

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S OPEN SPACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ISSUE: Increasing and preserving Open Space in the City.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council receive this report on Open Space Plan implementation.

BACKGROUND: At the September 20, 2005, City Council Public Hearing, I recommended deferral of two docket items related to open space: the "*Recommendations of the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) 2005 Report*" and the "*Open Space Steering Committee Pocket Park Recommendations*." Deferral was requested in order to provide staff time for additional analysis of the sites, and further communication with property owners associated with the listed sites. Staff completed this work, and in the ensuing time period, the City has focused on acquiring additional open space and has achieved significant gains in our open space program through voluntary and cooperative work with property owners and the community. Since 2004 the City has acquired via purchase or dedication some 21.455 acres of open space which represents a major achievement toward Council's adopted Open Space Plan goals. In addition, some 26.675 acres are planned for future dedication or acquisition. This brings the total acquisition or future dedication to 48.1 acres. This does not count other open space dedications planned before 2004, such as the 60 acres of open space to be obtained from the Potomac Yard development. The purpose of this docket item is to provide City Council with an update regarding:

1. Additional community outreach and analysis of potential Valuable Open Space Sites;
2. Significant gains in achieving the goals of the Open Space Master Plan;
3. Additional information regarding estimated maintenance costs for parks/open space;
4. Future planned open space preservation activities and a strategy for increased public outreach and education; and
5. Significant efforts and work of the Open Space Steering Committee.

1. Additional Community Outreach and Analysis of Potential Open Space Sites:

As a result of the September 2005 deferral and based on City Council direction, staff worked closely with the Open Space Steering Committee to undertake the following actions:

1. Additional outreach to property owners listed in the 2005 Priority Open Space, Pocket Park, and Voluntary Conservation Easement reports;
2. Further research and analysis of each nominated open space property in the reports listed above;
3. Revisions to the open space priority recommendations, including information on recent acquisitions;
4. Revisions to the pocket park recommendations, including removal of sites based on owners' requests; and
5. Revisions to the voluntary conservation easement list, including removal of sites based on owners' requests.

Four separate docket items follow this report including Recommendations on Valuable Open Space sites (updated from 2005 report); Revised List of Pocket Park sites (updated from 2005); Revised Potential Voluntary Conservation Easements (updated from 2005); and a Report on the Recommended Future Structure for the City of Alexandria's Open Space Steering Committee.

2. Significant Gains In Achieving the Goals of the Open Space Master Plan:

Since the inception of the Open Space Master Plan in 2003, the City has set forth and achieved many of the goals outlined in the plan. Of particular note, in the 2005-2006 time period, staff has worked with property owners to protect a number of the significant open space sites identified in the Open Space Master Plan and the 2004 Open Space Recommendations, as well as additional open space throughout the City. Important sites that have been protected include:

1. The acquisition of three of the Waterfront/Strand parcels;
2. The acquisition of property to expand Holmes Run Park;
3. Two conservation easements on listed properties;
4. Nearly completed acquisition (expected closing on January 10, 2007) of four parcels on Mount Vernon Avenue, shown as part of the Open Space Master Plan's "Green Crescent" and identified as valuable open space in the Four Mile Run Stream Restoration Master Plan;
5. Open space at 2600 Business Center Drive;
6. The first of two Freedmen's Cemetery parcels (expected closing in the first quarter of 2007);

7. A number of dedicated public access easements for open space, initiated through the development process; and
8. A number of properties dedicated to the City from private owners for use as open/park space.

A list of all open space protected since the inception of the Open Space Master Plan is attached to this memorandum (Attachment 1: Open Space Preserved Since Open Space Master Plan 2003 Approval). In addition, a matrix demonstrating achievement to date of the Open Space Master Plan Goals is included (Attachment 2: Open Space Master Plan Goals Achieved to Date). These achievements address Council's Strategic Master Plan Goal #2: "A City that Respects, Protects and Enhances the Natural Environment."

3. **Additional Information Regarding Estimated Maintenance Costs for Parks/Open Space:**

In response to Council's request, staff has developed an estimate of the required costs for maintenance of newly protected/acquired open space and other parkland. An overview of these maintenance requirements for open space, including the estimated yearly cost for the life of any viable park, is provided for additional information (Attachment 3: Estimated Yearly Maintenance Requirements for Open Space). By the end of FY 2007 staff will develop the projected total maintenance costs for newly acquired property.

4. **Future Planned Open Space Preservation Activities and A Strategy For Increased Public Outreach and Education:**

Actions to achieve the goals of the Open Space Master Plan and to preserve and protect open space in the City of Alexandria continue to be taken. This memorandum to Council provides additional information on staff's planned future strategies for continued preservation of open space (Attachment 4: Future Open Space Preservation Strategies).

5. **Significant Efforts and Work of the Open Space Steering Committee:**

Staff would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the extensive efforts of the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) members throughout the three years since they were each appointed. OSSC members were directly involved in all of the activities listed above, including their continued efforts to identify, analyze and rank open space sites across the City. Through dedicated service and ongoing public outreach, the members each played a significant role in achieving the goals of the Open Space Master Plan and enabled the City to successfully preserve valuable open space in Alexandria.

The following four docket items discuss these open space issues and plans in more detail, and propose recommendations for Council action, after the February 24 public hearing on these matters.

1. Revised List of Proposed Valuable Open Space Sites
2. Revised List of Proposed Pocket Park Sites
3. Revised Potential Proposed Voluntary Conservation Easement Sites
4. Recommended Future Committee Structure for the City of Alexandria's Open Space Steering Committee

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Open Space Preserved Since Open Space Master Plan 2003 Approval

Attachment 2: Open Space Master Plan Goals Achieved to Date

Attachment 3: Estimated Yearly Maintenance Requirements for Open Space

Attachment 4: Future Open Space Preservation Strategies

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Kirk Kincannon, Director, RPCA

Aimee Vosper, Landscape Architect Supervisor, RPCA

Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA

OPEN SPACE PRESERVED SINCE OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN 2003 APPROVAL (100 ACRE GOAL)

Open Space Dedications and Purchases

Location	Year Approved	Preservation Method	Held By	Acreage
Oak Grove - 1400 Janney's Lane	2004	Dedication	City	1.16 acres
Seminary Forest - 2200 Ivor Lane	2004	Purchase	City	5.00 acres
1301 Powhatan Street	2004	Dedication	City	.15 acres
210 Strand Street	2006	Purchase	City	0.102 acres
0 Prince Street and 200 Strand Street	2006	Purchase	City	0.443 acres
4630 Raleigh Avenue	2006	Purchase	City	.14 acres
Four Mile Run 4109, 4115, 4121, 4125 Mount Vernon Avenue	2007	Purchase	City	1.46 acres
2600 Business Center Drive	2007	Purchase	City	13.9 acres
Total Dedications and Purchases				21.455 acres

5

Planned Future Open Space Dedications and Purchases

Location	Year Approval Expected	Preservation Method	Held By	Acreage
ATA 2203 Mill Road	2006-2007	Dedication	City	1.01 acres
204 & 208 Strand Street, 1 Duke St.	2007	Purchase	City	0.675 acres
Eisenhower East Underway/Completed	2004-2006	Dedication	City	.26 acres
Proposed/Approved	2008-2010	Dedication	City	2.38 acres
Proposed/Approved	Future - no later than 2015	Dedication	City	20.70 acres
Eisenhower East Total Open Space				23.34 acres

1001 S. Washington & 714 Church St	2007	Purchase	City	1.01 acres
Total Future Dedications and Purchases				26.675 acres

Several areas previously captured within the Open Space Master Plan prior to the 10 year goal include: Cameron Station Linear Park, and Potomac Yard. In areas where open space is already accounted for, staff is working to incorporate additional improvements to the open space.

