one. The following summarizes key findings:

\#   Multipurpose trails had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as either very important (63%) or somewhat important (29%) to develop and maintain. There are five other new parks and facilities that over 80% of respondents indicated as being either very important or somewhat important to develop and maintain. They are: acquire properties for developing new parks (88%); multipurpose youth/adult athletic fields (82%); acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (82%); indoor wellness and fitness facility (82%); and indoor recreation activity spaces (81%).

Q17. Importance of Developing and Maintaining Various<u>New</u> Parks & Recreation Facilities for City of Alexandria Citizens

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

Facility	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Multipurpose trails	63%	29%	8%
Acquire properties for developing new parks	50%	38%	12%
Multipurpose youth/adult athletic fields	36%	46%	18%
Acquire & enhance historical areas & facilities	38%	44%	18%
Indoor wellness and fitness facility	42%	40%	18%
Indoor recreation activity spaces	33%	48%	19%
Nature/environmental center	33%	43%	24%
Improved access to streams and rivers	33%	40%	27%
Indoor running/walking track	31%	37%	32%
Dog park	26%	33%	41%
Outdoor pools with special recreation features	20%	37%	43%
Outdoor track	19%	38%	43%
Indoor warm water family aquatic center	22%	31%	47%
Indoor cold water pool	17%	35%	48%
Roller skating rink	13%	31%	56%
Skateboarding/in-line skating facilities	11%	33%	56%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Very Important   ▨ Somewhat Important   ■ Not Important

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

New Parks and Facilities Respondents Would Use Most

Based on the list of 16 various <u>new</u> parks and recreation facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to indicate which <u>four</u> they and members of their household would use most. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Multipurpose trails (57%) had by a wide margin the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities that they and members of their household would use most.** Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondent households indicated they would use most include: indoor wellness and fitness facility (31%); acquire properties for developing new parks (24%); nature/environmental center (24%); indoor running/walking track (23%); and acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (23%). It should also be noted that multipurpose trails received by a wide margin the most <u>first choices</u> as the park/facility that respondent households would use most.

Q18. The New Parks & Recreation Facilities that Respondent Households Would <u>Use</u> <u>Most</u> if they were Built

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

Facility	Percentage
Multipurpose trails	57%
Indoor wellness and fitness facility	31%
Acquire properties for developing new parks	24%
Nature/environmental center	24%
Indoor running/walking track	23%
Acquire and enhance historical areas & facilities	23%
Improved access to streams and rivers	20%
Multipurpose youth/adult athletic fields	19%
Indoor recreation activity spaces	17%
Indoor warm water family aquatic center	16%
Dog park	15%
Outdoor pools with special recreation features	14%
Outdoor track	8%
Roller skating rink	7%
Indoor cold water pool	5%
Skateboarding/in-line skating facilities	4%
Other	7%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

■ Used most often   ■ Second most often   ☐ Third most often   ■ Fourth most often

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

New Parks and Facilities Most Willing to Support with Tax Dollars

Based on the list of 16 various <u>new</u> parks and recreation facilities that the City of Alexandria could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to indicate which <u>four</u> they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Multipurpose trails (52%) had by a wide margin the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars.** Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondents indicated they would support with tax dollars include: indoor wellness and fitness facility (27%); acquire properties for developing new parks (27%); acquire and enhance historical areas and facilities (24%); and nature/environmental center (23%). It should also be noted that multipurpose trails received by a wide margin the most <u>first choices</u> as the park/facility that respondents would be most willing to support with their tax dollars.

Q19. The New Parks & Recreation Facilities that Respondent Households Would <u>Support</u> <u>Most</u> with their <u>Tax</u> <u>Dollars</u>

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

Facility	Percentage
Multipurpose trails	52%
Indoor wellness and fitness facility	27%
Acquire properties for developing new parks	27%
Acquire & enhance historical areas & facilities	24%
Nature/environmental center	23%
Multipurpose youth/adult athletic fields	21%
Indoor running/walking track	20%
Improved access to streams and rivers	19%
Indoor recreation activity spaces	16%
Indoor warm water family aquatic center	14%
Dog Parks	14%
Outdoor pools with special recreation features	11%
Outdoor track	7%
Roller skating rink	7%
Indoor cold water pool	5%
Skateboarding/in-line skating facilities	4%
Other	7%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

■Support Most ■Support 2nd Most □Support 3rd Most ■Support 4th Most

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

Best Ways to Develop Indoor Recreation Programming Space

Based on a list of 4 options, respondents were asked which two they thought best described the way the City of Alexandria should develop indoor recreation programming space to serve youth, teens, families, seniors, and individuals. The following summarizes key findings:

\# **Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated that the City of Alexandria should develop a multi-generational indoor center that serves all ages.** Thirty-one percent (31%) indicated that the City should develop a special Teen Center to be used only by teens, and 26% indicated that the City should develop a special Senior Center to be used only by seniors. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that no new indoor recreation programming spaces are needed in the City of Alexandria.

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)

- Develop a multi-generational indoor center that serves ALL AGES — 66%
- Develop a special Teen Center to be used ONLY BY TEENS — 31%
- Develop a special Senior Center to be used ONLY BY SENIORS — 26%
- None, No NEW INDOOR RECREATION programming spaces are needed — 20%

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

DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. Demographics: Number of People in Household

by percentage of respondents

One
33%

Two
39%

Five+
6%

Four
11%

Three
12%
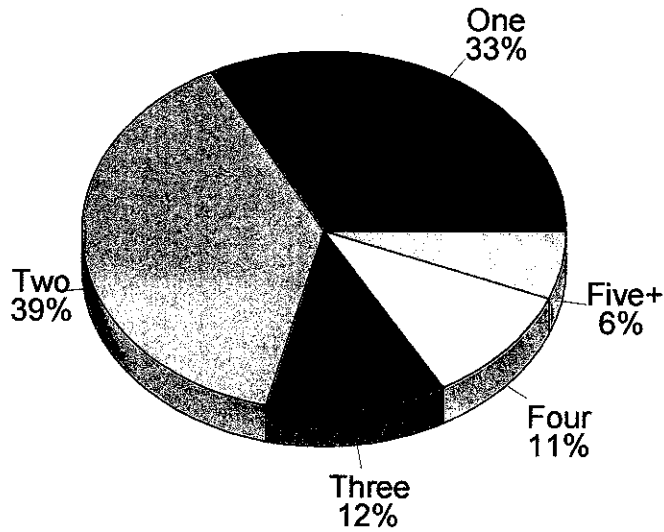
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q2. Demographics: Ages of People in Household

by percentage of household occupants

20-24
5%

25-34
18%

15-19
5%

10-14
5%

5-9
5%

Under 5
5%

35-44
18%

65+
9%

45-54
18%

55-64
14%
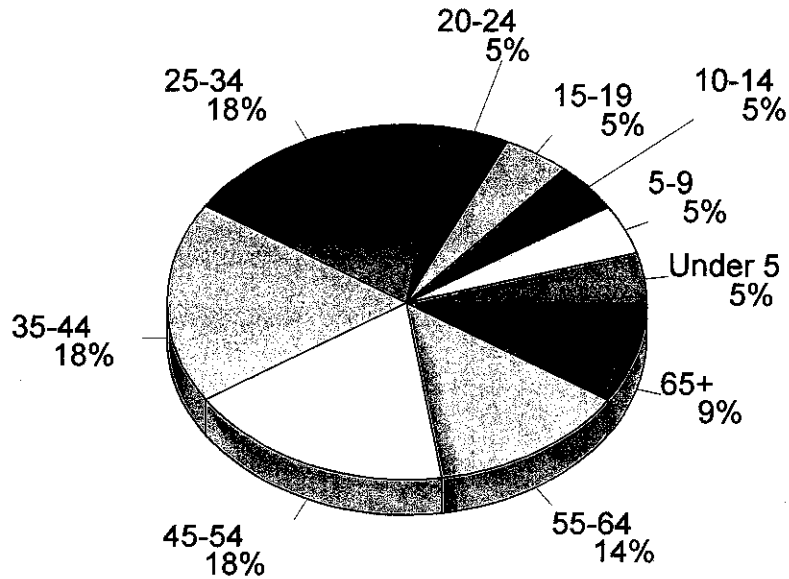
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q21. Demographics: Zip Code

by percentage of respondents

22304
31%

22314
29%

22301
12%

22311
2%

22302
13%

22305
13%
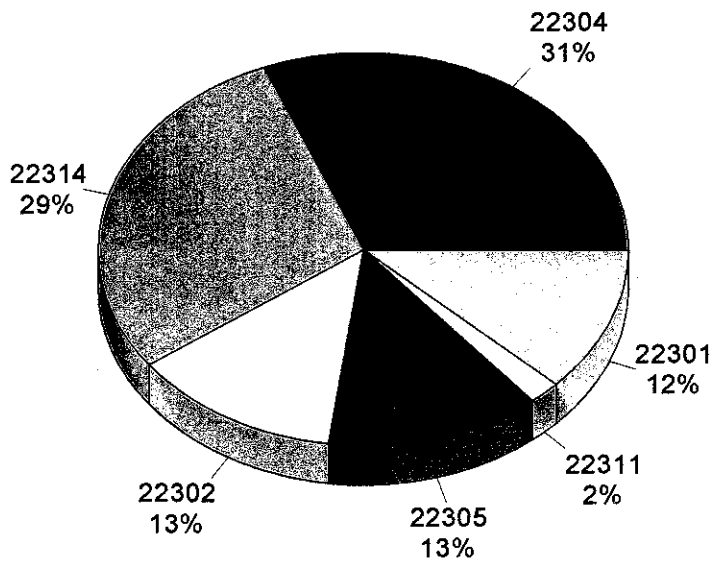
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q23. Demographics: Age

by percentage of respondents

35-44 years
23%

25-34 years
19%

Under 25
3%

45-54 years
23%

65+ years
14%

55-64 years
18%
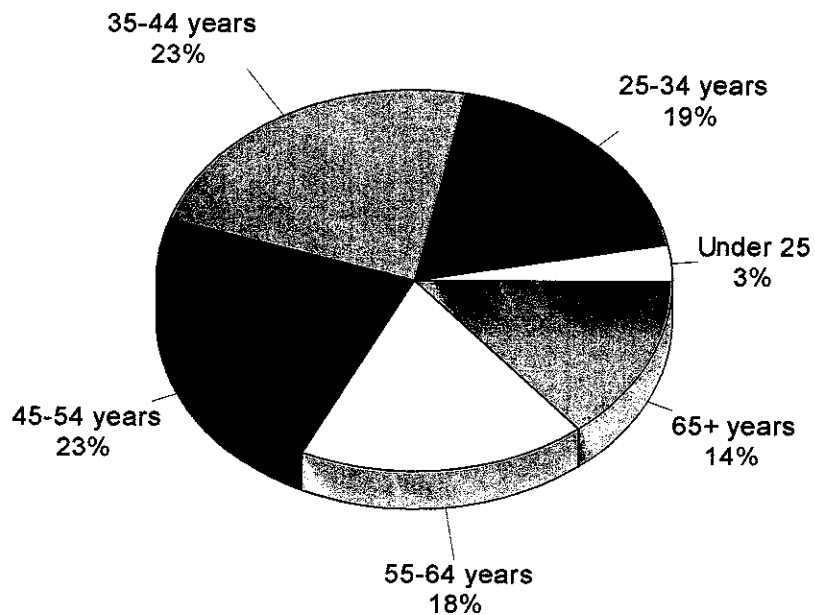
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q24. Demographics: Gender

by percentage of respondents

Male
41%

Female
59%
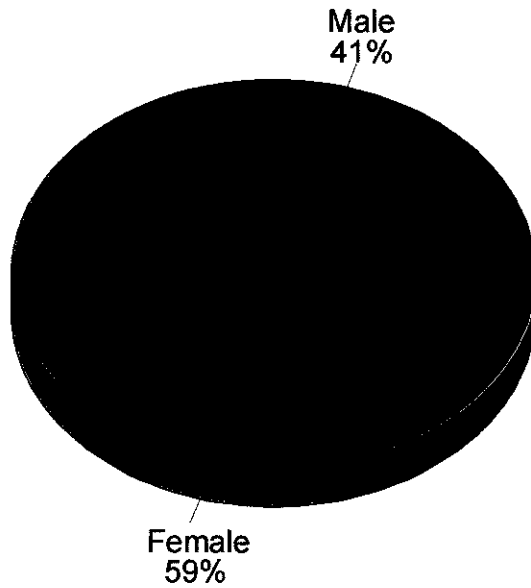
Q25. Demographics: Years Lived in Alexandria

by percentage of respondents

4 years
7%

3 years
10%

5 years
7%

2 years
8%

6-10 years
15%

1 year
7%

11-15
12%

31+ years
16%

16-20
7%

21-30
13%

Leon Younger & PROS
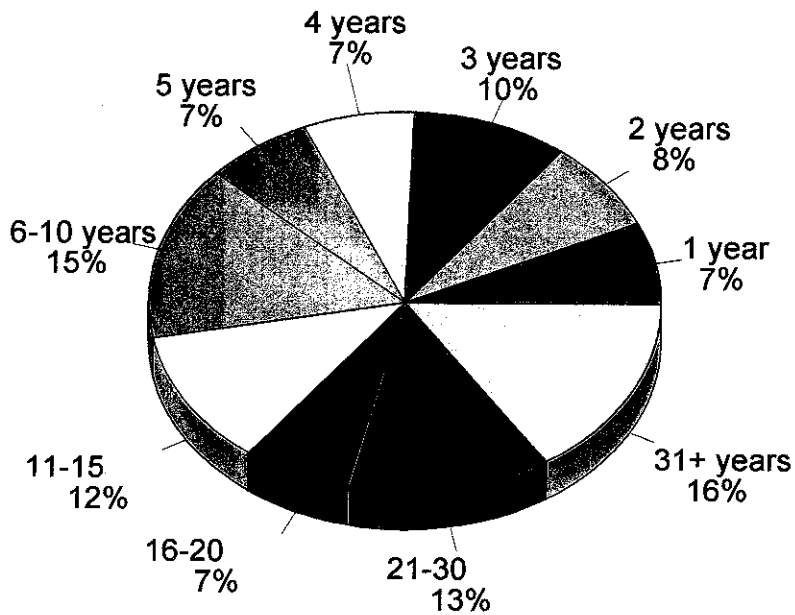
Q26. Demographics: Do Respondents have a Dog in their Household

by percentage of respondents

Yes
21%

No answer
1%

No
78%
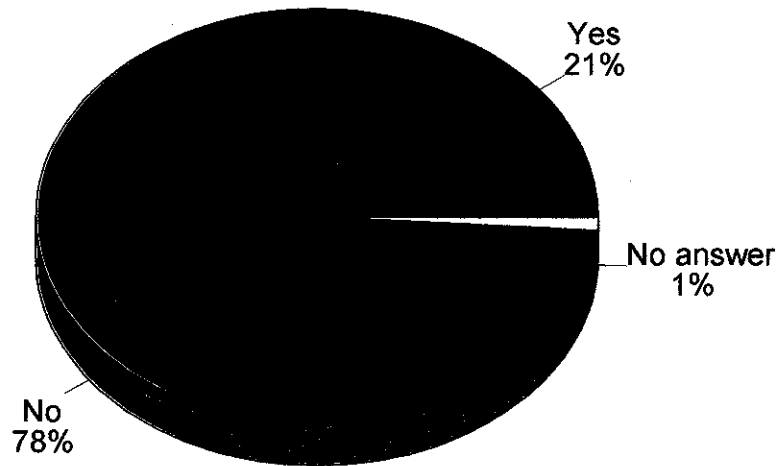
Q27. Demographics: Are Members of Household of Hispanic, Latino, or other Spanish Ancestry

by percentage of respondents

Yes
12%

No answer
1%

No
87%

Leon Younger & PROS
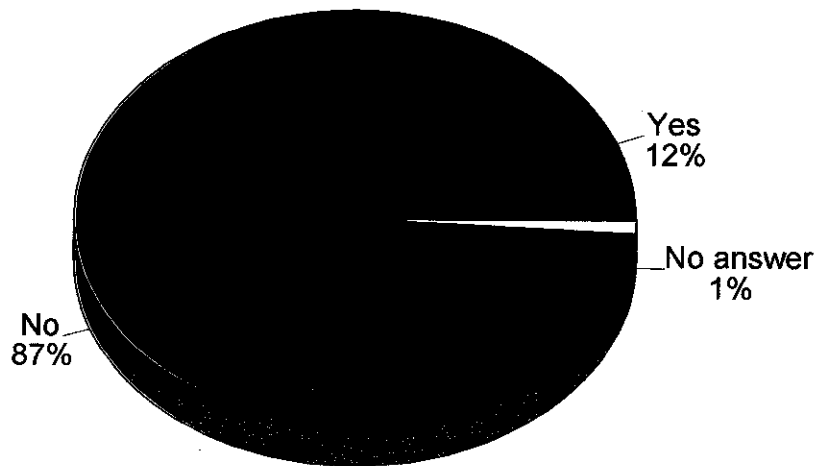
Q28. Demographics: Total Annual Household Income

by percentage of respondents

$50,000 to
17%

$25,000 to
15%

$75,000 to
14%

Under
5%

Prefer not to
19%

$100,000
29%
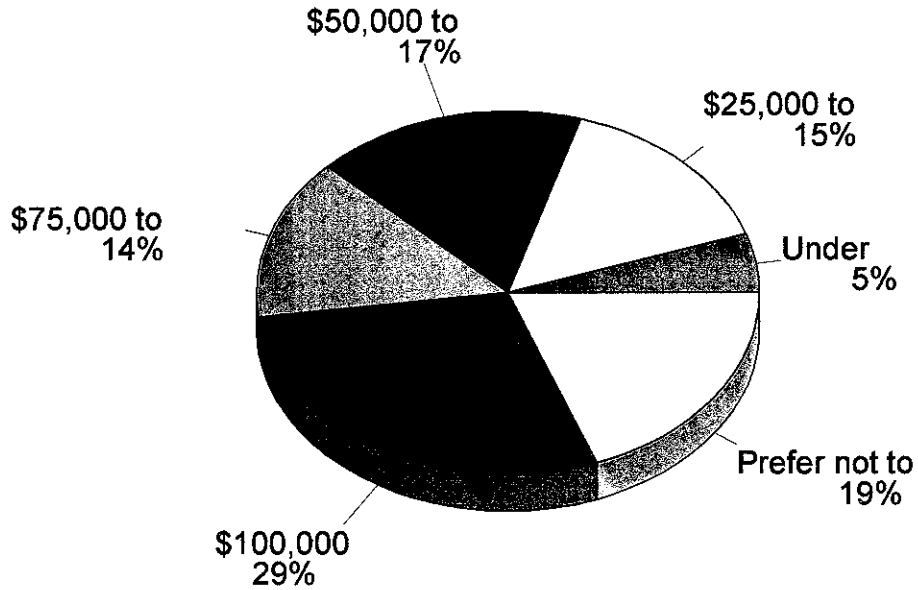
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q29. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents

White
63%

Other
5%

Asian
4%

Black/African American
16%

Hispanic
12%
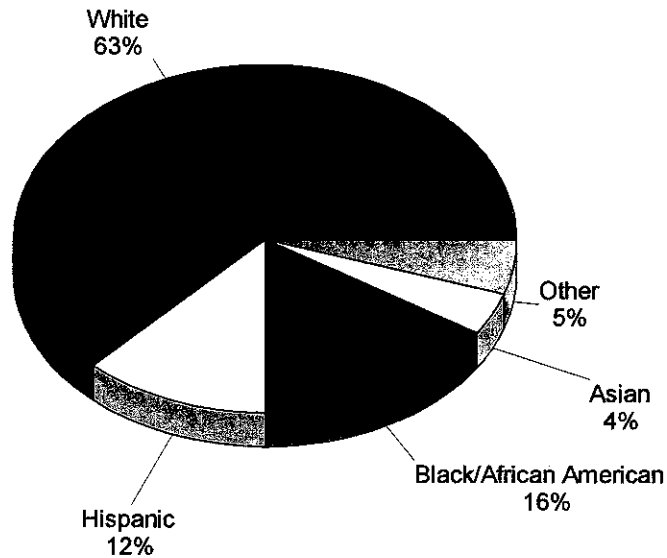
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

DEMOGRAPHICS ANALYSIS REPORT

Introduction to process

Understanding the demographic environment of a community is important for a variety of reasons. First, it enables you to understand the market area being served and to distinguish between the different customer groups. It also enables you to determine changes that are occurring in the area in order to make proactive decisions to accommodate these shifts. This provides for an agency to achieve flexibility as citizen's wants and needs change as they age. Additionally, this information equips the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities to consider their own objectives and resources in relationship to their demographic makeup.

Methodology

The US Census Bureau provides the population data for 1990 and 2000. The demographic projections for 2001 and 2006 is provided by Claritas, Inc. a national firm specializing in population projections and market trends reports. For this project, the areas analyzed were the City of Alexandria and the three planning areas in which the city has been divided. The raw projection data is supplied by Claritas. We then put it into tables, charts and graphs to clarify the market segments and recognize shifts. Clarita's is unsurpassed in the reliability of their demographic projections. Claritas draws on the largest number of post-census population and household data sources in the industry to create its annual current year update estimates and five-year projections. Contributing data comes from the Bureau of the

Census and other federal agencies like the Bureau of Labor Statistics, city and regional planning agencies as well as private sources. They contact about 1,600 organizations to acquire data for use in their projections. Claritas' estimates are grounded in the most authoritative localized sources that can be found. Ultimately, the Claritas' multi-step, multi-source methodology is the incorporation of the most accurate input at all levels of geography.

Key Issues and Findings

- The population is steadily increasing. The City of Alexandria 1990 population was at 111,183. Census 2000 has the population at 128,283. The estimated 2001 population is 129,339 and projected to increase to 135,748 by the year 2006. This is an increase of approximately 15.4% from the 1990 to 2000 Census. The increase from the 2001 estimate to 2006 is 5%, which is estimated to be 6,409 persons over the next 5-year period.

- All planning areas are projected to increase in population. Planning Area III is to increase the most with a 6.9% jump from the 2001 estimate to 2006. Planning Area I will increase 3.4% from 2001 through 2006, and Planning Area II will increase 1.9% from 2001 to 2006.

- By the year 2006, Planning Area III will contain the highest percentage of the Alexandria population at 58%. Planning Area II and I are estimated to contain 29% and 13% respectively.

- From 2001 to 2006, the highest percentage increases in the overall

- Alexandria population are occurring in the age groups of 15-17 at 42.6%, 55-59 at 37%, and 60-64 at 22.2%. American Demographics magazine states that Generation Y, also known as the Echo Boomers born between 1977 and 1994, has been heralded as the next big generation. The aging of the baby boomers, who account for the highest amount of the American population, impact the growth in the older age groups. According to the 2000 Census, the Washington-Baltimore CMSA has the second greatest population share (32%) of Baby Boomers and Post Baby Boomers among 102 metros with populations greater than 400,000.

- In Planning Area I, from 2001 to 2006, the highest percentage increases in the population are occurring in the age groups of 55-59 at 29.2%, 15-17 at 28.7%, and 60-64 at 19.0%.

- In Planning Area III, from 2001 to 2006, the highest percentage increases in the population are occurring in the age groups of 15-17 at 53.6%, 55-59 at 40.5%, and 60-64 at 21.5%.

- In Planning Area II, from 2001 to 2006, the highest percentage increases in the population are occurring in the age groups of 55-59 at 34.7%, 15-17 at 30.1%, and 65-69 at 26.3%.

- The median age of the area is increasing from 34.4 (Census 2000) to 39.2 (2006 projection).

- Alexandria is an affluent community. The median household income is estimated at $86,721 and the per capita income is $52,218 for 2006.

Almost half of the census tracts have median incomes greater than $100,000.

- The three highest income levels have changed considerably since the 1990 Census. The household incomes are projected to continue to increase. By 2006, the $50,000-$74,999 income level will be mostly comprised of 25-34 year olds. The $75,000-$99,999 will be comprised of 35-44 year olds. The $100,000 or more will be mostly comprised of 45-54 year olds.

Rank	1990 Census	2001 Estimate	2006 Projected
Highest	$35 - 49,999	$50 - 74,999	$100 - 149,999
Second	$50 - 74,999	$75 - 99,999	$150 - 499,999
Third	$25 - 34,999	$100 - 149,999	$75 - 99,999

- Based on household incomes by planning areas, Area I is projected to have the higher income levels of $100,000 and above (56%). Area III is projected to have a higher percentage of households with incomes less than $35,000 (14.8%).

- The City of Alexandria is rated as the third highest area for single affluent women age 25-34 and second for single affluent men ages 25-34, according to data from Easy Analytical Software, Inc.

- The Alexandria population is a racially diverse community, one of the most diverse jurisdictions in the Northern Virginia region. Since the 1990 Census, the white population has decreased from 64% to a projected 52% in 2006. Black/African Americans (as categorized by the Census Bureau) have been slowly increasing from 22% in 1990 to 24% by 2006. The Hispanic population is expected to continue to increase, from 10% in 1990 to 16% by 2006. Asians have also been increasing from 4% in 1990 to 7% by 2006. The rest of the city is comprised of a mixture of other races that is projected to remain stable at 1%.

- By 2006, Planning Area III is projected to be the most diverse in its racial makeup whereas Planning Area I is projected to be the least diverse with 80% of the population being comprised of whites.

- The size of households is stabilized. The average household size remained the same from 1990 to 2000 at 2.04 people per household. It is projected that Alexandria's household sizes will slightly increase to 2.07 people per household from 2001 through 2006.

- The number of households is increasing. Alexandria is projected to have the number of households increase from a 2001 estimate of 61,357 to 64,363 by the year 2006. This is an increase of about 5%. The 2000 Census indicates that the 64,251 housing units are categorized as follows:
  - 32% are single family or townhouses
  - 22% are condominiums
  - 46.2% are rental apartments

Full Findings Report

City of Alexandria Population

Ages	1990 Census	2000 Census	2001 Estimated	2006 Projected	% Change 01-06
Under 5 yrs	6,357	7,962	6,257	6,233	-0.4
Age 5 - 9	4,529	5,953	6,691	6,521	-2.5
Ages 10 - 14	3,850	4,722	7,247	7,061	-2.6
Ages 15 - 17	2,510	2,843	3,023	4,310	42.6
Ages 18 - 20	3,265	3,880	2,205	2,452	11.2
Ages 21 - 24	9,612	7,935	6,801	5,432	-20.1
Ages 25 - 29	16,636	32,571 (25-34)	13,195	12,225	-7.4
Ages 30 - 34	13,386		13,107	12,939	-1.3
Ages 35 - 39	10,758	23,186 (35-44)	12,475	12,618	1.1
Ages 40 - 44	9,439		12,836	12722	-0.9
Ages 45 - 49	6,713	17,641 (45-54)	10,779	12,184	13.0
Ages 50 - 54	4,895		8,995	10,282	14.3
Ages 55 - 59	4,075	6,117	6,342	8,686	37.0
Ages 60 - 64	3,786	3,868	4,988	6,096	22.2
Ages 65 - 69	3,575	5,695 (65-74)	3,987	4,719	18.4
Ages 70 - 74	2,832		3,443	3,694	7.3
Ages 75 +	4,965	5,910	6,968	7,574	8.7
Total	**111,183**	**128,283**	**129,339**	**135,748**	**5.0**
Median Age	**33.3**	**34.4**	**37.5**	**39.2**	

Total Population 1990 Census – Census 2000 – 2001 Estimate - 2006 Projected

Year	Population
2006	135,748
2001	129,339
2000	128,283
1990	111,183

10,000   30,000   50,000   70,000   90,000   110,000   130,000   150,000
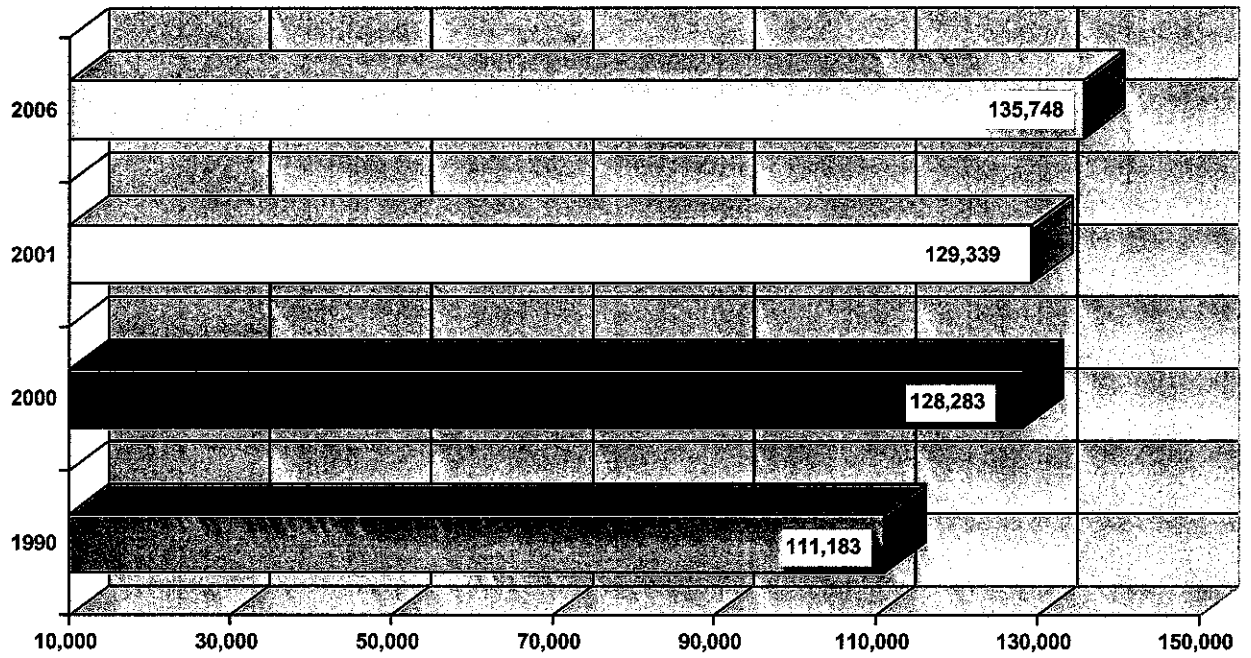
Alexandria Population by Age Groups

1990 Census
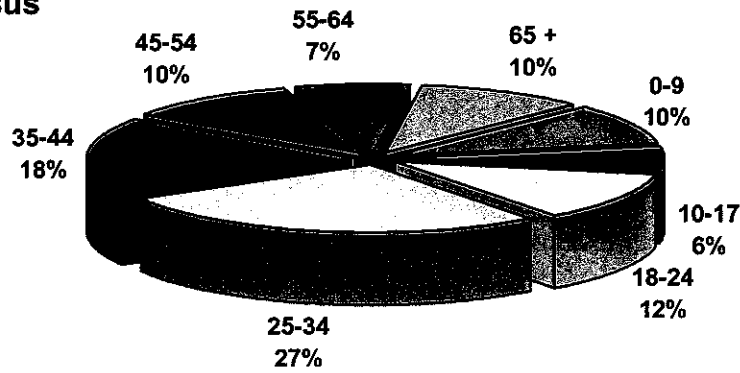
- 45-54: 10%
- 55-64: 7%
- 65 +: 10%
- 0-9: 10%
- 35-44: 18%
- 10-17: 6%
- 18-24: 12%
- 25-34: 27%

2001 Estimate

- 55-64: 9%
- 65 +: 11%
- 45-54: 15%
- 0-9: 10%
- 10-17: 8%
- 35-44: 20%
- 18-24: 7%
- 25-34: 20%

2006 Projected

- 55-64: 11%
- 65 +: 12%
- 45-54: 17%
- 0-9: 9%
- 10-17: 8%
- 18-24: 6%
- 35-44: 19%
- 25-34: 18%
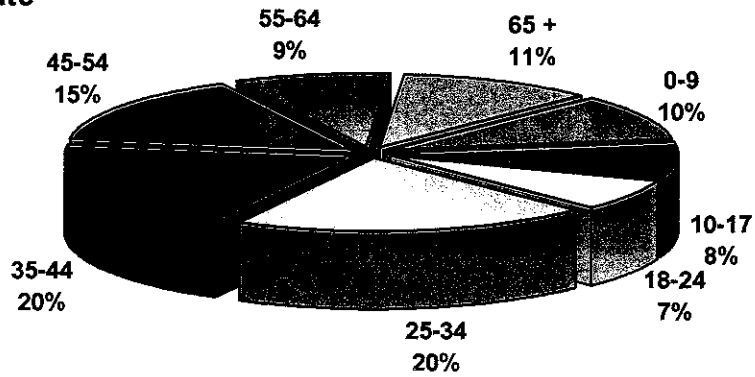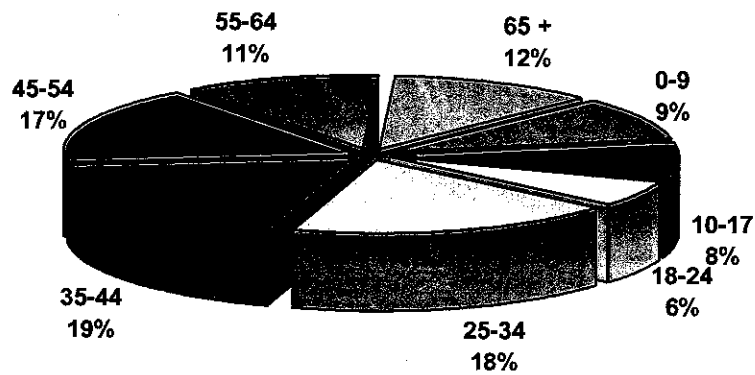
City and Census Tracts	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	2006 Projected Population
Alexandria	64,363	$86,721	$52,218	135,748
2001.02	1,793	$85,006	$42,857	4,097
2001.04	1,605	$66,688	$31,084	3,564
2001.05	2,960	$42,026	$30,376	4,365
2001.97	3,167	$79,161	$35,236	7,322
2001.98	3,963	$85,698	$44,793	8,246
2002.01	2,058	$95,543	$68,814	3,625
2002.02	525	$276,580	$134,886	1,501
2003.01	1,985	$92,083	$48,800	4,072
2003.02	1,324	$129,598	$54,051	3,796
2003.03	3,067	$67,517	$40,199	5,182
2004.01	4,733	$70,370	$36,203	9,614
2004.02	4,464	$70,646	$40,821	8,621
2005.00	2,783	$79,859	$50,923	4,390
2006.00	1,821	$95,078	$40,973	4,772
2007.98	2,406	$86,671	$47,166	5,192
2008.01	965	$139,113	$63,123	2,518
2008.02	1,450	$123,370	$71,517	3,084
2009.00	172	$178,242	$83,086	4,653
2010.00	1,683	$79,407	$51,899	2,616
2011.00	1,170	$132,895	$59,771	2,736
2012.02	1,313	$101,677	$45,382	3,286
2012.03	2,918	$69,167	$26,544	7,939

*These figures are rounded up.

