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The City of Alexandria Strategic Master Plan

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The City of Alexandria Strategic Master Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Strategic Master Plan for Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities 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 for the next 10 years. The recommended vision, policies, and actions are intended to further the city's comprehensive planning approach for the recreational needs for residents, the existing work force, and visitors to Alexandria.

The Strategic Master Plan is comprehensive and incorporates two separate planning processes. In 2001, the city commissioned Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. 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 through out the city.

Leon Younger & PROS was commissioned in late 2001 to develop a Recreation Needs Assessment for the remaining components of the Strategic Plan. Both studies had high levels of community input. The Recreation Needs Assessment included a recreation programs and facilities analysis, a community survey, citizen focus groups, a demographics review, park maintenance analysis, open space analysis, administrative policies analysis for marketing, volunteer development, capital improvement needs, and governance issues.

The Strategic Plan, while looking at the next 10 years of needs, specifically identifies key milestones to be achieved over the first five years and creates action plans through which the organization can guide its efforts.

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 and Fire Departments, the Planning Department, the Transportation and Environmental Services Department, and the Department of Human Services. 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 with economic development and population growth.

THE CITY

The City of Alexandria is the tenth most densely populated city in America which is comparable to the density levels of Detroit, Minneapolis, Cleveland and some boroughs of New York. Parkland is scarce and the city has had ample catching up to do over the past 52 years since its first park was developed. Currently the City maintains 127 park sites totaling approximately 840 acres.

Providing for the general public's recreational needs is one of the greatest challenges facing Alexandria governing bodies today. The challenge is complicated by ever-changing demands and expectations caused by increasing population growth and shifting community demographic profiles. To meet these needs the mission of the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department is the following:

> *"The 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 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 and natural resource areas."*

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

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, with a projected population of 142,000, the city will be required to add 100 acres of open space to maintain 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

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 land 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 also 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. 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 40.) In addition, the open space maps 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.

OPEN SPACE

Open space - Where is Alexandria now?

The City has just completed an comprehensive study of Open Space in Alexandria and this document will become a part of the City's Master Plan. Because open space is so crucial to the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department (RPCA), we have included the pieces of the Open Space Plan that relate directly to the operation of this Department. We recognize that all initiatives in meeting the Open Space goals will take the cooperation of many city departments and in no way is the soul responsibility of this Department.

In 1990, Alexandria was ranked the eleventh most densely populated city in the United States. Today, it is the tenth most densely populated 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 has 7,315 persons per square mile and Fairfax County has a mere 2,385 persons per square mile.

Open Space - 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. The City's overall needs are documented in the Open Space Plan, the following needs are directly related to the Department of RPCA:

- 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 maximize the use and visual quality of all open space.

- The need to protect existing parkland from development.

- The need to preserve areas of significant tree cover.

- The need to seek acquisition of 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.)

- The need to provide additional multi-purpose fields.

- The need to identify and enforce all existing public easements, which could serve as trail linkages.

- The need to minimize surface parking lots in park land.

- The need to define and develop attractive greenways to the city.

- The need to make better use of open space areas around school properties for habitats, gardens, educational and community opportunities.

Goals for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities to Achieve the Community's Needs for Open Space.

The following goals have been established for the department to meet citizens' needs. In many instances it will take the cooperation of this department along with other city departments to meet the goals. (Refer to matrix on page 47 for specific tactics and time line to achieve the goals).

1. Assist in the development of an Alexandria Open Space Public/Private Advocacy Group. An additional 100 acres of open space should be acquired in the next ten years to ensure the current 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents is maintained.
2. Connect the community through an effective trails system by developing fifteen miles of new trails in the next ten years.
3. Establish equal opportunity/proximity to parks, recreation facilities and programs, citywide. Parks and a recreation facility are needed in the far west end of the city.
4. Assist in developing innovative opportunities for creating additional open space with other city departments and citizens.
5. Protect and enhance the urban forest and beautification of the city.
6. Protect and enrich existing parks.
7. Provide the highest level of safety in parks and recreation facilities.
8. Assist in the implementation and completion of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan as it relates to public park land.
9. Assist in protecting and expanding stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas.
10. Assist in maximizing use of public school open space areas to satisfy local needs.
11. Assist in enhancing streetscapes and gateways.
12. Continue to explore funding options for acquisitions and protection of properties.

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

Parks

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 it was perceived that land was too valuable of a commodity to be used as open space or parks.   While the city has come a long way in creating a livable, green community for its residents, it must resist the trends of history and provide ample open space for future generations.

Executive Summary

The unique features of the city, as well as the quality of services that the city provides, molds the image that the city projects. Quality open spaces, parks, schools, and responsive safety measures collectively create a sense of a well balanced 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, 27% of the citizens rate the physical condition of city-operated parks they visited as 'excellent' and 52% as 'good'. The survey indicates 90% of the city residents say 'yes' when asked if parks enhance their property value. Of the residents surveyed, 78% indicated that parks provide economic benefits to the city. With these strong percentages, the citizens are saying they believe parks are a high priority in Alexandria.

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:

- Additional and better-maintained athletic fields are needed for both youth and adults.
- Several areas in the city are not adequately served by neighborhood parks and sports fields. Particularly in the west end of the City.
- Park infrastructure needs improvement especially the turf areas.
- Many parks are too small for the neighborhoods that use them.
- Upgrading of maintenance standards in many of the parks is needed.
- The city is over-scheduling park facilities.

Goals to Achieve the Community's Needs for Parks

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 goals:

1. Provide the highest level of safety in parks by creating maintenance standards for all assets within the parks and recreation system.
2. Develop design standards and guidelines for renovation and the development of new parks and facilities based on actual and emerging user demands.
3. Acquire more land for game fields for both adults and youth.
4. Manage existing capacity of fields.

5. Seek more user investment to offset maintenance costs of fields when user groups want higher levels of maintenance above what the city is currently providing.

6. Acquire land for parks in under served areas of the city for neighborhood parks, especially in the west end of the city.

7. Encourage private sector acknowledgment of their role in providing more parks in high-density areas.

8. Enhance open space requirements for new developments.

9. Curtail granting of encroachments in RPA's and adjacent areas.

10. Increase partnership teams with schools, private institutions and the city to design solutions for new and renovated properties.

11. Improve infrastructure of some parks by investing $10,000 per acre for lighting, drainage, parking, irrigation and fencing.

12. Enhance existing park maintenance partnerships.

13. 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 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 are served by youth and have 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 by the city in the past two years. The overall satisfaction with recreation facilities in the city was 34% of citizens being 'very satisfied' and 34% being 'somewhat satisfied'. These survey percentages are below normal compared to other recreation surveys from other cities according to the consulting team who has conducted various Strategic Master Plans.

Executive Summary

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.

- Walking and biking trails
- Neighborhood parks
- Playgrounds
- Indoor swimming centers
- Community recreation centers
- Dog parks
- Tennis facilities
- 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%) to be used by only seniors or teens.

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 and to increase the availability of recreation facilities for all citizens.

Goals to Achieve the Community's Needs for Recreation Facilities

Meeting the residents' recreational facility needs will take careful planning by citizens and staff. Feasibility studies for facilities need to be accomplished well in advance of any new building or renovation plans. The following goals have been established by staff and consultants to meet the recreations facility needs in the next ten years.

1. Explore the feasibility of enlarging Chinquapin Recreation Center to become the multi-generational center the residents desire.

2. Begin planning for the renovation of Patrick Henry and Charles Houston Recreation Center.

3. Explore the feasibility of acquiring property and constructing a new neighborhood recreation center on the city's west side to support its population density.

4. Develop feasibility studies and business plans for each new or renovated recreation facility. This will achieve the maximum usage and productivity of each center. These studies will match program needs of the neighborhoods served by the facility.

5. Create design standards for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to maximize its resources used by the greatest number of users.

6. 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.

7. Where appropriate, 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. 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 most participated 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.

Overall, there is not a clear understanding by the staff and the community on what the city should be providing in core and non-core services.

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.

In addition to not having a clear understanding of core progress the city does not know the true cost to produce a recreation service to establish the cost benefit in providing the service. The recreation program pricing is inconsistent across the city and program prices do not reflect the level of benefits received.

Recreation programs – What are the program needs?

The recreation program needs of the residents and staff begins with a clear understanding of how large the programs market is and what programs the citizens are interested in attending in order for the city to maximize its resources the Department should:

- Develop 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 under served within the City of Alexandria.
- 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.
- 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.
- Provide more adult and senior services within the city to create lifetime users of city's services.   With the large amount of adult population versus youth population in the city, these age groups should be represented with much more adult participation in recreation programs than what currently exists.

Goals to Achieve the Community's Needs for Recreation Programming

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff works extremely hard to meet all the needs of the citizens participating in their programs. Staff needs to evaluate program offering and offer consistent core programs for all ages throughout the city and offer specialty programs only where citizen needs exist. The following goals have been established.

1. Establish Core and Non-Core programs
   The staff must set consistent standards for how programs are delivered and define methods they will use for evaluating user satisfaction for the services provided.
2. Create a pricing philosophy and standards for all departmental programs and services, city wide.
   To accomplish this, staff needs to review the true costs of services in terms of benefits received. This will require the city to update 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. A grant writer would assist the department in additional funding opportunities.
3. Establish customer service standards for all operations.
4. Establish citywide communication standards to encourage participation in programs and events for all age groups.
5. Enhance evaluation methods and maintain statistical records to support programming opportunities.