Public Access or Open Space Conservation Easements

Location	Year Approved	Preservation Method	Held by	Acreage
Cameron Station Phase VII	2004	Dedication	City	0.75 acres
Cooper Dawson - 206 N. Quaker Lane	2004	Conservation easement	Private	0.41 acres
Pickett's Ridge - 1101 Finley Lane	2004	Public Access Easement Conservation Easement	Private	0.01 acres
Quaker Ridge - 3511 Duke Street	2004	Conservation Easement	Private	0.52 acres
1900 Russell Road	2004	Conservation Easement	NVCT/ Private	0.36 acres
1500 King Street	2005	Public Access Easement	Private	0.11 acres
Hennage - 500 Henry Street	2005	Public Access Easement	Private	0.52 acres
Old Club - 555 South Washington Street	2005	Public Access Easement	Private	0.09 acres
Postmasters - 329 First Street	2005	Public Access Easement	Private	0.02 acres
403 West Masonic View	2006	Conservation Easement	NVCT/Private	1.91 acres
3401 Russell Road	2006	Conservation Easement	NVCT/ Private	2.83 acres
INOVA Alexandria 1200 Howard Street	2006	Public Access Easement	Private	7.95 acres
Total Public Access or Open Space Conservation Easements				15.48 acres

Total Open Space Approved and/or Planned for Protection	63.61 acres
--	--------------------

Open Space Change in Status

Location	Year Approved	Status change	Acreage
3759 Jefferson Davis Highway - Alexandria Toyota Donation	2006	Easement to City ownership	3.98 acres
Holmes Run Parkway-1201 Beauregard Street Mark Winkler Donation	2006	Easement to City ownership	2.86 acres

4

Historic Preservation Easements in Alexandria

Not included in the open space acreage totals, but very important to note, are a number of historic preservation easements that also include open space. As of July, 2006 the easements according to the Office of Historic Alexandria are listed below. Properties with Historic Preservation Easements that include open space/scenic preservation on this list are:

118 N. Alfred Street	601 Oronoco Street
216 N. Alfred Street	609 Oronoco Street
115 & 117 S. Alfred Street	614 Oronoco Street & 429 N. Washington Street
219 S. Alfred Street	206 N. Pitt Street
Battery Heights (near Trinity and N. Quaker Lane)	201 Prince Street
211 Cameron Street	805-807 Prince Street
514 Cameron Street	808 Prince Street
607 Cameron Street	1020 Prince Street
202 Duke Street	1122 Prince Street
514-516 Duke Street	506 Queen Street
215 N. Fairfax Street	508 Queen Street
	518 Queen Street
	520 & 522 Queen Street
209 S. Fairfax Street	908 Queen Street
508 S. Fairfax Street	910 Queen Street
311 E. Howell Street	912 Queen Street
1007 King Street	13 Russell Road
2413 King Street	208 S. Saint Asaph Street
216, 218, 220 N. Lee Street	209 S. Saint Asaph Street
218 S. Lee Street	223 S. Saint Asaph Street (601 Duke Street)
310 S. Lee Street	312 S. Saint Asaph Street
401 S. Lee Street	220 N. Washington Street
418 S. Lee Street	
420 S. Lee Street	
428 S. Lee Street	
619 S. Lee Street (207 Franklin Street)	
735 S. Lee Street	
205 North View Terrace	

OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN REPORT ON GOALS ACHIEVED TO DATE

Goals, Recommendations and Implementations

As listed in the Open Space Plan, fifteen goals and associated recommendations provide the overall framework for the Open Space Master Plan adopted by City Council in 2003. 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 preserving institutional space;
5. Creating an open space network, "The Green Crescent" in new development areas;
6. Protecting and preserving institutional space;
7. Maximizing the 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.

b

Based on the above goals, the Open Space Master Plan (2003) laid out the timeframe sequence shown below as a guideline for implementing the fifteen goals and actions. The status of these items is indicated in italics.

Year 1 (2004):

- **Create the Alexandria Open Space Conservancy.** *In 2003 the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) was created by the City Manager and has been active each year since its inception. At this time, the City also initiated a partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) (Goals 1-15).*
- **Hire a grant writer.** *In 2003 RP&CA created a position to, in part, work with staff to identify and submit for grant dollars on the City's behalf (Goal 2).*
- **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.** *Staff and the OSSC work on a regular annual basis to identify sites for protection, and submit these recommend these sites to City Council to ensure our ability to take action if and when they become available. (Goals 1,2,9,15).*
- **Revise zoning requirements for new developments.** *The small area planning and Coordinated Development district planning process help the City to accomplish this goal by creating overlay zoning for areas of current and ongoing development. In addition, the City is developing a long term infill development strategy with revised requirements that will be submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council in 2007 (Goals 1,3,5,9,10,11,13).*

10

Years 2-3 (2005-2006):

- **Work to achieve settlement on 1 and 2 King Street, and 0 Prince Street in order to begin completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan.** *The City is involved in ongoing discussions related to 1 & 2 King Street (ODBC) and had successfully negotiated acquisition of 0 Prince Street. (Goals 1,2,3,10).*
- **Begin preparation of a greenway management plan for Holmes Run.** *The City's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) developed and uses the Homes Run Management Plan related to flood control and stream valley restoration (Goals 1,2,4,5,10,15).*
- **Initiate a system of monitoring the City's progress on its protection and enhancement of RPA's.** *This goal is achieved and RPA protection ensured as development proposals are analyzed through the City's interdepartmental review (IDR) process (Goals 1,4).*
- **Begin a dialogue between the Open Space Conservancy and the City's major institutional landholders to develop a strategy for conserving such land.** *The City communicates regularly with the major institutional landholders, including Episcopal High School, Virginia Theological Seminary, INOVA Hospital, Bishop Ireton, Virginia-American Water and the George Washington Masonic Temple in an effort to preserve and protect open space on respective properties. Conservation easements and other protective measures are encouraged and implemented when possible (Goals 1,6,9,15).*

== Years 3-5 (2006-2008):

- **Establish new trail crossing of Holmes Run at Chambliss Street.** *The City hired a Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator in 2006 and the process for establishing this connection is now being discussed (Goals 5,10).*
- **Connect the off-street Eisenhower Valley path to Old Town at Payne Street.** *In 2006, the Eisenhower East Plan and Design Guidelines were approved by City Council and include a requirement for this connection as development occurs in the area (Goals 10,11).*
- **Develop a strategy for creating additional open space near Simpson Field.** *The Potomac Yard Plan and negotiations with the developers of that property includes a strategy to create additional open space in this area, including additional active and passive parkland (Goals 1,2,9).*

Years 5-7 (2008-2010):

- **Rehabilitate Commonwealth Avenue.** *RP&CA begin this process in 2005, conduction communications with the civic associations in this area its support of some improvements to the median (including community maintained garden plots) and continues to work with these groups as they participate in efforts to maintain the area (Goals 2,5,11,12).*
- **Create a trail along Backlick Run, from Boothe Park to the Fairfax County line.** *As development projects are submitted*

and reviewed in the interdepartmental review process, sites along this potential trail area are identified and negotiations with the property owners are initiated to establish public access easements and /or dedication of the necessary property to create this trail. One such easement was approved in 2006 (Goals 1,4,5,10).

- **Begin a City green analysis of Alexandria tree cover.** *In 2005 the City Arborist and the newly established Urban Forestry Steering Committee performed this analysis. The Department is working with the Urban Forestry Committee to identify additional methods to preserve and enhance the City's tree cover (Goals 11,12) through the drafting of a proposed Urban Forestry Master Plan.*
- **Establish a streetscape and gateway enhancement plan for Route 1 (to be implemented in years 7-10/2010-2014).** *Design guidelines for Potomac Yard were approved that include such enhancements, and through its interdepartmental review process, the City has begun this long range planning effort for the surrounding the Route 1 area as well (Goals 5,10,11,12,14).*

The information provided in the following table includes implementation strategies which show that the City has achieved the majority of these goals, often in advance of the timeline created.