Census Tracts	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	2006 Projected Population
2012.04	1,241	$78,595	$35,636	3,019
2013.00	1,027	$98,994	$41,277	2,740
2014.00	1,646	$107,746	$56,308	3,727
2015.00	1,313	$182,861	$81,988	3,412
2016.00	1,690	$101,600	$49,595	4,389
2018.01	3,110	$101,233	$68,529	5,083
2018.02	873	$175,130	$106,519	1,878
2019.00	698	$159,677	$104,481	1,550
2020.01	1,036	$211,628	$171,351	2,193
2020.02	1,790	$84,786	$67,992	2,558
2025.98	4	$333,333	$112,427	8

Median Household Income: Average of the total money received in the stated calendar year by all household members that are 15 years of age or older.

Per Capita Income: Average amount of income per person in a population, regardless of age.

1990 Racial Population

Hispanic 10%

Asian 4%

Black/African Am. 22%

Other 0%

White 64%

2001 Racial Population

Hispanic 15%

Asian 6%

Black/African Am. 23%

Other 1%

White 55%

2006 Projected Racial Population

Hispanic 16%

Asian 7%

Black/African Am. 24%

Other 1%

White 52%
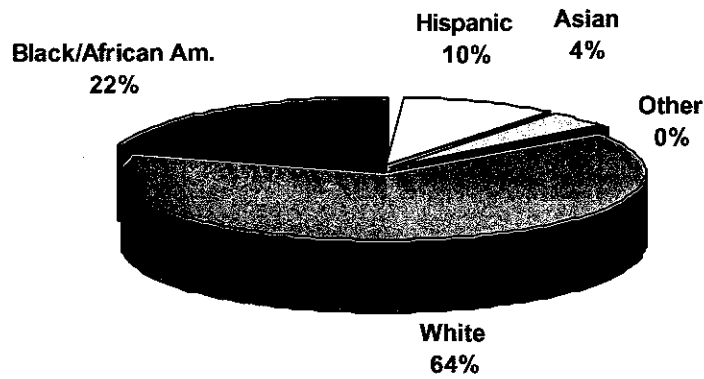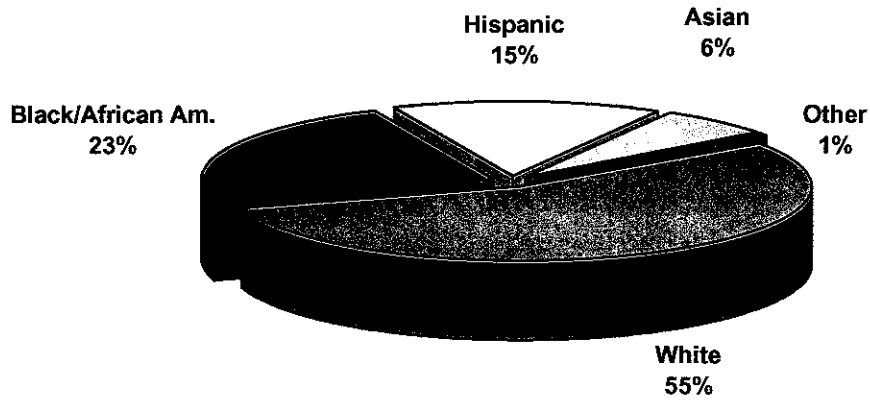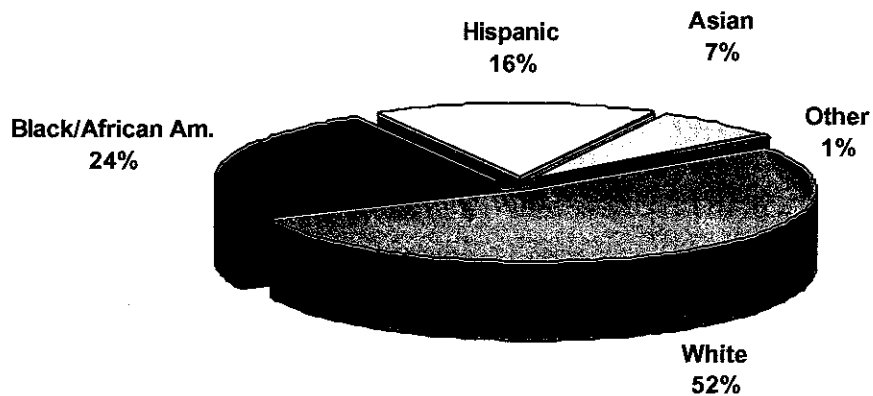
*These figures are rounded up.

Population by Ages for Alexandria1990 – 2000 – 2001 –2006
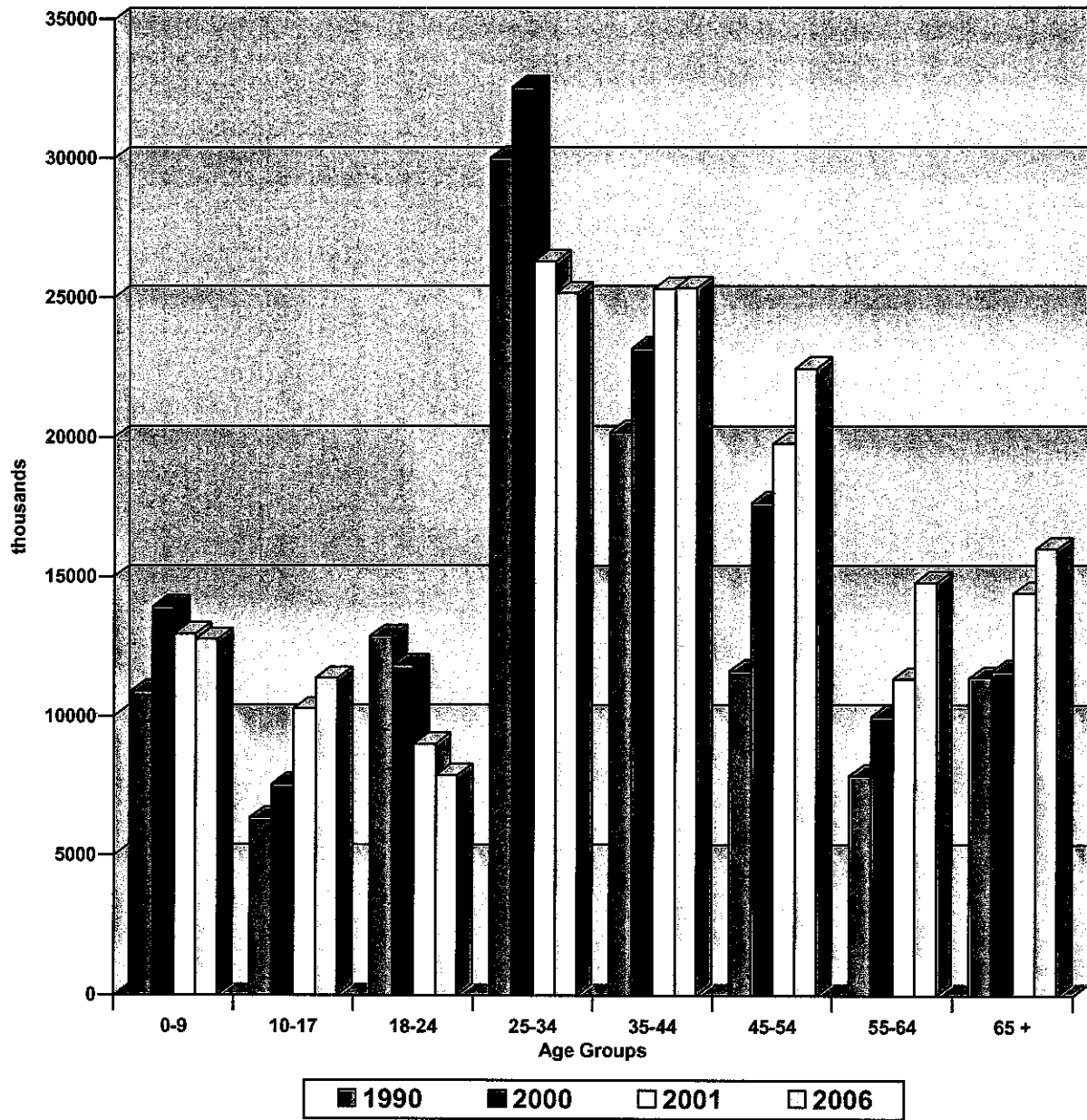
Number of Households by Income for Alexandria
2006 Projected
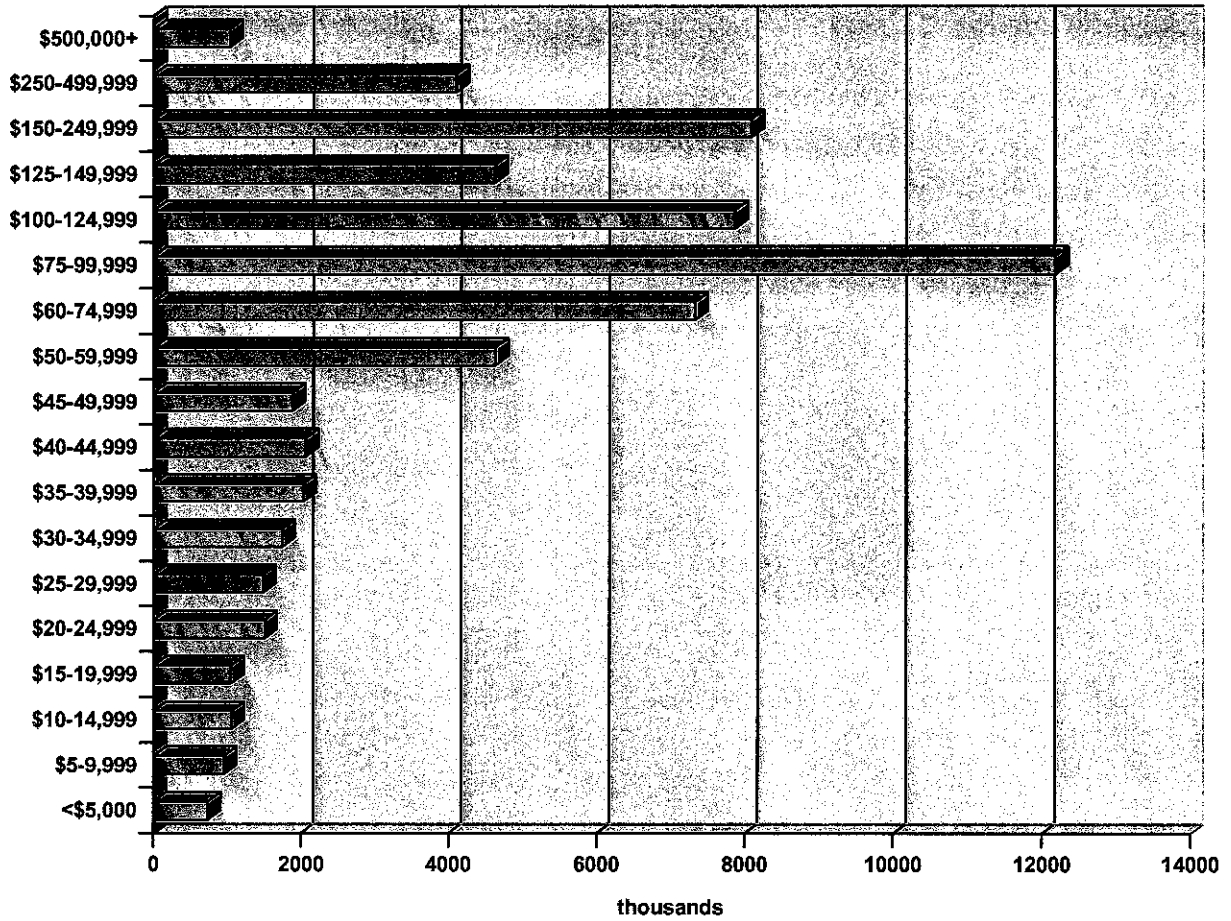
Income Data by Households for Alexandria
1990 Census - 2001 Estimated - 2006 Projected

Income	1990	%	2001	%	2006	%
Under $14,999	5,429	10.2	3,254	5.3	2,750	4.3
$15,000 - $24,999	6,476	12.2	3,059	5.0	2,556	4.0
$25,000 - $34,999	8,667	16.3	4,203	6.9	3,226	5.0
$35,000 - $49,999	12,068	22.7	7,991	13.0	5,980	9.3
$50,000 - $74,999	10,992	20.6	15,105	24.6	11,960	18.6
$75,000 - $99,999	4,909	9.2	10,482	17.1	12,178	18.9
$100,000 - $149,999	3,325	6.2	8,963	14.6	12,489	19.4
$150,000 - $499,999	1,283	2.4	7,821	12.7	12,188	18.9
$500,000 or more	131	0.2	479	0.8	1,036	1.6
Total Households	**53,280**		**61,357**		**64,363**	

Leon Younger and PROS

Household Income by Age for Alexandria
2006 Projected

Age

| ■15 - 24 | ▧25 - 34 | ■35 - 44 | □45 - 54 | □55 - 64 | ▨65 - 74 | ■75 + |
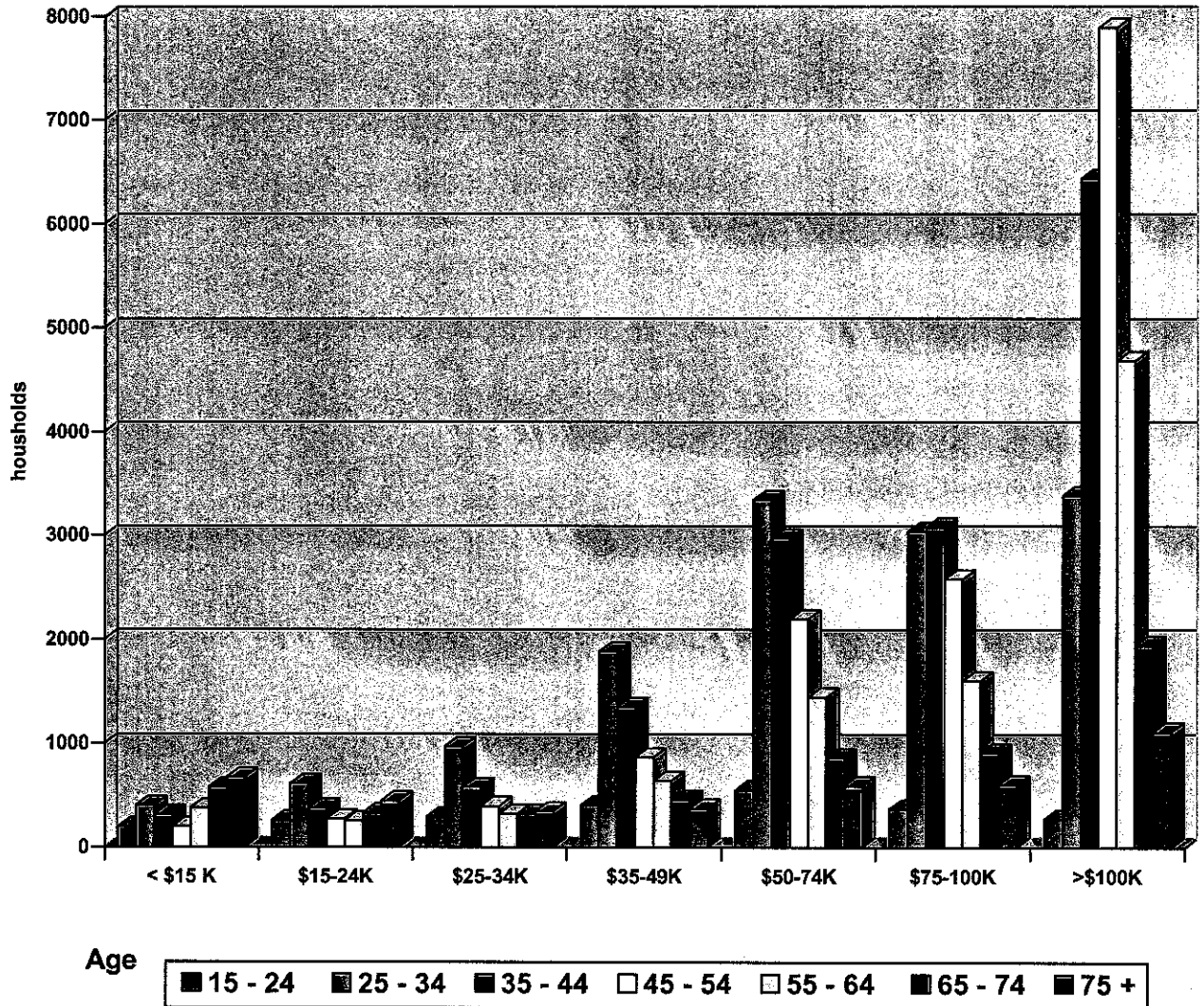
PLANNING AREA I – TOTAL POPULATION

Ages	1990 Census	2001 Estimated	2006 Projected	2001-2006 % Change
Under 5 yrs	676	660	647	-2.0
Age 5 - 9	481	675	625	-7.4
Ages 10 - 14	446	694	657	-5.3
Ages 15 - 17	311	303	390	28.7
Ages 18 - 20	354	239	263	10.0
Ages 21 - 24	1,177	733	548	-25.2
Ages 25 - 29	2,139	1,582	1,277	-19.3
Ages 30 - 34	1,819	1,627	1,636	0.6
Ages 35 - 39	1,532	1,648	1,601	-2.9
Ages 40 - 44	1,357	1,730	1,697	-1.9
Ages 45 - 49	1,117	1,570	1,665	6.1
Ages 50 - 54	824	1,277	1,453	13.8
Ages 55 - 59	712	983	1,270	29.2
Ages 60 - 64	652	841	1,001	19.0
Ages 65 - 69	656	729	855	17.3
Ages 70 - 74	450	628	707	12.6
Ages 75 +	684	1,150	1,359	18.2
Total	15,387	17,069	17,651	3.4

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD PLANNING AREA 1
2006 PROJECTED
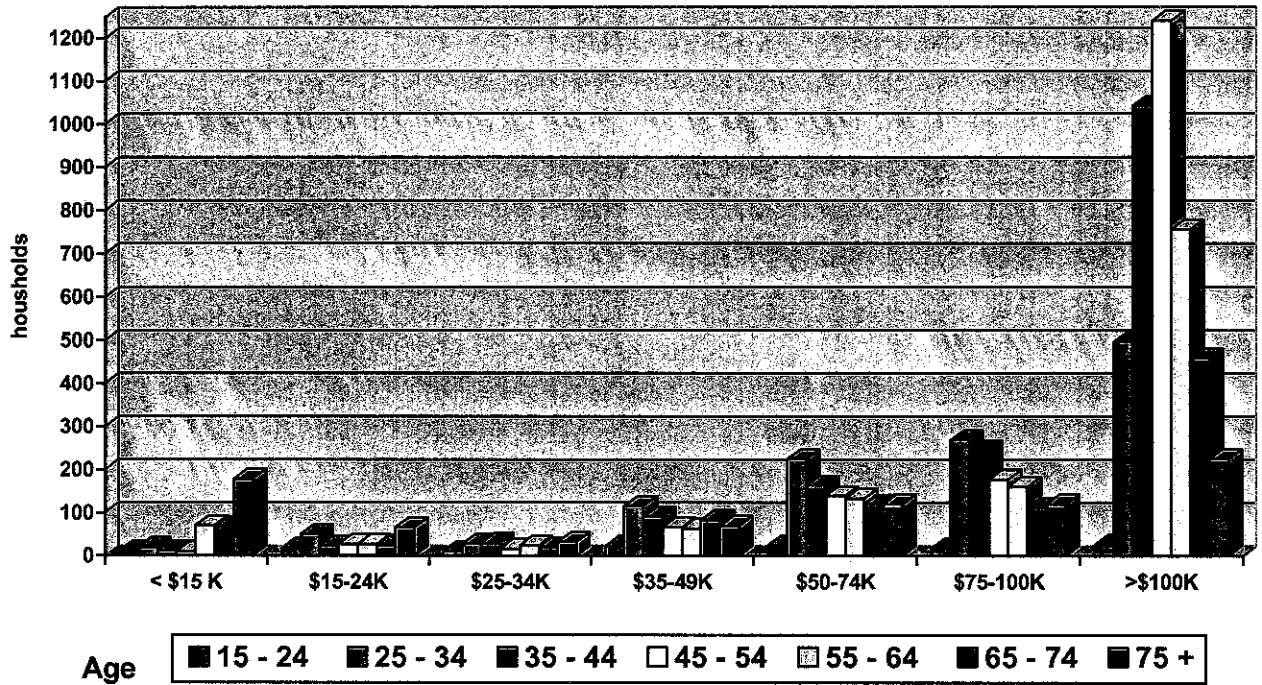
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME PLANNING AREA 1
2006 PROJECTED

thousands

2006 PROJECTED RACIAL
POPULATION

Black/African Am. Hispanic Asian
12% 4% 3%

Other
1%

White
80%
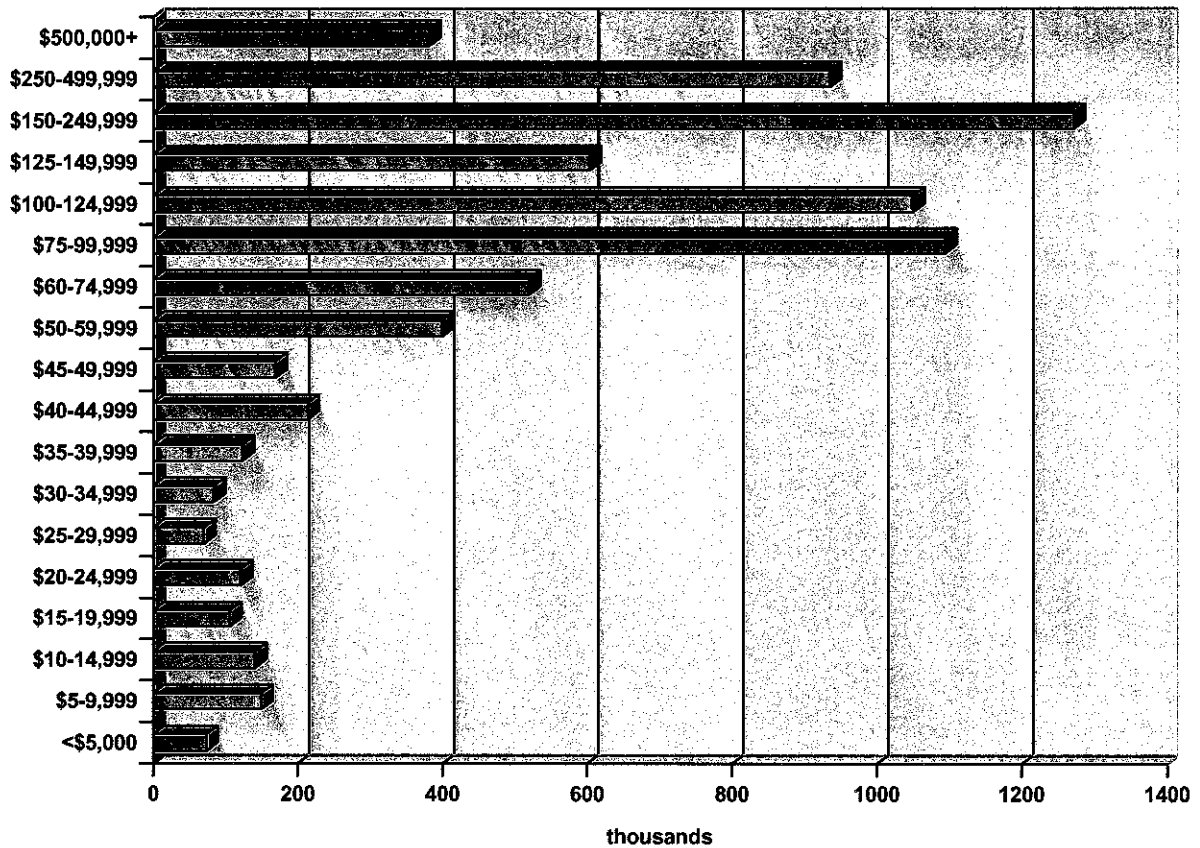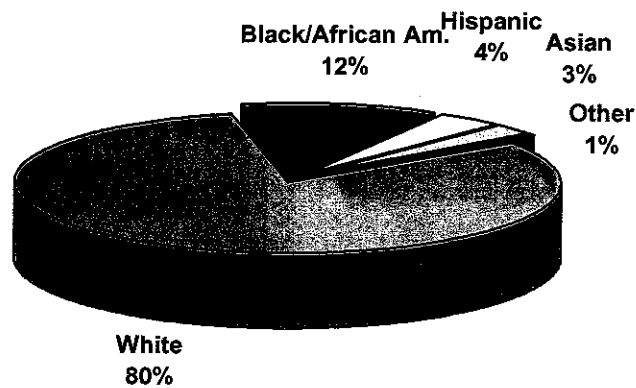
PLANNING AREA II – TOTAL POPULATION