6.   Enhance partnership opportunities to assist in offering recreation opportunities to a broader range of citizens

Administrative Goals to assist in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In order for the open space, parks, facilities and program goals to be met it is necessary to have strong administrative procedures in place. The following will assist each of the areas as they move forward to achieve the defined outcomes:

1.   Review and update all department policies every five years to support the goals of the department and to maximize public access to services.
2.   Develop technology standards that provide for efficiency of operations and service delivery.
3.   Provide volunteer opportunities in the department that provide lifetime experiences for members of the community when they volunteer their services. A dedicated staff person should oversee the volunteer opportunities.
4.   Enhance human resource standards through licensing, accreditation, certification and training of personnel.
5.   Enhance private or not-for-profit partnerships that provide services beyond the city's capability and/or for efficiency purposes.
6.   Enhance and support the role of commissions, committees and advisory groups to maintain a constant flow of information both into and out of the Department.

Capital Improvement Needs

The capital improvement needs for implementing the Strategic Master Plan will require $18 million dollars based on 2003 costs for general recreation facility improvements. An additional $9 million is needed for general park maintenance improvements, and a minimum $50 million is needed for land acquisition and the purchasing of easements. This will total $77 million over the next ten years.

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 based on 2002 dollars. Detailed costs can be found on pages 72-73.

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 acquired to provide greater equity of access to parks. Additional recommendations are to develop a new multi-generational center in the center of the city, renovate both Charles Houston and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers, develop a new neighborhood recreation center in the western part 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, 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 and provide strong staff training and development. 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.

Leon Younger and PROS and Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. have completed their work and have delivered the final reports. The key leadership of the City, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, the Planning Department, the Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Services and Department of Human Services 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 continually gain community input.

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 open space, 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 need 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. 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, 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 park 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.

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

DATA COLLECTIONS

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 strategies used are as follows:

Needs Assessment Study Planning Process

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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │  Phase One:     │
                        │  Review of      │
                        │  Existing       │
                        │  Conditions     │
                        └─────────────────┘

   ╱Public      ╱ →    ╱Organizational╱ →  ╱Inventory and╱
  ╱ Involvement╱      ╱ Input and    ╱    ╱ Analysis    ╱
                     ╱  Analysis    ╱

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  │ Key          │                         │ Open Space   │
  │ Stakeholders │                         │ Evaluation   │
  │ Interviews   │                         └──────────────┘
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  ┌──────────────┐      ◇ Key Issues      ┌──────────────┐
  │ Focus Groups │        and Ideas for   │ Site and     │
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  │ Partnerships │      │ Community    │   │ Program      │
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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 Department 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.

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, 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.
- Mapping was conducted on land use for recreational facilities, game fields, recreation centers, passive parks, natural resources and historic areas.

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.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

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%. The entire survey can be found on page 53a in the appendix.

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%.
- 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 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%.
- Nearly 90% of respondents rated the programs as either excellent (28%) or good (60%)
- 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."
- 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.
- 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%.

LAND ACQUISITION AND OPEN SPACE- KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

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

- 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 is 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.

LAND ACQUISITION AND OPEN SPACE - CONSULTANTS OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- 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 offers 7.5 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 parks serving active space.
- While many of the city parks are in outstanding condition, maintenance issues were noted in a number of instances. These 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.

PARKS - KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

The community of Alexandria would like the Parks, Recreation and Open Strategic 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.

PARKS – CONSULTANTS OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- 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 and park opportunities.
- Define and develop gateways to the city, along streets, highways, and 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.
- Develop Park Master Plan for each of the city's existing parks to guide short term and long term needs.
- Develop a significant forestry program.

RECREATION FACILITIES - 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 2003 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.
- Acceptable level of maintenance is needed at all facilities.

RECREATION FACILITIES – CONSULTANTS OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- 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.

RECREATION PROGRAMS – KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Identify and establish achievable levels of service rather than trying to be all things to all people.
- 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 – CONSULTANTS OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Several of the after-school and summer camp programs are licensed.
- The department has a great opportunity to capture a large portion of the summer 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 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.
- Special events provide an untapped opportunity for revenue development and 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.

MARKETING – KEY 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.

MARKETING – CONSULTANTS OBSERVATION AND 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 – CONSULTANT OBSERVATION AND 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.

STANDARDS AND MAPPING INTRODUCTION

Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. developed the Open Space Plan for the City of Alexandria. The Open Space Plan was developed in conjunction with the Recreation Needs Assessment developed by Leon Younger and PROS. T hrough 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, 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. 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. Additional maps can be found in the Open Space Plan.

Open Space Map Review

22305

22302

Planning District 2

22302

Planning District 3

22311

22301

22312

22304

22314

Planning District 1

Park Planning Districts I, II, and III

Legend

District Boundaries
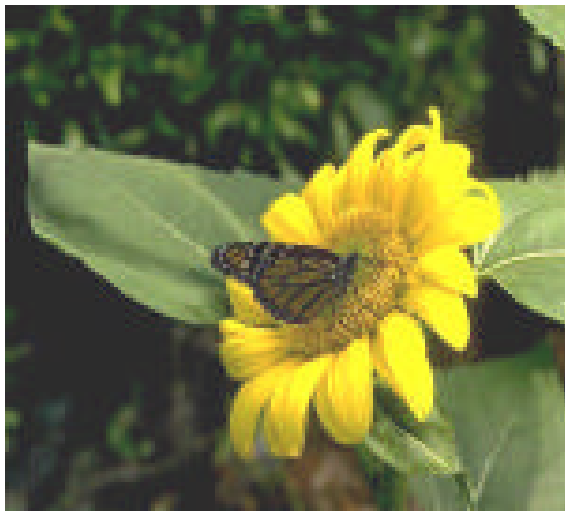
Existing Parks and Open Space
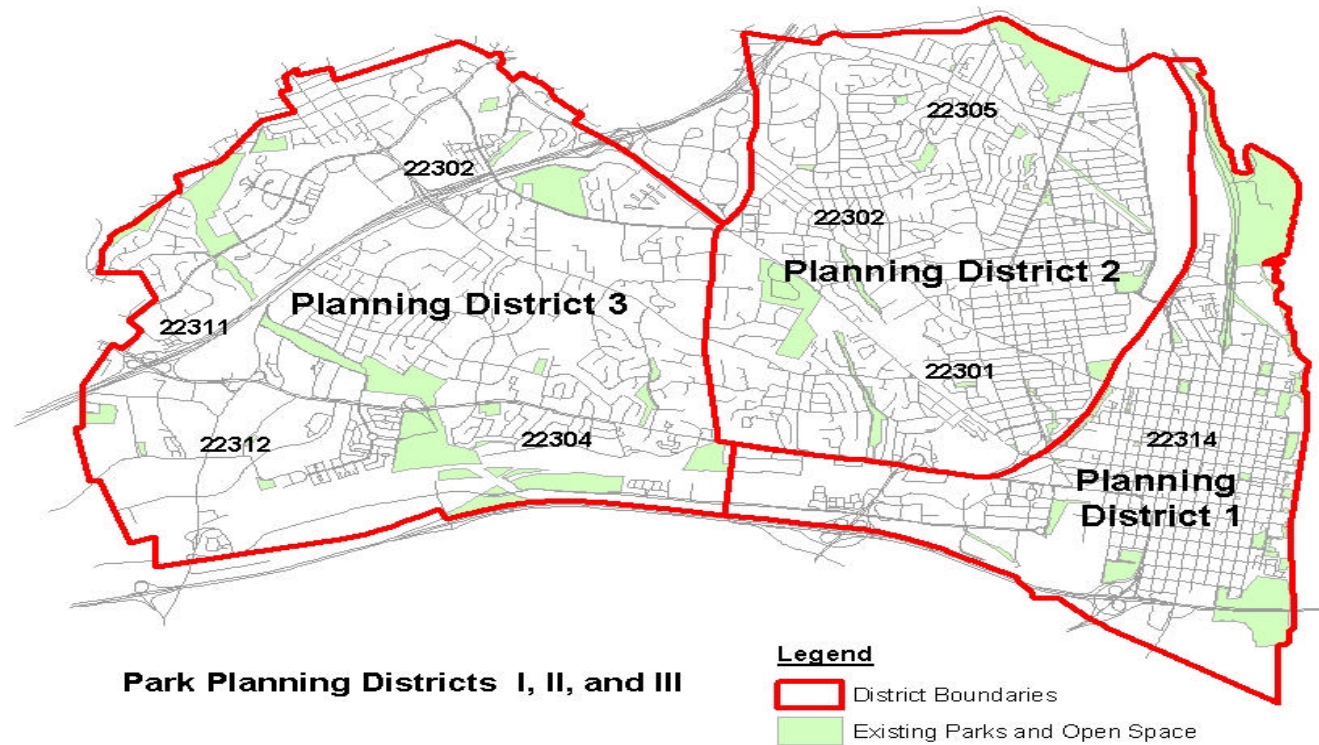
Open Space Map Review