12

Goal 1: Protecting and Enriching Existing Parks

13

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Continue the recent emphasis on increased maintenance of the existing park system and other public open spaces.	City Council has increased both the operational and CIP funding related to management of open space and parkland. RP&CA is currently updating its maintenance standards.
Carefully assess the existing heavily used parklands and recreation facilities in the Needs Assessment and determined methods for minimizing overuse	RP&CA is completing the master planning effort for all City fields to improve conditions of existing heavily used fields. The plan emphasizes the strategic use of synthetic turf and the engineering of natural turf areas with a set of City Council approved field standards. A synthetic turf informational session was held in June 2006 to initiate potential use of synthetic turf to address this need. Minnie Howard will have the City's first synthetic turf field constructed during the Summer of 2007.
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) created new parks and preserve existing open space.	The Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) was established by the City Manager in 2003 in part to act as a stewardship group for open space. The City also entered into an agreement with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust to promote the OSSC mission and work with citizens in an effort to educate them on the value of open space and their options in helping the City to preserve it. In the summer of 2005, an online method for contributions to the City's Open Space Fund was established. 48 acres have been approved for acquisition or other conservation methods as of June, 2006 (see Attachment 1, pages 1 and 2).
Establish an open space endowment for the purchase and development of public open space.	Effective FY 2004, one cent from the Real Estate tax was set aside and used for the purchase of open space (the Open Space Fund). For FY 2007, this ordinance was redefined to be 1% of the real estate tax revenues, to continue to provide money yearly for open space initiatives.

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.	Through the budgeting process, funding for the continued maintenance and park improvements for the acquired open space is considered annually. Staff continues to seek and identify grant dollars such as TEA-LU, TSCP, Land and Water Conservation, Trail Funds, CMAQ and Federal earmarks to support/enhance department functions such as park maintenance, renovation and expansion.
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.	RP&CA continues to partner with other City agencies to promote the Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Garden and the Tree Stewardship program. Brochures for these respective programs have been developed to market and expand the programs. The Urban Forestry Steering Committee was established in June 2004 to work on developing and implementing an Urban Forestry Master Plan.

Goal 2: Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open Space

hl

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Utilize air rights over roadways to create new open space, recreation, habitat, and educational facilities	In March, 2006 the City approved the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan which includes efforts to create new open space, including the use of bridge/railroad areas.
Expand sections of existing roadways to create traffic-free bike trails, pedestrian paths, and landscaped medians and sidewalks.	Top trail priorities have been established. The City hired a Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator in 2006 to continue to work with T&ES, RP&CA and P&Z to improve pedestrian and bicycle trail access. The Eisenhower Avenue Greenway Trail is scheduled for completion in 2008 with implementation on schedule for completion by 2008.
Utilize selection criteria to identify privately owned land suitable for acquisition by the City for parkland/open	Since approval of the Open Space Plan in 2003, the OSSC has regularly reviewed sites using Council-approved criteria to assess valuable open space. New criteria for Pocket Parks was approved and used to review

space use.	smaller sites in the spring of 2005. To date, approximately 48 acres have been protected.
Create a City Hall "Action Team" comprised of representative's form the City Managers Office and appropriate City Departments as needed to create a coordinated strategy for rapid action on land disposition.	Coordinated action to preserve open space occurs (ongoing) through work with the already established Interdepartmental Review group (IDR), and follow-up meetings with the City Manager's Office. Development proposals and open space acquisition opportunities are brought forward to City Council on a regular basis.
Enhance existing requirements for open space in new developments and make amendments as needed to ensure that new projects will provide sufficient usable open space	City staff works on an ongoing basis to negotiate with developers as development proposals are submitted to the City to ensure that new projects provide quality open space.
Strategically seek and develop additional funding sources that will allow the City to realize the recommended strategies for creating new open space opportunities.	In Eisenhower East, the City recently approved an open space fair share contribution open space/and or dollars for the acquisition and development of open space in the area. In addition, the City links with federal and state agencies to secure matching and non matching funds to continue preservation of open space.

15

Goal 3: Review and Complete Implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Continue to require implementation of the existing 25-foot wide easement or zone for open space linkage along the Potomac River waterfront as represented in zoning and settlement agreements, and create new parkland on parcels with title questions.	Through development and building permit review, each development site is reviewed for potential encroachment into the established RPA. The City will be initiating the waterfront planning process in early 2007, which will include an emphasis on continued implementation of the easement or zone area and the creation/preservation of waterfront open space.

<p>Seek and encourage all available opportunities to add missing parcels to the Potomac River Waterfront Plan. These strategies include acquisition gift of land, easements, purchase of development rights, etc.</p>	<p>In the Spring of 2006, three priority parcels along the waterfront were purchased by the City as open space. The waterfront planning process is scheduled to begin early in 2007. Negotiations for additional properties is ongoing.</p>
<p>The Department of Recreation Parks and Cultural Activities, 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.</p>	<p>In the winter of 2005 a Wayfinding Coordinator was hired by the City to coordinate this effort. The City established an interdepartmental committee to work with the coordinator and a to-be-selected contractor to achieve this goal.</p>

Goal 4: Protect, Expand and Connect Stream Valleys and Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

16

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
<p>Coordinate existing stream management programs including: flood control, stormwater management urban habitat recreation, etc.</p>	<p>An updated Watershed Management Plan incorporates new programs to help achieve this goal. Existing regulations already protect approximately 20 miles of streams and Potomac River shoreline with Resource Protection Areas. The City protects an additional 1.8 miles of stream based on the results of a Citywide stream reclassification study.</p>
<p>Look for opportunities for stream valley protection and educational programs near school sites.</p>	<p>The Department of Transportation and Environmental Quality and RP&CA have programs at the Cora Kelly Recreation Center/School and at Buddie Ford Nature Center adjacent to William Ramsay Elementary School. The recent Four Mile Run Restoration Plan will provide additional future opportunities to meet this goal.</p>
<p>Upgrade the health of stream valleys by developing a citywide stream protection strategy as part of a Watershed Management Plan</p>	<p>Working with information provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, DEQ staff published a Best Management Practices Manual for Automotive Related Industries. Compliance with the manual is required of all such businesses that require a Special Use Permit (SUP) by placing appropriate conditions on their SUP's.</p>

Encourage wetland creation and protection projects throughout the City to help clean our streams and increase wildlife habitat.	The City of Alexandria has adopted an Environmental Management Ordinance to help protect the Chesapeake Bay from pollution and urban run-off. With the Wilson bridge project, the protection and creation of new wetlands adjacent to Four Mile Run and Hunting Creek is ensured. Staff continues to explore additional opportunities.
Seek funding from State, Federal and other sources for site protection demonstration projects, and environmental education programs.	City staff continues to research and seek funding from federal sources to support programs such as Four Mile Run Restoration. City partnerships with the EPA, the Army Corp of Engineers and STAG grants also have increased available funding
Curtail or eliminate the granting of encroachments in stream valley RPA's and adjacent areas. Enhance identified RPA's with natural area buffers.	The newly revised Chesapeake Bay Ordinance adopted by City Council outlines the strict new RPA's for stream valleys and wetland areas. The restrictions will limit encroachment into RPA's in all development.
Establish on-going coordination with Arlington and Fairfax Counties for stream valley and natural resource protection, building on the model established for Four Mile Run.	Discussions have been initiated with Fairfax County on projects in the Cameron Run stream valley. The Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan was approved in March, 2006 and is in its initial implementation stage.
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 surface, reusing rainwater, etc.)	Through its partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT), the City actively encourages conservation easements with an associated tax benefit, for property owners within watershed and other valuable areas.