Ages	1990 Census	2001 Estimated	2006 Projected	2001-2006 % Change
Under 5 yrs	2,561	2,253	2,135	-5.2
Age 5 - 9	1,862	2,403	2,222	-7.5
Ages 10 - 14	1,560	2,606	2,427	-6.9
Ages 15 - 17	959	1,100	1,431	30.1
Ages 18 - 20	1,114	715	786	9.9
Ages 21 - 24	2,745	1,898	1,535	-19.1
Ages 25 - 29	4,646	3,405	3,132	-8.0
Ages 30 - 34	4,095	3,613	3,384	-6.3
Ages 35 - 39	3,663	3,488	3,462	-0.7
Ages 40 - 44	3,365	3,668	3,485	-5.0
Ages 45 - 49	2,285	3,260	3,436	5.4
Ages 50 - 54	1,496	2,782	2,995	7.7
Ages 55 - 59	1,149	1,958	2,637	34.7
Ages 60 - 64	1,204	1,465	1,836	25.3
Ages 65 - 69	1,137	1,083	1,368	26.3
Ages 70 - 74	1,038	1,040	1,032	-0.8
Ages 75 +	1,768	2,246	2,427	8.1
Total	**36,647**	**38,983**	**39,730**	**1.9**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD
2006 PROJECTED –PLANNING DISTRICT 2
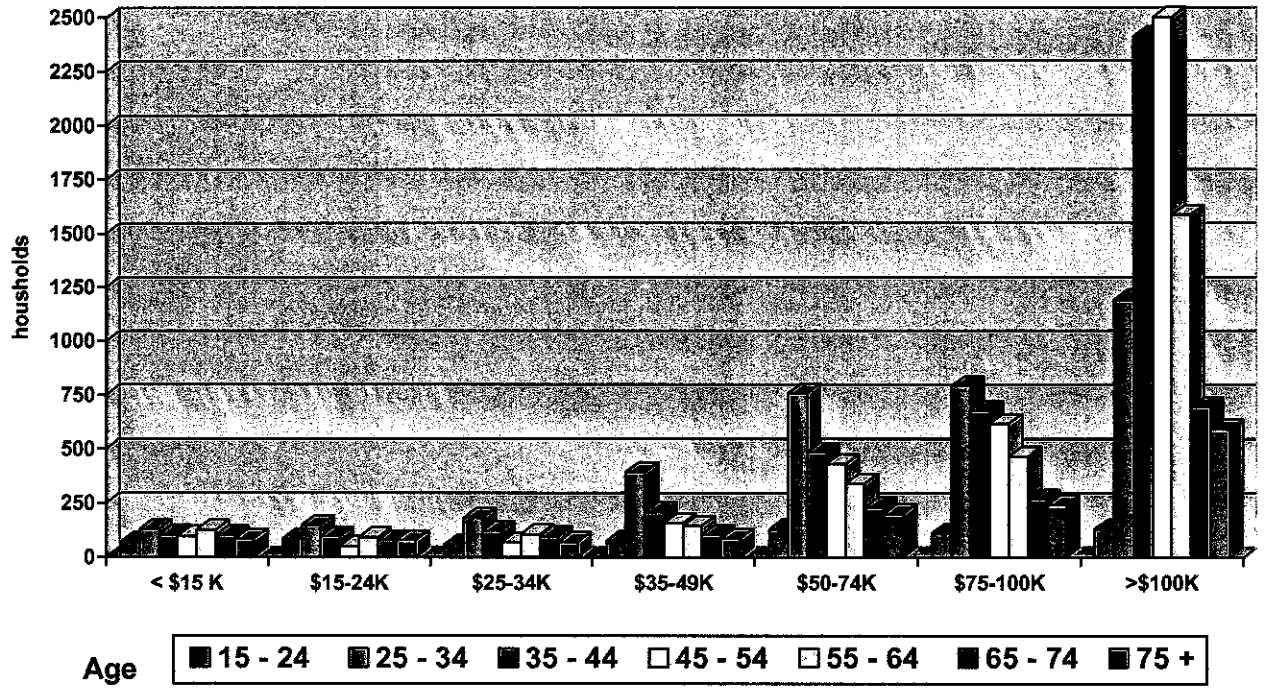
Age ■ 15 - 24 ▨ 25 - 34 ■ 35 - 44 □ 45 - 54 □ 55 - 64 ■ 65 - 74 ■ 75 +

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
2006 PROJECTED-PLANNING DISTRICT 2

thousands

2006 PROJECTED RACIAL POPULATION-PLANNING DISTRIC

Hispanic
20%

Asian
3%

Black/African Am.
18%

Other
1%

White
58%
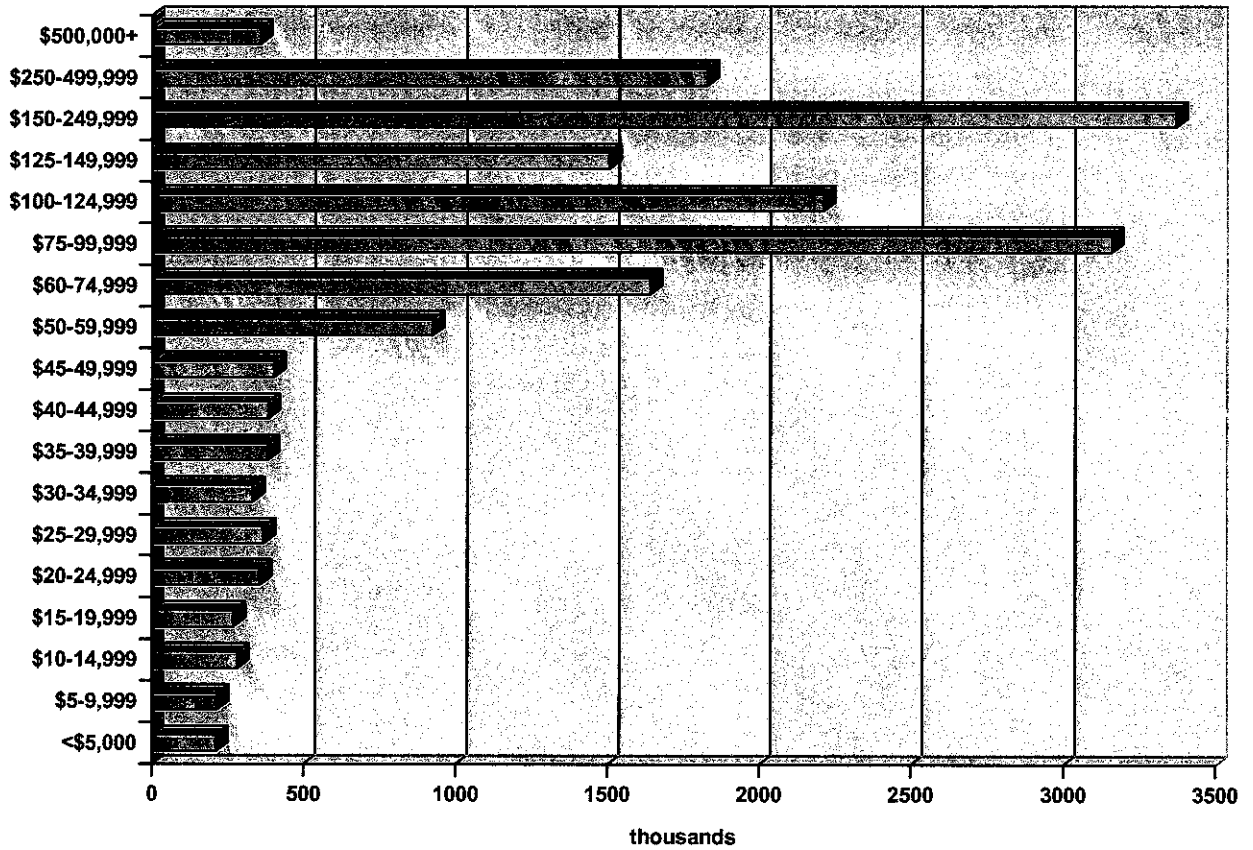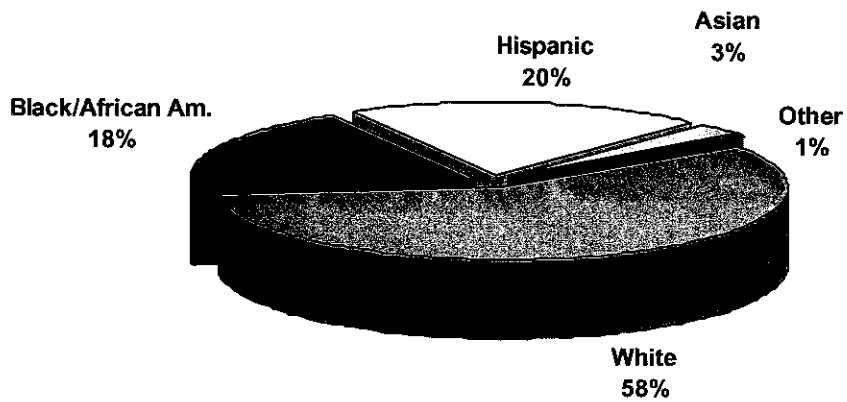
PLANNING AREA III – TOTAL POPULATION

Ages	1990 Census	2001 Estimated	2006 Projected	2001-2006 % Change
Under 5 yrs	3,120	3,344	3,451	3.2
Age 5 - 9	2,186	3,613	3,674	1.7
Ages 10 - 14	1,844	3,947	3,977	0.8
Ages 15 - 17	1,240	1,620	2,489	53.6
Ages 18 - 20	1,797	1,251	1,403	12.2
Ages 21 - 24	5,690	4,170	3,349	-19.7
Ages 25 - 29	9,851	8,208	7,816	-4.8
Ages 30 - 34	7,472	7,867	7,919	0.7
Ages 35 - 39	5,563	7,339	7,555	2.9
Ages 40 - 44	4,717	7,438	7,540	1.4
Ages 45 - 49	3,311	5,949	7,083	19.1
Ages 50 - 54	2,575	4,936	5,834	18.2
Ages 55 - 59	2,214	3,401	4,779	40.5
Ages 60 - 64	1,930	2,682	3,259	21.5
Ages 65 - 69	1,782	2,175	2,496	14.8
Ages 70 - 74	1,344	1,775	1,955	10.1
Ages 75 +	2,513	3,572	3,788	6.0
Total	**59,149**	**73,287**	**78,637**	**6.9**

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD
2006 PROJECTED --PLANNING DISTRICT 3
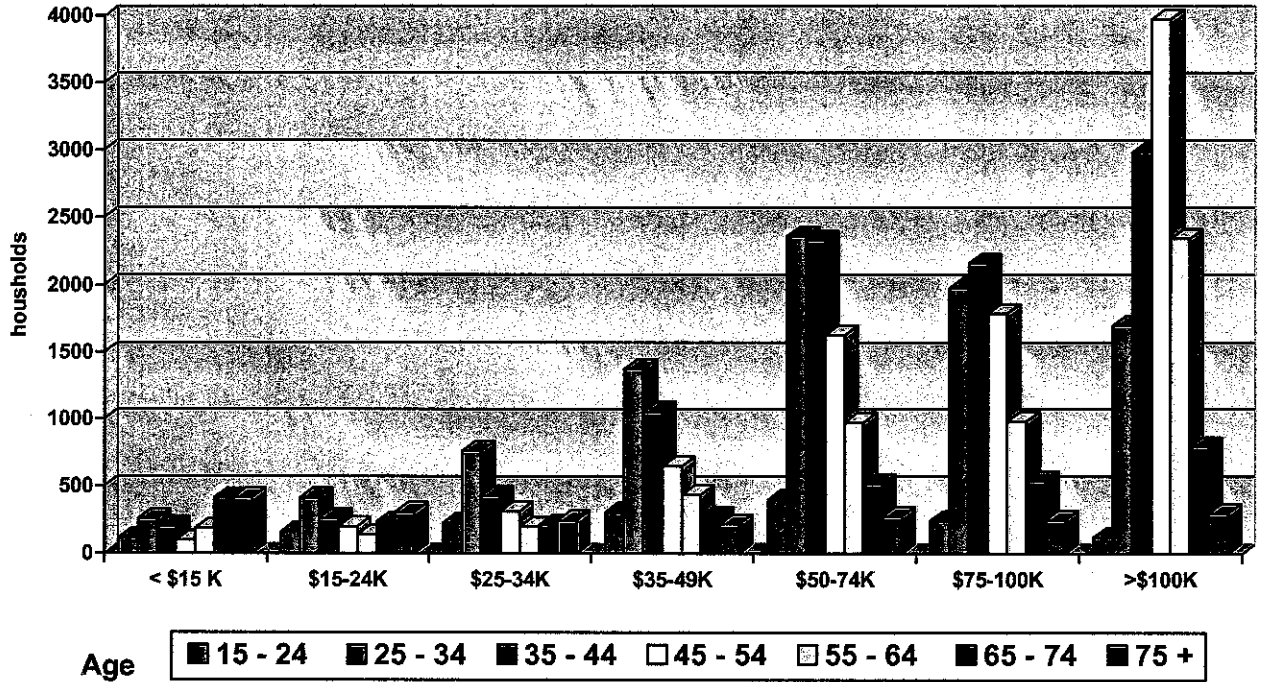
Age: ■ 15 - 24 ■ 25 - 34 ■ 35 - 44 □ 45 - 54 ▨ 55 - 64 ■ 65 - 74 ▨ 75 +

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
2006 PROJECTED-PLANNING DISTRICT 3

thousands

2006 PROJECTED RACIAL POPULATION- PLANNING DISTRICT 3

Hispanic
16%

Asian
10%

Other
1%

Black/African Am.
29%

White
44%
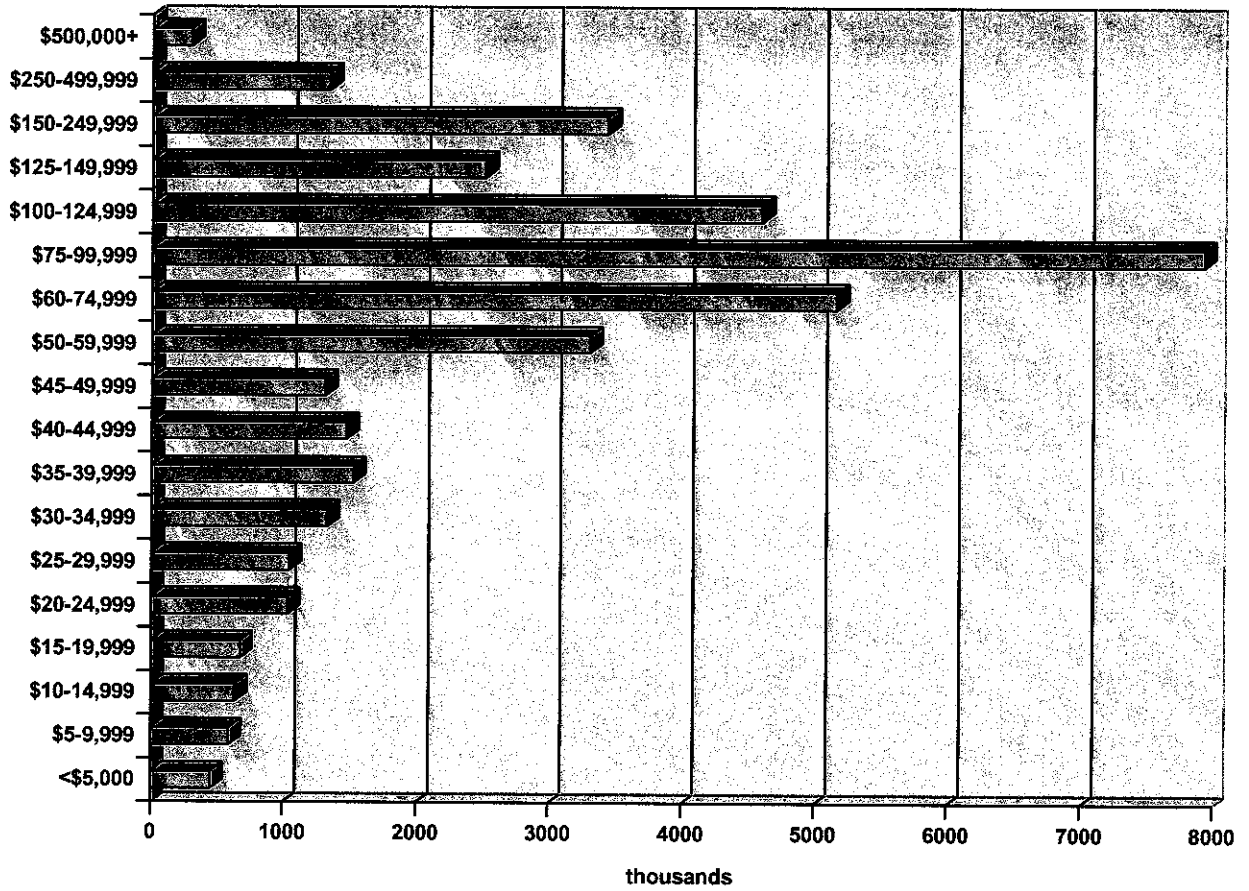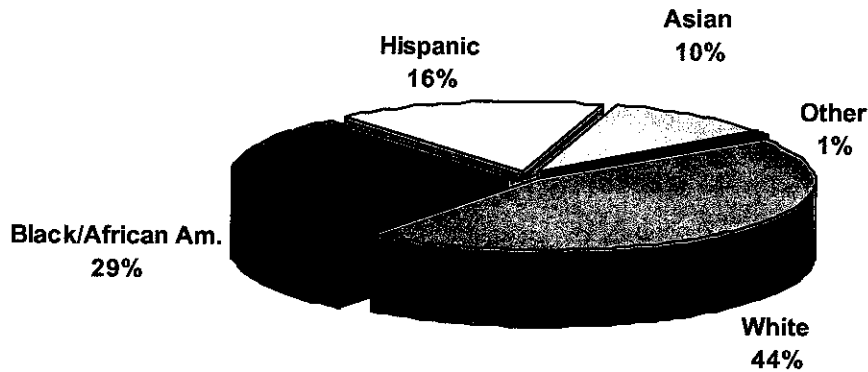
BENCHMARK ANALYSIS REPORT

Introduction to Process

In the development of the Recreation Needs Assessment for the City of Alexandria, Leon Younger & PROS studied four cities other than Alexandria (pop. 128,293) and incorporated their data into the benchmark analysis. Each city was picked for their similarities in size and demographics. A benchmark analysis serves as a study that compares services, policies, parks, and facilities of cities that share similar characteristics. The geographic regions are diverse because of the limited number of cities that are similar in size and the limited number of extraordinary park and recreation systems from which to compare. Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Administrators agreed with the four cities that were selected in this comparison.

Methodology

The study was initiated by sending a twelve (12)-page survey to the park and recreation departments of these cities with the intent to draw comparisons of services, philosophy, and practice between the agencies. The survey was comprised of Parks and Facility Standards, Recreation Facilities, Cost Recovery Programs and Strategies, Budget and Staffing, Capital Improvement Programs, Non-traditional Recreation Functions, Program Information, and Sports Programs for Adults and Youth. Surveys were sent to the following locations: Arlington Heights, IL (pop. 78,549), Arlington, VA (pop. 189,453), Tempe, AZ (pop. 158,625), and San Mateo, CA (pop. 95,000). The primary objective of the Benchmark Analysis was to determine how Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities compared to the other cities surveyed.

Key Issues and Findings

This benchmark study was conducted comparing the similarities and differences of the five cities; the mean population (130,463) of the five cities is just over Alexandria's reported population of 128,283. The average number of acres managed by the five organizations is 895.59. Alexandria manages 768.9 acres. Combining neighborhood parks with school parks allows Alexandria to be second to other studied agencies in terms of number of acres of neighborhood parks for the community (348.63 acres). Alexandria ranks first in acres per capita (368).

All organizations studied have a cooperative use agreement with the schools. The types of facilities and activities shared with schools include use of athletic fields, classrooms for after school programs, pools, tracks, playgrounds and gyms. Alexandria is competitive in the diversity of outdoor facilities when compared to the other organizations. However, they rank lowest in the total number of outdoor facilities that are offered to the community per capita.

Alexandria (23) ranks third among cities reporting indoor facilities. Arlington, VA (34) ranks first, Arlington Heights (27) ranks second. Arlington Heights ranks first (1: 2,909) when considering the number of indoor facilities per capita. Alexandria is second (1: 5,577).
While Alexandria has the most pools in their park and recreation system (7), four are small neighborhood pools that

are not open to all public patrons, only youngsters. Two other pools are small 25-yard community pools and there is one indoor pool. Arlington Heights ranks first with one pool per 13,091 people. Alexandria is below standard and ranks second to last with one pool per 42,761 people. Only three pools are considered when calculating this factor as the four small pools are not accessible to the general public.

Alexandria ranks third in the number of recreation centers with one center for every 12,828 residents. They offer one center for the Performing Arts, one Nature Center and eight recreation centers ranging in size from 10,000 square feet to over 25,000 square feet.

The diversity of funding provides an idea of the latitude an organization has to generate operating funds for the agency. There is potential for operational vulnerability when the sources of revenue are less diversified. This is experienced particularly when a budget crisis occurs. The greatest diversity was reflected in reports from the Arlington Heights Park District. This is likely due to the unique nature of the makeup of the organization. 42% of the agency funding comes from fees and charges or enterprise funds. Alexandria and Arlington, VA are next with 15-17% of funding coming from fees and charges.

Alexandria has the highest number of Part-time Permanent staff with 116 and the highest ratio per capita of permanent Part-time employees to citizens with one for every 1,106 residents. San Mateo is second with 70 Part-time Permanent employees.

Most of the cities studied are attempting to recover the direct costs for operating programs. Alexandria attempts cost recovery on adult programs. Classes in the Chinquapin Recreation Center attempt to recover the costs of the instructors and 85% of operating costs.

The following analysis is the detail of the benchmark study.

Full Findings Report

When benchmarked against the aforementioned cities, Alexandria's population is in the center. The mean population (130,463) of the five cities is just over Alexandria's reported population of 128,283. Of the cities that reported the total number of acres that they manage, Alexandria (768.9) is considerably lower by comparison to Tempe, AZ (1505.4) and Arlington, VA (1166.75) but is ahead of Arlington Heights, IL (633.61) and San Mateo, CA.(403.72).

Population and Acreage of the Locations Studied

Population and Acreage of the Locations Studied	Arlington Heights, IL	San Mateo, CA	Alexandria, VA	Tempe, AZ	Arlington, VA
Population	78,549	95,000	128,283	158,625	191,861
Acreage	633.61	403.72	768.9	1505.4	1166.75
Acres Per Capita	1 acre for every 123.97 residents	1 acre for every 235.31 residents	1 acre for every 166.83 residents	1 acre for every 105.37 residents	1 acre for every 164.44 residents

The average number of acres managed by the five organizations is 895.59. Tempe (1505.4) is responsible for the largest number of acres. San Mateo is smallest with 403.72 acres. Alexandria manages 768.9 acres. Tempe is also larger by size of service area (40 square miles) than the other reported agencies. Arlington, VA (25.7) is second largest in size. Alexandria is the most compact in size (15.75) when comparing the square miles of the organization and population of the community. Arlington Heights and Tempe each have golf facilities that account for much of the acreage they manage.

The National Recreation and Parks Association guidelines used for determining parks sizes and service radius suggests the following sizes and distance relationships for community members.

- Mini Parks (1-acre) – ¼ mile
- Neighborhood and School Park (5 acres or less) – ½ mile
- Urban Park (5-40) - 2.5 miles
- Community Parks (40-200 acres) – 1 mile
- Regional and Natural Preserve (200+ acres) – 7 miles

Arlington, VA (368.83) surpasses the other cities when comparing acreage for neighborhood parks.
Tempe (229) is second largest. However, when comparing the number of acres of neighborhood parks per capita, Arlington Heights offers residents one acre per 400 people. Arlington, VA is second with one acre per 520 people. Not withstanding the school park properties, Alexandria parks appear to under-serve the community with city owned park properties. However, there are 17 school parks that total 191.93 acres in the system. When combined with city owned parks the total acreage improves the average acres when considered with the benchmark communities.

When using the scale illustrated above and combining neighborhood parks with school parks, Alexandria would move to second position (348.63 acres) or one acre for every 368 residents. This ratio would rank Alexandria first in acres per capita.

Appendix

The park system also offers a good representation of dog parks and mini parks. Mini parks and dog parks by the nature of their size will influence maintenance costs due to the portal-to-portal travel time and the short time it takes to complete maintenance in the park. Alexandria is short of the National Recreation and Park Association recommended standard for acreage per 1,000 people. The national standard for parks is 12 to 15 acres per 1,000 people. Alexandria is 50% of the desired standard.

Park Types and Reported Acreage

Park Type	Alexandria, VA	Arlington Heights, IL	Tempe, AZ	Arlington, VA	San Mateo, CA
Mini parks (1-2 acres)	41 parks / 22.75 acres	6 parks / 13.8 acres	3 parks / 14 acres	67 parks / 48.25 acres	6 parks / 5.12 acres
Density to Population	1 acre per 5,639 people	1 acre per 5,692 people	1 acre per 11,330 people	1 acre per 3,976 people	1 acre per 18,544 people
Neighbor-hood Parks (5 acres/ less)	22 parks / 156.71 acres	25 parks / 196.31 acres	36 parks / 229 acres	67 parks / 368.83 acres	12 parks / 39.6 acres
Density to Population	1 acre per 818 people	1 acre per 400 people	1 acre per 692 people	1 acre per 520 people	1 acre per 2,399 people
Greenways	4 greenways 15.53 acres	3 greenways 24.8 acres	0 / 0	1 greenway 2.7 acres	3 greenways 55.3 acres (Not in total acres below. Total with other parks)
Density to Population	1 acre per 8,260 people	1 acre per 3,167 people	N/A	1 acre per 71,059 people	1 acre per 1,667 people
School parks	17 schools / 191.93 acres	6 schools / 34.6 acres	18 schools / 234 acres	0 / 0	0/0
School Park Density to Population	1 acre per 668 people	1 acre per 2,270 people	1 acre per 678 people	N/A	N/A
Large Urban Park (5-40 acres)	5 parks / 241.07 acres	2 parks / 128 acres	3 parks / 921.4 acres	4 parks / 275.96 acres	6 parks / 79.5 acres
Urban Park Density to Population	1 acre per 532 people	1 acre per 613 people	1 acre per 172 people	1 acre per 695 people	1 acre per 1,195 people
Community /Regional Parks (40-200 acres)	2 parks / 39.4 acres	8 parks / 133.6 acres	3 parks / 82 acres	12 parks / 283.26 acres	1 park / 44 acres
Community / Regional Parks Density to Population	1 acre per 3,256 people	1 acre per 588 people	1 acre per 1,934 people	1 acre per 677 people	1 acre per 2,169 people
Natural Resource Areas	5 / 56.5	2 / 102	1 / 25	1 / 185	1 / 225.5
Density to Population	1 acre per 2,270 people	1 acre per 770 people	1 acre per 6,345 people	1 acre per 1,037 people	1 acre per 421 people
Skate Parks	0	1 / .5	0	0	0
Private Recreation	1 / 44.6	None reported	None reported	Future, 2003	None reported
Density to Population	1 acre per 2,876 people	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dog Parks	17	0	4	7 parks / 2.75 acres	0
Total Acres	768.49	633.61	1,505.4	1,166.75	403.72
Density to Population	1 acre per 166.83 people	1 acre per 123.97 people	1 acre per 105.37 people	1 acre per 164.44 people	1 acre per 235.31 people

NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

City	Neighborhood Parks	Acres
San Mateo	12	39.6
Alexandria	22	156.71
Arlington Heights	25	196.31
Tempe	36	229
Arlington VA	67	368.83
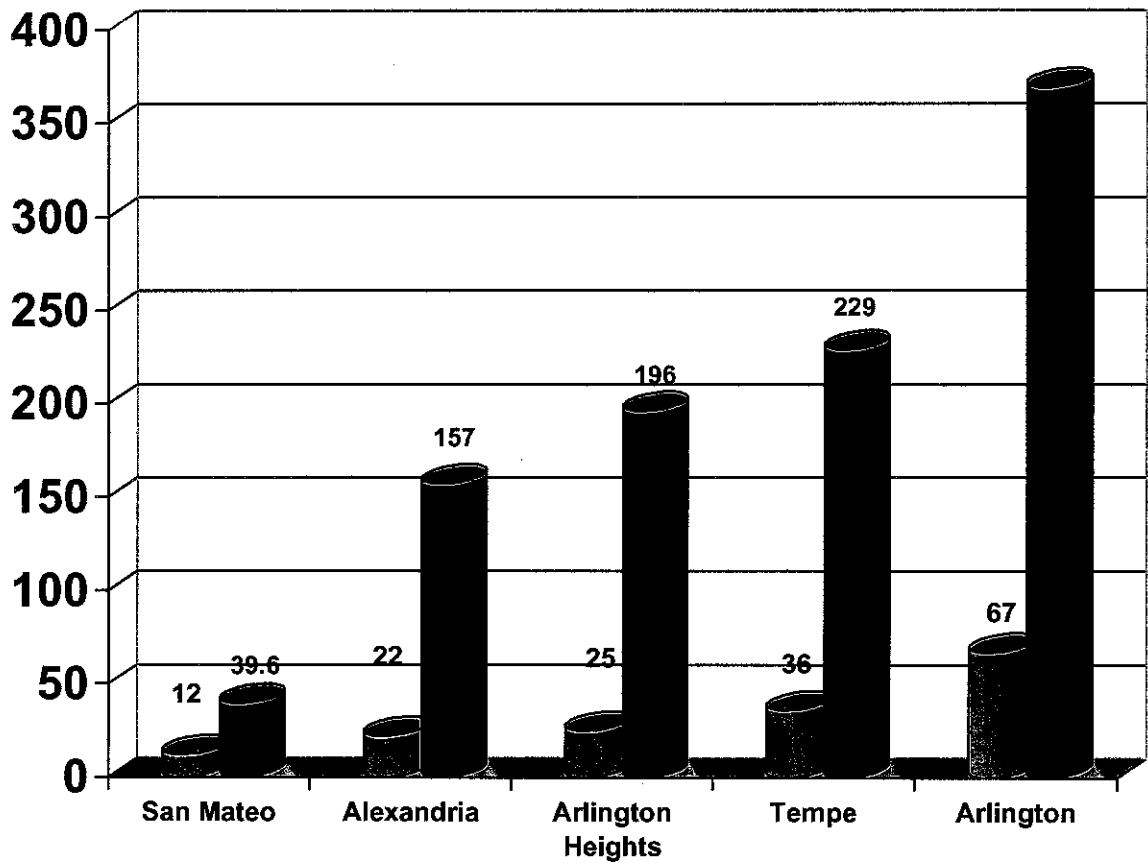
Blue is equal to the number of neighborhood parks acres and purple represents the total acres of neighborhood parks.

NUMBER OF SCHOOL PARKS

City	School Parks	Acres
Tempe	18	234
Alexandria	17	192
Arlington Hts	6	35
Arlington VA	0	0
San Mateo	0	0
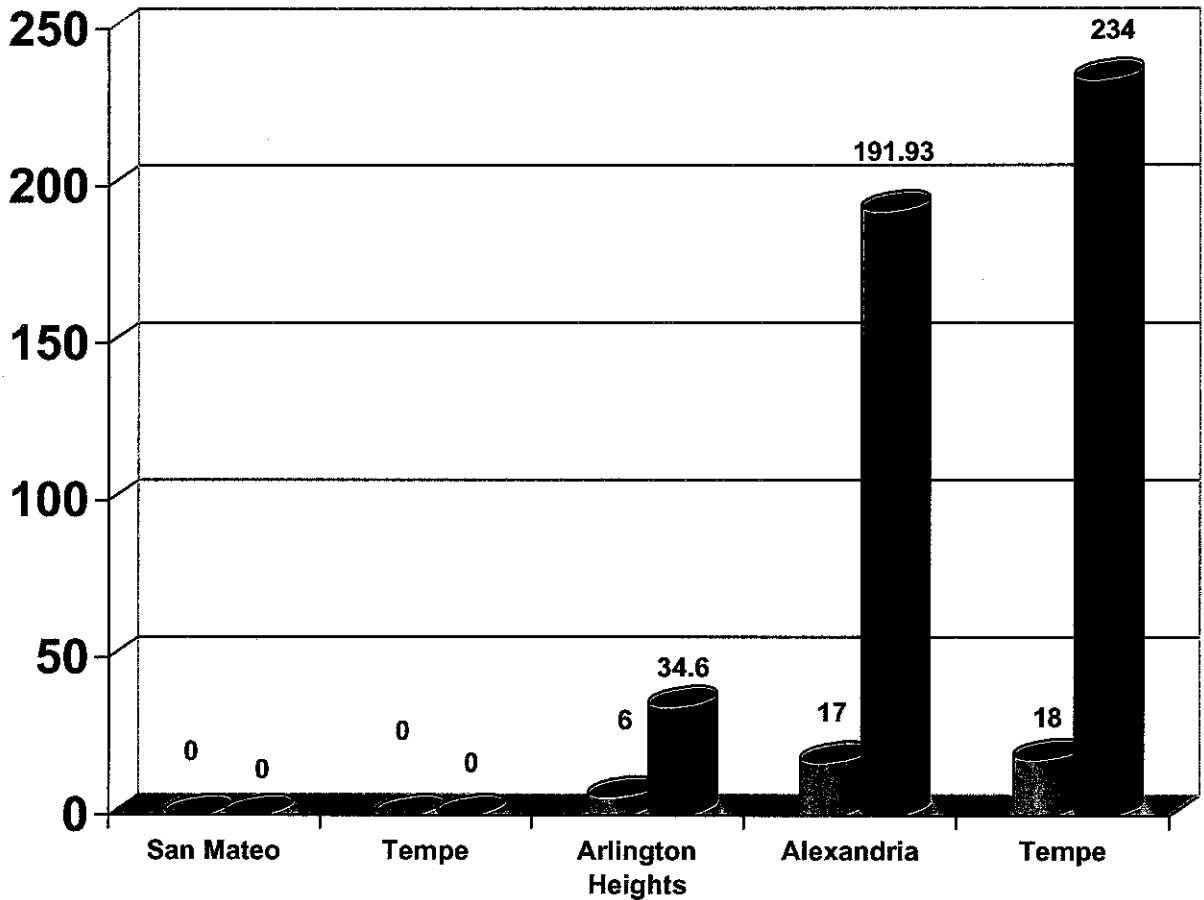
Blue is equal to the number of neighborhood parks acres and purple represents the total acres of school parks.