Legend
- Existing and Planned Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Routes
- Proposed Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Routes
- Parks
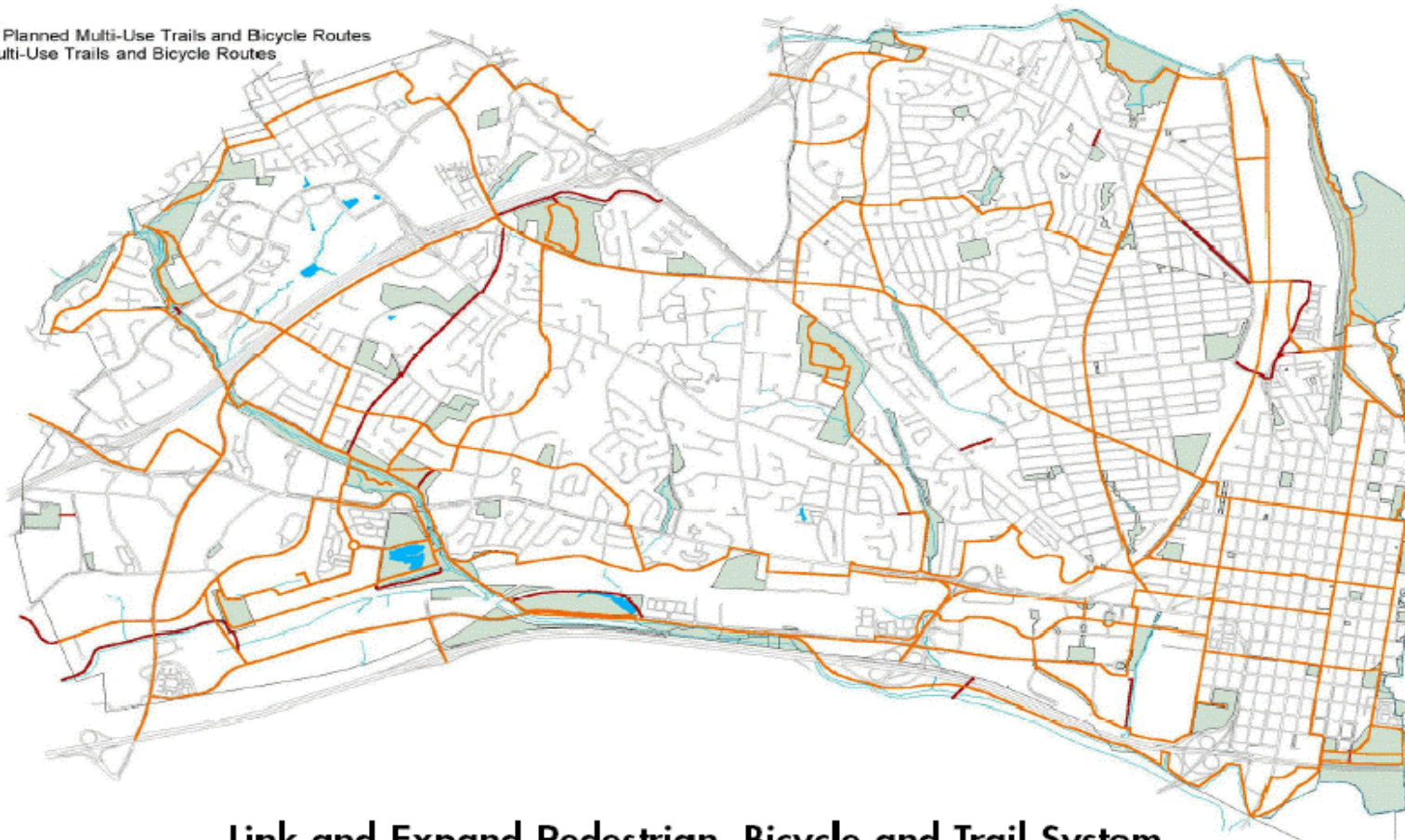
Link and Expand Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail System

Open Space Map Review
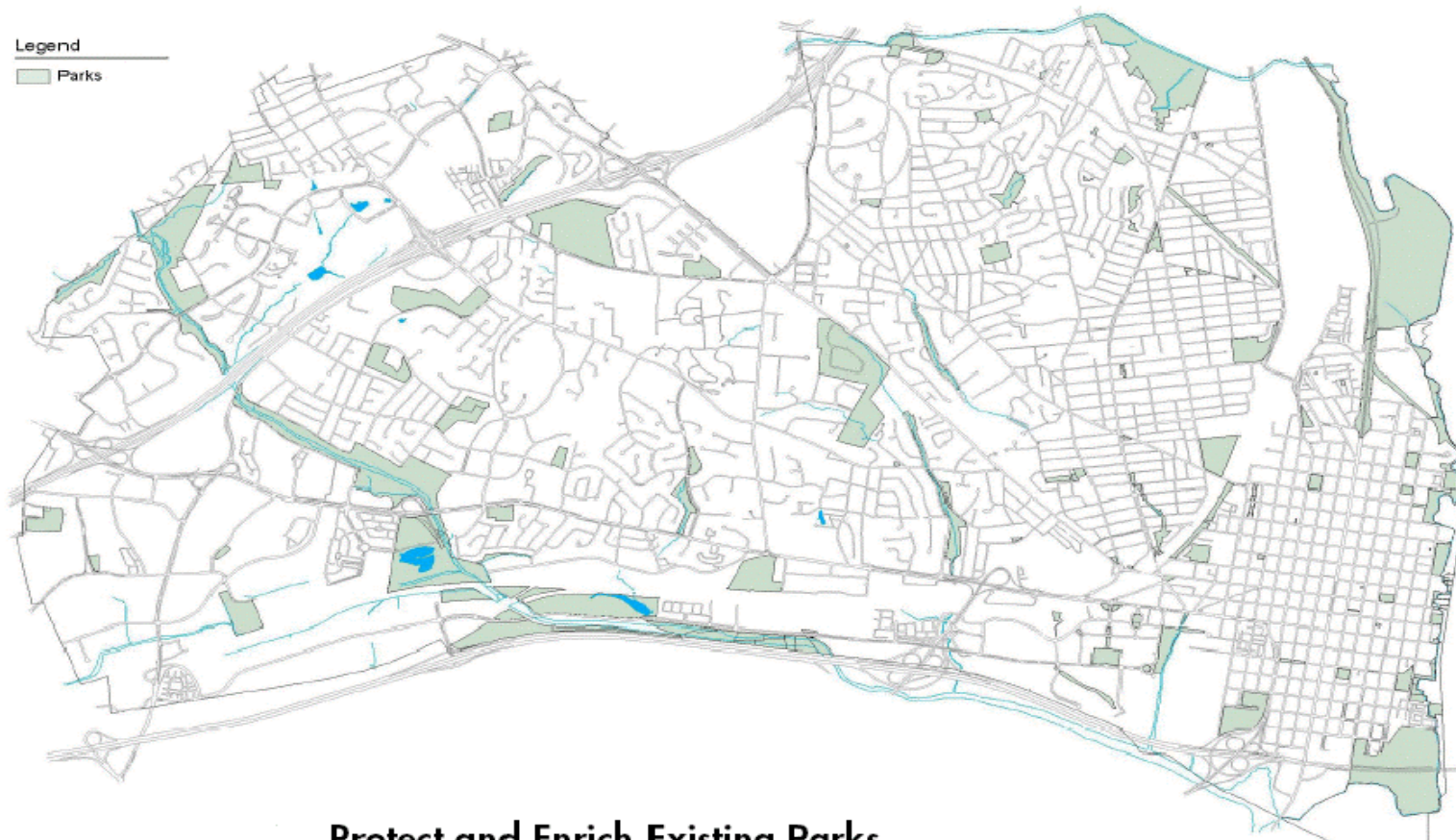
Legend

Parks

Protect and Enrich Existing Parks

Open Space Map Review

Legend
- Streetscape Improvements/Street Tree Program
- Significant Tree Cover
- Parks
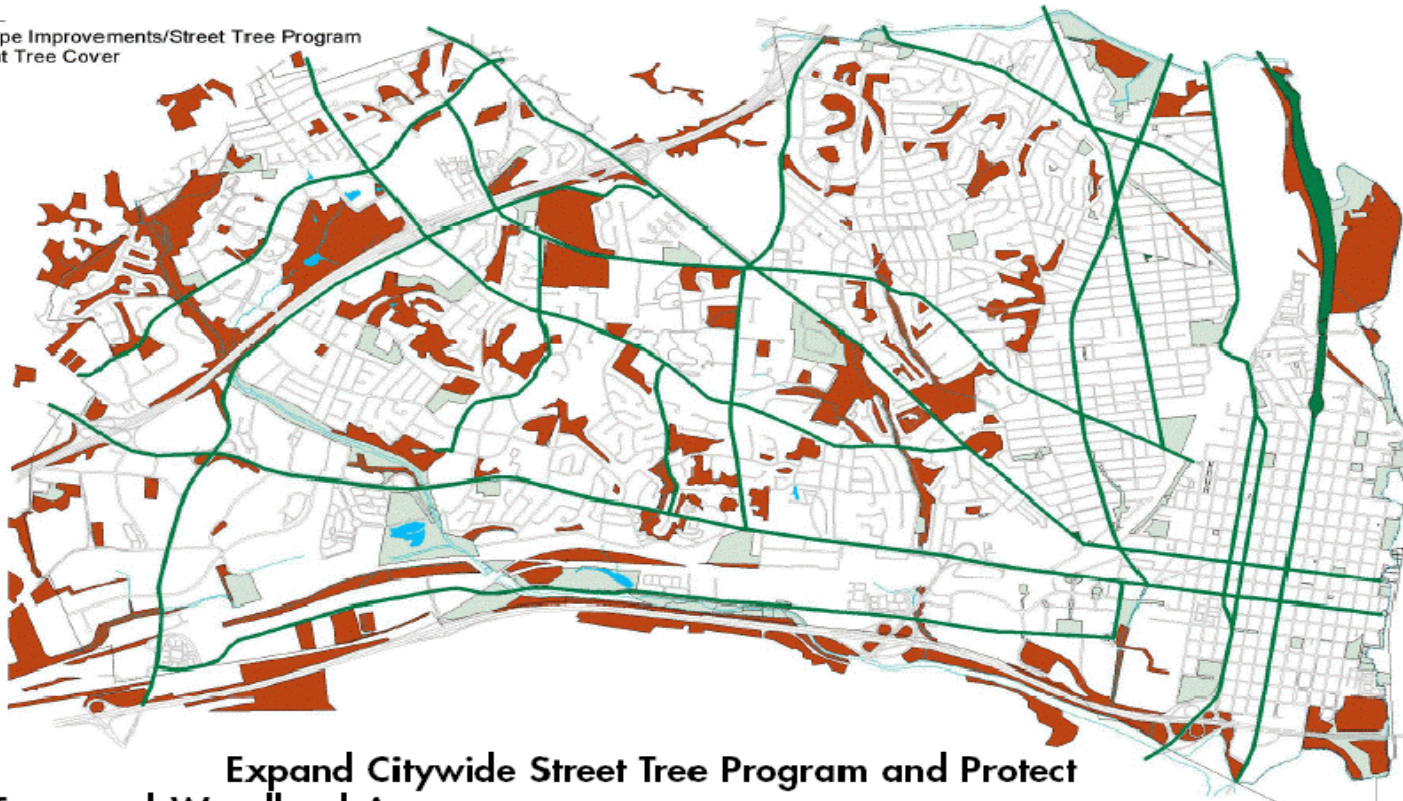
Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas

Open Space Map Review

Legend
- Green Crescent
- Green Connector
- Open Space Conservation Areas
- Parks

Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open

Open Space Map Review

Legend
- Potential Sites
- Parks

Complete Implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan

Open Space Map Review

Legend

- Undeveloped Lands
- Resource Protection Area
- Open Water
- Parks

Four Mile Run

Potomac River

Timber Branch

Holmes Run

Taylor Run

Hooff's Run

Strawberry Run

Old Cameron Channel

Backlick Run

Cameron Run

Great Hunting Creek
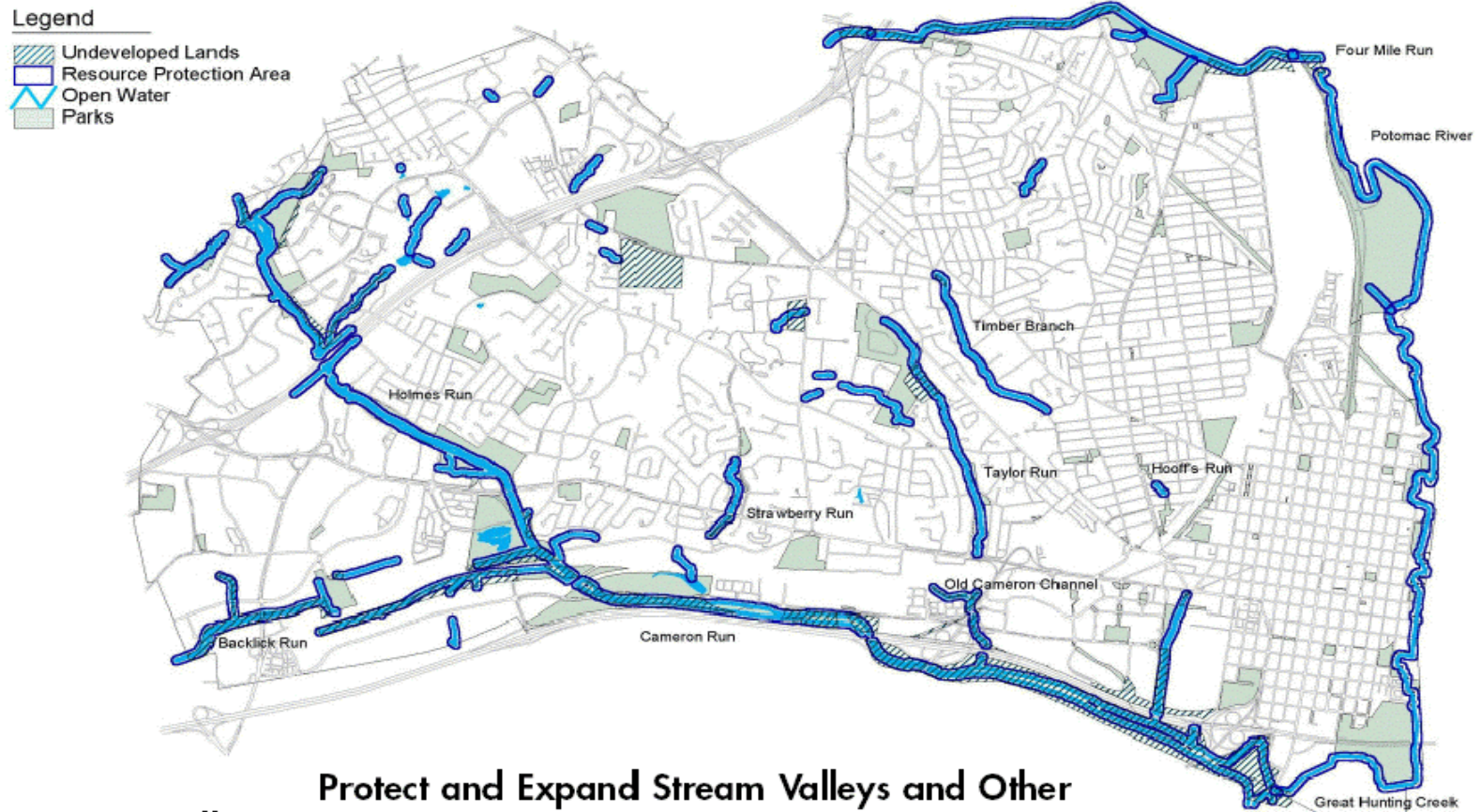
Protect and Expand Stream Valleys and Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Open Space Map Review

Legend

- ■ Green Crescent
- ■ Green Connector
- ■ Open Space Conservation Areas
- ☐ Parks

Open Space Concept Plan

Open Space Map Review

Legend
- Schools
- Parks

Charles Barrett School
Cora Kelly School
John Adams School
William Ramsay School
Minnie Howard School
George Mason School
Mt. Vernon Elementary School
Francis Hammond Junior High School
T.C. Williams High School
James K. Polk School
Patrick Henry School
George Washington Junior High School
MacArthur School
Maury School
Jefferson Huston School
Samuel W. Tucker School
Lyles-Crouch School
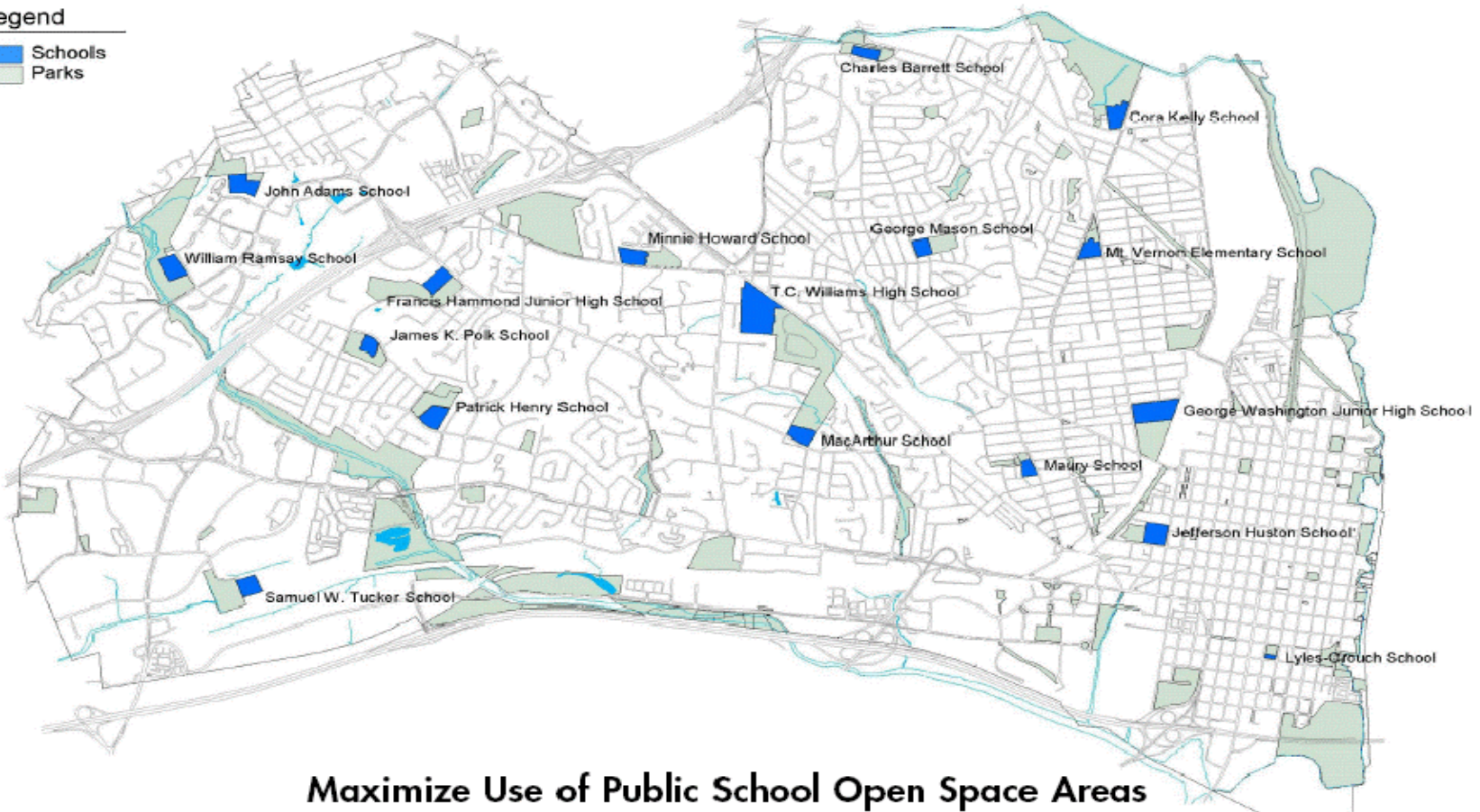
**Maximize Use of Public School Open Space Areas
to Satisfy Local Needs**

Open Space Map Review

Enhance Streetscapes and Gateways

SERVICE AREA 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.