Goal 5: Create An Open Space Network In New Development Areas

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Plan for potential development and redevelopment sites to include open space areas in overall plans.	Coordinated work with Planning and Zoning and other departments in review of development plans to ensure open space creation and/or protection. P&Z and RP&CA are responsible for negotiating open space for development proposals. For example, the Eisenhower East Small area Plan includes a network of new open space.

Consider both significant large, green areas, as well as smaller parks and visual linkages as part of any development area.	Any new development proposal undergoes review by an interdepartmental team to achieve this goal. Conditions of approval are recommended to the Planning Commission and City Council by staff to ensure that development areas include adequate open space as outlined in the Open Space Master Plan.
Utilize design guidelines to make the City's objectives clear and ensure development sites achieve coordination of open space area among separate developments in adjacent areas	Small Area Plans, including Eisenhower East (recently approve), Potomac Yard, Landmark/Van Dorn, Mount Vernon Avenue and Arlandria establish design guidelines that address achievement of this goal.
Encourage use of conservation easements to the maximum extent appropriate.	The City's partnership with NVCT encourages outreach and education regarding the use of conservation easements by private property owners. The partnership has sponsored a number of recent and upcoming outreach/education events in 2006-2007, including an open house a newly acquired easement property and two conservation easement breakfasts at local hotels.
Incorporate historical and archeological resources in planning for open space and new development projects were appropriate.	The Office Historic Alexandria is represented on the OSSC and is included in IDR reviews of development plans.
Consider the use of all available planning tools to create an open space network in new development areas.	Developer contributions for open space, proffers, master plan development, transit-oriented development, conservation easements, tax incentives, design guidelines and stream valley setbacks are each used when appropriate throughout the City's development approval process.
Require coordination in the planning and design of open space areas for new developments in order to maximize and link spaces in a definable, useable manner.	The coordinated IDR team reviews all proposed projects. Conditions of approval are recommended to the Planning Commission and City Council by staff to ensure that development areas include adequate open space.
Evaluate all new development proposals in the context of their impact on Alexandria's public and private open space	RP&CA staff evaluate all proposed projects for impact on both public and private open space and creates conditions of approval that are included in the recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council to ensure that development areas include significant open space.

61

Review existing zoning and development standards and requirements in order to achieve adequate open space in all developments citywide and make revisions as necessary.	Staff goals in the Small Area Planning process include: that open space serves a public function, ground level open space, urban design and landscape guidelines, limits on infill development, required contributions to open space funding, and open space components in all revised small area plans.
Require significant open space areas that are large, connected and green as part of any discretionary approval. Require the creation and maintenance of visual linkages among open spaces and key vistas.	Coordinated IDR team review of all proposed projects. Conditions of approval are reviewed in the context of the Open Space Master Plan to ensure that development areas include adequate open space.
Create requirements for the maintenance of proffered open spaces in new development areas that may include the creation of endowments for such purposes.	In many instances, private owners (HOAs, etc.) are required to maintain in perpetuity public open space/parks on their properties. Examples include developments in the Eisenhower East Area, Hennage (the Monarch), Mark Center, Potomac Yard BMPs, and other development sites throughout the City.
Where development has already occurred, consider conservation and scenic easements, taxation programs, and other techniques for the creation, preservation and maintenance of open space on these sites.	The City's partnership with NVCT encourages outreach and education regarding the use of conservation easements by private property owners.
Coordinate with Arlington and Fairfax Counties to implement the plan to protect and connect open space linkages in new development areas.	The recently approved Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan, Cameron Run Watershed study, and the Holmes Run area are examples of the City's successful efforts to achieve this goal.

Goal 6: Protect and Preserve Institutionally-Owned Open Space

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Encourage conservation easements or other similar actions, with benefits to institutional and nonprofit organizations.	RP&CA works in coordination with Planning and Zoning in discussions with institutional and non-profit land owners (i.e., INOVA Hospital, Episcopal High School, Virginia-American Water, Masonic Temple, Bishop Ireton, Virginia Theological Seminary) regarding the benefits of preserving open space and utilizing conservation easements on their properties.

Encourage the City to explore additional actions for preservation on institutional open space.	The City continues to seek voluntary gifts of land, voluntary conservation easements, tree cover protection measures, trail, scenic, and historic easements on institutional properties. For example, INOVA Hospital in 2006 established a public open space easement for 7.95 acres.
--	---

Goal 7: Maximize the Use of Public School Open Space Areas to Satisfy Local Needs

20

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Continue to upgrade school open space properties to serve the local needs of the surrounding communities.	Recent and upcoming improvements at T.C. Williams, Minnie Howard, Jefferson Houston, Ramsay, George Washington Middle School, Cora Kelly, and Lyles Crouch incorporate improved use of open space on these sites.
Continue to coordinate the planning of parks and schools with the goal of making efficient use of these important public resources.	RP&CA is currently undertaking a working with the Schools to identify methods to strengthen the planning process between the Schools and the City. Coordination includes revisions to the existing Schools and Facilities Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to identify efficiencies and operational changes that will address the importance of achieving this goal.
Where appropriate, cluster active recreation uses near school properties to serve local needs.	Improvements at the new T.C. Williams are examples of the City's commitment to achieving this goal.
Establish a team for each school project that is representative of the each involved City agency in order to identify innovative and effective solutions for use of school open space areas by neighborhood residents while satisfying outdoor school programs, including the planning and design of new and renovated school facilities.	The established IDR team works directly with the schools as each proposed project/improvement enters into the City's required review process. Projects are reviewed with the same standards as private developments. A community liaison team is typically established to communicate City/School development project activities

Goal 8: Preserve and Protect Cemeteries

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Protect natural and cultural resources (e.g., trees and streams) in cemeteries, recognizing that some may be important also as features of the cultural landscape.	Interdepartmental review of any potential effects on these areas is ongoing with the intent of preserving the natural and cultural resources.
Support the restoration and commemoration efforts at Freedmen's and other historic cemeteries.	City acquisition of the Freedmen's Cemetery was authorized by Council with a restoration plan that includes future development of a commemorative park setting. One parcel should be acquired in early 2007, with the second parcel likely to be acquired later in 2007.

Goal 9: Create Public Open Space from Vacant Land

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Preserve, protect and enhance vacant lands as public open space amenities, including vacant land near existing parks, schools, natural resource areas, at street endings, next to institutional properties, adjacent or linking to existing/proposed trails, with significant trees and/or slopping terrain, with historic resources, etc.	A number of initiatives have occurred and/or are underway to achieve this goal, including: preservation of key properties such as the Jack Taylor dedication, Roth/Witter settlement area site, Winkler dedication, 4630 Raleigh Ave. acquisition and the Kust property conservation easement at Monticello Park Approval of the Pocket Park Program to encourage City acquisition of smaller, neighborhood serving open space parcels, and development infill development guidelines by Planning and Zoning.
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 areas.	To date, staff has compiled a survey of vacant properties, right-of-ways, and alleys. Coordination with City GIS has begun to compile and map all such properties.