Cooperative Use of Facilities

All organizations studied have a cooperative use agreement with the schools. The types of facilities and activities shared with schools include use of athletic fields, the use of classrooms or, as in the case of Alexandria, the use of schools for after school programs, and pools, tracks, playgrounds and gyms. Arlington Heights has worked with schools to create the equity construction of gymnasiums. Such development allows each entity to reduce the cost of construction and reduce conflict when the issue of use surfaces. The conflict is reduced because each entity has equally invested in the equity of the facility, thus guaranteeing use.

Outdoor Facilities

Alexandria is competitive when comparing the diversity of outdoor facilities with the other organizations. However they rank lowest in the number of outdoor facilities that are offered to the community. The city appears to be doing a good job providing facilities for activities such as soccer, baseball, basketball and tennis. While the quality of playgrounds has not been examined in any of the agencies, there appears to be enough playgrounds provided for the youth.

When comparing the number of facilities against the other cities, Alexandria ranks next to last (182) in outdoor sport facilities and playgrounds. Arlington Heights, IL (211), Tempe, AZ (226) and Arlington, VA (277) lead in the number of athletic facilities offered to the community. When comparing the per capita ratio of those agencies that reported, Arlington Heights (1:372) ranks first. Arlington, VA (1: 692) Tempe (1:700) and Alexandria (1:704) were very close to each other when offering outdoor recreation facilities to the community.

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Facility Type	Alexandria	Arlington Heights	Tempe	Arlington, VA	San Mateo
Baseball	10	7	4	49*	14
Basketball	27	27	44.5	47	5
Football	See Multi-use	3	0	0	0
Lacrosse	See Multi-use	0	0	0	0
Marina	1	1	0	0	1
Multi-use	19****	7	0	47**	0
Playgrounds	44	40	42	74	24
Pools	6	5	3	0	3
Soccer	17	17	41	0	5
Softball	4	38	22	29***	1
Tennis	39	59	51	96	15
Volleyball	7	7	19	9	1
Total	182	221	226.5	277	69

*Baseball is played on 49 fields. Six of these are baseball only. The rest are both baseball and softball or used for other sports out of season.

**These are considered multipurpose rectangular fields. All 47 accommodate some kind of soccer activity such as games, pick-up, or practice. Of the 47, 6 are currently being used for football, 3 for field hockey, 4 for lacrosse, and 1 for rugby.

***Softball is played on 29 fields. Six of these fields are used for softball only. The remainder are either used for baseball and softball or used for other sports out of the baseball or softball season.

****These fields are used for a combination of sporting events such as soccer, football, baseball and softball.

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Cities	Ratio of Outdoor Recreation Facilities Per Capita
Arlington Heights	1:372
Arlington VA	1:692
Tempe	1:700
Alexandria	1:704
San Mateo	1:1,376

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES
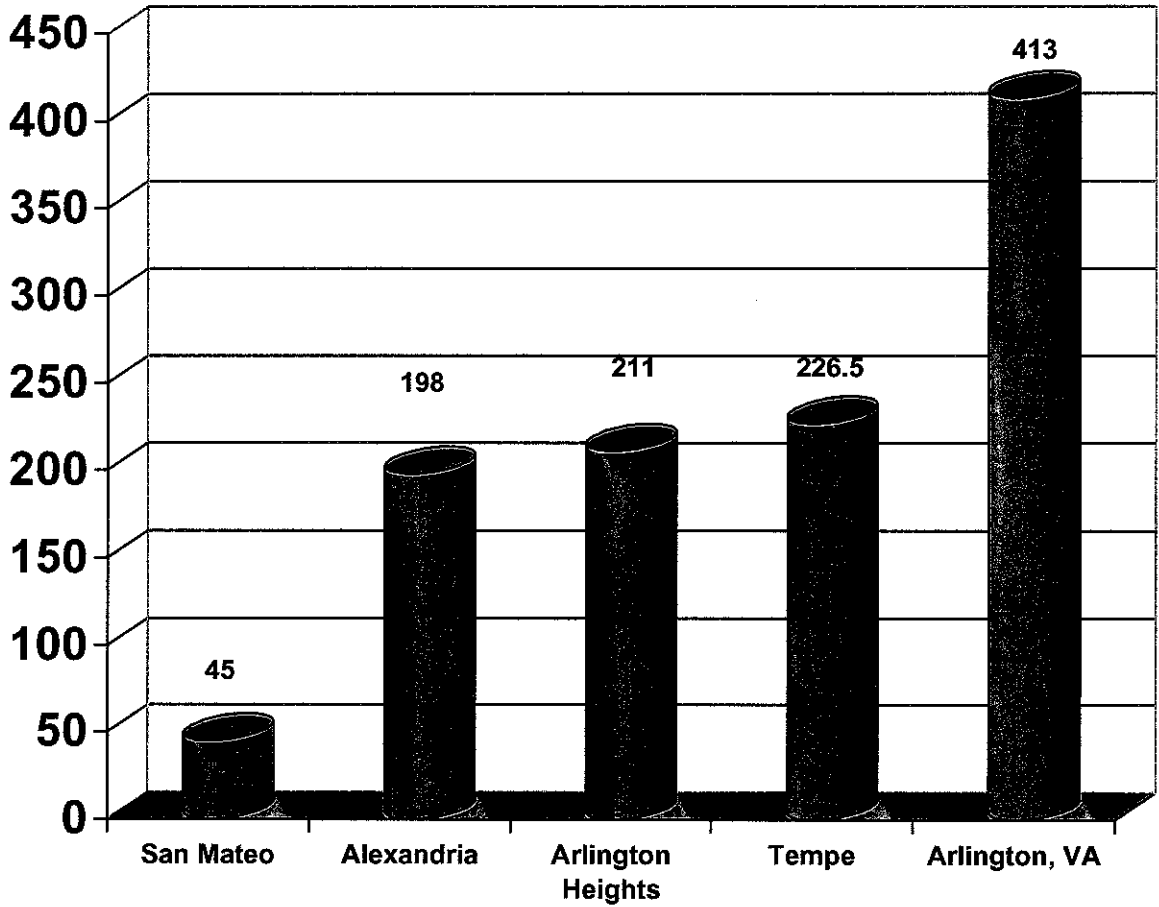
Blue is equal to the number of outdoor recreation facilities in the community.

Indoor Sports Facilities
Alexandria (23) ranks third among cities reporting indoor facilities. Arlington, VA (34) ranks first, Arlington Heights (27) ranks second and San Mateo (0) is last. San Mateo and Tempe are communities that depend on excellent climates and don't have the same requirements for indoor facilities. Arlington Heights also ranks first (1: 2,909) when considering the number of indoor facilities per capita and Alexandria is second (1: 5,577).

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

City	Gymnasiums	Indoor Pools	Tennis	Running Tracks	Racquetball	Total
Alexandria	16	1	0	0	5	22
Arlington Hts	7	1	14	0	6	27
Tempe	3	1	0	0	0	4
Arlington VA	31	3	0	0	0	34
San Mateo	0	0	0	0	0	0

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Cities	Ratio Indoor Facilities Per Capita
Arlington Hts	1:2,909
Arlington VA	1:5,643
Alexandria	1:5,831
Tempe	1:32,156
San Mateo	0

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES
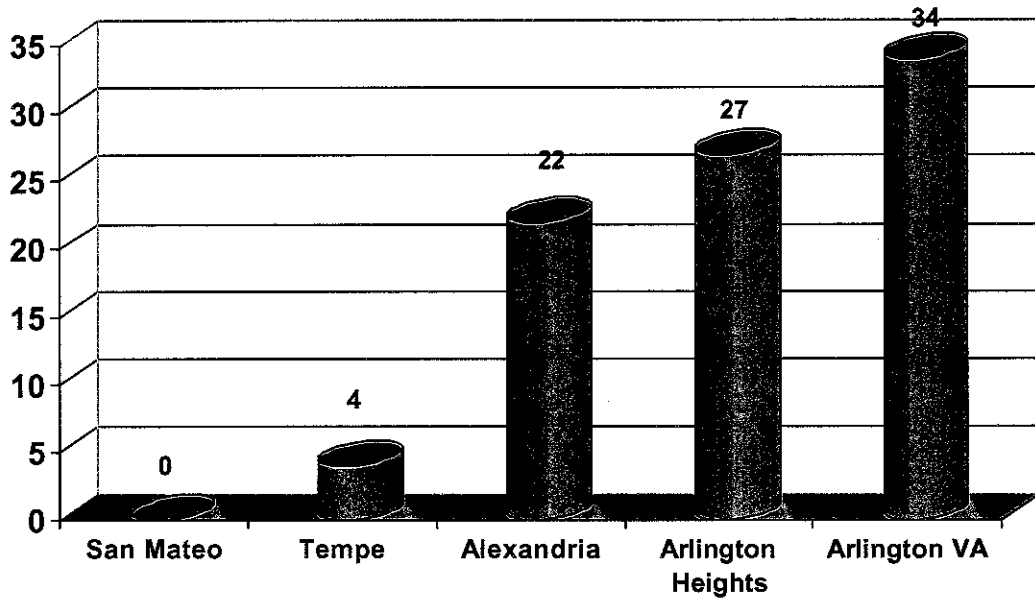
Blue is equal to the number of outdoor recreation facilities in the community.

Pools
While Alexandria has the most pools in their park and recreation system (7), four are small neighborhood pools that are not open to all public patrons, only youngsters. Two others are small 25-yard community pools and there is one indoor pool. They rank second to last with one pool per 42,761 people. This factor is being used, as the four small pools are not accessible to the general public. Arlington, VA has one outdoor pool within its boundaries that is owned and operated by the county. Arlington Heights ranks first with one pool per 13,091 people.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR POOLS

City	Indoor	Outdoor
Alexandria	1	2-25 yard pools and 4 tot sized pools
Arlington Hts	1	5
Tempe	1	3
Arlington VA	3	0
San Mateo	0	3

Specialty Facility Fees - Pools

Costs for admission to outdoor pools were diverse and ranged from free (Alexandria) to kids under 6 and Seniors over 55 to a high of $4.00 for residents and $7.00 to non-residents (Arlington Heights). Tempe was next low with a fee of $.75 to youngsters and $1.25 to adults over 18 years of age. San Mateo ranged from $1.50 to $3.25 for daily admissions to the pools. Family season passes are sold in most agencies that offer outdoor pools with Alexandria the only city not having a season pass. Family passes range in cost from $124 (Arlington Heights) to $100 in other reporting cities.

Indoor pool annual family passes are offered in all of the reporting cities except Arlington, VA with Alexandria being high ($828), Tempe and San Mateo offer quarterly passes for $169 ($676 annually) second high and Arlington Heights offers a rate ($144) for residents that is lowest. All organizations reported they offer season pass sales for age groups. Tempe, Arlington, VA, San Mateo, and Arlington Heights, IL offer such a pass on a quarterly basis.

Cities	Ratio Pools per Capita
Arlington Heights	1:13,091
San Mateo	1:31,091
Tempe	1:39,656
Alexandria	1:42,761
Arlington VA	1:63,954

Recreation Centers

Arlington Heights ranks first with one center for every 9,818 residents. Five of these centers are neighborhood facilities, one is an older adult facility, and two are gymnasiums the agency built with the school district. Arlington, VA ranks second with one center for every 11,991 residents. Alexandria ranks third with one center for every 12,828 residents. They offer one center for the Performing Arts, one Nature Center and eight recreation centers ranging in size from 10,000 square feet to over 25,000 square feet. Tempe offers three new state of the art multi-generational facilities that offer opportunities for all ages in the community.

FACILITIES PER CAPITA

City	Recreation Centers	Centers Per Capita
Arlington Hts	8	1: 9,818
San Mateo	9	1:10,556
Arlington VA	14 (two in 2003)	1: 11,991
Alexandria	10	1: 12,828
Tempe	6	1: 26,437

RECREATION CENTERS BY VOLUME
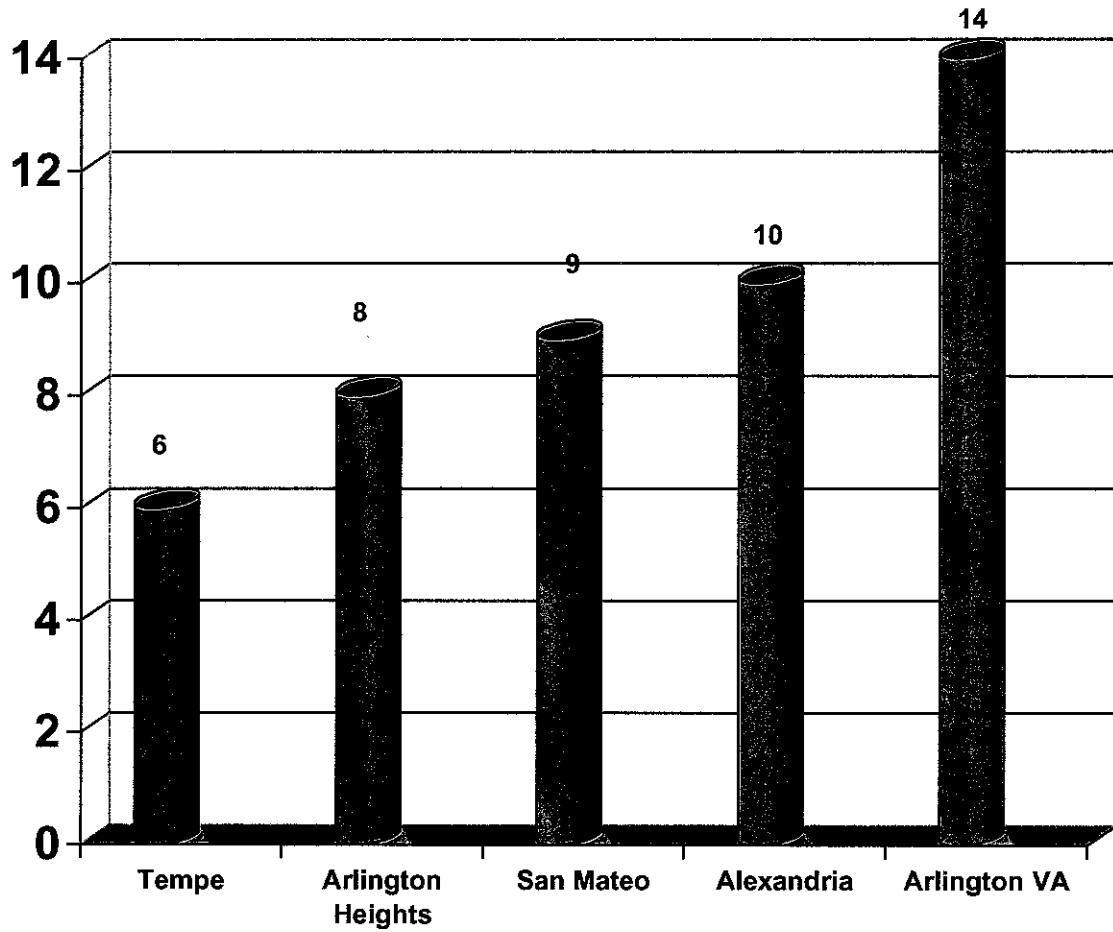
Blue is equal to the number of recreation centers in the community.

FUNDING OF AGENCY BUDGETS

City	General Fund	Enterprise Funds	Fees and Charges
Alexandria	85%	0%	15%
Arlington Hts	55%	18%	24%
Tempe	100%	Not Reported	Not Reported
Arlington VA	83%	Not Reported	17%
San Mateo	100%	Not Reported	Not Reported

COST RECOVERY

City	Revenues From Fees	Percent of Operating
Arlington VA	$3,938,085	17%
Arlington Hts	$3,833,469	21%
Tempe	$2,050,709	32%
Alexandria	$2,000,000	15%
San Mateo	Not Reported	Not Reported

Total Operating Budget
The total operating budgets ranged from $6.2 million (Tempe) to $23 million (Arlington ,VA). Alexandria is $14 million. The estimated revenues for fiscal year 1999 – 2000 ranged from the lowest of $2,000,000 (Alexandria) to $3.9 million (Arlington, VA). When compared to per capita investment, Arlington Heights is first ($227.93) and San Mateo, CA ranks second ($126.58),

The findings indicate that cities depend on the General Fund, Enterprise Funds, fees and charges and impact fees to support their budgets. Alexandria indicates no enterprise funds however they operate a revenue facility. Alexandria uses fees and charges and the General Fund for revenue support. Two agencies reported the use golf courses as a means to increase annual revenues that augment operating budgets.

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

City	Annual Budget	Per Capita Expense
Arlington Hts	$17,838,816	1: $227.10
San Mateo	$12,025,000	1: $126.58
Arlington VA	$23,040,932	1: $120.09
Alexandria	$13,975,000	1: $108.93
Tempe	$ 6,274,317	1: $ 39.55

Agency Funding

The percentage of funding will provide an idea of the potential diversity an organization uses to generate operating funds for the agency. There is potential for operational vulnerability when the sources of revenue are less diversified. This is experienced particularly when a budget crisis occurs. Each agency was asked to give an approximate percentage of where funds are generated to support the costs of managing the organization.

The greatest diversity was reflected in reports from the Arlington Heights Park District. This is likely due to the unique nature of the makeup of the organization. 42% of the agency funding comes from fees and charges or enterprise funds. Alexandria and Arlington, VA are next with 15-17% of funding coming from fees and charges.

Capital Improvement Budget

When considering the amount of investment each community has made toward Capital Improvement Programs over the last six years Arlington Heights ($9,681,164) has the highest average per year. Arlington, VA ($7,705,333) is second highest and Tempe ($4,171,837) is third. If the FY 98-99 ($31,269,235) from Arlington Heights is removed from the averages, They would switch positions with Arlington, VA, with an average of $5,364,396 the numbers tend to be more closely aligned with the other benchmark cities.

All of the reporting cities indicated the funds for capital improvements were generated from General Obligation Funds. Only Arlington Heights indicated the use of Revenue Bonds and Enterprise Funds as a means for generating funds for capital development. Tempe and Alexandria use grants and Alexandria uses transfers from other funds.

Sources of Revenues for Capital Development

The organizations that were studied were asked to prioritize the types of funding that has been used to generate revenues for capital development programs. The following chart reflects the responses to this question. As was discussed in the sources of funding (page 11), there is potential for the lack of facility development when the sources of funds are less diversified. Once again, there is vulnerability to Capital Development funds when a budget crisis occurs. From the responses, the special district has greater flexibility as they indicate the potential for Capital Development funds in several categories. Enterprise funds and Impact Fees are among these choices. Most organizations depend on G. O. Bonds as a source of Capital Development funds.

Sources of Revenues for Capital Development

Source	Alexandria	Arlington Heights	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
G.O Bonds	2	2	1	1	
Private Giving		5			
Revenue Bonds		1			
Impact Fees		4			1
Pay as You Go			2	2	
Grants	2		3		
Transfers	1				
Enterprise Funds		3			

Average Yearly Capital Improvement Budget

City	FY 2002	FY 01-02	FY 00-01	FY 99-00	FY 98-99	FY 97-98
Alexandria	$3,308,000	$3,395,695	$3,961,776	$3,538,168	$1,365,000	$3,249,284
Arlington Hts	$6,316,200	$1,995,751	$3,641,700	$3,374,328	$31,269,235	$11,494,000
Tempe	$6,285,000	$3,576,000	$3,249,456	$4,112,000	$3,707,000	$4,107,000
Arlington VA	$1,532,000	$1,532,000	$25,898,000	$55,000	$17,135,000	$80,000
San Mateo	$1,340,000	$1,366,000	Two years reported	Two years reported	Two years reported	Two years reported

Cities	Capital Investment 6 Year Average	Capital Investment Per Capita 6 Year Average
Arlington Hts	$9,681,164	1:$123.25
Arlington VA	$7,705,333	1:$ 40.16
Tempe	$4,171,837	1:$ 26.30
Alexandria	$3,136,320	1:$ 24.45
San Mateo	$1,350,000 (2 yr ave.)	1:$ 14.21

The following graph reflects the six-year average of Capital Investment of each city as illustrated in the chart above. It also reflects the Per-Capita Investment experienced in each city.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET – AVERAGED OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS
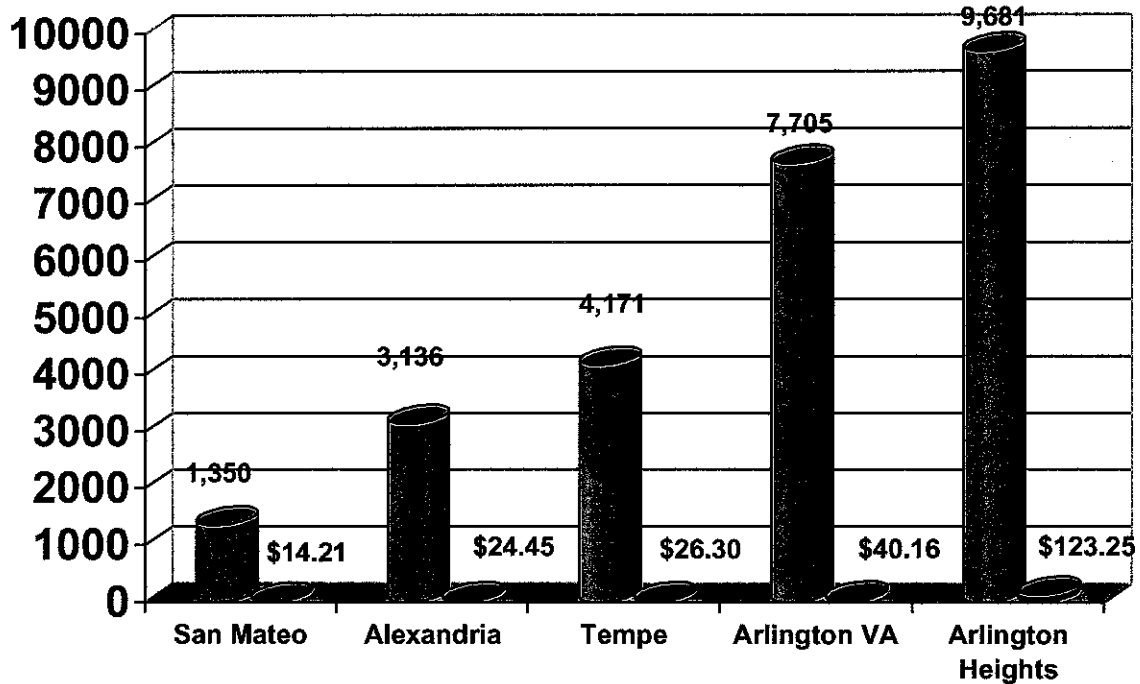
Blue is equal to the six year average of capital improvement in thousands and the purple superimposed number represents the six year average per-capita expense of Capital Budgets in the community.

Number of Employees

Arlington Heights has the lowest number of full-time employees with 103. Arlington, VA has the most full time employees with 242. Alexandria is in the middle of the reporting cities with 128 employees.

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Employees	Full-time Admin.	Full-time Recreation	Full-time Maintenance	Full-time Parks	Total
Arlington VA	27	89	110	Other 16	242
San Mateo	9	79	33	Other 16	137
Alexandria	14	52	62	? Inclusive	128
Tempe	7	31	0	78	116
Arlington Hts	26	32	45	? Inclusive	103

Cities	Ratio of FTE per Capita
Tempe	1:1,367
Alexandria	1:1,002
Arlington VA	1: 793
Arlington Hts	1: 762
San Mateo	1: 693

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES
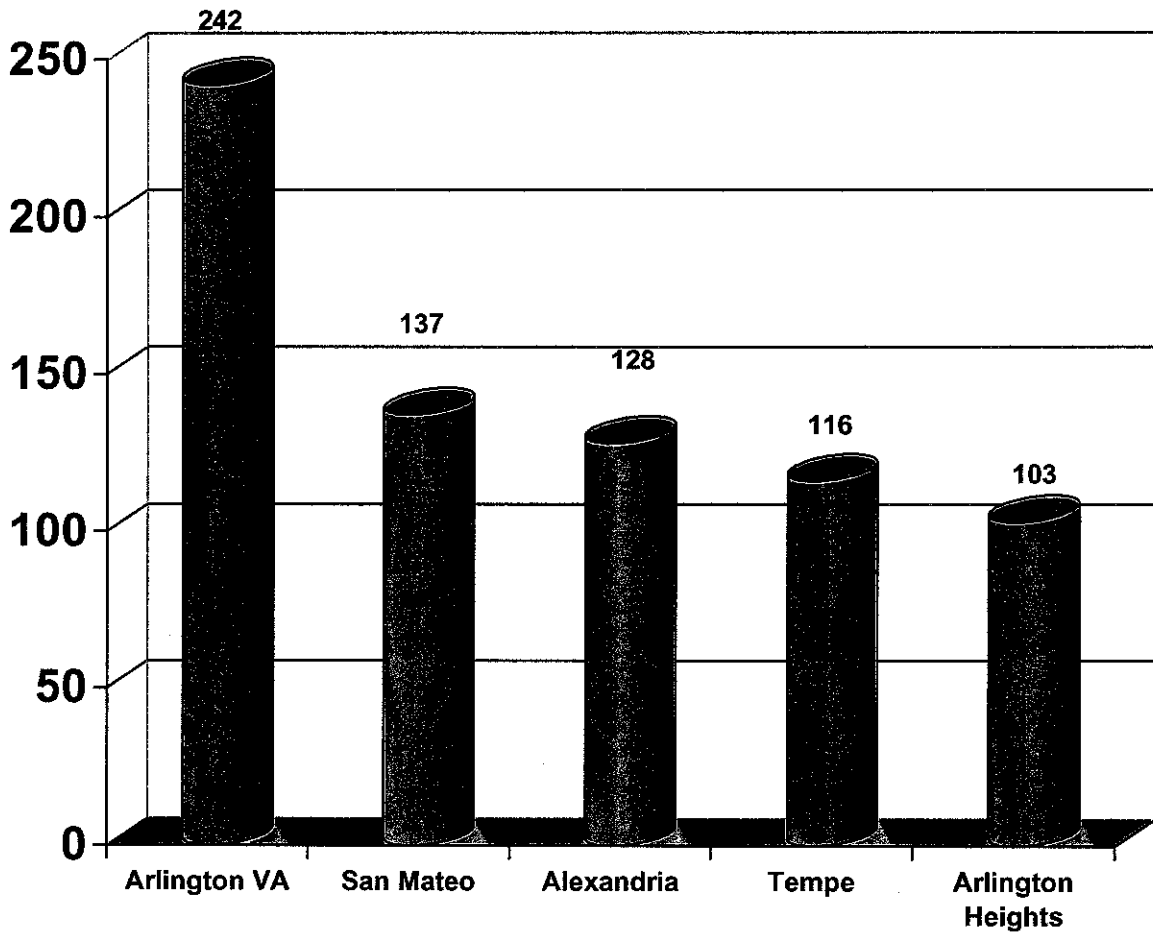
Blue is equal to the total number of full time employees in the community.

Part-time Permanent
Alexandria has the highest number of Part-time Permanent staff with 116 and the highest ratio per capita of permanent Part-time employees to citizens with one for every 1,106 residents. San Mateo is second with 70 Part-time Permanent employees and with it's ratio per capita with one for every 1,357 residents. Arlington Heights is high with 784 part-time seasonal employees and Alexandria is second with 242 part-time seasonal employees.

Employees	Administ.	Recreation	Maintenance	Parks	Other	Total
Alexandria	1	111	4 Combined with parks	0	0	**116**
San Mateo	4	33	0	30	3	**70**
Arlington Hts	2	24	0	3	0	**29**
Arlington VA	2	19	1	1	0	**23**
Tempe	1.5	5	0	.5	0	**7**
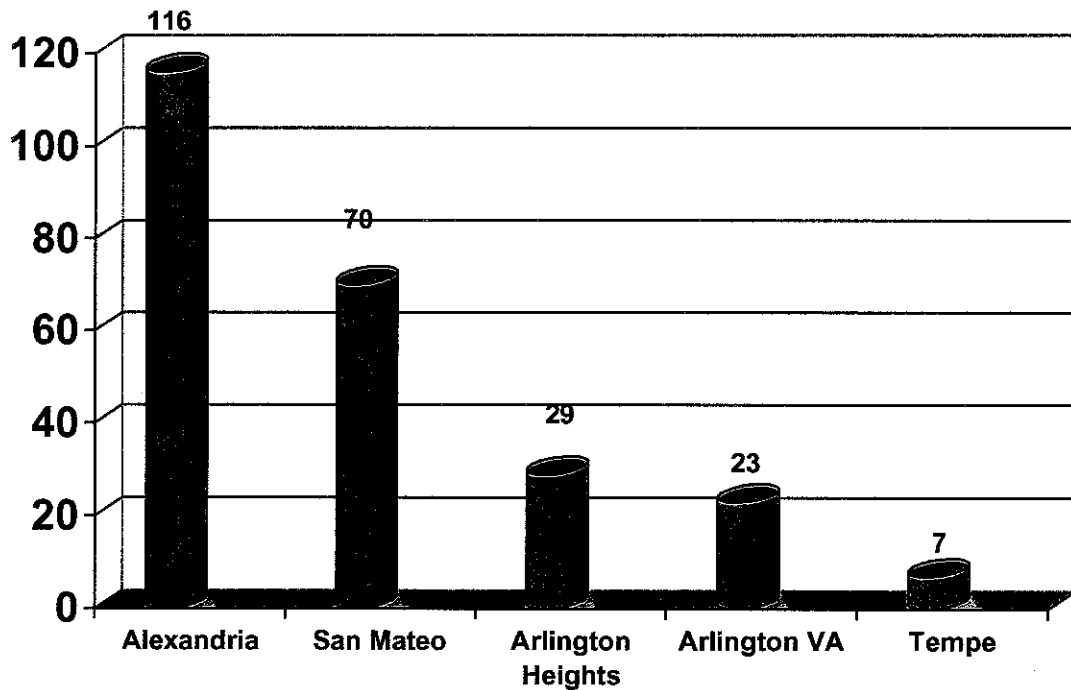
Blue is equal to the total number of part time permanent employees in the community.