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

Alexandria Recreation Center Density Service Area

**Alexandria Sports Fields
Density Service Area**

Legend:
- # Four or More Field Sites
- # Three Field Sites
- # Two Field Sites
- # Single Field Sites
- Density Service Area
- Streets

2000 Census Density
- 0 - 122
- 123 - 351
- 352 - 769
- 770 - 1803
- 1804 - 4025

**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

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Phase Two     │
                    │    Vision       │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                             ▼
   ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐
   │  Open   │→  │  Park   │→  │Facility │→  │ Program │
   │  Space  │   │  Needs  │   │  Needs  │   │  Needs  │
   └─────────┘   └─────────┘   └─────────┘   └─────────┘

                         ◇
                      Create
                       the
                      Vision

                   ┌──────────────┐
                   │   Develop    │
                   │     the      │
                   │Recommendations│
                   │     for      │
                   │Implementation│
                   └──────────────┘
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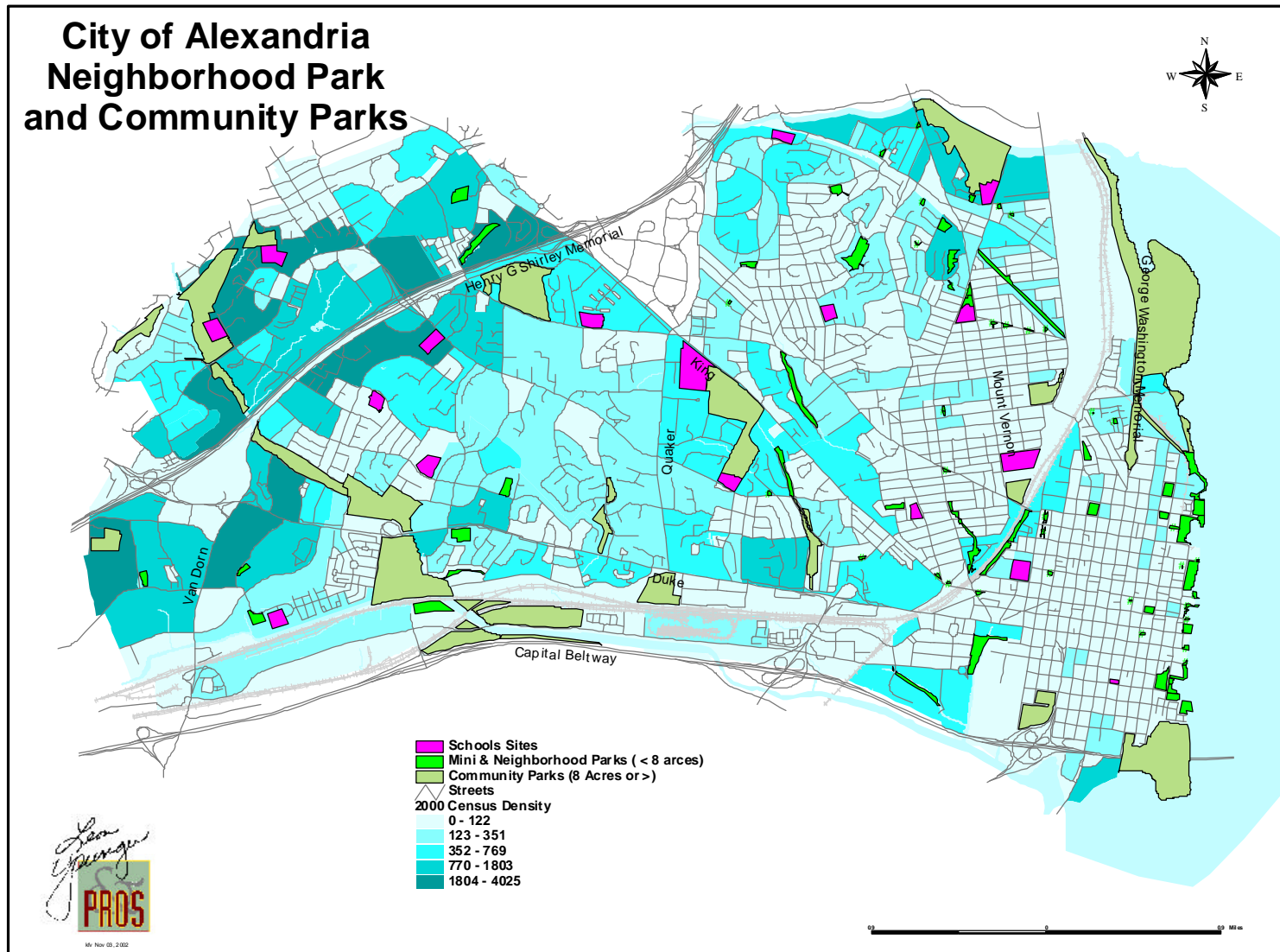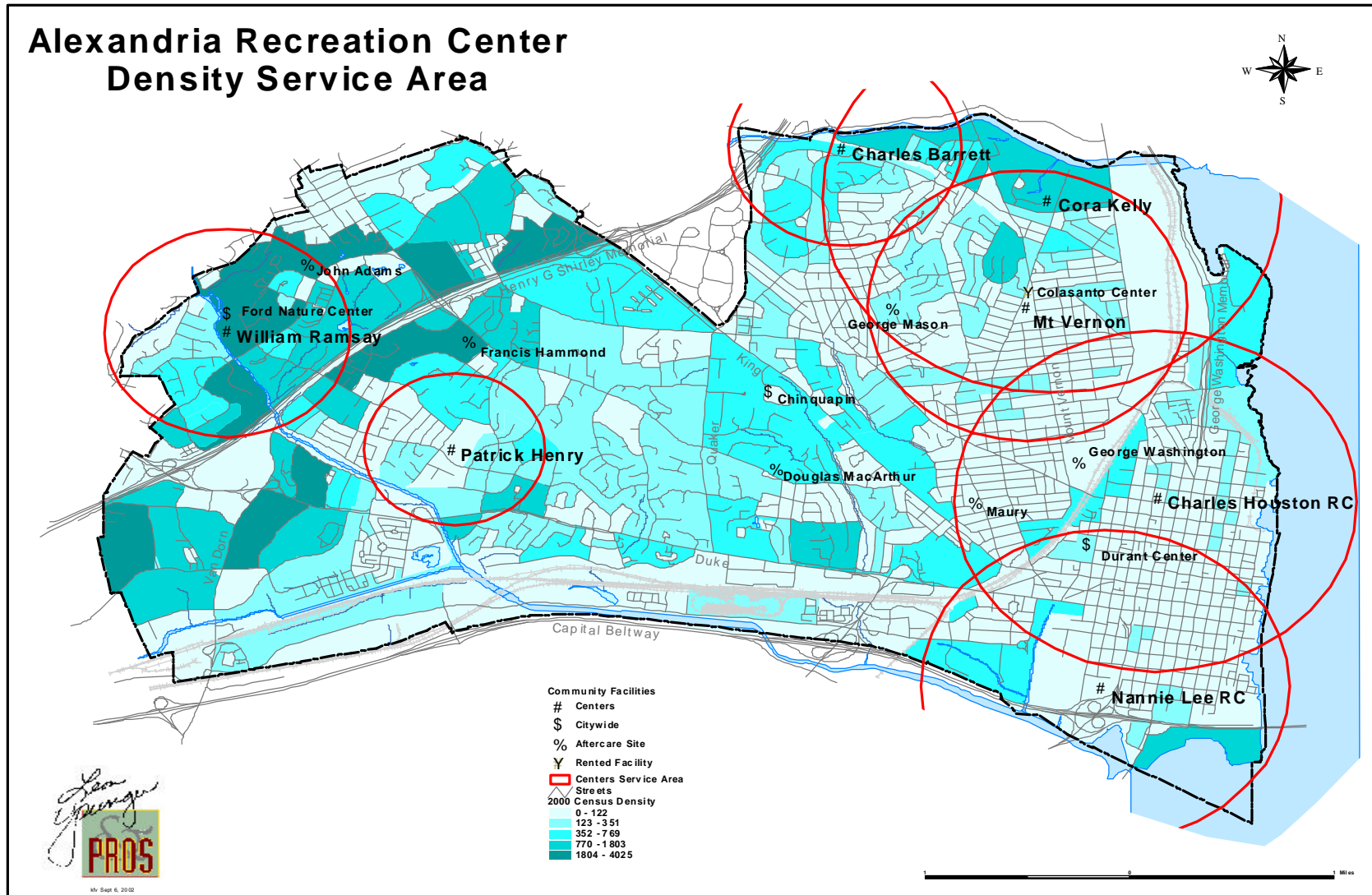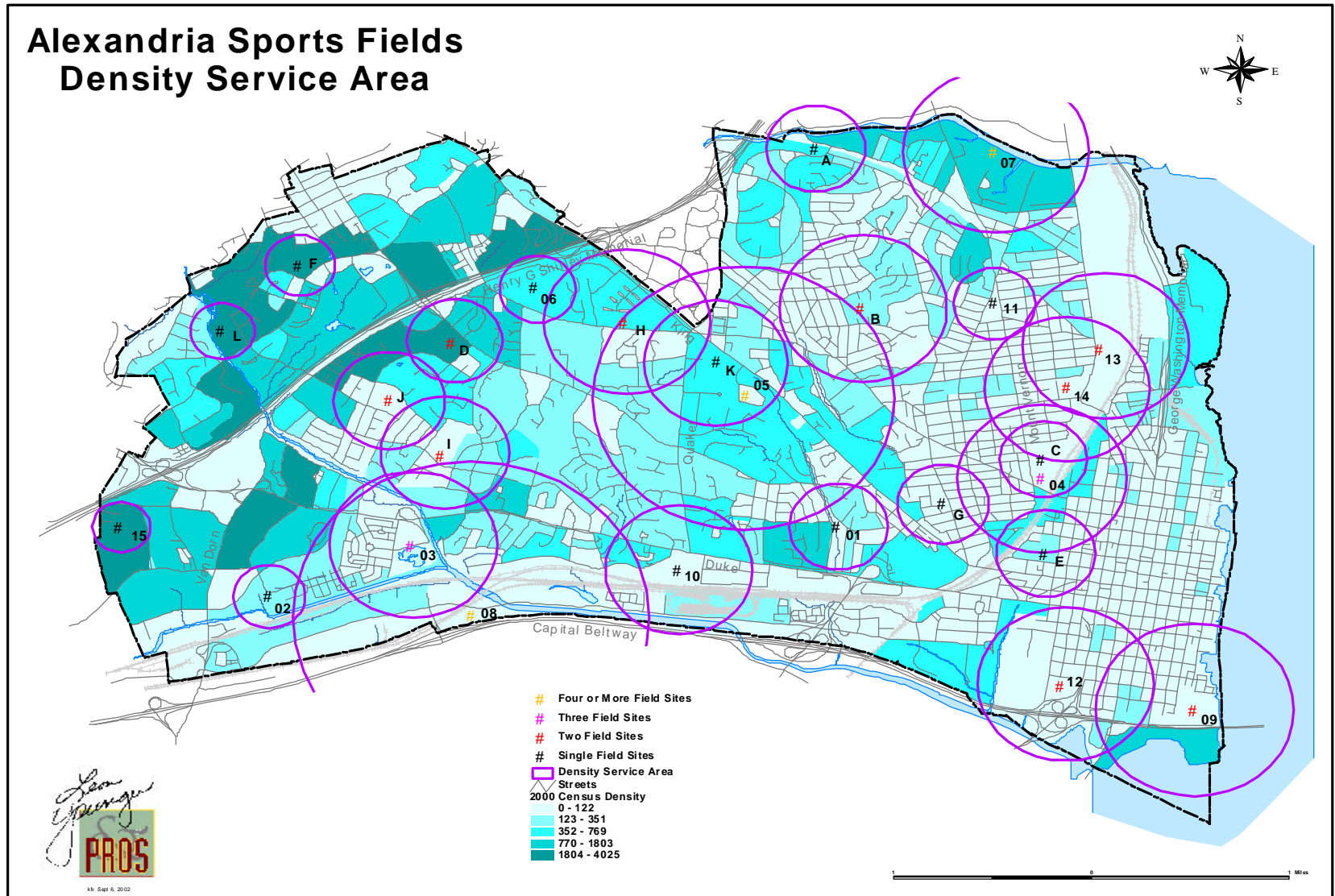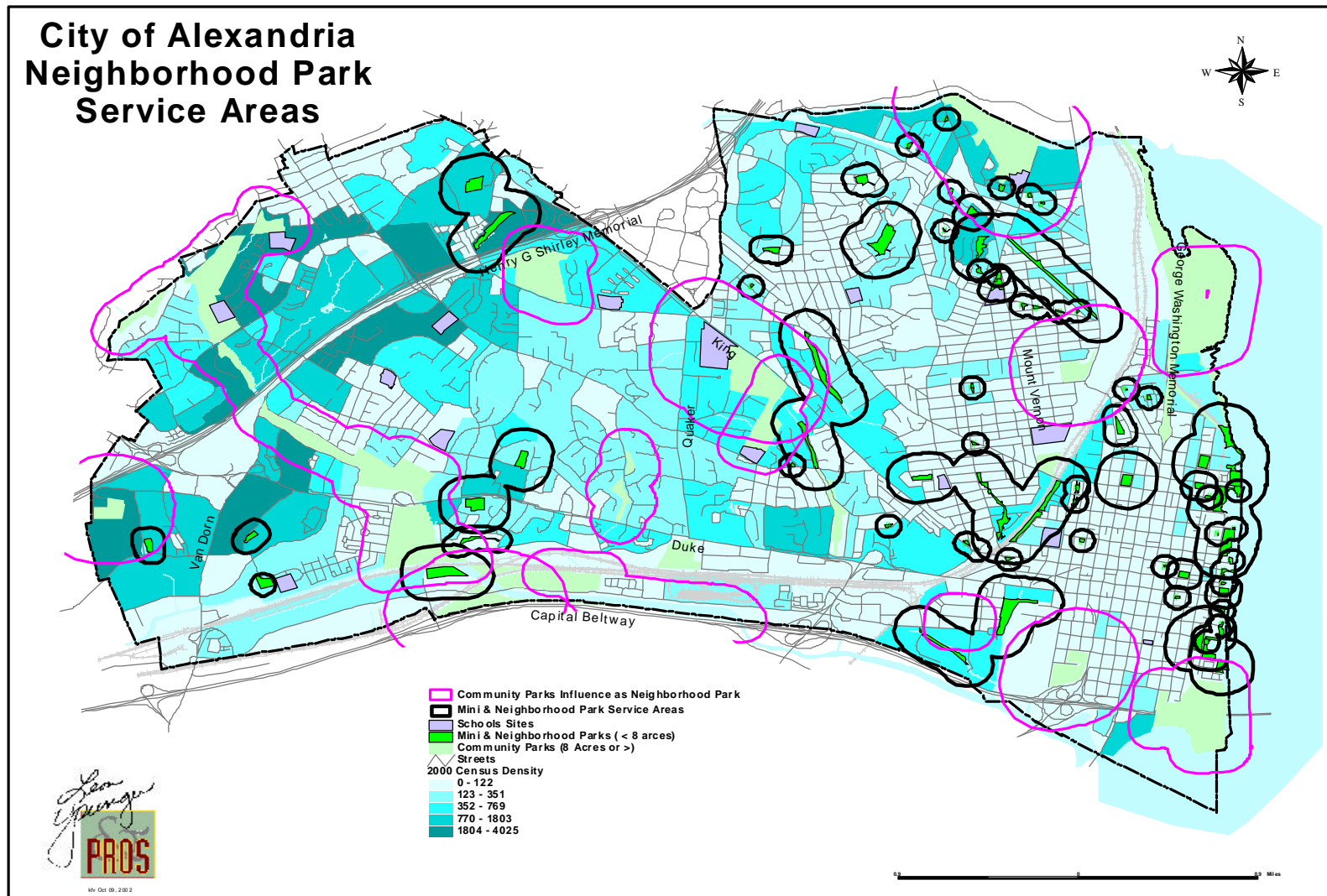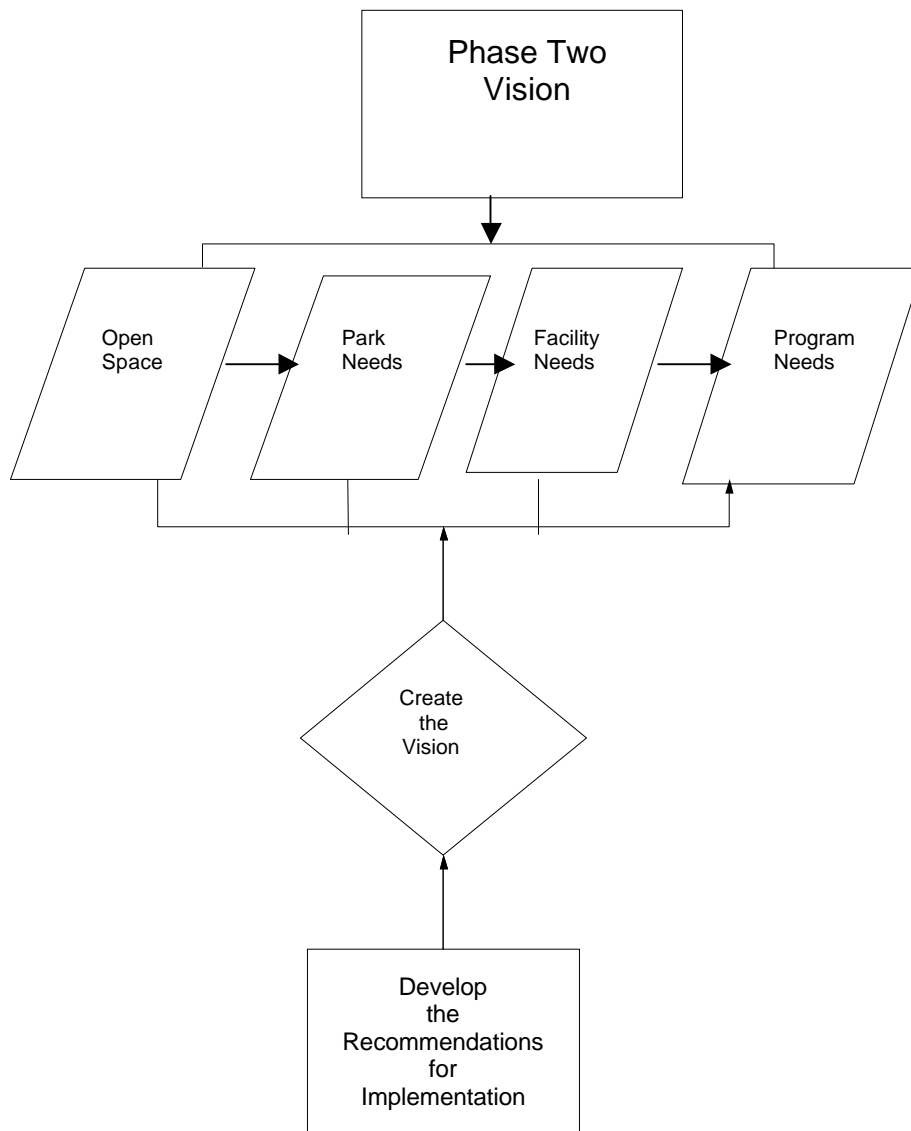
PHASE TWO: VISION

The second phase in the Strategic Master Plan planning process is the Vision 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 Step of the Vision 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.

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 the Department wants to be known for, 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.

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.

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.

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.

Vision Statement

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 on pages 47-70.