Goal 10: Link and Expand Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail System

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Expand the City's multi-use trail system to address the objective of the City's bicycle and trail master	Top trail priorities such as the Eisenhower East multi-use trail, Eisenhower East Connection, and the Holmes Run trail were established

21

transportation plan to “reduce the rate of increase of vehicle trips.”	in the Multi-use Trails Master Plan. These priorities are coordinated with the Transportation Master Plan and the City’s Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator.
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.	Coordination between RP&CA and T&ES is ongoing to expand/support a multi-use trail system. Trail easements have been secured, and funds sought through state funding/grants. Trail Easements are also provided on individual development/SUP sites, such as Virginia Paving, Hooff’s Run and Pickett’s Ridge.
Implement the Alexandria Heritage Trail as a component of multi-use trail plan to promote historical and cultural understanding of the City, thereby promoting educational and tourism opportunities.	Work has been initiated and is underway. RP&CA and T&ES are working on combined projects and have made financial and staff commitment to continue improving pedestrian/bike and multi-use access ways. The Transportation Task Force will likely include trail recommendations in its report.
Work with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services to implement bike trails in public right-of-ways.	Work has been initiated and is underway. RP&CA and T&ES are working on combined projects and have made financial and staff commitment to continue improving pedestrian/bike and multi-use access ways. The Transportation Task Force will likely include bike trail recommendations in its report .
Work on a site by site basis with private property owners to seek easements for trail development and expansion.	Trail easements are encouraged through small area planning efforts and development review. Through development and building permit review, each development site is reviewed for potential trail development and expansion (e.g., VA Paving, Pickett’s Ridge, etc.)
Reassess and revise the Alexandria Trails Plan to provide the connections identified in the Open Space Plan.	Staff has worked to draft changes to the plan that will be vetted through the community process throughout FY2006-2007.
Coordinate regional planning efforts for trail linkages with Fairfax and Arlington Counties, VDOT and National Park Services.	Partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission to provide all regional trail maps online completed. New work to create a map demonstrating regional linkages is underway. The City has an ongoing partnership with the National Park Service, Arlington and Fairfax Counties to achieve this goal.
Aggressively seek private, state and Federal funding for continued trail development.	Federal funds and state funds are aggressively sought by the City on a yearly basis.

22

Improve trail signage, provide public education through pamphlets, maps and websites, mark historic sites and natural resources and create events to encourage trail use by both walkers and riders.	Design and installation of new trail signage (20 miles of multi-use trails) is slated for completion in FY2007. Alexandria's local bicycle advocacy group offers regular trail and street rides to promote alternative transportation routes, historical sites and scenic views within the City.
Collaborate with schools to identify "Safe Routes to School" using the trail system and other public streets.	"Safe Walk Route" seminars held to promote walk/biking to school (e.g. Walk to School Day in October, 2006). Efforts with children and parents are continued each year as a joint effort between RP&CA, Schools, Health Department and T&ES. The City has also applied for additional state grant funds to help meet this goal.
Encourage developers to include facilities for bicyclists and walkers in their Transportation Management Plans.	Through the IDR process and small area planning efforts, the City reviews all projects and development submissions. Recommended requirements for approval include pedestrian and bicycle access. Current successes include Eisenhower East and Potomac Yard plans.

Goal 11: Enhance Streetscapes and Gateways

23

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Enact comprehensive streetscape enhancements on existing roadways and create additional enhanced roadways	Mount Vernon Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, Russell Road, King Street, Washington Street, Route 1, Duke Street, Eisenhower Avenue and other significant roadways have recently seen protection and enhancements. Enhancements include additional plantings, benches, trash cans, improved paving materials and curb/gutter improvements.
Establish an interagency working group to create and implement a comprehensive streetscape program for the City.	An interdepartmental group comprised of all involved departments reviews all plans to ensure compliance with established streetscape guidelines, including those approved for Eisenhower East, Potomac Yard and Mount Vernon Avenue.
Consider implementation of a gateway improvement program.	There is an established Gateway Improvement Program that incorporates redesign and replanting of gateways to include seasonal color, ornamental trees, evergreen plant material and irrigation where feasible.

Establish guidelines for streetscape elements that recognize and reflect the individual character of each neighborhood or area of the city, derived in part from the historical features of each area.	Long Range Planning initiatives, including the Braddock Metro Small Area Plan, Waterfront Plan and other neighborhood planning efforts will seek to incorporate streetscape guidelines that help address the importance of historical features. Open space is also an essential component of these plans.
Require adherence to design guidelines for development applications and other approvals affecting streetscape.	All building permits and site plan approvals require adherence to applicable streetscape guidelines and are reviewed by IDR accordingly.
Provide adequate levels of infrastructure to support and maintain these streetscape/gateway program	Continued implementation and promotion of Urban Forestry, Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-garden programs and increased funding to support these programs, is part of the RP&CA annual operating budget process.

Goal 12: Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas

24

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Protect significant tree-lined arterials, parkways, thoroughfares and boulevards.	The Urban Forestry Steering Committee is working to develop a plan that helps to achieve this goal.
Identify and protect potential tree cover protection areas.	The IDR review process ensures that any development site with potential tree conservation area is identified and conditions are made accordingly. Ongoing discussions with property owners who are not currently seeking development approvals are also underway (i.e. Episcopal High School and Virginia Theological Seminary, etc.)
Establish an aggressive campaign to involve community organizations in protecting existing trees and planting new trees within each neighborhood.	The Urban Forestry Steering Committee has already completed three successful tree sales (for residents who want to plant trees in the City)
Strengthen existing tree protection regulations and establish a City Tree Plan to identify areas for increased forestation.	A review of the City's Landscape Guidelines for development is currently underway, with any necessary revisions planned to be submitted to City Council.
Support and strengthen the newly established Arlington and Alexandria Tree Steward Program to assist in tree maintenance, planting and public education.	City staff continues to be dedicated to this work, with additional outreach planned through the Urban Forestry Steering Committee.

Evaluate existing City tree crown cover based on current American Forests recommended standards for residential and commercial areas.	The existing crown coverage for the City is approximately 34%. The City Arborist and the Urban Forestry Steering Committee are currently reviewing standards and creating a proposed plan to achieve this goal.
---	---

Goal 13: Encourage the Creation of Civic Parks At and Adjacent to Metro Stations

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Coordinate with WMATA to enhance opportunities at each Metro station area to create and upgrade civic space and provide safe pedestrian connections.	Work sessions with WMATA to discuss long range planning efforts are ongoing, including consideration of: Braddock Metro, Potomac Yard, Eisenhower Station and Landmark Van Dorn sites.
Develop signs at Metro stations to mark access to trails and open spaces.	A study of existing signage and necessary improvements is currently underway in coordination with the Wayfinding Coordinator (Planning and Zoning). Temporary wayfinding signs (King Street Metro to the waterfront) have been installed.

25

Goal 14: Beautify Interchanges and Highway Corridors

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Actions to Date
Collaborate with VDOT on upgrading all maintenance of and developing design guidelines for highway interchanges and corridors throughout Alexandria.	East Eisenhower Design Guidelines approved. Maintenance memorandums of agreement and the South Washington Street Gateway designs are underway.
Monitor all highway expansion programs proposed by VDOT to ensure protection of existing landscape plans.	All highway expansion programs are coordinated through T&ES and impacts to landscape and natural habitats are addressed my remediation requirements (Wilson Bridge construction damage/interference remediation addressed).

Goal 15: Protect Privately Owned Open Space

Achieved Recommendations and Implementation	Action to Date
Educate private landowners on the importance of their open spaces and on available tools for preservation and protecting that space.	In partnership with NVCT, the City has conducted a series of outreach seminars. Most recently, a Conservation Easement Educational Forum (Breakfast) was held in December, 2006 with additional seminars and community outreach to civic associations and neighborhoods planned for the spring of 2007. Open space information and educational pieces are sent to all citizens with regular Recreation brochures and mailings.
Explore legal and planning strategies to encourage private landowners to preserve and protect their open space areas.	Planning and Zoning is studying revised infill regulations to achieve this goal. Temporary subdivision regulations have been approved.
Support an increase to 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.	The Open Space Fund was approved in 2003 for a one cent set aside of Real Estate tax. This was amended to 1% of real estate tax revenues in 2007.
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.	With the completion of an extensive study/analysis, new infill regulations will be proposed to Council in 2007. Temporary regulations for subdivisions were approved in June 2006.
Appropriate significant public financial resources and grant real estate tax relief in order to demonstrate a commitment by the City to the protection of privately owned open space through conservation easements and other preservation tools.	In 2005, using some of the real estate tax revenues dedicated for open space acquisition the City commenced to sell general obligation bonds that facilitated the implementation of OSSC recommendations. Through its partnership with NVCT, the City actively encourages private conservation easements and other preservation tools.