Cities	Ratio of PTE per Capita
Alexandria	1:1,106
San Mateo	1:1,357
Arlington Hts	1:2,708
Arlington VA	1:8,342
Tempe	1:22,660

Leon Younger and PROS

PART-TIME SEASONAL

Employees	Admin.	Recreation	Maintenance	Parks	Other	Total
Arlington Hts	4	750	0	30	0	**784**
San Mateo	0	275	0	15	9	**299**
Alexandria	0	215	27 combined w/ parks	0	0	**242**
Arlington VA	4	104	6	7	3	**124**
Tempe	1	64	0	6	0	**71**

Cities	Ratio of Seasonal per Capita
Alexandria	1:530
Arlington Hts	1:100
Tempe	1:2,234
Arlington VA	1:1,547
San Mateo	1: 317

Contractual

Few contractual employees are reported by the agencies. San Mateo has a sizeable contractual employee group with 125 in recreation programming and 6 in park staff.

Trail Miles

Arlington, VA has the highest number of miles of trails with 38. Alexandra is second with 20 miles of trails. Arlington Heights and Tempe report just over 15 miles each.

City	Trail Miles
Arlington VA	38
Alexandria	20
Tempe	15.8
Arlington Hts	15.4
San Mateo	3.5

Cities	Ratio of Miles per Capita
Arlington VA	1: 5,049
Arlington Hts	1: 5,100
Alexandria	1: 6,414
Tempe	1:10,039
San Mateo	1: 27,143

Other Parks and Recreation Functions
All of the responding cities had some "other" parks and recreation maintenance functions. The most common were beautification, mowing, and tree maintenance.

Function	Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
Beautification	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weed Cutting	Yes	No	No	No	No
Mowing Medians and Shoulders	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alley Cleaning	Yes	No	No	No	No
Reforestation	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Tree Maintenance	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stream/Pond Maintenance	Yes	No	No	No	No

Program Information
Registration

All cities had a registration software/application in place.

All required pre-registration with payment for programs. Arlington, VA reported that from time to time there are programs or trips where participants can just show up and pay at that time.

All of the cities reported that they have a satisfaction guaranteed program. Only Tempe indicated they did not have a non-resident fee policy. Alexandria has a surcharge of $20.00 for non-residents; Arlington, VA has a surcharge of $10 to 50% of the cost to non-residents. Other fees vary from 100% to 140% depending on the program and the age of the participant. All reporting cities indicated they use waiting lists for registration, and scholarship programs are offered at 100% of the cost of the program. Tempe offers scholarships at 90%.

Arlington, VA reported that they offer fee reductions. Fee reductions are based on Section 8 income scales. They offer 25, 50 or 75 percent off depending on how they fall on economic standard charts. They will go as high as 90 percent in extreme situations. For instance, Section 8 definitions are correlated as such: Extremely Low Income is our 25% discount; Very Low Income is our 75% discount; The 50% threshold is an interpolation of these other two; They used to have a much more graduated scale but they reported that it was a mess trying to use.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGIES

Function	Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
100% Guarantee?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non Resident Fees	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Fee Over Resident Fees	$20	50%	N/A	$10 or 50%	15-25%
Class Min/Max?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wait Lists?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fee Assistance Programs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
At What %	100%	100%	90%	25 – 75%	Not Reported
Percent of Programs Canceled	10%	6%	20%	Not Reported	Not Reported
Length of Prog. Session	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	8-12 weeks	6-12 weeks

Program Makeup and Cancellations

Tempe shows the highest cancellation rate for programs at 20%. Arlington Heights (6%) is the lowest and Alexandria (10%) is in the middle of the reporting agencies. The typical length of programs is 8-week sessions.

Function	Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
Software	Rec. Trac.	Rec. Reg.	Reflections	Rec. Trac.	ESCOM-CLASS
Registration Methods					
On-site	X	X	X	X	X
Mail	X	X	X	X	X
FAX	No Response	X	X	X	No Response
E-Mail	No Response	No Response	X	No Response	No Response
Internet	X	X	X (form only)	Future	X
Required to Pre-register?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Usually	Yes
Required to Pre Pay ?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Usually	Yes
Payment Types					
Cash	X	X	X	X	X
Check	X	X	X	X	X
Credit Card		X	X	X	X
Invoice					
PO					

Cost Recovery

Most of the cities studied are attempting to recover the direct costs for operating programs. Alexandria attempts cost recovery on adult programs. Classes in the Chinquapin Recreation Center attempt to recover the costs of the instructors and 85% of operating costs. Other reporting organizations indicate the desire to recover costs between 0 and 140% depending on the group that is influenced by the fees. Many report the use of enterprise concepts as a means to recover costs in programs such as golf and tennis.

PERCENTAGE OF THE RECOVERY OF DIRECT COSTS COMPARISONS

Function	Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
Adult Sports	100%	140%	100%	100%	155%
Youth Sports	25-100%	140%	50%	100%	110%
Youth Rec.	Not Reported	140%	50%	0-100%	91%
Adult Rec.	100%	140%	100%	0-100%	150%
Seniors	0-100%	140%	50%	0-100%	58%
TR Programs	0-50%	N/A	N/A	0-100%	N/A
Fitness/ Well.	100%	140%	100%	0-100%	147%
Cultural Arts	0%	140%	100% adult 50% youth	0-100%	135%
Special Events	0%	0%	Varies	0-100%	0%
Pools	0-80%	100%	100% ad. 50% youth	60%	65%
Environmental Programs	0-100%	140%	100% ad. 50% youth	0-100%	N/A
After School Programs	0%	140%	100%	0-100%	100%
Day Camps	100%	140%	100%	0-100%	100%
Life Skills / Education	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	Difficult to Identify
Contracting Classes	50-70% to instructor	No	No	17% Camps	No
Charge backs to other Depts.	No	N/A	No	Yes	No
Facility Rental	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Community Advisory Committees

Alexandria utilizes the benefits of Community Advisory Committees and cooperative relationships extensively. These "community connections" provide a tremendous opportunity to allow the staff and elected officials to get close to the community with park and recreation related issues and extend resources beyond what are immediately available to the department through organization staff and capital assets.

COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
Public Schools	Five School Districts	Schools	Marymount U.	Building Leases
Little League	Five Different Park Districts	Little League	G. Washington U.	Youth Sports Field Use
Soccer Leagues		YMCA	Department of Motor Vehicles	Restaurants and Snack Bars
Titans Football				
Fairfax County Football				
NYSCA				
National Jr. Tennis				
Hershey Track and Field				
Artisans Association				
Community Pre-School				
Alexandria Harmonizers				
Alexandria Seaport Found.				
Alexandria Boxing Club				
Condominium Association				
Homeowners Association				

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Alexandria	Arlington Hts	Tempe	Arlington VA	San Mateo
Parks and Recreation Committee	Board of Commissioners	Parks and Recreation Board	Parks and Recreation Committee	Parks and Recreation Committee
Beautification	Golf	Golf	Urban Forestry	Youth Advisory
Waterfront	Soccer	Cemetery	Arts	Seniors
Bike Study	Museum	Sponsorships	Sports	
Open Space				
Ad Hoc Recreation				
Recreation Center Advisory Bd.				
TR Advisory Bd.				
Park Steering Committee				

Adult Men's League Fees and Number of Games (Gms)

Key

Gms = Games

Res Fee = Resident Fees

NR Fee = Non Resident Fees

Tm = Team

P = People

All fee numbers are in terms of Dollars $

All game numbers are in terms of games played

NA = The activity is not conducted by the park and recreation agency. In many cases the activity is conducted by another organization in the community.

- = No activity reported

ADULT WOMEN'S LEAGUE FEES AND NUMBER OF GAMES GMS)

Activity	Alexan # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee
Slow-Pitch Softball	24	600 tm	20p	12	675 tm	10p	15	380 tm	-	18	505 tm	17p	NA	-	-
Flag Football	NA	-	-	8	450 tm	10p	8	335 tm	-	12	668 tm	17p	NA	-	-
Basket-Ball	10	585t m	20p	10	490 tm	5p	7	270 tm	-	11	655 tm	17p	NA	-	-
Volleyball	8	250 tm	20p	10	260 tm	60t 10p	8	150 tm	-	10	310 tm	17p	NA	-	-
Baseball	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	7	450 tm	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-

ADULT CO-RECREATIONAL LEAGUE FEES AND NUMBER OF GAMES (GMS)

Activity	Alexan # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee
Slow-Pitch Softball	NA	-	-	10	475 tm	10p	15	380 tm	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-
Basket-Ball	8	400 tm	20p	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-
Volleyball	8	250 tm	20p	10	260 tm	60t 10p	8	150 tm	-	10	310 tm	17p	NA	-	-

Activity	Alexan # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee
Slow-P. Softball		425 tm	20p	10			8			18	505 tm	17p	10	700 tm	
Soccer		585 tm	20p	NA	-	-	8	50 tm		NA			NA		
Volleyball		250 tm	20p	10	260 tm	60t 10p	8	150 tm		10	310 tm	17p			

BOYS LEAGUE PROGRAM FEES AND NUMBER OF GAMES (GMS)

Activity	Alexan # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe #of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo #of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee
Tackle Football	NA	-	-	*NA	-	-	NA	-	-	7	15p	-	NA	-	-
Flag Football	NA	-	-	*NA	-	-	7	20p	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-
Basket-Ball		15p		*NA	-	-	7	35p	-	9	35-50p		NA	-	-
Soccer		50p	-	8	29p	37p	*NA	-	-	9	45p	-	NA	-	-
Baseball	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	7	450 tm	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-
Lacrosse	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	10	120p Plus eq. And unif.	-	NA	-	-

*Program run by another organization in the community

Girls League Program Fees and Number of Games (Gms)

Activity	Alexan #ofGms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe #of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo#of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee
Softball		15p		*NA	-	-	15	50p	-	13	40-75p		NA	-	-
Soccer		50p	-	8	29p	37p	NA	-	-	9	45p	-	NA	-	-
Basket-Ball		15	-	7	64p	-	7	35	-	10	35-60p	-	NA	-	-
Volleyball	NA	-	-	7	175 tm	-	8	150 tm	-	8	40p	-	NA	-	-
Lacrosse	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	10	120p Plus eq./ unif.	-	NA	-	-

Boys and Girls Co-Recreational League Program Fees and Number of Games (Gms)

Activity	Alexan # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl Hts # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Tempe # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	Arl. VA # of Gms	Res Fee	NR Fee	San Mateo # of Games	Res Fee	NR Fee
T-ball		15p	-	8	47p	51p	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-
Track and Field	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	8 Wks	30p	-	NA	-	-

*Program run by another organization in the community

RECREATION FACILITY ANALYSIS SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction to Process

This section contains a physical assessment of existing recreation and park facilities operated by the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The assessment was conducted to determine the physical condition, programs offered, productivity of the site and capital improvements needed.

Methodology

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities personnel and the assessment team, comprised of Leon Younger & Pros and Woolpert personnel, toured the City facilities during October and November 2001, and February and March 2002. The main goals were to observe the current state of the facilities; identify current and planned program activities; and identify significant facility issues and opportunities for improvement.

Key Issues and Findings

This document includes a general assessment of each facility identified. Ideas for consideration are listed at the end of each facility review. Specific facility improvement recommendations are listed in Appendix (x). This document contains three sections, Recreation Facilities, Park Facilities and After School Centers.

The specific findings and issues are identified below.

RECREATION FACILITIES

In general the recreation facilities can be characterized as follows:

- The facilities are well maintained by City staff
- Most of the issues noted are due to the age of the facility, size of the facility, and outdated design
- The facilities are not standard in finishes, equipment or interior signage
- The entrance/ID signs are standard for all facilities of the department, but need updating
- Lack of storage, parking, weight room space, and other program space is common to many facilities
- The facilities appear to conform overall to the most current standards for disabled access with a few exceptions
- The Department has several ongoing projects that should be considered during the assessment.

  - Doctor Oswald Durant Memorial Recreation Center renovation and addition project
  - Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center renovation and addition
  - Lee Center signage and security projects
  - William Ramsay Recreation Center driveway and parking projects

Observations of recreation facility conditions include information provided by Department staff during the site visits.

Charles Barrett Recreation Center
1115 Martha Custis Drive
Summary

This small center connected to Charles Barrett School contains a game room, two small offices, weight room, multipurpose room, kitchen, and shared gymnasium. The facility holds after-school and teen programs. The area within the recently constructed addition is warm and inviting, but the multipurpose room needs to be renovated. The weight room has a storage cage that consumes approximately 20% of the program space. The facility is staffed with two full-time, four part-time, and seven seasonal employees. The school occupies most of the program space during the day, resulting in limited hours of operation to the general public. The center is open approximately 58 hours per week.

Observations/Evaluation
- Site drains to low point near entrance
- Roof leaks at the entrance vestibule
- Carpeting shows wear and is contracted to be replaced
- HVAC system functions well, especially at weight room
- Offices are small and irregularly shaped
- Triangular storage room was converted to third staff office and is utilized inefficiently
- Storage is inefficient; bulk supplies take up needed space in weight room cage
- Multipurpose room
  - Was not renovated during most recent construction project
  - Kitchen cabinets need to be repaired
  - Wall mirrors are in poor condition
  - Base is in poor condition
- Contains school's data closet that is not a candidate for center's storage use
- Toilet rooms are in good condition
- Mechanical closet is used as a janitor's closet
- Gym has sound baffles and works well for activities; divider curtain is utilized regularly, and acoustics are generally acceptable
- Weight room has dated equipment

Ideas for Consideration
- Refinish multipurpose room, renovate kitchen area and include tall wall cabinets and full-height cabinets for maximum storage
- Reconfigure use of oddly-shaped staff room for more efficient storage and staff functions
- Install tall shelving at small storage closet (original office) adjacent to multipurpose room
- Relocate stored materials at weight room elsewhere (possibly locating bulk storage off-site), remove cage and expand weight room area
- Confirm code requirement for mechanical closet and correct any misuse
- Grade earth at entrance area for drainage away from building, install drain tile and possibly drains at low areas
- Install new landscaping, walkway and graphics at building entrance
- Expand the footprint of the building to enhance the programming capabilities

Chinquapin Park Recreation Center
3210 King Street
Summary

This is a 17-year-old, well-maintained facility with an indoor pool, snack bar, multipurpose room, fitness room,

racquetball courts, and offices. Though in a good location, the building does not adequately serve users. This is considered the Department's premier revenue producing facility. It is currently recovering approximately 78% of its operating costs through revenue generation. The building is open approximately 104 hours per week. Areas such as the racquetball courts and the fitness room are considered marginally productive. The snack bar's operating costs exceed the associated revenues. Storage space is limited and has encroached into program areas. Office space is inadequate, and space dedicated for generating revenue is also limited. The facility requires renovation to correct layout problems; initial assessment indicates that there is room on the site to expand the facility.

Observations/Evaluation

- The reception/control point is located away from the two entrances and elevator
- Offices
  - Spaces are small and inadequate
  - Staff members are divided among three areas, including a converted racquetball court and former daycare space
- Pool
  - Length is 25 yards instead of regulation 25 meters
  - Air is warm and stagnant, and is an ongoing problem
  - Water temperature of 83°F is a compromise by two main user groups and is displeasing to both
- Locker rooms
  - Spaces are in average condition, and lack ADA compliant lavatories
  - Multiple doors at the entrances are difficult for users to maneuver

- HVAC
  - The system does not function to provide comfortable airflow throughout the building
  - Possible loose bearing is heard in pump
- Exterior doors are heavy and difficult to open
- Fitness room is too small for the number of users, and the equipment is outdated
- Storage space is inadequate
- Site lacks an adequate number of parking spaces
- Site lacks an exterior lighted sign

Ideas for Consideration

- Revisit schematic designs previously completed in 1989 and study addition/renovation options
- Find adaptive reuse opportunities for two of the existing racquetball courts, including building second floor for added square footage
- Maintain this pool at an acceptable temperature for a specific user group and build indoor Olympic-sized pool elsewhere, possibly on site
- Secure one set of entrance doors and relocate reception desk near other doors and elevator, or revise entrance sequence for secure plan in addition/renovation
- If the snack bar is replaced with vending machines, locate them on opposite side of stairs and use space for offices
- Install power-assisted hardware at exterior doors
- Add parking adjacent to existing parking area
- Install an exterior lighted sign
- Place more emphasis on expanding and updating revenue facilities including fitness room and classrooms

Doctor Oswald Durant Memorial Recreation Center
1605 Cameron Street

This is an historic building adjacent to Jefferson Houston School. It is currently unoccupied and awaiting complete renovation and construction of a small addition.

Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center
5700 Sanger Avenue

This is an outdated and poorly maintained facility connected to school on the opposite side of the William Ramsay Recreation Center (see below). Its renovation is currently in design phase. Plan should be reviewed in context of site master plan to resolve parking and access issues.

Patrick Henry Recreation Center
4643 Taney Avenue
Summary

This small and outdated facility houses a busy after school program. The facility is open approximately 30.5 hours per week. The building contains a gymnasium, game room, multipurpose room, kitchen, arts & crafts room, office, and break room. The overall condition of the facility is poor and the plan is dysfunctional. The space behind the center appears to be ample for an addition. The weight room was changed to a multipurpose room but still contains dangerous equipment.

Observations/Evaluation
- The building feels crowded and appears too small for the number of children in attendance
- Ceiling at entrance shows evidence of roof leakage

- Plan is awkward, as children must travel through game room and arts & crafts room to exit to playground
- All spaces are too small for use
- Gymnasium is not regulation size
- Storage space is inadequate
- Finishes are outdated and in poor condition
- Lighting needs to be replaced
- Weight room equipment is no longer used but dangerously occupies lounge space used by children

Ideas for Consideration
- Relocate weight room equipment
- Design addition to facility and reconfigure existing layout, possibly adding a regulation-sized gym and reconfiguring existing gymnasium
- Incorporate a new graphics package and color scheme at the facility

Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street
Summary

This outdated facility contains game room, gymnasium, preschool program rooms, weight room, boxing room, computer lab, meeting rooms, kitchen, senior center room, outdoor pool and playground. The facility is open approximately 82.5 hours per week. The overall condition of the facility is poor, and the building needs to be renovated. It appears there is room on the site to expand the facility.

Observations/Evaluation
- Gymnasium
  - Floor needs to be replaced
  - Moisture sometimes condenses on gym ceiling
  - Adjacent toilet rooms are used for storage
  - Needs more storage

- Acoustics are not good
- Gymnasium space does not have bleachers
- Weight room is small and serves as a hallway between gymnasium and boxing room
- Boxing room
  - Existing rink is in process of being replaced
  - Ventilation is inadequate
  - Shower needs updating
- HVAC system is adequate
- Kiln in copier room lacks cage
- Interior finishes are in poor condition, except at senior center where carpeting is new
- Lighting is outdated
- Sprinkler room is used for janitor's storage
- Small commercial kitchen needs updating
- Fence at playground is in poor condition
- Outdoor pool is susceptible to "drive-by trash" through unattractive chain link fence

Ideas for Consideration
- Plan to renovate interior completely with new finishes, lighting, plumbing fixtures, casework, and kitchen equipment
- Schematic design/code studies may reveal opportunity to convert gymnasium toilet rooms to storage or game room space
- Investigate setback requirements north of building for potential addition
- Investigate possibilities of vertical expansion
- Enclose or remove pool
- Relocate boxing room for use as weight room, convert weight room to gym storage
- Replace gym floor

- Incorporate a graphics package with a consistent color scheme at the facility

Cora Kelly Recreation Center
25 West Reed Avenue
Summary
This is a bright 11-year-old facility adjacent to Cora Kelly Elementary School containing a game room, offices, weight room, racquetball court, computer lab, two contiguous meeting rooms, teen room, daycare room, dance studio, ceramics room, photo lab, classroom, and gymnasium. The building design presents a variety of unique angles in several of the program areas, often limiting available program space. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week. The school uses the gymnasium during the day. This facility houses a thriving after school program that often brings to capacity all available program space. The building is in good condition but requires some improvements.

Observations/Evaluation
- Entire facility was painted three years ago; carpet is new
- Reception desk is away from entrance door, creating a security problem
- Gymnasium
  - Urethane gym floor shows wear and needs to be repainted
  - Four banks of manually-operated wood bleachers are difficult to maintain and not up to standard
  - VCT floor in hallway shows damage by doors prior to being repaired
  - The rolls of floor covering are stored in hallway between gymnasium and school, and partially block egress door

- The operable partition between conference rooms A and B is in disrepair and needs to be replaced
- Roof leaks at front desk during hard and continuous rain
- HVAC system is adequate and is separate from school HVAC system
- Weight room
  - Small for usage
  - Equipment is outdated
  - Contains only door to racquetball court and creates a dangerous situation for children having to walk through the room
- Wood floors at dance studio and racquetball court are in good condition
- Exterior storage is possible, though lack of storage is not evident
- Casework in teen room, kitchen and daycare room is in disrepair
- Some wood doors show wear
- Parking lot is dysfunctional and small for its heavy use; spacious pedestrian landscaping at entrance is wasted since loitering is prohibited at the facility
- Site is fully utilized, and there appears to be no opportunity for expansion other than by building a second floor

Ideas for Consideration
- Redesign parking lot, capturing area in front of building
- Relocate reception desk to entrance, increase game room area by removing current desk
- Consider reconfiguring entryway corridor to increase program space
- Determine source of leak at front desk and repair
- Repaint gymnasium floor
- Replace existing bleachers with new electronically-operated bleachers
- Replace existing casework at all locations
- Renovate commercial kitchen

- Relocate racquetball court door to enter from gym
- Replace weight room equipment, considering pieces with multiple functions to occupy less space
- Replace VCT at hallway area
- Refinish or replace wood doors
- Replace operable partition at community room
- Install exterior storage unit in alleyway between center and school
- Consider implementing a consistent graphics package and color scheme at the building.

Lee Center
1108 Jefferson Street
Summary

This facility occupies most of a former school building and is dedicated to the administrative functions of the Department. The center contains offices, meeting rooms, auditorium, and exhibit hall. The facility appears to be in overall good condition but requires some renovation to improve function.

Observations/Evaluation
- Security station inadequately serves as makeshift reception desk and is located away from two entrances and elevator
- Double height lobby space appears to be oversized and underutilized
- Signage is poor or nonexistent throughout building
- Storage space is adequate
- Carpet is worn and scheduled to be replaced
- Interior needs to be repainted
- Conference room #14 has poor layout and is poorly lighted for its use
- HVAC
  - First floor space requires use of portable radiators, while a nearby room is always hot

- Possible loose bearing heard in pump
- Rattling is heard in dance room
- Column enclosure in dance room is damaged
- Exhibit hall
  - It was renovated and is in good condition
  - Rubber base in some locations needs to be replaced
- All toilet rooms were recently renovated
  - Second floor toilet room door needs to be readjusted
  - Second floor water fountain requires guards to be ADA compliant
- Phone networking equipment is in first floor janitor's closet

Ideas for Consideration

- Review work under contracts that includes signage, new carpeting, and security system
- Balance and repair HVAC system as required
- Paint interior
- Make minor repairs to finishes
- Install guards at water fountain
- Extend second floor over existing double-height entrance space
- Improve reception by adding desk at each entrance or using signage
- Change dysfunctional conference room #14 to an office space

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson Street
Summary

This facility is housed in the east section of the former school building. The center contains a game room, exercise room, multipurpose room, kitchen/break room, weight room and gymnasium. Facility appears to be in overall good condition, but gymnasium requires major renovation to improve function. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week.

Observations/Evaluation

- Reception/office area is crowded for number of people who use the space
- Ceiling tiles are in poor condition, and VCT is in average condition at older area
- Multipurpose room
  - Cage requires maintenance, is not secure, and may be unnecessary
  - Kitchen casework and computer counter need to be replaced
- Break room kitchen is in good condition
- Weight room
  - Ventilation is poor
  - Space is not large enough for number of users
- Exercise room
  - Cages are acceptable
  - Rubber tile flooring is outdated but in fair condition
- Toilet rooms need to have ADA compliant lavatories installed
- Gymnasium
  - It is not regulation size
  - Staff cannot locate switches to fans
  - Space lacks a functioning public address system
  - Divider curtain wheels do not align properly
  - Scoreboard has a short in it and needs to be replaced
  - Floor shows old damage caused by leaks in roof
  - Windows leak and need to be resealed
  - Bleachers are insufficient for crowds, especially as sight lines are blocked by wing walls

Ideas for Consideration
- Install shelving for reception area/office to reclaim needed desk space
- Remove cage and replace casework at multipurpose room
- Replace ceiling tiles and lighting
- Install exhaust fan at weight room
- Install ADA compliant lavatories at toilet rooms
- Renovate gymnasium
- Create a consistent signage program throughout the facility

Mount Vernon Recreation Center
2601 Mount Vernon Avenue
Summary
This center is connected to Mount Vernon School and contains a game room, office, computer lab, two contiguous meeting rooms, dance room, ceramics room and a shared gymnasium. The school's use of the gymnasium limits the program capabilities during school hours. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week. This building incorporates an inviting color scheme and has an open foyer made of brick and glass. The facility appears to be in overall good condition but requires some repairs.

Observations/Evaluation
- New vestibule is best example among facilities, as it is welcoming and safe with its recessed mat
- Storage at the end of the gymnasium is ample
- Air temperature is often uncomfortable for users, as school controls HVAC system
- Ceiling tile is missing in computer room
- Game room VCT floor is cracked and buckled, apparently where old and new construction meet

- Evidence of leaking above ceiling is observed in meeting room "1"
- Leaking is an ongoing problem above janitor's closet
- Closet across from janitor's closet may violate code as used for storage
- Gymnasium
  - Was expanded during the recent addition project, and roof leaks have been an ongoing problem
  - Fasteners for baffles are visible on all walls, but the baffles are missing (possibly relocated to Barrett gymnasium) and poor acoustics preclude maximum utilization of space
  - Multipurpose floor is in good condition except at location of leak
  - Base is separating from wall in at least one location
- Cracking is visible in hallway CMU wall near ceramics room

Ideas for Consideration
- Confirm that the school is planning to replace the roof
- Determine source of leak above ceiling at two locations and replace ceiling tiles
- Replace missing ceiling tile at computer room
- Replace missing sound baffles
- Repair game room floor
- Investigate splitting HVAC system
- Identify solution to lack of adequate parking

William Ramsay Recreation Center
5650 Sanger Avenue
Summary
This newly opened facility contains a game room, computer lab, arts & crafts room, dance studio, fitness room and shared gymnasium. Other than on-street parking, there is no dedicated

parking for this facility. The use of masonry and glass gives this building an exciting, energetic feel. The building is in excellent condition.

Observations/Evaluation
- Parking is an ongoing problem at this location and is currently under design; driveway is to be reconfigured soon
- The center and school share the alarm system; false alarms have created a problem on weekends as the alarm can only be deactivated from within the school building
- The shared use of the gymnasium creates limited programming opportunities during the school day
- The concourse is open and inviting, however is not capable of sustaining program activities, which limits overall program space

Ideas for Consideration
- Review master plan of site, including design for parking and Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center (see above)
- Investigate possibility of adding annunciator panel inside center

PARK FACILITIES

In general the parks can be characterized as follows:

- Most parks have standardized ID signs, although they are outdated
- Two parks have modernized signage and graphics throughout the facility
- Most available park land has been developed, reflecting an emphasis on athletic facilities
- The parks are generally well maintained
- The parks contain many structures that are near the end of their life cycle
- Many facilities are due for renovation

- Most parks do not have adequate parking

The parks observed are presented in alphabetical order.

Charles Barrett
1115 Martha Custis Drive
Summary
This facility is adjacent to the Charles Barrett Recreation Center. The park area contains two acres. Street access to the site is good, although there is no dedicated parking. This site contains one softball field that is used for t-ball and coach pitch. It has a soccer field overlaid and both are used for league play.

Observations/Evaluation
- The ballfield lacks a backstop, guard rail fences, and bleachers
- The turf is in fair condition
- This facility is experiencing an overuse of athletic activity

Ideas for Consideration
- Consider installing a backstop, bleachers, and guard rail fences
- Install irrigation
- Consider relocating the soccer field to another site
- Create designated parking for the facility

Armistead Boothe
520 Cameron Station Blvd
Summary
This facility contains one adult softball field and is designed to also accommodate league soccer. Other amenities include a playground, tennis courts, basketball court, restroom and picnic pavilion. Parking at the site is nominal. New low spill sports lights have been installed at the ballfield. The facility is in good condition considering the level of use it receives.

Observations/Evaluation

The playground receives significant use and is at capacity during the school day.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider updating the site amenities to reflect the recent investment in the sports lights
- Consider relocating the soccer field to another site
- Consider making this site a 90 ft baseball/softball multi-use field

Braddock Field
1005 Mount Vernon Ave

Summary

This 6.6 acre site is located adjacent to George Washington Middle School. The facility contains three softball fields, overlaid with one large athletic field. There are also three lighted tennis courts adjacent to this facility. The athletic fields are not irrigated and there is evidence of significant activity at this site.

Observations/Evaluation

The fields appear to be over-programmed. The lack of irrigation exacerbates the impact of the over use. All turf areas are under stress and in need of renovation.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider installing irrigation to the entire site.
- Renovate all turf areas
- Consider re-design of the athletic area to accommodate the athletic demands identified in the needs assessment.

Ben Brenman
5000 Duke Street

Summary

This is one of the city's newest parks. It contains one little league field with grass

infield, one dedicated soccer field, and one combination softball/ soccer field. All of these fields are irrigated. Additional amenities include connecting trails, three sand volleyball courts, and one picnic pavilion. The vinyl- bonded fencing creates an inviting atmosphere at this site. Well-planned and easy to read graphics are present.

Observations/Evaluation

Non-sodden areas should be top dressed and seeded. There appear to be drainage problems at the site in the vicinity of B Street.

Ideas for Consideration

Explore the idea of adding a playground and an additional athletic field to this site if the demand is identified in the needs assessment.

Brook Valley
5400 Holmes Run Parkway

Summary

This linear park provides a trail opportunity along a roadway and Holmes Run. It offers play areas for younger children. The paths are in good condition. The entire area is maintained to an acceptable standard.

Observations/Evaluation

This facility attracts users from the adjacent residential areas, while trail users come from throughout the community. There is an interest in developing soccer fields in the limited flat open space areas of this linear park. The addition of soccer fields would be difficult to justify in this environment.

Idea for Consideration

- The existing multi- use trail should be widened to current standards of ASHTO.