Implementation & Vision Matrix
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
PHASE III
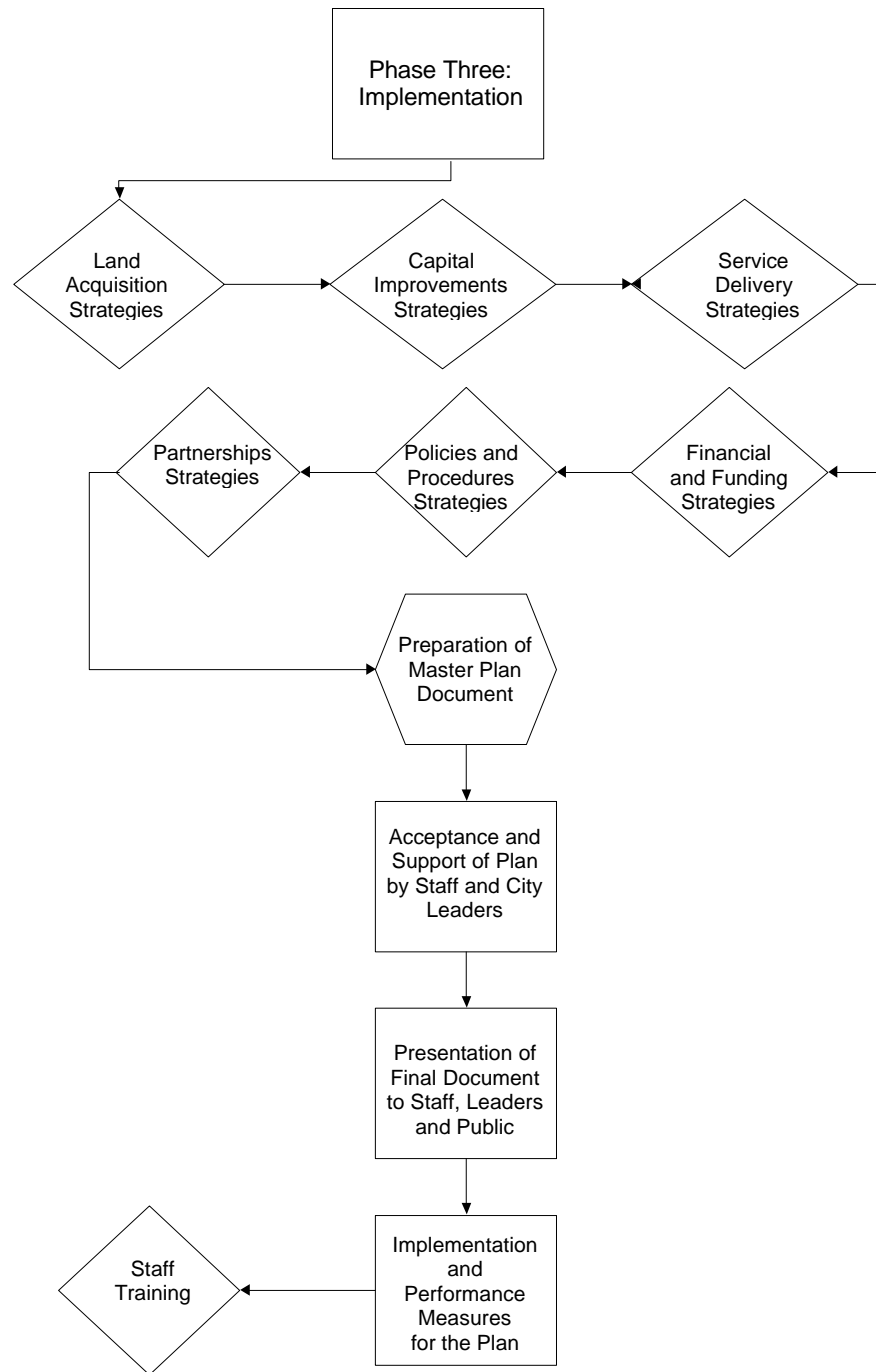
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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │  Phase Three:   │
                        │ Implementation  │
                        └─────────────────┘

   ◇ Land              ◇ Capital            ◇ Service
     Acquisition    →    Improvements    →    Delivery
     Strategies          Strategies           Strategies

   ◇ Partnerships   ◇ Policies and        ◇ Financial
     Strategies    ←   Procedures      ←    and Funding
                       Strategies           Strategies

            ⬡ Preparation of
              Master Plan
              Document

            ┌─────────────────┐
            │ Acceptance and  │
            │ Support of Plan │
            │ by Staff and City│
            │ Leaders         │
            └─────────────────┘

            ┌─────────────────┐
            │ Presentation of │
            │ Final Document  │
            │ to Staff, Leaders│
            │ and Public      │
            └─────────────────┘

   ◇ Staff       ←   ┌─────────────────┐
     Training         │ Implementation  │
                      │ and             │
                      │ Performance     │
                      │ Measures        │
                      │ for the Plan    │
                      └─────────────────┘
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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, 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.

IMPLEMENTATION – VISION MATRIX

The framework for meeting the Alexandria community's values is outlined in the following vision matrix. The vision matrix creates strategies for addressing key issues regarding land acquisition, capital improvements, recreation service delivery, partnership development, policies and procedural changes, and financial and funding strategies.

The vision matrix illustrates the specific actions related to each of the 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 1: AGGRESSIVELY PROTECT, RESTORE, ENHANCE AND CONNECT OPEN SPACE AND ASSOCIATED NATURAL, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES.

STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION POLICY		TACTICS	OPERATIONAL IMPACT	STAFF GROUP RESPONSIBLE	START DATE END DATE
1.1	Preserve, protect, enrich and connect 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 a public/private advocacy Group to lead initiative. Zoning: • Change zoning to require public open space set-asides and apply requirements to commercial properties • 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	City Manager's office, Director of RPCA, Director of Planning & Zoning, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services	Spring 2003 *on-going

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
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 WITH THE GOAL OF 15 ADDITIONAL MILES OF TRAILS IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS. • CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR TEA-21 MONIES FOR DEVELOPING THOSE TRAILS. THE DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING TWO TEA-21 GRANTS. • 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 FOR ALEXANDRIA'S DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. • 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. OUR DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY FUNDED ANNUALLY FOR BIKE TRAILS AT $77,000. • IMPROVE TRAIL SIGNAGE, PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION	Staff time coordination with T&ES and bike committee	Deputy Director for Parks, Landscape Architect, T&ES staff, Planning & Zoning Staff, Volunteer Coordinator	Spring 2003 *on-going

			Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
		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. • COLLABORATE WITH THE ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 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. • ENCOURAGE DEVELOPERS TO INCLUDE FACILITIES FOR BICYCLISTS AND WALKERS IN THEIR TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLANS. • 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

1.3	ESTABLISH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES CITYWIDE.	• DEPARTMENT STAFF WILL EVALUATE ALL PARKLAND AND RECREATION FACILITIES BY MAPPING ON GIS TO DETERMINE COVERAGE AREAS FOR EACH AND DETERMINE WHERE GAPS EXIST.	IDENTIFY THE INFORMATION TO ANALYZE, DEPT. STAFF TIME AND GIS STAFF RESOURCES PROVIDES STRONG BASIS FOR DECISION MAKING REGARDING RESOURCE ALLOCATION	DEPUTY DIRECTORS, DIVISION CHIEFS OF RPCA AND CITY GIS STAFF	JAN 2003 JAN 2004
1.4	Develop 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 allstream 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		City Manager's office, Director RPCA, Planning& Zoning Director, Office of Historic Alexandria, Department of Transportation, Environmental	Spring 2003 Spring 2004

			Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
		the City. Strategically seek and develop additional funding sources that will allow the City to realize the recommended strategies for creating open space opportunities and maintain existing open space.			
Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.5	Protect, restore 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. • Protect existing trees and woodland. • Expand city wide tree planting program.	Coordination with Community Groups, Planning and Zoning Department, VDOT Potential additional funding required	City Manager's office, City Arborist, Private consultant to assist in developing urban forestry plan, Office of Management & Budget, Planning & Zoning	Spring 2003 Spring 2004
Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date

| 1.6 | Protect and enrich existing parks as well as new opportunities. | • 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.
• 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. | | City Manager's Office, Director RPCA, Deputy Director of Parks, Planning & Zoning, Landscape Architect, Volunteer Coordinator | Spring 2003 *on- going |
| Strategy Recommendation Policy | | Tactics | Operational Impact | Staff Group Responsible | Start Date End Date |

1.7	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

1.8	Assist in the Completion and implementation of the Potomac Waterfront Plan	• 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
		• Develop an Alexandria Waterfront Education Plan, including interpretive and directional signs, written and electronic materials, and interpretive events.
				Director RPCA, Director of Planning & Zoning, Office of Historic Alexandria	Fall 2003
					*on -going

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

| 1.9 | Protect and expand 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. | | Volunteer Coordinator, Director RPCA, Director of T&ES | Spring 2003 Spring 2008 |

Implementation & Vision Matrix

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.10	Maximize 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, Alexandria City Council, private institutions; the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the staff of Alexandria City Public Schools 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.		City Manager office, Director of RPCA, Director of Planning & Zoning, Director of Transportation& Environmental Services, ACPS Superintendent	Summer 2003 *on-going

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.11	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: Signage, Sidewalks,Intersections /crosswalks Lighting Street Furniture Landscaping and street trees Historical sites Underground utilities 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		Director of RPCA, Director of Transportation & Environmental Services, Director of Planning & Zoning	Spring 2004 *on-going

		- Improve highway interchanges within the city limits and 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.			