26

ESTIMATED YEARLY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL COSTS FOR OPEN SPACE

Based on FY2007 costs for parkland maintenance and operations, staff produced a program for estimating the yearly maintenance costs for acquired open space. The exact costs depend directly on the type and use of the open space. Future use is determined through a public process that involves community input. The process also involves thorough staff analysis of each site. These costs would therefore be more closely determined at the time of potential acquisition.

Estimated Yearly Maintenance and Operational Costs Per Acre

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 1. | \$2,000 to \$5,000 | Natural (includes streams, wooded areas, etc. with no to few plantings) |
| 2. | \$5,000 to \$10,000 | Turf/lawn with passive uses (includes benches, trash cans, etc. with plantings) |
| 3. | \$10,000 to \$15,000 | Active recreational uses and programming (includes playgrounds and small fields) |
| 4. | \$15,000 to \$40,000 | Heavy landscape/hardscape areas and active recreational fields/uses (includes athletic fields, Market Square level of landscaping, ball courts, etc.) |

The categories above reflect the different types of park/open space land the City maintains. Properties acquired and/or preserved through the Open Space Programs are most likely to fall under the first two categories of Natural use or Turf/lawn with passive uses, but more intensive uses may also occur with future open space planning for the areas.

FUTURE OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

Strategy for Increased Public Outreach and Education:

Going forwards, it will be very important to continue and enhance its efforts in public outreach regarding open space opportunities within the City. In order to ensure that the City responds to citizens' interests and concerns about open space, public outreach and education will be increased with a goal of encouraging property owners and community groups in identifying available open space and approaching the City with options. In this way, the City can ensure that those property owners who are interested in voluntary discussions and negotiations have the opportunity to work with the City and are knowledgeable about the options available to them. In addition, staff will work to educate and encourage citizens about successful preservation of open space and specific options that include: voluntary conservation easements, right-of-first refusal and sales/acquisition opportunities. Information about the City's Open Space Programs and Plan is included regularly in the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Program Guide, which is distributed three times a year to the general public.

The City's partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust is an essential component of our public outreach and education plan related to open space. The City has been working for three years with NVCT to encourage landowners to preserve their property with conservation easements, and this partnership with NVCT has proven to be beneficial to the City's goal of preserving and protecting open space. NVCT now holds four conservation easements in the City of Alexandria and conducts ongoing outreach to promote additional conservation easements. To increase and improve public education and outreach, the City's agreement with NVCT includes a number of planned activities during FY 2007.

- Property owner outreach events - invitation only breakfasts targeting approximately 50 land owners each at hotel locations in the West End and Old Town. These events provide information regarding conservation easement opportunities and benefits;
- Opening of the Kust property (conservation easement adjacent to Monticello Park) - public viewing of the property at a "Birding and Breakfast" with an additional emphasis on outreach to nearby property owners. A requirement of the Kust's conservation easement is to open the site to the public twice a year;
- Expanded NVCT mailing list to include 2,500 new Alexandria households - each will receive a NVCT newsletter;
- NVCT ad in the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities quarterly brochure/program guide - provides information about NVCT programs and conservation easements; and
- Real Estate Mailing insert - January tax assessment mailing will include information on preservation and easement opportunities for property owners.

Strategy for Exploration of Currently Vacant Parcels:

As requested, staff have identified over 100 vacant parcels of land as potential open space sites. Staff will continue its efforts to research and determine the value of these sites as potential open space opportunities in the City.

Open Space Trust Fund Update:

In 2003, Council unanimously approved a dedicated one cent set aside of the real property tax rate revenue toward the acquisition of open space. In 2004, Council leveraged some of those dedicated real estate tax revenues by issuing general obligation bonds, borrowing \$10 million for open space acquisition. As part of the FY2007 budget approval, City Council amended and passed changes to the set aside rate from one cent to one percent of real property tax revenues, which will continue to provide funds yearly. As of March 2004, citizens and other interested parties could make contributions to the Open Space Trust Fund online at the City's website through the City's E-Check program.

16-20
1-9-07

+

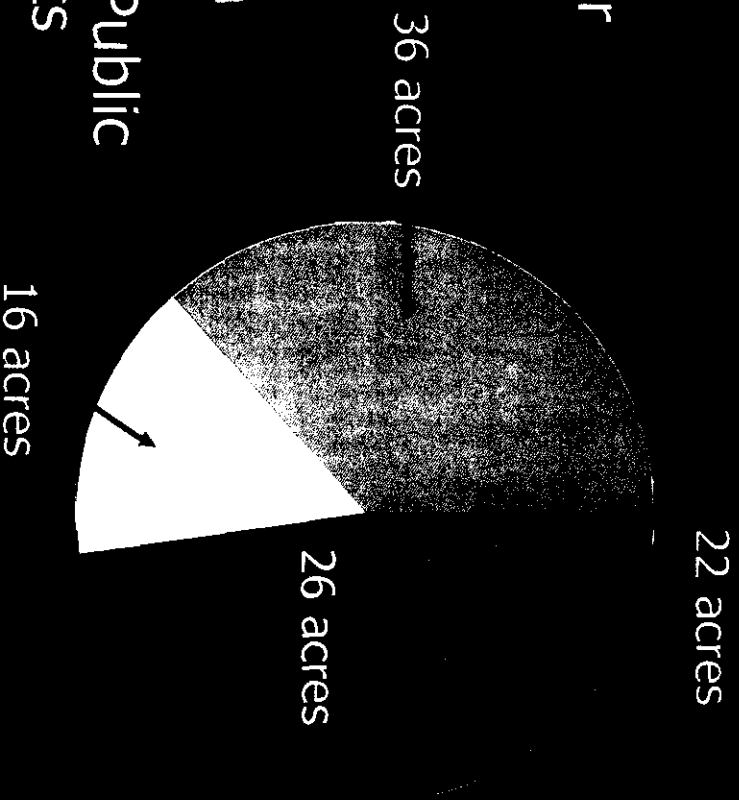
Open Space Plan Implementation

Status Report on the City of
Alexandria's Open Space Activities
January 9, 2007 City Council Meeting

Open Space Preserved — 100 Acre Goal

- 48 Acres of Open Space acquired or dedicated.