Chinquapin
3210 King Street
Summary

This 21-acre park is located adjacent to T C Williams High School and the Chinquapin Recreation Center. It contains an athletic field for High School team practice, five additional football/soccer fields, basketball courts, a large picnic pavilion, playground, restrooms, trails, tennis courts, and volleyball courts.

Observations/Evaluations

The park receives heavy use by a variety of different users. The turf is showing signs of stress from over use. Lack of adequate parking appears to be an issue. There also appears to be a problem with vehicles cruising through the park.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider renovating the turf on all athletic fields and throughout the general park area
- Develop traffic calming devices on the park road to discourage cruising through the facility
- Update the signage and graphics throughout the park
- Upgrade all site amenities

Fort Ward Fields
4301 W. Braddock Road
Summary

This facility contains one soccer field and two tennis courts. The St. Agnes St. Stephens School pays an annual fee to gain access to the site. The school personnel maintain the field, arranged to have irrigation installed, and in return, receive exclusive access to the site

during he school day. The city utilizes this site for league soccer games in the afternoon, on weekends and during the summer.

Observations/Evaluation

This site appears to be in heavy demand, although it is only available to the public on a limited basis. The standard of maintenance appears to be low at this facility. The entire area is fenced, allowing for strictly controlled access.

Ideas for Consideration

- Re-evaluate the contractual arrangement that determines the users of the facility
- Consider conducting a return on investment analysis to evaluate the current contractual arrangement with the school
- Consider making the facility more publicly accessible

Four-Mile Run
3700 Commonwealth Avenue
Summary

This 55- acre linear park follows four mile run tributary. It has a school and businesses nearby and has fair access from a variety of points of ingress/egress. It is somewhat hidden from view from most major roadways. The park contains a playground, three lighted ball fields, two-lighted soccer fields, lighted multi-use courts, basketball courts, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and an extensive trail system. The athletic facilities appear over used.

Observations/Evaluation

The facility has a variety of mixed uses on the site. Many of the athletic fields are showing the wear associated with year round activity. There currently is an initiative occurring to add more

parking between the ball fields. There is an apparent need to upgrade the existing facilities and increase the intensity of planned maintenance.

Ideas for Consideration
- Replace the fencing at the ball fields
- Replace all sports lights
- Install bleachers, players benches, and other site amenities to all athletic fields
- Renovate turf at all athletic fields
- Consider relocating some of the soccer activity to alleviate the stress to the ball fields from over use
- Upgrade all signage to include a consistent graphics theme

Hammond Middle School
4646 Seminary Road
Summary
This 25- acre site is located adjacent to Hammond Middle School. It is located in a residential neighborhood and has good street access to the site. The site contains one soccer field that is currently under renovation, and an informal ball field. Additionally, it contains a full-size soccer field located at the lower end of the property known as Lower Hammond.
Observations/Evaluation
This site currently is being renovated. The renovations will include irrigation and site support amenities.

Idea for Consideration
Complete the renovation of the soccer field.

Patrick Henry
4643 Taney Avenue
Summary
This 18- acre site is adjacent to Patrick Henry School. The site is located in a residential area. It contains one ball field, and one soccer field. There is no

dedicated parking other than what is available at the school.

Observations/Evaluation
The fields appear over- used and are in need of renovation.

Idea for Consideration
- Consider eliminating the softball field and adding another soccer field to this site.
- Completely renovate all turf areas

Hensley Park
4200 Eisenhower Avenue
Summary
This 12.4- acre site contains one soccer field, three softball fields, a picnic pavilion, gazebo and restrooms. The fields receive intense use and show the impact of the level of use. There is limited parking on site. There is no consistent signage or graphics at this location.

Observations/Evaluation
The lack of parking has limited the ability to effectively schedule this as a league game site, or utilize all fields at the same time. The size of the soccer field is not regulation, resulting in additional scheduling difficulties for league play. The configuration of the fields is not optimal, and general ingress/egress is challenging. The sports lights and irrigation system are in need of replacement or upgrading. The two lower softball fields have no irrigation.

Ideas for Consideration
- Enlarge the parking area
- Reconfigure the fields so that the are laid out in a more suitable orientation to the sun
- Upgrade the existing irrigation system and add irrigation to the fields not currently irrigated

- Develop an enhanced pattern for ingress/egress
- Consider enlarging the soccer field
- Upgrade the sports lights

Minnie Howard
3701 W. Braddock Road
Summary
This facility is adjacent to a school and shares the athletic facilities with the school. Facilities include two lighted softball fields, overlaid with field hockey, and restrooms. All fields are irrigated.

Observations/Evaluation
The fields are experiencing heavy use and show the wear and tear from the intense usage. There appears to be a drainage problem on Field #2.

Ideas for Consideration
- Consider upgrading the restrooms
- Consider renovating the turf
- Correct drainage problems
- Add a consistent signage and graphics scheme to this site

Nannie J Lee
1108 Jefferson Street
Summary
This facility is located adjacent to the Nannie J Lee Recreation Center. It is located in a residential area and contains two non- regulation unlit softball fields; two lighted tennis courts, one lighted basketball court, sand volleyball court, a small playground and mini-pool. There is limited parking at this site.

Observations/Evaluation
The ballfield facility supports league play for youth t-ball and coach pitch games. Soccer is also played on the fields when they are available. The entire ballfield facility is in need of upgrading to support the level of use it currently receives. Several of the other site amenities

appear to receive significant use and are in need of renovation or upgrade.

Ideas for Consideration
- Renovate the turf at both ball fields
- Upgrade the parking at the site
- Consider relocating the soccer games to another site
- Upgrade the tennis and basketball court lights
- Resurface the tennis courts

Luckett Field
3540 Wheeler Avenue
Summary
This 5.6-acre facility is located near residential, light industrial and commercial establishments. It contains one lighted softball field. It is located near the park maintenance shop and employees use the parking facility during the day. This site has been identified as a potential site for a skate park.

Observations/Evaluation
The site has good separation from the busy adjacent roadway. It lacks effectiveness as a league game site due to it only having one field. The facility needs an updated signage and graphics scheme.

Ideas for Consideration
- Install new signage with updated graphics
- Replace fencing
- Enlarge field to accommodate 90' baseball facility

George Mason
2601 Cameron Mills Road
Summary
This 9.4 -acre site sits adjacent to George Mason School. It is in a residential area. It contains a playground, basketball courts, two tennis courts, picnic pavilion and two ball fields. The ball fields are

programmed for youth league play, although marginal in design standard. Most support amenities are in need of upgrade or replacement.

Observations/Evaluation
This site has been retrofitted to support league play at the ball fields. The fields are marginal in their ability to support that activity.

Ideas for Consideration
- Replace fences and backstops
- Create defined pathways to all amenities
- Add irrigation to all turf areas
- Install updated signage with consistent graphics scheme

Maury Field
600 Russell Road
Summary
This facility is adjacent to Maury Elementary School. The facility contains one small-unlighted ball field.

Observations/Evaluation
The field is located close to the road and lacks support amenities such as adequate fencing.

Ideas for Consideration
- Install backstop, guard rail fencing, players benches, and bleachers
- Consider re-orienting the field to move it further from the road
- Consider adding irrigation to the field

Mt. Vernon Softball Field
2701 Commonwealth Avenue
Summary
This facility is located adjacent to Mt. Vernon School. It has good street access to the site and fair visibility from the road. It contains one unlighted ball field, tennis courts, a small swimming pool, and an arts center.

Observation/Evaluation
The facilities are in need of renovation. The pool is small and offers an outdated aquatic experience.

Ideas for Consideration
- Renovate the pool to incorporate zero depth entrance, in water play equipment, and moving water
- Renovate the ball field and supporting site amenities
- Add irrigation to the ballfield
- Install updated signage and graphics throughout the facility

Potomac Yard Fields
2501 Jefferson Davis Highway
Summary
This facility currently contains two soccer fields.

Observations/Evaluation
The facility was built as a temporary facility for youth league soccer. It may be relocated to another site within Potomac Yards within five years.

Ideas for Consideration
- Install players benches, and bleachers
- Install ID sign and with updated graphics

Ramsay
5650 Sanger Avenue
Summary
This facility contains one unlighted softball field. It is adjacent to Ramsay School. There is no designated parking to support this facility.

Observations/Evaluation
The field is in need of renovation. Irrigation should be added to support the turf.

Ideas for Consideration
- Install irrigation

- Replace backstop, players benches, bleachers
- Install updated signage and graphics

Simpson Stadium
500 Monroe Avenue
Summary

This 13.7- acre site contains two lighted ball fields, two tennis courts, basketball court, playground, neighborhood gardens, limited concessions, restrooms, interior trails, and a dog park. The facility is located adjacent to a YMCA and shares parking with that facility.

Observations/Evaluation

The park is heavily used and all support amenities show the impact of the intense use. The dog park is used to the degree that there is no turf with the confines of the fenced area. The entire facility is in need of renovation.

Ideas for Consideration

- Renovate the dog park turf, and install irrigation
- Add play features for dogs within the dog park
- Renovate the restroom and concession building
- Install new signage with upgraded graphics

AFTER SCHOOL CENTERS

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities operates after school programs within school-owned and operated facilities. The after school centers are presented in alphabetical order.

John Adams After School Center
651 Rayburn Avenue
Summary

This after school program is located in the John Adams Elementary School. The program operates approximately 20 hours per week during the school season. Facilities consist of a multipurpose room, gymnasium, and office. The program serves between 100 and 150 children daily. Elementary school children are bussed to this location from other sites. The structured program consists of homework sessions, basketball league, arts and crafts, gymnasium activities, cheerleading, trips to bowling alley and other areas. This facility was not reviewed.

Francis Hammond Recreation Center
4646 Seminary Road
Summary

This is an after school program conducted at the Hammond Middle School, an older facility undergoing the construction of an addition. The program serves sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and operates approximately 10 hours per week during the school year. The program has access to the gymnasium, cafeteria, and outdoor inline hockey rink. Average attendance is approximately 57 per day and program offerings include education, recreation, life-skill development and tutoring. The cafeteria and gymnasium are in need of renovation.

Observations/Evaluation

- Cafeteria and Gymnasium are on opposite sides of the building from each other, separated by two

stairwells and a corridor of classrooms
- Cafeteria
  - Section of floor is uneven painted concrete, and unattractive rubber edge piece joins this level with the slightly higher section of vinyl tile
  - 2 x 4 ceiling tiles are sagging and need to be replaced
  - Wood doors are in poor condition and need to be replaced
- Gymnasium
  - Large space has two full crosscourts
  - Wooden floor is in average-to-poor condition
  - Some original wood bleachers were replaced with new, others remain and are in poor condition

Idea for Consideration
Renovate gymnasium and cafeteria if not part of the current construction project.

Minnie Howard After School Center
3801 Braddock Road
This facility was not reviewed.

MacArthur After School Center
1101 Janney's Lane
Summary
This after school center operates at the MacArthur Elementary School gymnasium. The program operates approximately 20 hours per week during the school season. Several other groups meet after school and share this space with the after school program. The program serves several elementary school aged children and the current

allocation of space is inadequate to meet the current demand.

Observations/Evaluation
- Carpet tiles are in poor condition
- Abandoned HVAC regulator remains on wall
- Space has easy access to playground and parking
- Storage room is large and well utilized

Ideas for Consideration
- Replace carpet tiles
- Paint walls

George Mason After School Center
2601 Cameron Mills Road

This after school program operates from the gymnasium at George Mason Elementary School. The facility is open approximately 20 hours per week. This is a structured after school program with minimum facilities. This facility was not reviewed.

Maury After School Center
600 Russell Road
This after school center operates out of the gymnasium of the Maury Elementary School. The facility is open approximately 20 hours per week. The attendance at this program is small, usually averaging between 15 and 20 children per day. This facility was not reviewed

George Washington After School Program
1005 Mount Vernon Avenue
Summary
This is an after school program conducted at the George Washington Middle School, an architecturally significant facility built in 1934 that is about to undergo the construction of an

addition. The program serves sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and operates approximately 10 hours per week during the school year. The program has access to the gymnasium and cafeteria. Average attendance is approximately 20 per day, and program offerings include education, recreation, life-skill development and tutoring. The cafeteria and gymnasium are in need of renovation.

Observations/Evaluation
- Cafeteria is in the main building and the gymnasium is in a separate building, both to be joined with an addition during impending construction project
- Cafeteria
  - Vinyl tile floor is buckling in many places
  - Abandoned stainless steel counter takes up space
  - Ceiling was replaced when air conditioning was added, and is in good condition
  - Walls are in poor condition and in need of repair in several locations
- Gymnasium building is highly used and in overall poor condition
  - Parquet floor needs to be repaired or replaced
  - Existing wood bleachers need to be replaced
  - HVAC system is inadequate
  - All finishes are in poor condition
  - Locker and toilet rooms need to be renovated and made accessible

Idea for Consideration

Renovate gymnasium and cafeteria if not part of the current construction project.

RECREATION PROGRAM ANALYSIS REPORT

Introduction to Process

This report is an analysis of the City's recreation programs compared to similar programs in communities nationwide. Programs were reviewed for quality, levels of participation, fee structure, program amenities and marketing efforts. Staff was led through a process by the consultants to determine the core services to be analyzed.

Core services were defined as programs that consumed a large portion of the budget, were offered three out of four seasons per year, have dedicated staff assigned to the program, have a dedicated facility assigned to the program, and have wide demographic appeal.

Methodology

Staff grouped activities into the following core program categories:

Adult Sports; After School, Playground and Summer Camp; Aquatics; Contract Classes; Cultural Arts/Performing Arts; Facility Rentals; Family Programs; Senior Programs; Special Events; Therapeutic Recreation; Volunteers; Wellness and Fitness; and Youth Sports.

It should be noted that just because a service is not core does not mean that it is not important. Based on citizen feedback and other information a strategy may be developed to move a non-core service to core or to move a core service to non-core based on the importance of the program to the community.

Key Issues and Findings

The Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities offers a wide variety of programs and activities that promote healthy lifestyles, lifelong learning, and skill development. The program analysis revealed several common issues.

A. Fees for programs are low or non-existent. A cost recovery system needs to be established that provides for a reasonable Return On Investment (ROI) balanced against the need to provide core services at minimal or no cost. This system should be based on the following assumptions:

1. Fees should recover direct costs which include promotion (printing, mailing, fliers, etc.), instructor pay and benefits, consumable supplies, and where applicable, facility rental fees.
2. A process should be developed for waiving fees for economically disadvantaged citizens who wish to participate in programs.

B. The Department needs a better method of tracking participation in its programs. To better understand market share in all programs, the Department should be able to distinguish between gross participation and unique users.

C. Consistency between programs needs to be developed. The Department is inconsistent in how it applies policies and procedures to its programs. For example, customers are charged a fee to use the weight room at Chinquapin but not at other sites.

D. The Department lacks a strategy to replace worn out or broken equipment. Capital items need to be inventoried and

assigned a schedule for replacement. A cost recovery plan could include establishing a funding mechanism for equipment replacement.

E. The Department should to provide training to key staff members on benefits-based marketing, program evaluation, basic accounting, and program tracking.

Full Findings Report

The following is a discussion of the thirteen program areas evaluated. All program areas were assessed for their strengths and weaknesses. General findings and observations were developed in order to draw summary conclusions regarding each program area. This information will serve as a basis for the development of program recommendations when combined with other research conducted in the Needs Assessment.

Adult Sports

This program consists of traditional sports, which are offered on a variety of levels. Programs are offered year-round. Activities include coed and men's softball; coed soccer; coed volleyball; men's, women's, and master's basketball; and specialty tournaments. This is a core program with an annual participation rate of 7,500.

Strengths
- Variety of skill levels and playing times offered
- The department has a good share of the market
- The program has a long tradition in the city

Weaknesses

- Lack of adequate sized fields for coed and men's softball
- Lack of lighted fields for evening use
- Parking at facilities is inadequate
- Few gymnasiums available for use by adults

Key Findings and Observations

Fees are designed to cover program costs. Lack of field space and facilities restrict offerings. The unit has established and consistent registration policies and procedures in place for registration. There is a procedure for charging non-residents a higher fee.

After-School, Playground and Summer Camp

The department is serving a significant portion of the youth population ages 5-17. The program provides a structured environment for children after school and in the summer months. This is a core service with an annual participation rate of 7,565.

Strengths

- The program provides activities in a safe environment
- Program supports a strengthening families approach
- Program appears to be reaching a large number of children ages 5-17
- Partnerships exist with other city agencies

Weaknesses

- Facility space is limited
- Transportation is limited

Key Findings and Observations

Several programs are state licensed. Staff is looking into licensing all programs or at a minimum following state guidelines. The goal is to move forward with programs that require participants to be signed in and out. There are opportunities for growth in this area. This program has the potential to be a star revenue producer that could be key in subsidizing non-revenue producing programs. The ability to add unique activities such as adventure programs and non-traditional sports targeted at teens would enable the department to capture a larger share of the market. The marketing assets of this program position the department for cash and budget, relieving in-kind opportunities from sponsorships and partnerships. The program benefits from partnerships with other city agencies such as the Public Schools.

Aquatics

The department operates seven aquatic facilities. This is a core service with a long tradition. The bulk of facilities are located in the eastern portion of the city. Activities include skill development courses, fitness activities, and non-structured open swim times.

Strengths
- 7 Pools
- 1 year-round pool
- 2 large seasonal pools
- 4 mini seasonal pools
- Large variety of programming, classes and diversity of use
- Lifeguards are Ellis certified

Weaknesses

- Age and design of all pools are outdated
- Lack of parking at sites
- Difficult to maintain Health Department standards

- Ventilation in all pump rooms is non-existent
- Limited deck space at Rixse
- Pump rooms are hazardous at all facilities
- Expenses are high, and fees and charges are minimal

Key Findings and Observations

A comprehensive fee schedule has been developed for the aquatic facilities. Operating costs for the four seasonal mini-pools appear to be high. There appears to be more demand for services than there is facility space. A variety of courses and programs are offered. Program offerings are limited by facility size and availability. There are several safety issues with the mechanical areas of the aquatic facilities. National trends for aquatic staffing indicate a shortage of qualified personnel. The department has developed a training program in order to attain a pool of qualified staff.

Contract Classes

The department offers a variety of courses designed to develop skills and lifelong learning. Course offering include such activities as exercise and fitness, dance, and sports. Over 3,500 registrations took place in the last year.

Strengths

- Variety of classes
- Courses are offered at sites through out the city
- The cancellation rate is low (10%)

Weaknesses

- Transportation is not offered to classes

- Childcare is not available during classes
- Many facilities are older and small
- Program staff also has building responsibilities
- Budget and facility space limit offering new programs

Key Findings and Observations

Registration processes are clearly outlined in "In Your Neighborhood." Facility space and configurations are limiting factors in expanding course offerings. There is inconsistency between contract classes that are fee based and similar free programs offered at recreation centers. For example, the MYO SIM Kendo/Karate Club, which charges no fee, may compete with the fee-based martial arts courses offered by the department. At the end of courses, participants evaluate the program, providing a mechanism for staff to improve programs and offerings.

Cultural Arts/Performing Arts

The program encompasses dance, music, theater, visual arts, and literature. Programs are large events of 7,000 to 130,000 participants. This is a core service. Programs are popular and have a long tradition in the city. The programs provide a positive economic impact to the city. These programs support the mission of the Council appointed Commission for the Arts.

Strengths

- Enhances tourism
- Has a long tradition behind it
- Unique programs not offered elsewhere
- Promotional materials are attractive and informative

Weaknesses

- Artist pay is not to local standards
- Parking is limited at some venues
- Competition for grant funding
- Demand is greater than supply
- Low visibility in the department and community

Key Findings and Observations

Programs are heavily subsidized. The department has established guidelines for vendors. There are opportunities for sponsorships and other revenue enhancing activities.

Facility Rentals

Facility rentals include two separate indoor facilities (Lee Center and Durant Center) with multiple rooms. Park amenities such as picnic shelters and the amphitheater are also available for rent.

Strengths

- Lee Center has lights and sound in the auditorium
- Lee Center has a dance studio
- Lee Center has ample parking on the weekends

Weaknesses

- Lee Center building security needs improvement
- Commercial kitchen in Lee Center not utilized
- The department cannot use rental fees as they are deposited back into the general fund

- Not enough staff to effectively operate rentals
- Not enough parking at the Durant Center however more parking is being added
- The number of people allowed for each park rental is limited by parking availability

Key Findings and Observations

Chinquapin park rentals are handled separate from other park rentals. The department has established standards and procedures for rentals. Combined rentals from the Lee and Durant Centers and park rentals are approximately $120,000. Rentals at Durant and Lee Centers are at maximum capacity. Fees are below market price. There appears to be excess demand for rentals.

Family Programs

Family programs provide an opportunity for parents and children to interact while participating in a recreational program. Programs are offered in a variety of settings.

Strengths

- Motivates cohesiveness with family and community
- Supplies and supports family needs
- Provides resources to families
- Provides life skills
- Helps to increase participation in programs offered at locations
- Helps to market the programs and the department
- Builds a support system and rapport between staff, parents, school, community, and children

- Helps to strengthen the relationships with the family members, the local government, the department, and the community

Weaknesses

- Location of activities offered
- Scheduling inconvenience
- Less interaction with parents as they get older
- Lack of communication with the parents
- Language barriers inhibit participation
- Lack of parental interest in participation, volunteering, their children, the facility, or events
- Limited transportation resources
- Lack of funding for the program by the city or the parents

Key Findings and Observations

There is a lack of consistency in the offerings in this area. While there is mention of a class or a sport for every member of the family in the "In Your Neighborhood" publication, there are no specific family programs. The overall offerings support the concept of family programs.

Senior Programs

The program provides socialization and interaction with other seniors. The program also offers special programming target at seniors for healthy living and lifelong learning. The department operates three senior centers.

Strengths

- Sports and fitness programs
- Creative and performing arts

- Educational and personal development programs
- Special events and activities

Weaknesses

- Lack of dedicated space for senior programming
- Transportation is limited but available through STU, Senior Taxi, and DOT Taxi
- Insufficient funding
- Cost for services increasing

Key Findings and Observations

Participation in this core program is increasing. Programs are free or have minimal fees, making these programs a high cost per experience. Senior centers and program offerings are geographically concentrated on the east side of Alexandria.

Special Events

The department facilitates and implements numerous smaller festivals, races, parades, and holiday events with a variety of themes.

Strengths
- Promotes cultural diversity
- Enhances tourism
- Provides visibility for the city

Weaknesses

- Events impact on city services for parking, security, etc.
- Heavily subsidized – several events pay for police service, garbage removal, etc.
- Large amounts of departmental resources are used to support these events with minimal return to the department

Key Findings and Observations

These events are totally subsidized with no revenue returned to the department. The department has applications and policies and procedures in place for event requests. Special events provide an untapped opportunity for revenue development and for promoting the department.

Therapeutic Recreation

The department has been offering therapeutics programs since 1968. This is a core service. The program offers a variety of activities specially designed for the developmentally disabled and physically disabled. Programs are offered for children and adults. The department offers inclusion opportunities for this population as well.

Strengths

- Offers a variety of recreation programs for children and adults with disabilities
- Door to door transportation is provided
- All programs, including camps, are free
- A Saturday program for kids with developmental delays is offered
- Two six-week all day summer camps for kids with disabilities are offered
- A summer lunch grant program for kids attending camps is offered
- Staff have great ideas for expanding services and programs
- There is a program for mainstreaming children with emotional and behavioral issues
- Strong and active advisory council

Weaknesses

- The department is currently not offering any pre-school programs or programs for children with multiple disabilities
- Transportation takes more time for some programs than actual program time
- No revenue is generated
- The number of children with autism attending the Saturday program is increasing
- The summer lunch grant is granted to a facility instead of on an as-needed per child basis
- Staff and resources are limited
- The transition out of 'mainstream' to general recreation programs often does not happen
- The cost per participant is high

Key Findings and Observations

Staff has made a concerted effort to gather citizen input to develop the program. The department has conducted a study on therapeutic services to determine citizen satisfaction, identify critical issues, and to increase availability of service to the community. Extensive modifications to advertising and physical facilities have been made based upon this study, to improve the experience, increase availability, and increase participation. Facility descriptions in "In Your Neighborhood" include handicap accessibility information. Other promotional material produced by the department includes information about ADA accommodations. The program showed a 20% increase in participation over last year but is limited by staffing resources, space, and transportation. The therapeutic program is almost 100% subsidized. Generally, few fees are charged for services. Transportation is a costly and time-consuming aspect of the TR program. There is opportunity for the department to partner with other agencies in Alexandria. Comprehensive training for department staff in meeting the needs for persons with disabilities is not in place, but it is a component of the department's diversity training.

Volunteers

Volunteers are used to supplement paid staff. This provides an opportunity for citizen involvement in programs.

Strengths

- Most volunteers are long term
- Most volunteers are age appropriate for the program that they are in
- Recreation and fun activities may attract volunteers
- Some areas depend on volunteers as staff

Weaknesses

- Hard to attract volunteers for the therapeutic Buddy Program
- No consistent volunteer screening process for the department
- Training is time consuming
- Statistics on volunteers are not tracked consistently

Key Findings and Observations

No recruiting effort is taking place on a citywide level. Volunteering occurs as programs need it. There are no recruitment materials. Background checks are not done for all volunteers. A system to track volunteer hours is needed.

Wellness And Fitness

The department offers a variety of programs promoting healthy lifestyles. The activities include instruction, drop-in fitness programs, and self-guided experiences.

Strengths

- Fitness programs are offered at a variety of locations
- The department offers a good mix of wellness programs such as weight training, boxing, fitness trails, and a variety of classes and sports

Weaknesses

- Quality of equipment varies according to the site
- Chinquapin charges admission to use the fitness room and has the oldest equipment
- Rooms are small
- There is no staff available to instruct on proper use of equipment

Key Findings and Observations

Fitness programs are popular in the city. Demand outstrips capacity. The department lacks a strategy to replace worn out or broken equipment. Capital items need to be inventoried and assigned a schedule for replacement. Fees for using fitness facilities are inconsistent. There is no orientation program in place for new users. The department does not track usage.

Youth Sports

This program consists of traditional sports, which are offered on a variety of levels for youth ages 5 to 17. Programs are offered year-round. Activities include baseball, softball, basketball, football, and tennis. This is a core program with an annual participation rate of 4,274.

Strengths

- Offers a variety of traditional athletic sports
- Volunteers are used as coaches, as baseball umpires, and serve on advisory boards

Weaknesses

- Fees generated do not cover costs
- Lack of facilities limit offerings

Key Findings and Observations

Program offerings appear to be limited by field and facility availability. The program is heavily subsidized with some programs recovering only a fraction of their costs. For example, the department provides jerseys and/or uniforms with some costing as much as $55 per participant. Some localities have chosen to pass this cost on to the participants or to develop sponsorships to defray costs.

VOLUNTEER OPERATIONS ANALYSIS REPORT

Process

There were two focus groups conducted at Alexandria Parks and Recreation concerning volunteer operations on April 24, 2002. The first focus group facilitated was with the Alexandria Parks and Recreation staff that worked with volunteers. There was approximately 14 staff present. The second focus group facilitated was with a group of volunteers that were invited to discuss volunteer operations. There were approximately 16 volunteers from all areas of the department, such as youth sports coaches, advisory councils, Adopt a Park, teen leaders, neighborhood groups and dog park volunteers. The session lasted about an hour and a half and the discussion was structured around questions that were similar to the staff volunteer questions. This was done in order to hear both the staff and volunteer perspective. Some responses to operations were very similar and others differed greatly.

Methodology

The park and recreation staff were asked a series of volunteer operations questions. Each of the responses was documented. The focus groups were open for all comments, and the dialogue was insightful. The evening meeting with the volunteers was conducted in the same manner. The volunteers were asked set of questions similar to those asked of the staff. Their responses were documented and incorporated with the staff comments. All the information was summarized for the key findings. The draft notes were sent to the staff for their review and comments. Based on their comments, the final report was completed.

Summary

The Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department has a good volunteer corps. Many of the volunteers are community-minded individuals who want the best parks and services to enhance the quality of life in their community. The department has done a good job of matching the interests of the individuals with the program areas.

The department has many more areas in which volunteers could be utilized, and there is a great need to expand volunteer services is warranted. Volunteers help reduce staff time and resources necessary for projects and programs. Many of the staff feel overwhelmed with the amount of core responsibilities in their position plus the management of volunteers. The department needs to expand personnel to include a volunteer coordinator position or adopt a volunteer-based coordinator position. The position would develop the operation policies and procedures manual, job descriptions, recruitment, application process, training, and recognition program.

The department does recognize volunteers in many of the areas where volunteers are used. The department needs to have a system-wide volunteer recognition program that allows all volunteers from each program area the opportunity to understand the diversity of volunteer accomplishments throughout the parks and recreation department.

The department should strive to standardize forms and procedures to streamline operations and reduce staff workload in regards to volunteer

recruitment procedures and management.

Key Findings

The key findings are as follows:

- The amount of volunteers is impressive. There are many people involved in a variety of areas.
- Many areas in which more volunteers could be used were identified.
- The organization of volunteer operations is not coordinated or managed by a specific division or section. Each area creates and manages volunteers separately.
- Communication with volunteers is an issue. Volunteers would like to receive more directed information and opportunities. They consider the information in the brochure to be afterthought or space filler.
- Tracking of volunteer hours is not a coordinated effort, and each section has its own method for collecting the information. In some cases, it is not collected.
- Volunteers are not categorized to distinguish between various types and levels of volunteering.
- Training is not offered to volunteers in all cases.
- No standard orientation process exists for new volunteers. Orientation is only conducted when time allows and is not considered necessary in all cases.
- The staff feel overwhelmed in many cases with the amount of tasks they are responsible for; the inclusion of volunteers is sometimes seen as more of a burden than as assisting them. The training and supervision of volunteers seem to take more time than getting the actual task completed.

- There is no department-wide formal recognition of volunteers. Many sections hold their own recognition event. In most cases, the volunteers in most cases would like to see the city do a city-wide or department-wide recognition program.
- The staff and volunteers would like to see a more organized approach to managing volunteers, administratively and in the field. They feel that volunteer management is more than a one-person job and that multiple coordinators are necessary.
- There are no standards for the application process.
- The liability waivers are an issue in that there is conflicting information about the types necessary for each area.
- The department is lacking volunteer policies and staff training for managing the volunteers. This includes lack of transportation and age limits.
- Most areas do not have volunteer job descriptions so that both staff and volunteers understand the skills needed and the expectations and purpose of each job.
- There is no comprehensive listing of long and short-term volunteer opportunities.

STAFF FOCUS GROUP MEETING REPORT

1) What are the current jobs and tasks for volunteers?

- Assisting the staff with programs, games, working with therapeutics, cooking classes, exposure to inclusion programs, older teens work as volunteers with and without disabilities, some skill building, program set up, and lead activities.
- Programmatic – assisting leaders, may move to developing and leading programs
- Front desk, meeting, greeting, answering phones.
- Advisory Council – made up of parents, leading special events, offering events, raising money, monthly meeting; they maintain their own bank account
- Teens assist in leading activities, using summer youth employment (paid, not really volunteers), others volunteer at the center during the school year (such as cheerleading coaches).
- Community service workers do custodial jobs, maintenance needs around centers, assisting leaders.
- School partnerships assist in tutoring and leading activities.
- Coaches for all sports, parents and teens.
- Community organizations help to co-sponsor and provide manpower for events and programs, and assist financially.
- Feel that the term "volunteer" is a misnomer, is it really volunteering if they are required to do this (courts and schools requiring community service) versus those that volunteer because they want to help.

- My philosophy is that I'll take any help we can get.
- Trail maintenance – We use scout troops to enhance parts of the park, gardening
- Several adults have been volunteering for 20 years with park projects, gardening, identifying problems redesign ideas for trails - older groups of people, not so much youth.
- Adopt A Park program is a grant to civic associations that supply volunteer manpower, report evaluations of parks, interact with beautification committee; rigid program where the grant is dependent upon the inspection of the parks, money goes towards supplies, supporting operations
- Pick up trash.
- Arts commission is an advisory body to the city, very active in terms of developing organizations and projects, 15 commissioners, executive committee; structure, specific arts related projects, also grants committee that give money to organizations that do not have paid staff, stewards of the funds, train non-profit board members how to work on the Board.
  - Special events are very dependent on volunteers; volunteers actually run the festivals, marketing, act as exhibitors, hire entertainment; it's their event, we empower.
  - Tree lighting.
  - Cause for Claus – program for Santa Claus, Spanish-speaking Santas
  - Administrative volunteers are in-between jobs, or career changers, program interns, given specific projects, leadership oriented; they take it from

beginning to end; we have about five per year.

- Master Gardeners are with Friends of the Trees and provide training for master gardeners that identify the trees - we provide park boundaries, has increased our workload for the volunteer effort.

2) How many volunteers are currently active in your system?

- Don't know the number of volunteers.
- We don't go by number of volunteers, we use hours. That varies from month to month. It is reported somewhere in the annual report.

3) What type of tracking do you use for volunteers?

- There is an annual goal of a number of hours by sections.
- Signing in and out.
- School kids – tracked by area.
- Estimates from coordinators.
- Program reports – have number of hours listed.
- Keep files on each individual volunteer coach for mailings.
- It should be accurately documented, however this is a budget issue. It amounts to dollars and cents.
- There is not a uniform method to track.
- Fact is that we are short staffed and to track and complete the paperwork is detraction from our jobs, volunteers are to be assisting us, not making more work.
- There is no volunteer coordinator for the department or within the different divisions.

- Youth workers are not always effective. It takes too much time to watch, train, and supervise them. The end results are not worth it. It takes too much time to deal with them for the results we get.
- We need more guidance to work with volunteers
- The attitudes of some of the volunteers make it difficult to work with them.
- Coordinators are needed to help staff with volunteers, even if part-time volunteer staff.

4) What type of training do you provide to volunteers? Is there an orientation process?

- There is no volunteer training program across the board
- The Arts Commission has an orientation process, train to fill out grant applications
- Grants program has an orientation process prior to review of their grant application
- We do have training for the arts board leadership that includes marketing, fund raising, how to be a board member.
- We do a mini-orientation at the center. We walk them through the basics, nothing that is too time consuming. The volunteers come and go.
- Some organizations that provide volunteers also provide basic training.
- We give them on the job training.
- We have very little turnover in the Adopt A Park program. The coordinators train new people.
- Recreation leaders provide support for volunteers. We give them an idea of what to expect and hope they take the initiative.

- Give them tasks that they are comfortable with; many do not a need much training. It takes too much time.
- Coaches are put through a certification process, NYSCA process, set up clinics with local high schools to do training about the sport and the game, take what we can get. Without these volunteer coaches, we wouldn't have a program. We try to get as much training as possible, give feedback wherever possible. The coaches have to able to teach the rules of the games and basic skills to teach kids. This includes discipline, self-control, working with kids three times a week. Some volunteers transport kids.
- Training can be time consuming.
- Adopt A Park will redirect some of their volunteers. We turn away those that have different goals, no background or expertise. The kids or groups are redirected to the nature area.
- The court-appointed community service workers couldn't go through the criminal check so some areas can't take them.
- Arts commission is a blending of the goals of the organizations and boards.
- Nature and recreation turn them away for reasons from support to attitude.

5) Is there an application process?

- We don't require at arts commission.
- All have their own process.
- We have tried to develop a standardized process.
- We are developing Adopt a Garden program and are

reviewing the process. Some aspects go through different channels. There are problems with the clauses within the agreements. Some groups are not comfortable about signing these liability clauses.
- Youth sports do background checks on coaches.
- The license day camps have a criminal background check on all volunteers. There is an area on the form for two references, but those are rarely called to verify.
- Background checks on court appointed prisoners are not necessary.
- Are prisoners really volunteers?
- There are no categories of volunteers.

6) How do you recruit volunteers?

- Media advisory
- Local papers
- Posters
- Flyers
- Registration forms at schools
- Department brochure
- Volunteer bureau
- Retired seniors
- Phone calling
- Each section is doing individually and there is no coordinated effort

7) What does the Department do to recognize volunteer work?

- We hold a picnic for volunteer coaches.
- Certificates are given out.
- Tee shirts and small promotional items are given.
- Park and recreation give awards for projects that are nominated.
- Adopt a Park gives monetary awards up to $960 that goes to

the non-profit that worked on the park or the park itself. The volunteers themselves get recognition from the civic association.

- In the past there was a bi-annual volunteer recognition program. We offer to write reference letters for the volunteers.
- Gave Ben and Jerry's ice cream vouchers.
- Volunteer dinner and certificate to councils

8) Is it important to recognize?

- Absolutely important to recognize the volunteers
- I feel it is difficult. Volunteers don't come to be recognized. I feel they do not like this attention.
- No budget for volunteer recognition or volunteers

9) Who manages the volunteer program?

- No centralized person manages volunteer process, each center or section has his or her own management process.
- Being in therapeutic recreation, staff is always the volunteer coordinator.

10) How do you communicate with the volunteers?

- Letters and emails.
- Phone calls.
- Arts and Therapeutic Recreation have newsletters that are directly mailed to volunteers.
- The park and recreation brochure has volunteer information. This is mailed only to a portion of the community.

- The website lists information, but not sure how effective it is.
- Word of mouth.
- Staff list on their planning sheets that there was written communication for a role in a particular activity.

11) Are there job descriptions for the volunteers?

- Arts department has job descriptions.
- Therapeutic recreation has descriptions
- Adopt a Park
- Nature programs
- Are there age limits to who can volunteer? Is there a park policy?

12) Where are the biggest volunteer gaps or areas where more volunteers could be used?

- Administrative volunteers – clerical, data entry, phones.
- Instructors for programs.
- Across the city there are a multitude of projects that could be accomplished if there were volunteer coordinators working with the volunteers on a long-term basis.
- We need volunteer translators.
- One volunteer coordinator will not be enough; we need a lot of hands-on people to work with volunteers in recruiting, training, supervising, etc.
- The needs vary with the programs.
- Many of our volunteers are one shot (one month average). Some areas have 80% one-shot volunteers; other areas have 1-2% one-shot volunteers.

- Many of the adult volunteers in the Adopt a Park program are long term.

13) **What would be the long-term goals for the volunteer component of the department? What is the perfect department?**

- Training for the volunteers in the appropriate areas. Some areas do not need training, such as a task that is not skilled based.
- Employee counseling.
- All follow the same process - standardized policies on how handle volunteers
- Department-wide management.
- Have standard waivers and terminology for handling children, transportation, other organizations' permission slips, etc.
- Tacking on duties to others – need to be specific.
- This is a job for more than one person because each section's needs are different.
- All supervisors at one time or another were doing the orientation. We should have an orientation process for new volunteers.
- I'm not sure if a boilerplate liability form would work for all areas.
- City attorney makes it difficult because there are different opinions.
- We need to develop department-wide policies, such as working with children policies, criminal checks, etc.
- Have a department-wide coordination of needs and be able to access them.
- Web page should be interactive. There should be a page set up

for volunteers, application on line and notify the section management when an application that is for their area is submitted. The volunteer bureau has this, and it is extremely beneficial.

Comments

- We have a volunteer fair with a sign-up sheet, but there is little done to follow up on these potentials. This is bad public relations and image. If someone signs up and no one gets around to speaking with them, what does that say about us?
- On the flip side, sometimes these contacts don't produce anything.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS GROUP MEETING REPORT

The following questions were asked of the City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation volunteers. A summary of their responses follows.

1) How long have you been a volunteer with the Department?

- 30 years
- 13 years
- 9 years
- 6 years
- 3 months (just starting Adopt a Park)
- 25 years
- 3 months
- 7 months
- 7 years
- 6 years
- 2 years
- 10 years
- 8 years

2) What attracted you to becoming a volunteer? How did you get involved?

- This was my first home and there were a lot of burglaries in the area. The park behind the house had a lot of kids hanging out there. With an adult present and keeping the park cleaned, it discouraged the teens that were congregating there. Then I found out there was a city fund for adopting a park, and then the state brought in their share. This evolved my level of involvement.
- Something needs to be done in our neighborhood. We are just getting started.
- I was walking with my son and watched a group of youngsters playing football. The coach came over and basically recruited me to coach and get my son involved in football.
- We were asking the city to put in a dog park, which was the first of its kind. I did the research, helped the city to figure out how to develop and support it. It was a community effort. If there is not a group of citizens who want to take the lead, nothing will happen. We have four dog parks that are fenced. There are people coming all over the region to use these four parks and it takes a lot of work to maintain.
- Beautification program along the cemeteries, owner wouldn't take care, help to keep the area nice, got involved helping the children back and forth across the streets, got involved because her children were involved

- I got started because of my grandchildren. They were involved in the sports, as well as a lot of children in the community. I saw that the children need help to grow as adults. I started to volunteer services, give them guidance and help in what I thought they needed.
- For me it started with Earth Day and editing a brochure, how to make sure we have the active and passive spaces. This got me interested in a whole set of things from wanting to help protect the spaces for the future, to removing invasive plants, litter pickup, keeping the parks in good repairs, improving the quality of the landscaping, helping kids learn about wildlife - kids need to know about the trees and wildlife.
- Always used the recreation center. My kids went there. I encouraged the kids to go there and use. My daughter ended up working there. I was asked to be on the parent board and thought that would broaden my horizon. I enjoy it. I have lots of ideas and like serving a lot of kids.
- I was passing out job application at schools and liked working with kids. Heard about the programs and got involved.
- I have been a volunteer coach working with children for 30 years. I feel that education and sports go hand-in-hand, especially for kids with learning disabilities such as ADHT. It is an incentive to be good in school; they can't play if their grades aren't good. I also have volunteered with foster kids for 21 years.

- Got involved with mom as volunteer coach. She makes sure we are involved in good things. I want to share my God-given talents with the community and those less fortunate than I am.
- I used to play sports when younger and I saw an ad looking for volunteers.
- I liked coaching kids and then they ask if I wanted to volunteer.

3) Was there a formal application process that you went through?

- Youth coaches must complete an application.
- There are several applications within the Adopt a Park program. One must state how one is using with the money, fill out a survey, and fill out paperwork for the gardens and waiver.
- Adopt a Park has a formal contract each year. This in turn began a new application process.
- There is no application process for the Advisory Council.
- Coaches have an application and have to become certified by NYSCA. The youth sports certification serves as an insurance policy for liability.
- Youth coaches have to submit to background checks.
- Additionally, one must submit a plant specific plan, waiver of liability, and attorneys have said these are worthless.

4) Did you go through an orientation or training?

- There are some rules and regulations for Advisory Boards.

We did review the rules to know what is required.
- Coaches have NYSCA certification.
- It is an unwritten rule; experienced coaches mentor new coaches.

5) Do you feel volunteers need to go through training or an orientation?

- Yes, absolutely
- If the volunteer is picking up garbage, they don't need training.
- To identify invasive plants, the volunteers teach each other.
- Advisory Boards are becoming more proactive – trying to improve their community centers, we bring in new programs and ideas to better serve the community. Some centers are very small, over crowding children.
- Parks have limited resources, trees, and plantings. These aren't managed or. Volunteers help with maintenance and look at the parks to help with supplying resources. The city has one arborist and few people to really assist the volunteers.

6) Do you record or track the number of hours you are volunteering? Are you requested by the staff to track your hours?

- Advisory Board meeting minutes are kept and recommendations for the center supervisor are recorded. This would include hours.
- From an athletic perspective, there is no formal tracking. I have an idea of the hours

necessary, prescribed number of hours to coach, keep up with coaches, etc.

- Tracking of hours isn't important, don't need to keep track.
- Get involved because of a passion. Tracking would do more harm more than good.
- Volunteering is informal, why structure it?
- Sign in and out to track on a notebook.
- Require different styles of tracking for different areas.
- Adopt a Park is based on performance. Estimates of hours are tracked.
- Programs in centers would be non-existent without volunteers.
- Coaches do field preparation as well as coaching. This goes beyond the actual duties.

7) How does the department communicate news and information to you as volunteers?

- There is very little communication from the department. It would help me greatly to know what is going on in the parks, so I can inform neighbors when they ask me. As an example, when fencing is dropped off, I get calls from the neighbors wondering what is going on. It would be nice if the department would call and let me know what is going on. They have my phone number to call.
- This needs to be improved greatly. Communication is needed regarding park events, and the coordination of installation of trees, water fountains, etc. is essential. Operations could run more

effectively with better communication.

- Sports community has a database that keep them informed, such as letters to former coaches
- The Department should send a notification of needs out to all of the community as well as the volunteers.
- Volunteer positions are in the Gazette and Journal, Comcast channel lists positions
- Alexandria parks brochure has bits of information. They need to look into changing the cover of the brochure. It is boring, looks like hype. This should be made to look more interesting; eye catching that has sports, kids on it, something more. Its purpose is to be about programs. The volunteer tidbits are lost in it.
- Volunteer or community brochure could be developed. Currently, the solicitation of volunteers is an afterthought.
- Alexandria volunteer bureau has a publication and that is boring too and not widely distributed.
- A list is needed to be of long and short-term volunteer opportunities.
- Notices should be sent to civic associations. They are always looking for articles.

8) How do you feel about being recognized as volunteers?

- It is important to be recognized. Volunteering is something one does from the heart.
- Thank you notes are received from the staff and that is appreciated.
- Most of the reward of volunteering comes from the joy

of the kids. When they are successful or able to achieve a first, seeing their faces is really rewarding. When they are able to score a first time, run a race and win, first goal, I think those are the praises you get as a volunteer, appreciation of the children.

- We do get our rewards in bits and pieces, from kids and giving back to the community.
- Coaches don't get the credit they deserve, they receive thank you notes, but then "are you coming back next year?" They need something more. Many coaches spend their own money on the kids.
- I was involved in a citywide recognition, which was formal and held at the Hilton. This was a grass roots effort from advisory councils.
- There should be some sort of formal thank you from the city and a token of appreciation such as a shirt, a progressive recognition reward, by the amount of years, nothing extravagant, but something.

9) Any other comments or concerns with volunteer operations?

- One issue with fundraising -the Advisory Councils or volunteer groups should have the ability to purchase from and support the operations and not have to go through city procurement. This gets too expensive and bogged down by bureaucracy. This needs improvement.
- It is good to know what other groups are out there and what they are doing. We get too involved in our own area to know

what is going on with other volunteer groups. I wish I had known this sooner; I might have gotten involved with that area.

- Get the information out there. This could be very helpful in finding other the common interests.
- Advisory councils should communicate with each other. The more established councils could mentor the newer ones, share ideas and strategies.
- Would like to see upgrades in the community center, landscaping, too small to serve all that need to have these opportunities, Hispanic community is growing, need to service them.
- Alexandria should fund volunteer coordinator positions because we could then leverage a whole lot more citizen involvement.
- More literature and more Spanish speaking staff in the center. We need translators, get flyers that are produced in Spanish.

MARKETING ANALYSIS REPORT

Process

Three staff members of Alexandria met with the consultant on April 24, 2002 to discuss the operations of marketing services within the Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department. Interview with the staff were conducted in a focus group setting. The purpose of the meeting was to disucss marketing operations and areas for improvement. The department is doing many positive promotional tactics.

Methodology

Critical analysis in the area of Recreation Needs Assessment involves an understanding of the approach toward marketing the department and its resources toward a specific line of business.

Several respondents in the Focus Group study indicated they were unaware of the facilities and programs offered. This analysis is intended to evaluate the impact of the current marketing efforts and to develop recommendations to assist the department expand their exposure within the community

Summary

The marketing of the Alexandria Parks and Recreation needs improvement. The department does not have a marketing person designated to marketing the organization. The department relies on the public information officer from the city administration to assist in increasing awareness or promotions for park related programs and services. The department needs to centralize the marketing function and operations to increase effectiveness and consistency.

The current approach is to have programming staff produce and market the programs. This is a more reactionary approach versus proactive approach.

A marketing plan for the entire department as well as each business unit marketing plans is needed. With the development and implementation of a goal oriented marketing plan, the department can begin to incorporate long term and short term strategies for the future.

Key Findings

The staff did state that they were in the process of creating a marketing plan, but with further investigation, the plan is really a set of guidelines for production of materials and distribution. It will help staff in standardizing some of the promotional efforts. From this meeting, the key issues and findings are as follows.

- Each division and center does its own promotions of programs and services.
- Marketing efforts are not coordinated due to staff not being assigned specifically to manage the marketing efforts.
- Cross promotions have not been explored in-house or with outside agencies.
- Marketing strategies are not fully developed or implemented. In several cases, the staff is reactionary in their approach to marketing due to limitations of time and resources.
- The staff could be better equipped with the appropriate technology (software and hardware) to produce their own in-house publications that go beyond the basic flyer. The process to get access to more

advanced technology to produce higher quality collateral pieces can be, in some cases, time consuming due to the many steps involved. The process could use some refinement.

- Time and resources are limited to track the effectiveness of any promotions.
- The distribution plans focus on schools and need to be expanded to target other audiences and age segments.
- The staff has to work through a PIO (public information officer) at city hall that selects programs or events they deem worthwhile to instigate more promotion.
- The budget is limited for marketing that covers only copying and mailing costs.
- Staff has yet to develop the in-house costs of creating flyers.
- Staff has not been exposed to opportunities for training in marketing strategies or methods to produce more effective promotions.
- Many methods are used in promotions.
- The website is not used to its fullest potential.
- Archives are handled separately and could use a more sophisticated program for handling the archives of the department (photos, scrapbook, videos, artwork).
- Very little in market research is done.
- Staff understands the purpose of having a good image, but find it difficult to develop image improvements, such as a unique logo, due to limited time and resources.
- Sponsorships are not pursued. Policies surrounding sponsorship development were not clear for programs other than youth and adult leagues.

- The staff are stretched to their limits in trying to manage multiple operations outside of their expertise and experience in regards to marketing. Marketing and registration are considered another task on top of many others. Many of the tasks are approached proactively, and much of what is accomplished is reactionary. There is little time for developing and implementing long-term marketing strategies.

The questions and responses follow.

1) How are the departments marketing efforts managed?

- There is no one person assigned to oversee this function.
- Each center or area does his or her own promotions or marketing.
- A marketing committee was established to deal with different areas and we are coming up with a plan. The plan will look at the processes, ongoing campaigns, customer service issues, etc.
- We would like to have a centralized marketing department to go to for our needs.
- There is a PIO in city manager's office that gets a calendar of events and will do some stuff for us.

2) What are the areas of responsibility for the marketing committee?

- Marketing committee is to get the word out to the various departments -- mission of how marketing will be handled and to develop consistency in publications.

- Look at the needs in customer services.
- Coordinate and organize marketing efforts.
- All of the staff on the marketing committee are committed to other things (their jobs), and then this is placed as part of it. It can be overwhelming.
- Not all of the staff in the Department know about the committee and its purpose.

3) What are the various promotion and advertising methods used by the Department?

- Brochure – 3 times, spring and summer, fall and winter; this is structured due to money and the blend of spring and summer programs
- Used to do a calendar of summer activities, beautifully done, could do again, but no money to mail
- Flyers for individual program
- Each center has monthly calendar and flyers
- Sports brochure
- Working on now – each center and program to have its own piece that would have a longer shelf life
- Website
- Public service announcements
- Photo opportunities to the PIO
- Often do our own photos and send into the PIO
- Public relations are sprinkled throughout – marketing committee is enhancing the concepts
- Workshop for staff on customer service
- No paid advertising
- Word of mouth

4) How are marketing efforts budgeted and planned?

- Brochure – printing, mail
- Only things budgeted for in marketing are photocopying and mailing and this is by section.
- Produce and photo copy can be done in-house if the quantities are small.
- There is a centralized mailroom at city hall that does the high volume copying.
- Flyer creation is not a problem
- Mailing costs absorbed easily within each section's budget.

5) How are efforts coordinated within the Department?

- Program plan has a piece on how it will be advertised.
- Example, citywide cheerleading competition – once approved, sent to papers, flyers, centers are advertised
- Trying to improve how flyers are displayed at the centers.

6) Are there marketing plans for the Department or by section/center?

- No
- We are working on one that will be department-wide and will be adaptable for each section and center. It is more like guidelines and the mechanics for producing materials.
- The goal is to have one marketing plan for the Department.

7) Are there distribution plans for promotional materials?

- School distribution
- Mail
- Recreation centers

- Libraries
- Special events – city hall, libraries, local businesses
- Some groups do better than others

8) Do you encourage or do cross promotions in-house or with other agencies?

- We haven't done that much.
- Many of the housing developments are self-contained. They have their own recreation areas and programs. We are losing ground with these people in attracting them to our programs. Also, much of the population is transient.

9) What technology do you use in house for marketing?

- Work on our own
- City has Corel and the department has Corel presentation.
- Microsoft Print Shop is on some of the computers.
- Basic programs, nothing specific for promotions and graphics
- Any software or hardware has to be approved by city IT.
- Calendar Plus is on some computers.
- The website is not up to date. We are not able to update our own information on our own centers. The information that is on the site is old and very generic.
- IT is not conducive to assisting the department in becoming more self-supporting to produce their own promotions and marketing materials.
- City does have a centralized office for graphics, but they have to do budget transfers pay for it.

10) Do you know the costs of marketing services?

- Central IT office does tell them how much it will cost to produce materials.
- Mailroom does the copy and charges back.
- There is a sub-object code in the budget for copying and print shop. This is kept the same each year. Staff can do a little juggling, but requests to add more money is a low priority.
- We do not track internal costs to produce something.

11) What type of training is available for marketing?

- Print Shop is not a city software, so there is no training. It's learning as you go.
- If it is a city-approved software, they do offer training.
- The rest is basically hands on with your supervisor on creating your own pieces, how many to copy, do copywriting and supporting graphics.

12) How are internal communication pieces handled?

- Monthly email newsletter that is from parks and is good.
- City has a bi-monthly newsletter that does include parks and recreation.
- We produce an annual report at the end of the year
- Some of the front line staff do not keep up to date, never going to have computer access for everyone. Making sure all get the information has to be a proactive approach by the supervisor of the area.

13) Does the department have archives and who is in charge of that?

- Not handled very well at all
- Poorly handled
- No historical documentation

14) Is there any standardization for information dissemination or image?

- There are some standards, but they are developed and implemented by each center.

15) Does the Department have a sponsorship program and seek out sponsorships?

- Not really, community organizations may support a program or the advisory council will run special events.
- Private/public sponsorships do exist in the sports programs. The leagues have sponsors.
- Joint ventures are handled by each center and the promotions include their names.

16) How is the image managed for the Department?

- The Department does not have its own logo. It is it the city's logo with the department name around it. If we wanted to develop our own logo, that would take some time.
- We have been able to develop taglines.
- The racks that have the flyers and brochures in each center are going to be upgraded and standardized to improve the image.

17) What is done in the area of market research?

- We do very little in the way of research.
- We do conduct program evaluations.
- Surveys for programs
- The Advisory Councils do give us feedback on what the community would like to see or have improved.
- We are responsive to complaints to the point that we massage it to no end. There is no tracking unless it was a complaint that generated an incident report.
- We have an "all eyes" approach in the city. There is one person in the Department assigned to handle citizen input related to stuff in the parks.

18) What would you like to see as goals for marketing of the Department?

- Create and have our own marketing department.

19) Any other concerns or comments?

- IT can be a barrier to using technology the way it was intended. As an example, so many departments have the game schedules and results on the web. Our IT makes it difficult to get things done and on the web. They speak in "computereez" and not in layman's terms. They can double our workload, or if they make it so difficult or too time consuming, it just won't be done.
- Our registration software is another problem, RecTrac. There is no one person who is dedicated to managing this

program, training staff how to use its information, ensuring the integrity of the information, troubleshooting, using it to its full potential. This falls on each center staff to do registration, computer setup and data entry and this increases the workload.

- Each person in the department is very fragmented. Everyone is wearing too many hats and fighting for the same piece of pie.
- Information highway doesn't work. I'm not sure if we have been told or have we been told too much and it is not being absorbed.
- We are looking forward to the plan to help resolve these problems.

CONDITION ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

Assessment of Existing Facilities

This section contains a physical assessment of existing recreation and park facilities operated by the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. Department and Assessment Team, comprised of Leon Younger & Pros and Woolpert personnel, toured the City facilities during October and November 2001, and February and March 2002. The main goals were to observe the current state of the facilities; identify current and planned program activities; and identify significant facility issues and opportunities for improvement. This document includes ideas for consideration; specific facility improvement recommendations are listed in Appendix (x). This document contains three sections, Recreation Facilities, Park Facilities and After School Centers.

RECREATION FACILITIES

In general the recreation facilities can be characterized as follows:

- The facilities are well maintained by City staff
- Most of the issues noted are due to the age of the facility, size of the facility, and outdated design
- The facilities do not appear to be standard in finishes, equipment or interior signage
- The entrance/ID signs are standard for all facilities of the Department but need updating

- Lack of storage, parking, weight room space, and other program space is common to many facilities
- The facilities appear to conform overall to the most current standards for disabled access with a few exceptions
- The Department has several ongoing projects, and they are understood to be as follows:
  - Doctor Oswald Durant Memorial Recreation Center renovation and addition project
  - Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center renovation and addition
  - Lee Center signage and security projects
  - William Ramsay Recreation Center driveway and parking projects

Observations of recreation facility conditions include information provided by Department staff during the site visits. The recreation facilities are presented in alphabetical order.

Charles Barrett Recreation Center
1115 Martha Custis Drive

Summary

This small center connected to Charles Barrett School contains a game room, two small offices, weight room, multipurpose room, kitchen, and shared gymnasium. Facility houses after school and teen programs. The area within the recently constructed addition is warm and inviting, but the multi-purpose room needs to be renovated. The weight room has a storage cage that consumes approximately 20% of the program space. The facility is staffed with two full-time, four part-time, and seven seasonal employees. The school occupies most of the program space during the day, resulting in limited hours

of operation to the general public. The center is open approximately 58 hours per week.

Observations/Evaluation

- Site drains to low point near entrance
- Roof leaks at the entrance vestibule
- Carpeting shows wear and is contracted to be replaced
- HVAC system functions well, especially at weight room
- Offices are small and irregularly shaped
- Triangular storage room was converted to third staff office and is utilized inefficiently
- Storage is inefficient; bulk supplies take up needed space in weight room cage
- Multipurpose room
  - Was not renovated during most recent construction project
  - Kitchen cabinets need to be repaired
  - Wall mirrors are in poor condition
  - Base is in poor condition
  - Contains school's data closet that is not a candidate for center's storage use
- Toilet rooms are in good condition
- Mechanical closet is used as a janitor's closet
- Gym has sound baffles and works well for activities; divider curtain is utilized regularly, and acoustics are generally acceptable
- Weight room has dated equipment

Ideas for Consideration

- Refinish multipurpose room, renovate kitchen area and include tall wall cabinets and full-height cabinets for maximum storage
- Reconfigure use of oddly-shaped staff room for more efficient storage and staff functions

- Install tall shelving at small storage closet (original office) adjacent to multipurpose room
- Relocate stored materials at weight room elsewhere (possibly locating bulk storage off-site), remove cage and expand weight room area
- Confirm code requirement for mechanical closet and correct any misuse
- Grade earth at entrance area for drainage away from building, install drain tile and possibly drains at low areas
- Install new landscaping, walkway and graphics at building entrance
- Expand the footprint of the building to enhance the programming capabilities

Chinquapin Park Recreation Center
3210 King Street

Summary

This is a 17-year-old, well-maintained facility with an indoor pool, snack bar, multipurpose room, fitness room, racquetball courts, and offices. Though in a good location, the building does not adequately serve users. This is considered the Department's premier revenue producing facility. It is currently recovering approximately 78% of its operating costs through revenue generation. The building is open approximately 104 hours per week. Areas such as the racquetball courts and the fitness room are considered marginally productive. The snack bar's operating costs exceed the associated revenues. Storage space is limited and has encroached into program areas. Office space is inadequate, and space dedicated for generating revenue is also limited. The facility requires renovation to correct layout problems; initial

assessment indicates that there is room on the site to expand the facility.

Observations/Evaluation

- The reception/control point is located away from the two entrances and elevator
- Offices
  - Spaces are small and inadequate
  - Staff members are divided among three areas, including a converted racquetball court and former daycare space
- Pool
  - Length is 25 yards instead of regulation 25 meters
  - Air is warm and stagnant, and is an ongoing problem
  - Water temperature of 83°F is a compromise by two main user groups and is displeasing to both
- Locker rooms
  - Spaces are in average condition, and lack ADA compliant lavatories
  - Multiple doors at the entrances are difficult for users to maneuver
- HVAC
  - The system does not function to provide comfortable airflow throughout the building
  - Possible loose bearing is heard in pump
- Exterior doors are heavy and difficult to open
- Fitness room is too small for the number of users, and the equipment is outdated
- Storage space is inadequate
- Site lacks an adequate number of parking spaces
- Site lacks an exterior lighted sign

Ideas for Consideration

- Revisit schematic designs previously completed in 1989 and study addition/renovation options
- Find adaptive reuse opportunities for two of the existing racquetball courts, including building second floor for added square footage
- Maintain this pool at an acceptable temperature for a specific user group and build indoor Olympic-sized pool elsewhere, possibly on site
- Secure one set of entrance doors and relocate reception desk near other doors and elevator, or revise entrance sequence for secure plan in addition/renovation
- If the snack bar is replaced with vending machines, locate them on opposite side of stairs and use space for offices
- Install power-assisted hardware at exterior doors
- Add parking adjacent to existing parking area
- Install an exterior lighted sign
- Place more emphasis on expanding and updating revenue facilities including fitness room and classrooms

Doctor Oswald Durant Memorial Recreation Center 1605 Cameron Street

Summary

This is an historic building adjacent to Jefferson Houston School. It is currently unoccupied and awaiting complete renovation and construction of a small addition.

Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center
5700 Sanger Avenue

Summary

This is an outdated and poorly maintained facility connected to school on the opposite side of the William Ramsay Recreation Center (see below). Its renovation is currently in design phase. Plan should be reviewed in context of site master plan to resolve parking and access issues.