- 16 Acres of Open Space under Conservation or Public Access Easements



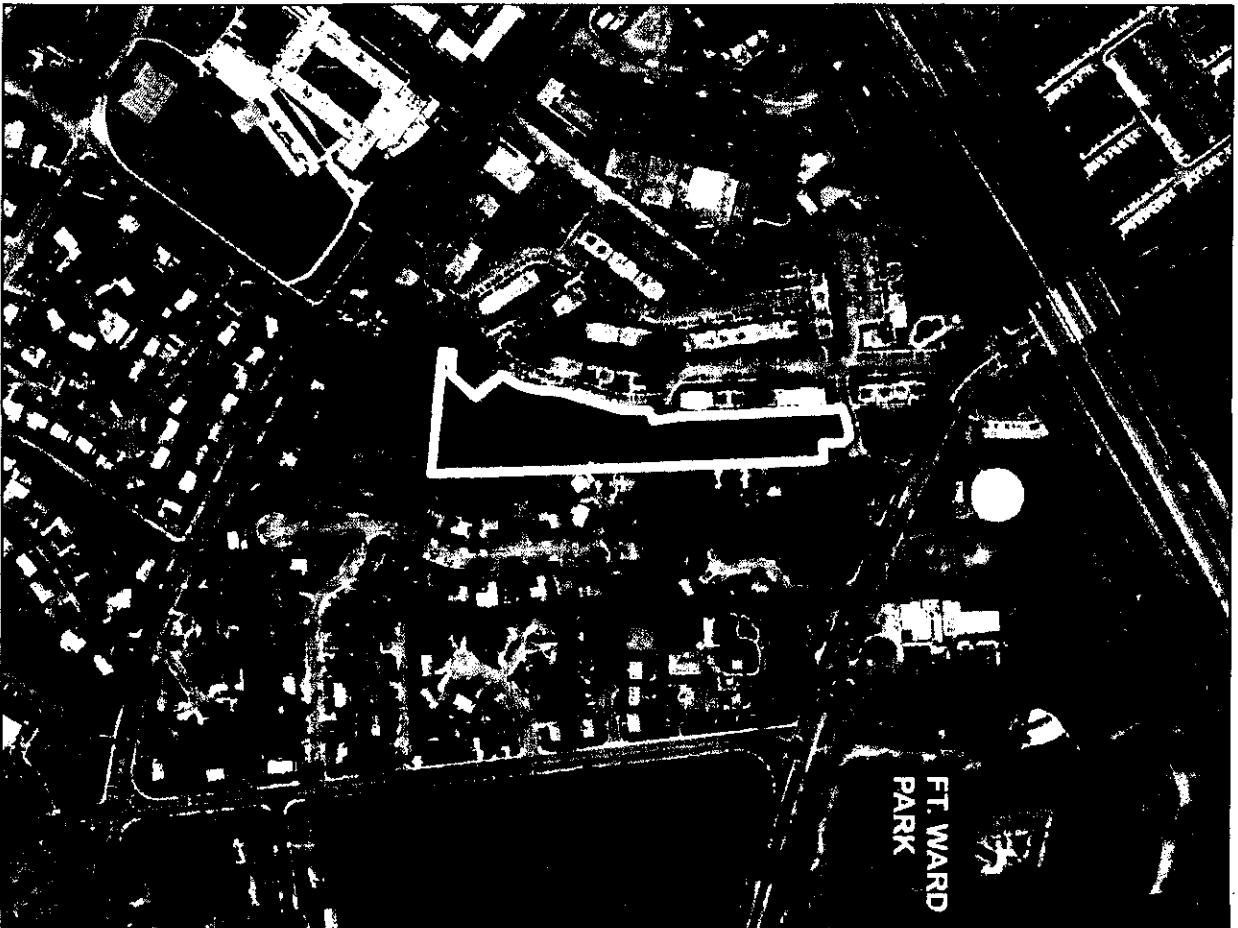
- Acquired or Dedicated
- Planned Acquisition or Dedication
- Conservation Easement
- Balance of Ten Year Goal

Open Space Acquired



- Ivor Lane – Seminary Forest
- 2600 Business Center Drive
- Strand – Waterfront (three parcels)
- Mount Vernon Avenue - Four Mile Run
- Raleigh Avenue - Holmes Run Park