Patrick Henry Recreation Center
4643 Taney Avenue

Summary

This small and outdated facility houses a busy after school program. The facility is open approximately 30.5 hours per week. The building contains a gymnasium, game room, multipurpose room, kitchen, arts & crafts room, office, and break room. The overall condition of the facility is poor and the plan is dysfunctional. The space behind the center appears to be ample for an addition. The weight room was changed to a multipurpose room but still contains dangerous equipment.

Observations/Evaluation

- The building feels crowded and appears too small for the number of children in attendance
- Ceiling at entrance shows evidence of roof leakage
- Plan is awkward, as children must travel through game room and arts & crafts room to exit to playground
- All spaces are too small for use
- Gymnasium is not regulation size
- Storage space is inadequate

- Finishes are outdated and in poor condition
- Lighting needs to be replaced
- Weight room equipment is no longer used but dangerously occupies lounge space used by children

Ideas for Consideration

- Relocate weight room equipment
- Design addition to facility and reconfigure existing layout, possibly adding a regulation-sized gym and reconfiguring existing gymnasium
- Incorporate a new graphics package and color scheme at the facility

Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street

Summary

This outdated facility contains game room, gymnasium, preschool program rooms, weight room, boxing room, computer lab, meeting rooms, kitchen, senior center room, outdoor pool and playground. The facility is open approximately 82.5 hours per week. The overall condition of the facility is poor, and the building needs to be renovated. It appears there is room on the site to expand the facility.

Observations/Evaluation

- Gymnasium
  - Floor needs to be replaced
  - Moisture sometimes condenses on gym ceiling
  - Adjacent toilet rooms are used for storage
  - Needs more storage
  - Acoustics are not good
  - Gymnasium space does not have bleachers

- Weight room is small and serves as a hallway between gymnasium and boxing room
- Boxing room
  - Existing rink is in process of being replaced
  - Ventilation is inadequate
  - Shower needs updating
- HVAC system is adequate
- Kiln in copier room lacks cage
- Interior finishes are in poor condition, except at senior center where carpeting is new
- Lighting is outdated
- Sprinkler room is used for janitor's storage
- Small commercial kitchen needs updating
- Fence at playground is in poor condition
- Outdoor pool is susceptible to "drive-by trash" through unattractive chain link fence

Ideas for Consideration

- Plan to renovate interior completely with new finishes, lighting, plumbing fixtures, casework, and kitchen equipment
- Schematic design/code studies may reveal opportunity to convert gymnasium toilet rooms to storage or game room space
- Investigate setback requirements north of building for potential addition
- Investigate possibilities of vertical expansion
- Enclose or remove pool
- Relocate boxing room for use as weight room, convert weight room to gym storage
- Replace gym floor
- Incorporate a graphics package with a consistent color scheme at the facility

Cora Kelly Recreation Center
25 West Reed Avenue

Summary

This is a bright 11-year-old facility adjacent to Cora Kelly Elementary School containing a game room, offices, weight room, racquetball court, computer lab, two contiguous meeting rooms, teen room, daycare room, dance studio, ceramics room, photo lab, classroom, and gymnasium. The building design presents a variety of unique angles in several of the program areas, often limiting available program space. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week. The school uses the gymnasium during the day. This facility houses a thriving after school program that often brings to capacity all available program space. The building is in good condition but requires some improvements.

Observations/Evaluation

- Entire facility was painted three years ago; carpet is new
- Reception desk is away from entrance door, creating a security problem
- Gymnasium
  - Urethane gym floor shows wear and needs to be repainted
  - Four banks of manually-operated wood bleachers are difficult to maintain and not up to standard
  - VCT floor in hallway shows damage by doors prior to being repaired
  - The rolls of floor covering are stored in hallway between gymnasium and school, and partially block egress door
- The operable partition between conference rooms A and B is in disrepair and needs to be replaced

- Roof leaks at front desk during hard and continuous rain
- HVAC system is adequate and is separate from school HVAC system
- Weight room
  - Small for usage
  - Equipment is outdated
  - Contains only door to racquetball court and creates a dangerous situation for children having to walk through the room
- Wood floors at dance studio and racquetball court are in good condition
- Exterior storage is possible, though lack of storage is not evident
- Casework in teen room, kitchen and daycare room is in disrepair
- Some wood doors show wear
- Parking lot is dysfunctional and small for its heavy use; spacious pedestrian landscaping at entrance is wasted since loitering is prohibited at the facility
- Site is fully utilized, and there appears to be no opportunity for expansion other than by building a second floor

Ideas for Consideration

- Redesign parking lot, capturing area in front of building
- Relocate reception desk to entrance, increase game room area by removing current desk
- Consider reconfiguring entryway corridor to increase program space
- Determine source of leak at front desk and repair
- Repaint gymnasium floor
- Replace existing bleachers with new electronically-operated bleachers
- Replace existing casework at all locations
- Renovate commercial kitchen
- Relocate racquetball court door to enter from gym

- Replace weight room equipment, considering pieces with multiple functions to occupy less space
- Replace VCT at hallway area
- Refinish or replace wood doors
- Replace operable partition at community room
- Install exterior storage unit in alleyway between center and school
- Consider implementing a consistent graphics package and color scheme at the building

Lee Center
1108 Jefferson Street

Summary

This facility occupies most of a former school building and is dedicated to the administrative functions of the Department. The center contains offices, meeting rooms, auditorium, and exhibit hall. The facility appears to be in overall good condition but requires some renovation to improve function.

Observations/Evaluation

- Security station inadequately serves as makeshift reception desk and is located away from two entrances and elevator
- Double height lobby space appears to be oversized and underutilized
- Signage is poor or nonexistent throughout building
- Storage space is adequate
- Carpet is worn and scheduled to be replaced
- Interior needs to be repainted
- Conference room #14 has poor layout and is poorly lighted for its use
- HVAC
  - First floor space requires use of portable radiators, while a nearby room is always hot

- Possible loose bearing heard in pump
- Rattling is heard in dance room
- Column enclosure in dance room is damaged
- Exhibit hall
  - It was renovated and is in good condition
  - Rubber base in some locations needs to be replaced
- All toilet rooms were recently renovated
  - Second floor toilet room door needs to be readjusted
  - Second floor water fountain requires guards to be ADA compliant
- Phone networking equipment is in first floor janitor's closet

Ideas for Consideration

- Review work under contracts that includes signage, new carpeting, and security system
- Balance and repair HVAC system as required
- Paint interior
- Make minor repairs to finishes
- Install guards at water fountain
- Extend second floor over existing double-height entrance space
- Improve reception by adding desk at each entrance or using signage
- Change dysfunctional conference room #14 to an office space

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center 1108 Jefferson Street

Summary

This facility is housed in the east section of the former school building. The center contains a game room, exercise room, multipurpose room, kitchen/break room, weight room and gymnasium. Facility appears to be in overall good condition, but gymnasium requires major renovation to improve function. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week.

Observations/Evaluation

- Reception/office area is crowded for number of people who use the space
- Ceiling tiles are in poor condition, and VCT is in average condition at older area
- Multipurpose room
  - Cage requires maintenance, is not secure, and may be unnecessary
  - Kitchen casework and computer counter need to be replaced
- Break room kitchen is in good condition
- Weight room
  - Ventilation is poor
  - Space is not large enough for number of users
- Exercise room
  - Cages are acceptable
  - Rubber tile flooring is outdated but in fair condition
- Toilet rooms need to have ADA compliant lavatories installed
- Gymnasium
  - It is not regulation size
  - Staff cannot locate switches to fans
  - Space lacks a functioning public address system
  - Divider curtain wheels do not align properly
  - Scoreboard has a short in it and needs to be replaced
  - Floor shows old damage caused by leaks in roof
  - Windows leak and need to be resealed

- Bleachers are insufficient for crowds, especially as sight lines are blocked by wing walls

Ideas for Consideration

- Install shelving for reception area/office to reclaim needed desk space
- Remove cage and replace casework at multipurpose room
- Replace ceiling tiles and lighting
- Install exhaust fan at weight room
- Install ADA compliant lavatories at toilet rooms
- Renovate gymnasium
- Create a consistent signage program throughout the facility

Mount Vernon Recreation Center
2601 Mount Vernon Avenue

Summary

This center is connected to Mount Vernon School and contains a game room, office, computer lab, two contiguous meeting rooms, dance room, ceramics room and a shared gymnasium. The school's use of the gymnasium limits the program capabilities during school hours. The facility is open approximately 77 hours per week. This building incorporates an inviting color scheme and has an open foyer made of brick and glass. The facility appears to be in overall good condition but requires some repairs.

Observations/Evaluation

- New vestibule is best example among facilities, as it is welcoming and safe with its recessed mat
- Storage at the end of the gymnasium is ample

- Air temperature is often uncomfortable for users, as school controls HVAC system
- Ceiling tile is missing in computer room
- Game room VCT floor is cracked and buckled, apparently where old and new construction meet
- Evidence of leaking above ceiling is observed in meeting room "1"
- Leaking is an ongoing problem above janitor's closet
- Closet across from janitor's closet may violate code as used for storage
- Gymnasium
  - Was expanded during the recent addition project, and roof leaks have been an ongoing problem
  - Fasteners for baffles are visible on all walls, but the baffles are missing (possibly relocated to Barrett gymnasium) and poor acoustics preclude maximum utilization of space
  - Multipurpose floor is in good condition except at location of leak
  - Base is separating from wall in at least one location
- Cracking is visible in hallway CMU wall near ceramics room

Ideas for Consideration

- Confirm that the school is planning to replace the roof
- Determine source of leak above ceiling at two locations and replace ceiling tiles
- Replace missing ceiling tile at computer room
- Replace missing sound baffles
- Repair game room floor
- Investigate splitting HVAC system
- Identify solution to lack of adequate parking

William Ramsay Recreation Center
5650 Sanger Avenue

Summary

This newly opened facility contains a game room, computer lab, arts & crafts room, dance studio, fitness room and shared gymnasium. Other than on-street parking, there is no dedicated parking for this facility. The use of masonry and glass gives this building an exciting, energetic feel. The building is in excellent condition.

Observations/Evaluation

- Parking is an ongoing problem at this location and is currently under design; driveway is to be reconfigured soon
- The center and school share the alarm system; false alarms have created a problem on weekends as the alarm can only be deactivated from within the school building
- The shared use of the gymnasium creates limited programming opportunities during the school day
- The concourse is open and inviting, however is not capable of sustaining program activities, which limits overall program space

Ideas for Consideration

- Review master plan of site, including design for parking and Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center (see above)
- Investigate possibility of adding annunciator panel inside center

PARK FACILITIES

In general the parks can be characterized as follows:

- Most parks have standardized ID signs, although they are outdated
- Two parks have modernized signage and graphics throughout the facility
- Most available park land has been developed, reflecting an emphasis on athletic facilities
- The parks are generally well maintained
- The parks contain many structures that are near the end of their life cycle
- Many facilities are due for renovation
- Most parks do not have adequate parking

The parks observed are presented in alphabetical order.

Charles Barrett
1115 Martha Custis Drive

Summary

This facility is adjacent to the Charles Barrett Recreation Center. The park area contains two acres. Street access to the site is good, although there is no dedicated parking. This site contains one softball field that is used for t-ball and coach pitch. It has a soccer field overlaid and both are used for league play.

Observations/Evaluation

- The ballfield lacks a backstop, guard rail fences, and bleachers
- The turf is in fair condition
- This facility is experiencing an overuse of athletic activity

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider installing a backstop, bleachers, and guard rail fences
- Install irrigation

- Consider relocating the soccer field to another site
- Create designated parking for the facility

Armistead Boothe
520 Cameron Station Blvd

Summary

This facility contains one adult softball field and is designed to also accommodate league soccer. Other amenities include a playground, tennis courts, basketball court, restroom and picnic pavilion. Parking at the site is nominal. New low spill sports lights have been installed at the ballfield. The facility is in good condition considering the level of use it receives.

Observations/Evaluation

The playground receives significant use and is at capacity during the school day.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider updating the site amenities to reflect the recent investment in the sports lights
- Consider relocating the soccer field to another site
- Consider making this site a 90 ft baseball/softball multi-use field

Braddock Field
1005 Mount Vernon Ave

Summary

This 6.6 acre site is located adjacent to George Washington Middle School. The facility contains three softball fields, overlaid with one large athletic field. There are also three lighted tennis courts adjacent to this facility. The athletic fields are not irrigated and there

is evidence of significant activity at this site.

Observations/Evaluation

The fields appear to be over-programmed. The lack of irrigation exacerbates the impact of the over use. All turf areas are under stress and in need of renovation.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider installing irrigation to the entire site.
- Renovate all turf areas
- Consider re-design of the athletic area to accommodate the athletic demands identified in the needs assessment.

Ben Brenman
5000 Duke Street

Summary

This is one of the city's newest parks. It contains one little league field with grass infield, one dedicated soccer field, and one combination softball/ soccer field. All of these fields are irrigated. Additional amenities include connecting trails, three sand volleyball courts, and one picnic pavilion. The vinyl- bonded fencing creates an inviting atmosphere at this site. Well-planned and easy to read graphics are present.

Observations/Evaluation

Non-sodden areas should be top dressed and seeded. There appear to be drainage problems at the site in the vicinity of B Street.

Ideas for Consideration

Explore the idea of adding a playground and an additional athletic field to this site if the demand is identified in the needs assessment.

Brook Valley
5400 Holmes Run Parkway

Summary

This linear park provides a trail opportunity along a roadway and Holmes Run. It offers play areas for younger children. The paths are in good condition. The entire area is maintained to an acceptable standard.

Observations/Evaluation

This facility attracts users from the adjacent residential areas, while trail users come from throughout the community. There is an interest in developing soccer fields in the limited flat open space areas of this linear park. The addition of soccer fields would be difficult to justify in this environment.

Idea for Consideration

- The existing multi- use trail should be widened to current standards of ASHTO.

Chinquapin
3210 King Street

Summary

This 21-acre park is located adjacent to T C Williams High School and the Chinquapin Recreation Center. It contains an athletic field for High School team practice, five additional football/soccer fields, basketball courts, a large picnic pavilion, playground, restrooms, trails, tennis courts, and volleyball courts.

Observations/Evaluations

The park receives heavy use by a variety of different users. The turf is showing signs of stress from over use. Lack of adequate parking appears to be an issue. There also appears to be a problem with vehicles cruising through the park.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider renovating the turf on all athletic fields and throughout the general park area
- Develop traffic calming devices on the park road to discourage cruising through the facility
- Update the signage and graphics throughout the park
- Upgrade all site amenities

Fort Ward Fields
4301 W. Braddock Road

Summary

This facility contains one soccer field and two tennis courts. The St. Agnes St. Stephens School pays an annual fee to gain access to the site. The school personnel maintain the field, arranged to have irrigation installed, and in return, receive exclusive access to the site during he school day. The city utilizes this site for league soccer games in the afternoon, on weekends and during the summer.

Observations/Evaluation

This site appears to be in heavy demand, although it is only available to the public on a limited basis. The standard of maintenance appears to be low at this facility. The entire area is fenced, allowing for strictly controlled access.

Ideas for Consideration

- Re-evaluate the contractual arrangement that determines the users of the facility
- Consider conducting a return on investment analysis to evaluate the current contractual arrangement with the school
- Consider making the facility more publicly accessible

Four-Mile Run
3700 Commonwealth Avenue

Summary

This 55- acre linear park follows four mile run tributary. It has a school and businesses nearby and has fair access from a variety of points of ingress/egress. It is somewhat hidden from view from most major roadways. The park contains a playground, three lighted ball fields, two-lighted soccer fields, lighted multi-use courts, basketball courts, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and an extensive trail system. The athletic facilities appear over used.

Observations/Evaluation

The facility has a variety of mixed uses on the site. Many of the athletic fields are showing the wear associated with year round activity. There currently is an initiative occurring to add more parking between the ball fields. There is an apparent need to upgrade the existing facilities and increase the intensity of planned maintenance.

Ideas for Consideration

- Replace the fencing at the ball fields
- Replace all sports lights

- Install bleachers, players benches, and other site amenities to all athletic fields
- Renovate turf at all athletic fields
- Consider relocating some of the soccer activity to alleviate the stress to the ball fields from over use
- Upgrade all signage to include a consistent graphics theme

Hammond Middle School
4646 Seminary Road

Summary

This 25- acre site is located adjacent to Hammond Middle School. It is located in a residential neighborhood and has good street access to the site. The site contains one soccer field that is currently under renovation, and an informal ball field. Additionally, it contains a full-size soccer field located at the lower end of the property known as Lower Hammond.

Observations/Evaluation

This site currently is being renovated. The renovations will include irrigation and site support amenities.

Idea for Consideration

Complete the renovation of the soccer field.

Patrick Henry
4643 Taney Avenue

Summary

This 18- acre site is adjacent to Patrick Henry School. The site is located in a residential area. It contains one ball field, and one soccer field. There is no dedicated parking other than what is available at the school.

Observations/Evaluation

The fields appear over- used and are in need of renovation.

Idea for Consideration

- Consider eliminating the softball field and adding another soccer field to this site.
- Completely renovate all turf areas

Hensley Park
4200 Eisenhower Avenue

Summary

This 12.4- acre site contains one soccer field, three softball fields, a picnic pavilion, gazebo and restrooms. The fields receive intense use and show the impact of the level of use. There is limited parking on site. There is no consistent signage or graphics at this location.

Observations/Evaluation

The lack of parking has limited the ability to effectively schedule this as a league game site, or utilize all fields at the same time. The size of the soccer field is not regulation, resulting in additional scheduling difficulties for league play. The configuration of the fields is not optimal, and general ingress/egress is challenging. The sports lights and irrigation system are in need of replacement or upgrading. The two lower softball fields have no irrigation.

Ideas for Consideration

- Enlarge the parking area
- Reconfigure the fields so that the are laid out in a more suitable orientation to the sun

- Upgrade the existing irrigation system and add irrigation to the fields not currently irrigated
- Develop an enhanced pattern for ingress/egress
- Consider enlarging the soccer field
- Upgrade the sports lights

Minnie Howard
3701 W. Braddock Road

Summary

This facility is adjacent to a school and shares the athletic facilities with the school. Facilities include two lighted softball fields, overlaid with field hockey, and restrooms. All fields are irrigated.

Observations/Evaluation

The fields are experiencing heavy use and show the wear and tear from the intense usage. There appears to be a drainage problem on Field #2.

Ideas for Consideration

- Consider upgrading the restrooms
- Consider renovating the turf
- Correct drainage problems
- Add a consistent signage and graphics scheme to this site

Nannie J Lee
1108 Jefferson Street

Summary

This facility is located adjacent to the Nannie J Lee Recreation Center. It is located in a residential area and contains two non- regulation unlit softball fields; two lighted tennis courts, one lighted basketball court, sand volleyball court, a small playground and

mini-pool. There is limited parking at this site.

Observations/Evaluation

The ballfield facility supports league play for youth t-ball and coach pitch games. Soccer is also played on the fields when they are available. The entire ballfield facility is in need of upgrading to support the level of use it currently receives. Several of the other site amenities appear to receive significant use and are in need of renovation or upgrade.

Ideas for Consideration

- Renovate the turf at both ball fields
- Upgrade the parking at the site
- Consider relocating the soccer games to another site
- Upgrade the tennis and basketball court lights
- Resurface the tennis courts

Luckett Field
3540 Wheeler Avenue

Summary

This 5.6-acre facility is located near residential, light industrial and commercial establishments. It contains one lighted softball field. It is located near the park maintenance shop and employees use the parking facility during the day. This site has been identified as a potential site for a skate park.

Observations/Evaluation

The site has good separation from the busy adjacent roadway. It lacks effectiveness as a league game site due to it only having one field. The facility needs an updated signage and graphics scheme.

Ideas for Consideration

- Install new signage with updated graphics
- Replace fencing
- Enlarge field to accommodate 90' baseball facility

George Mason
2601 Cameron Mills Road

Summary

This 9.4 -acre site sits adjacent to George Mason School. It is in a residential area. It contains a playground, basketball courts, two tennis courts, picnic pavilion and two ball fields. The ball fields are programmed for youth league play, although marginal in design standard. Most support amenities are in need of upgrade or replacement.

Observations/Evaluation

This site has been retrofitted to support league play at the ball fields. The fields are marginal in their ability to support that activity.

Ideas for Consideration

- Replace fences and backstops
- Create defined pathways to all amenities
- Add irrigation to all turf areas
- Install updated signage with consistent graphics scheme

Maury Field
600 Russell Road

Summary

This facility is adjacent to Maury Elementary School. The facility contains one small-unlighted ball field.

Observations/Evaluation

The field is located close to the road and lacks support amenities such as adequate fencing.

Ideas for Consideration

- Install backstop, guard rail fencing, players benches, and bleachers
- Consider re-orienting the field to move it further from the road
- Consider adding irrigation to the field

Mt. Vernon Softball Field
2701 Commonwealth Avenue

Summary

This facility is located adjacent to Mt. Vernon School. It has good street access to the site and fair visibility from the road. It contains one unlighted ball field, tennis courts, a small swimming pool, and an arts center.

Observation/Evaluation

The facilities are in need of renovation. The pool is small and offers an outdated aquatic experience.

Ideas for Consideration

- Renovate the pool to incorporate zero depth entrance, in water play equipment, and moving water
- Renovate the ball field and supporting site amenities
- Add irrigation to the ballfield
- Install updated signage and graphics throughout the facility

Potomac Yard Fields
2501 Jefferson Davis Highway

Summary

This facility currently contains two soccer fields.

Observations/Evaluation

The facility was built as a temporary facility for youth league soccer. It may be relocated to another site within Potomac Yards within five years.

Ideas for Consideration

- Install players benches, and bleachers
- Install ID sign and with updated graphics

Ramsay
5650 Sanger Avenue

Summary

This facility contains one unlighted softball field. It is adjacent to Ramsay School. There is no designated parking to support this facility.

Observations/Evaluation

The field is in need of renovation. Irrigation should be added to support the turf.

Ideas for Consideration
- Install irrigation
- Replace backstop, players benches, bleachers
- Install updated signage and graphics

Simpson Stadium
500 Monroe Avenue

Summary

This 13.7- acre site contains two lighted ball fields, two tennis courts, basketball

court, playground, neighborhood gardens, limited concessions, restrooms, interior trails, and a dog park. The facility is located adjacent to a YMCA and shares parking with that facility.

Observations/Evaluation

The park is heavily used and all support amenities show the impact of the intense use. The dog park is used to the degree that there is no turf with the confines of the fenced area. The entire facility is in need of renovation.

Ideas for Consideration

- Renovate the dog park turf, and install irrigation
- Add play features for dogs within the dog park
- Renovate the restroom and concession building
- Install new signage with upgraded graphics

AFTER SCHOOL CENTERS

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities operates after school programs within school-owned and operated facilities. The after school centers are presented in alphabetical order.

John Adams After School Center
651 Rayburn Avenue

Summary

This after school program is located in the John Adams Elementary School. The program operates approximately 20 hours per week during the school season. Facilities consist of a multipurpose room, gymnasium, and

office. The program serves between 100 and 150 children daily. Elementary school children are bussed to this location from other sites. The structured program consists of homework sessions, basketball league, arts and crafts, gymnasium activities, cheerleading, trips to bowling alley and other areas. This facility was not reviewed.

Francis Hammond Recreation Center
4646 Seminary Road

Summary

This is an after school program conducted at the Hammond Middle School, an older facility undergoing the construction of an addition. The program serves sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and operates approximately 10 hours per week during the school year. The program has access to the gymnasium, cafeteria, and outdoor inline hockey rink. Average attendance is approximately 57 per day and program offerings include education, recreation, life-skill development and tutoring. The cafeteria and gymnasium are in need of renovation.

Observations/Evaluation

- Cafeteria and Gymnasium are on opposite sides of the building from each other, separated by two stairwells and a corridor of classrooms
- Cafeteria
  - Section of floor is uneven painted concrete, and unattractive rubber edge piece joins this level with the slightly higher section of vinyl tile
  - 2 x 4 ceiling tiles are sagging and need to be replaced

- Wood doors are in poor condition and need to be replaced
- Gymnasium
  - Large space has two full crosscourts
  - Wooden floor is in average-to-poor condition
  - Some original wood bleachers were replaced with new, others remain and are in poor condition

Idea for Consideration

Renovate gymnasium and cafeteria if not part of the current construction project.

Minnie Howard After School Center
3801 Braddock Road

This facility was not reviewed.

MacArthur After School Center
1101 Janney's Lane

Summary

This after school center operates at the MacArthur Elementary School gymnasium. The program operates approximately 20 hours per week during the school season. Several other groups meet after school and share this space with the after school program. The program serves several elementary school aged children and the current allocation of space is inadequate to meet the current demand.

Observations/Evaluation

- Carpet tiles are in poor condition
- Abandoned HVAC regulator remains on wall

- Space has easy access to playground and parking
- Storage room is large and well utilized

Ideas for Consideration
- Replace carpet tiles
- Paint walls

George Mason After School Center
2601 Cameron Mills Road

Summary

This after school program operates from the gymnasium at George Mason Elementary School. The facility is open approximately 20 hours per week. This is a structured after school program with minimum facilities. This facility was not reviewed.

Maury After School Center
600 Russell Road

Summary

This after school center operates out of the gymnasium of the Maury Elementary School. The facility is open approximately 20 hours per week. The attendance at this program is small, usually averaging between 15 and 20 children per day. This facility was not reviewed

George Washington After School Program
1005 Mount Vernon Avenue

Summary

This is an after school program conducted at the George Washington Middle School, an architecturally significant facility built in 1934 that is about to undergo the construction of an addition. The program serves sixth,

seventh, and eighth grade students and operates approximately 10 hours per week during the school year. The program has access to the gymnasium and cafeteria. Average attendance is approximately 20 per day, and program offerings include education, recreation, life-skill development and tutoring. The cafeteria and gymnasium are in need of renovation.

Observations/Evaluation

- Cafeteria is in the main building and the gymnasium is in a separate building, both to be joined with an addition during impending construction project
- Cafeteria
  - Vinyl tile floor is buckling in many places
  - Abandoned stainless steel counter takes up space
  - Ceiling was replaced when air conditioning was added, and is in good condition
  - Walls are in poor condition and in need of repair in several locations
- Gymnasium building is highly used and in overall poor condition
  - Parquet floor needs to be repaired or replaced
  - Existing wood bleachers need to be replaced
  - HVAC system is inadequate
  - All finishes are in poor condition
  - Locker and toilet rooms need to be renovated and made accessible

Idea for Consideration

Renovate gymnasium and cafeteria if not part of the current construction project.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS REPORT

Introduction to Process

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities operate a variety of programs and facilities throughout the City. In order to ascertain the productivity and condition of these facilities, a facilities analysis was conducted.

All of Alexandria's eleven recreation centers, three of the school based after school centers, and twenty of the 127 parks were evaluated.

The recreation centers were assessed in order to identify the current condition of each facility, the overall level of use the facility is receiving, and to generate potential renovation and re-use options to enhance the productivity of the facility. General improvement recommendations for each site were developed and cost estimates were formulated to identify the impact of effecting such improvements.

The after school sites located on school properties were assessed and ideas for consideration regarding enhancing productivity were assimilated. No capital improvement cost estimates was developed for these school owned properties.

A cross section of parks were evaluated in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the condition of the park system and the necessary improvement s that would be required to meet the current demands of the community.

Methodology

The consulting team, comprised of Leon Younger & PROS and Woolpert personnel during October and November 2001, and February and March 2002, reviewed all of the facilities.

Field review consisted of a physical tour of the site, interviews with various staff and selected document review. The consultants conferred their findings in order to formulate ideas for consideration and subsequent capital improvement recommendations.

Key Issues and Findings

The recommendation for necessary capital improvements to recreation centers and parks is estimated to be $26,827,000.
This section identifies the key issues for each category of facility reviewed.

RECREATION FACILITIES

The recreation centers are typically older facilities that include minimal active recreation space. Most were originally developed in the 1960- 1970 era. They are generally well maintained. Most of the issues noted were due to the age, size and outdated design of the buildings.

The facilities do not appear to be standard in their finishes, equipment or interior signage. They are generally in need of an overall image plan to create some energy at the site. A few of the recently facilities have incorporated the use of modern color schemes and signage materials.

There is a lack of storage, parking, weight room, and other active use space at most facilities.

The majority of activity is centered around after school programs for youth, thereby limiting a broad demographic appeal. Senior citizens use several of the facilities earlier in the day.

Most facilities appear to conform to current standards for disabled access.

Recommendations

Generally, the most pressing need at the recreation centers is for more program space. The conversion of existing space and the addition of more program space will be the largest challenge for the Department to undertake. Associated parking for the current and future demand of the facilities will need to be accommodated as well.

Site-specific recommendations and cost estimates are as follows. They are detailed in the Appendix at the conclusion of this Capital Improvement Process chapter.

Charles Barrett Recreation Center
Renovate the multi-purpose room and provide new strength training equipment. $70,000

Chinquapin Park Recreation Center
Conduct a renovation study, and renovate the entire facility. Construct a 25,000 square foot addition.
$7,600,000

Patrick Henry Recreation Center
Renovate the existing building; construct an addition of 6,000 square feet.
$2,256,000

Charles Houston Recreation Center

Conduct a renovation study, relocate the front desk, and renovate selected portions of the building.
$5,308,320

Cora Kelly Recreation Center
Conduct a renovation study, relocate the reception desk, and renovate selected portions of the building.
$1,342,000

Lee Center
Conduct minor renovations.
$380,000

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
Renovate the facility.
$1,369,000

Mount Vernon Recreation Center
Conduct a study on the HVAC system, Minor renovations.
$101,000

William Ramsay Recreation Center
Conduct an alarm system study.
$1,000

Grand Total: $18,427,320.00

PARK FACILITIES

A sampling of park facilities enabled the consultant to draw general conclusions regarding the entire park system.

The parks in Alexandria are generally well maintained, although they contain many amenities that are near the end of their useful life.

Most parks are currently being maintained to a level three, on a rating system of one being the most intense

maintenance and five being the least intense.

There is an inconsistent image regarding parks and facilities. The lack of a consistent graphics program and color scheme makes the facilities appear less than optimal.

Many facilities are in need of renovation, and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Most facilities do not have adequate parking.

The athletic facilities are somewhat scattered throughout the park system, and a consolidation through adaptive re-use of facilities could prove to enhance site productivity.

There appears to be over use of the athletic facilities, possibly a result of extensive team sport practices.

Recommendations

Since all parks were not assessed, a comprehensive listing of capital improvement needs was not possible. The sampling of facilities did provide however the ability to make a general recommendation to develop an idea of the cost impact of improving the park system to meet current and projected needs.

In order to elevate the condition of the park system from a level three to a level two, it is estimated that related costs will be in the neighborhoods of $10,000 per acre in capital improvement investments. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities currently maintains 840 acres of parkland. This estimate equates to an infusion of approximately $8,400,000.

Improvements might include such items as tennis court renovations, ball field renovations, new sports lighting systems, playground replacements, stand alone restroom renovation and replacements, and parking improvements and other related site work.

Consolidation of similar athletic venues and better scheduling of practice times will result in considerable improvements to game fields.