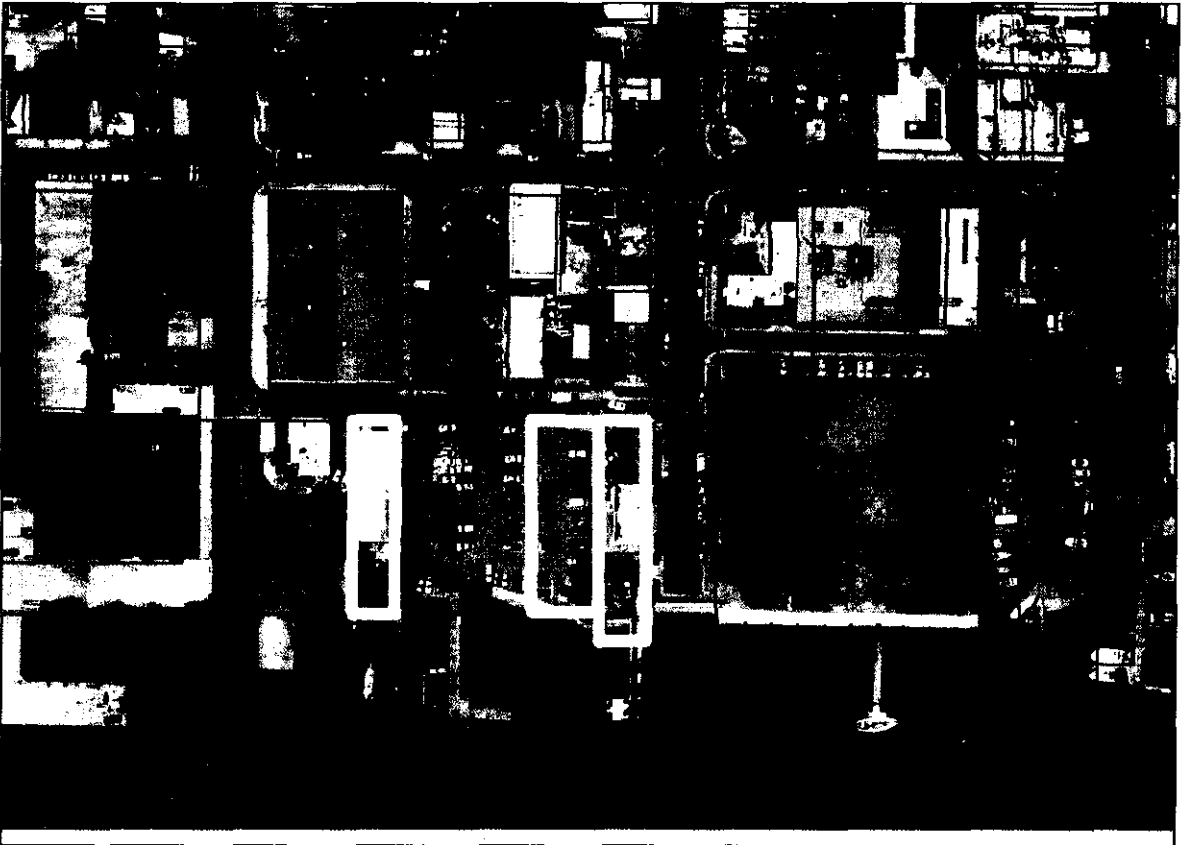
2200 Ivor Lane -- Seminary Forest



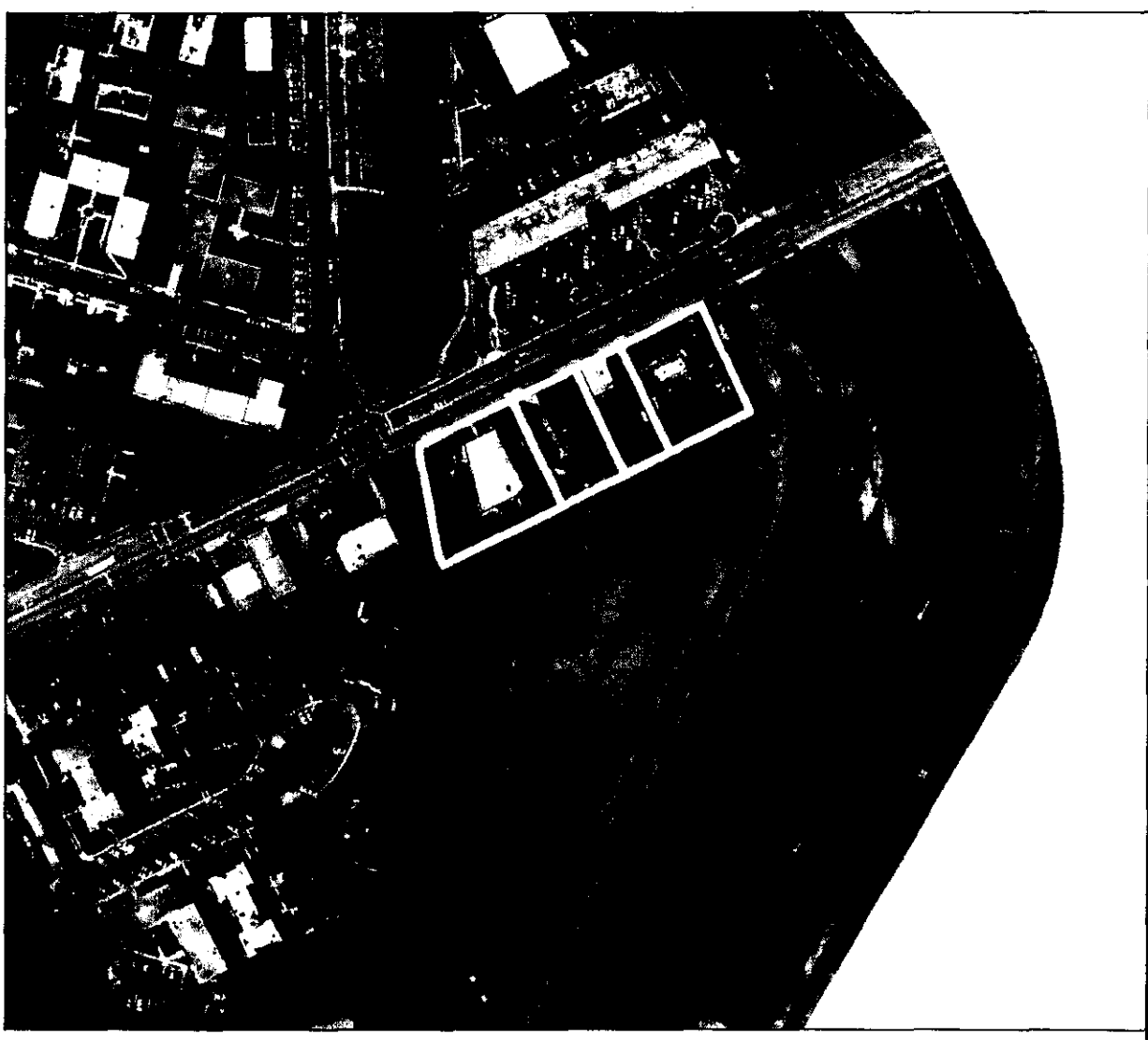
2600 Business Center Drive



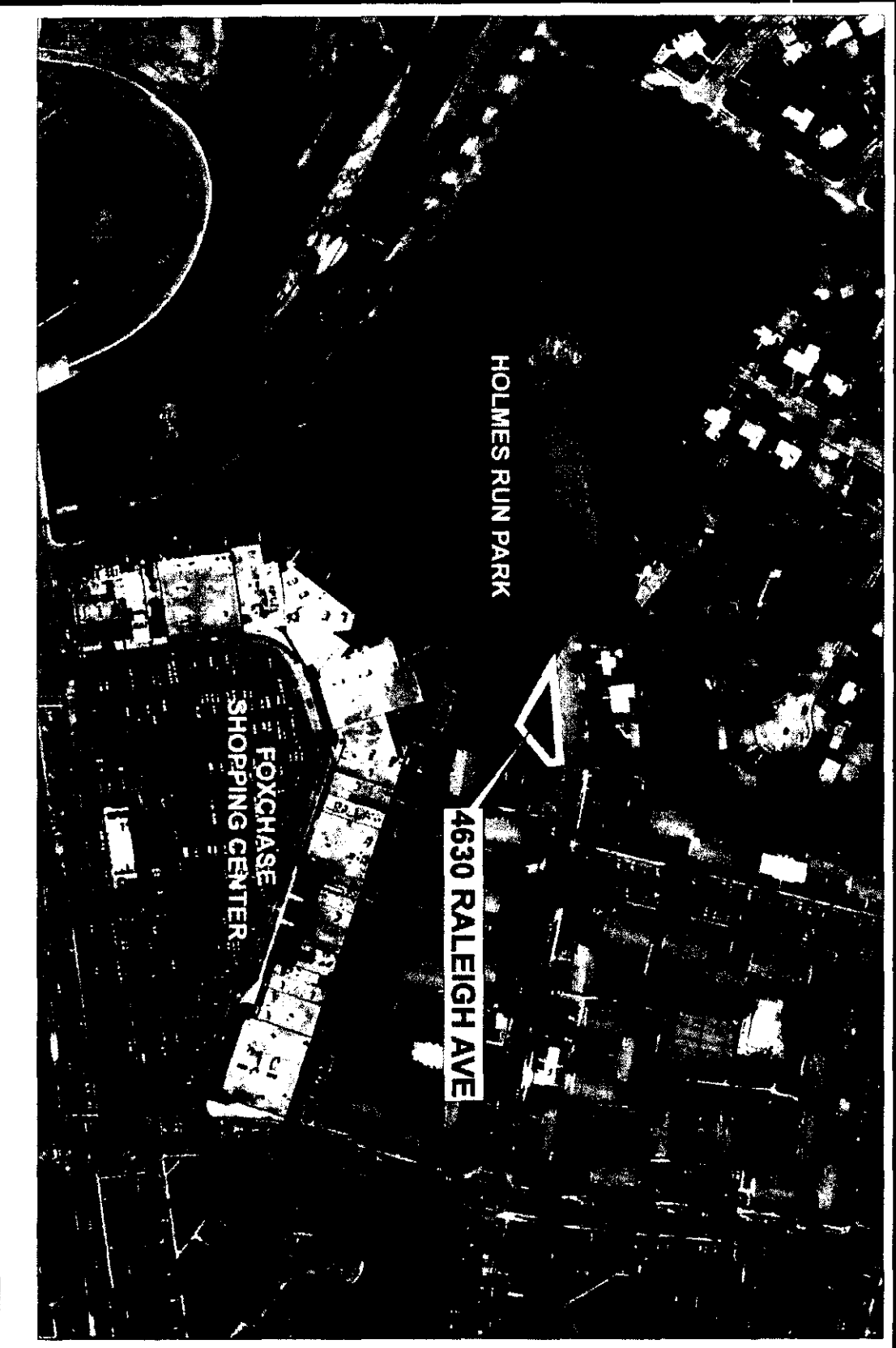
Strand - Waterfront



Mount Vernon Avenue -- Four Mile Run



4630 Raleigh Avenue



Open Space Dedicated



Open space dedicated or approved for future dedication, to the City:

- Oak Grove
- 1301 Powhatten St.
- ATA – Mill Road
- Eisenhower East Parks and Public Squares

Voluntary Conservation and Public Access Easements

+

Open Space preserved under voluntary
conservation easements:

- 1900 Russell Road
- 403 West Masonic View
- 3401 Russell Road

Development Site Open Space:

Open space preserved on nine approved
development sites.

Open Space Master Plan Achievements



- Ongoing Partnerships in Open Space Preservation: NVCT and the Office of Historic Alexandria.
- Ongoing Community Outreach: Civic, Association Meetings, RP&CA program information, educational events, etc.

Revised List of Valuable Open Space Protection Sites

- Sites no longer prioritized, and all considered “valuable open space” with a goal to be preserved.
- Valuable open space to be preserved through voluntary mechanisms: acquisition, right of first refusal, conservation easements, public access easements, or other means.

Revised List of 2005 Pocket Park Sites

- Property owner outreach concluding with removal of all uninterested parties from the 2005 list.
- Review and ranking of two additional proposed properties.
- Revised list of properties to be voluntarily considered, one property for immediate consideration.

Revised Potential Voluntary Conservation Easements

+

- Property owner outreach concluding with removal on all uninterested parties from the 2005 list.
- New list created with all interested property owners to be contacted by NVCT.
- Increased efforts to build interest in voluntary conservation easements.

Recommendation of the Future OSSC Structure

+

- New group would be appointed by the City Manager and would act as an advisory body.
- Group would include representation from the current commissions and committees and two citizen representatives.