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.12	Continue to explore funding options for acquisitions protector of Properties.	• Refer to open space plan funding opportunities.		City Manager, Director of Planning & Zoning, Director of Transportation & Environmental Services, Director of RPCA, Grants Coordinator and Office of Management and Budget	Spring 2003 *on-going

VISIONING MATRIX					
Goal 2: Create the highest level of programs, maintenance, and security standards for all areas.					
Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.1	Establish equal opportunities to recreation programs city wide	• Department staff will evaluate all programs by mapping to determine coverage areas for all core programs and determine where gaps exist. • Department to decide to provide more services or partner with other service providers. • Develop a free or subsidized recreation rider program with the Transportation Division and Public School Division of the city to provide busroutes to the recreation centers and facilities.	Need to access appropriate funding source Staff Time, coordination with other agencies	Director RPCA, Director of Transportation & Environmental Services, Director of DASH, City Manager Office, Superintendent Of Schools	Jan 2003 Jan 2004

Implementation & Vision Matrix

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

2.2	Establish core and non-core programs for each Division.	• 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
		• Market core services through tiered programs to expand use and create lifetime users of recreation programs
		• Develop new programs to attract new users
			Staff Time, Research with various user groups	Deputy Directors, Division Chiefs, and Program Operations of RPCA	Jan 2003
					July 2003

2.3	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 RPCA, City Manager, Management & Budget, Deputy Director of Programs, Division Chief of program Operations and Division Chief of Administration	Jan 2003 Jan 2005

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.4	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. Protect and restore existing assets.	• 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 of RPCA	Jan 2003 Jan 2005
2.5	Establish asset lifecycle standards.	• Identify planned lifespan for all physical assets or change use of land. • 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, Division Chiefs, Capital Projects, Key Staff of RPCA	July 2003 July 2005

Implementation & Vision Matrix

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.6	Establish safety standards for all users and staff protection.	• Develop minimum guidelines of operations 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, Key Staff	Winter 2003 Summer 2003
2.7	Develop program Standards for providing consistency of services citywide.	• 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 and Division Chief for Programming, Key program staff	Fall 2002 Fall 2005
2.8	Establish customer service standards for all operation of the system.	• Develop a customer service plan for parks, programs, and facilities.	Staff Time	Deputy Directors of Parks and Programs, Key Staff	July 2003 July 2004

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.9	Establish consistent citywide communication standards to encourage participation in available programs and events.	• Designate a staff or create a position 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 RPCA, Deputy Director of Programs, Outside consultant to help write the policy	Jan 2003 Jan 2005
2.10	Review and update all department policies to support the vision of the department and to maximize thepublic access to services.	• Evaluate every policy and procedure in the system and 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 RPCA, Deputy Directors, Division Chiefs	Fall 2003 July 2004
2.11	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 and ITS Staff	Fall 2003 June 2004

Implementation & Vision Matrix

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
2.12	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	Director RPCA, Deputy Directors, Division Chiefs, Special Projects Coordinator, City Arborist, Landscape Architect	Spring 2003 *on-going
2.13	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	Landscape Architect, RPCA Office of Historic Alexandria	July 2003 July 2005

VISIONING MATRIX

GOAL 3:Create a lifetime customer

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
3.1	Establish progressive levels of pricing that reflect services received.	• Establish baseline costs for all tiered services through an Activity Based Costing model. **see glossary • Create new pricing strategies for tiered services. • Create new pricing strategies for tiered services.	Coordination with OMB, Staff Time, Market research, outside agencies	Director RPCA, All Key staff	Spring 2003 *on-going
3.2	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.	Encourage public participation in the planning and design of facilities.	Director RPCA, Deputy Directors of Programming and Parks, Division Chiefs, Special Projects Coordinator	on-going
3.3	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 Incentive.		Director RPCA, Volunteer Coordinator	Fall 2004

VISIONING MATRIX

Goal 4: Create Revenue Opportunities

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 Chiefs, 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.	Coordination with OMB and General Services	Deputy Directors for parks and programs, Division Chiefs, Key staff Outside consultant	Jan 2004 Jan 2006
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 2004 Fall 2006

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 RPCA	Fall 2004 July 2006
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 RPCA, Deputy Director for Programs and new Marketing entity	July 2004 July 2005
4.6	Create Grants, Alliances, Partnerships, and a Sponsorships to helping support the development of additional fiscal resources.	• Develop a grants writer position 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 RPCA City Manager, Personnel Office and Office of Management and Budget	Fall 2002

VISIONING MATRIX

GOAL 5: Develop Partnerships

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 RPCA, Volunteer Coordinator	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 Directors for Parks and Programs Supervisor Landscape Architect	Fall 2002 *on-going
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	Director RPCA, Deputy Directors and Volunteer Coordinator	July 2004

Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
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 of RPCA, Deputy Directors for Parks and Programs, Division Chiefs, Volunteer Coordinator	Sept 2003 *on-going
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	Volunteer 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

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 Capital improvement cost for recreation facilities is approximately $19,000,000. Details of the individual projects are on page.

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.

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
harles Barrett Recreation enter (9,800 SF)	Multi-Purpose Room Renovation				$40,000	
	New Weight Room Equipment				$30,000	$70,00
hinquapin Park Recreation enter (34,000 SF)	Renovation Study				$20,000	
	Renovation	34,000	$120	$4,080,000		
	Addition	25,000	$140	$3,500,000		$7,600,00
octor Oswald Durant Memorial ecreation Center	Renovation in Progress					
erome "Buddie" Ford Nature enter	Renovation in Progress					
atrick Henry Recreation Center ,850 SF)	Renovation	8,850	$160	$1,416,000		
	Addition	6,000	$140	$840,000		$2,256,00
harles Houston Recreation enter (24,302 SF)	Renovation Study				$20,000	
	Renovation	24,302	$160	$3,888,320		
	Addition	10,000	$140	$1,400,000		$5,308,32
ora Kelly Recreation Center 5,840 SF)	Renovation Study				$20,000	
	Reception Desk Relocation				$30,000	
	Selected Renovation	25,840	$50	$1,292,000		$1,342,00

Capital Improvement Plan

ee Center	Renovation				$200,000	
	New square footage over entry	1,000	$180	$180,000		$380,00
annie J. Lee Memorial ecreation Center (13,690 SF)	Renovation	13,690	$100	$1,369,000		$1,369,00
ount Vernon Recreation Center 8,900 SF)	HVAC study				$1,000	
	Floor repairs; baffle replacement				$100,000	$101,00
illiam Ramsay Recreation enter (18,000 SF)	Alarm System Study				$1,000	$1,00

Summary

Total Number of Facilities	Total Number of Projects	Total SF	Average SF Cost			Total Cos
11	21	148,682	$132			$18,427,32

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Funding Strategy Report

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Fees
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Grant Funding Sources & Strategies for Land Acquisition

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 <u>did not</u> 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.

The following goals have been established:

Open Space:

1. Assist in the development of an Alexandria Open Space Public/Private Advocacy Group. An additional 100 acres of open space should be acquired in the next ten years to ensure the current 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents is maintained.
2. Connect the community through an effective trails system by developing fifteen miles of new trails in the next ten years.
3. Establish equal opportunity/proximity to parks, recreation facilities and programs, citywide. Parks and a recreation facility are needed in the far west end of the city.
4. Assist in developing innovative opportunities for creating additional open space with other city departments and citizens.
5. Protect and enhance the urban forest and beautification of the city.
6. Protect and enrich existing parks.
7. Provide the highest level of safety in parks and recreation facilities.
8. Assist in the implementation and completion of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan as it relates to public park land.
9. Assist in protecting and expanding stream valleys and other environmentally sensitive areas.
10. Assist in maximizing use of public school open space areas to satisfy local needs.
11. Assist in enhancing streetscapes and gateways.
12. Continue to explore funding options for acquisitions and protection of properties.

Parks:

1. Provide the highest level of safety in parks by creating maintenance standards for all assets within the parks and recreation system.
2. Develop design standards and guidelines for renovation and the development of new parks and facilities based on actual and emerging user demands.
3. Acquire more land for game fields for both adults and youth.
4. Manage existing capacity of fields.

5. Seek more user investment to offset maintenance costs of fields when user groups want higher levels of maintenance above what the city is currently providing.

6. Acquire land for parks in under served areas of the city for neighborhood parks, especially in the west end of the city.

7. Encourage private sector acknowledgment of their role in providing more parks in high-density areas.

8. Enhance open space requirements for new developments.

9. Curtail granting of encroachments in RPA's and adjacent areas.

10. Increase partnership teams with schools, private institutions and the city to design solutions for new and renovated properties.

11. Improve infrastructure of some parks by investing $10,000 per acre for lighting, drainage, parking, irrigation and fencing.

12. Enhance existing park maintenance partnerships.

13. Create a dedicated funding source for capital improvements, and land acquisition.

Recreation Facilities:

1. Explore the feasibility of enlarging Chinquapin Recreation Center to become the multi-generational center the residents desire.

2. Begin planning for the renovation of Patrick Henry and Charles Houston Recreation Center.

3. Explore the feasibility of acquiring property and constructing a new neighborhood recreation center on the city's west side to support its population density.

4. Develop feasibility studies and business plans for each new or renovated recreation facility. This will achieve the maximum usage and productivity of each center. These studies will match program needs of the neighborhoods served by the facility.

5. Create design standards for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities to maximize its resources used by the greatest number of users.

6. 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.

7. Where appropriate, 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:

1. Establish Core and Non-Core programs

    The staff must set consistent standards for how programs are delivered and define methods they will use for evaluating user satisfaction for the services provided.

2. Create a pricing philosophy and standards for all departmental programs and services, city wide.

    To accomplish this, staff needs to review the true costs of services in terms of benefits received. This will require the city to update 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. A grant writer would assist the department in additional funding opportunities.

3. Establish customer service standards for all operations.

4. Establish citywide communication standards to encourage participation in programs and events for all age groups.

5. Enhance evaluation methods and maintain statistical records to support programming opportunities.

6. Enhance partnership opportunities to assist in offering recreation opportunities to a broader range of citizens

Administrative:

1. Review and update all department policies every five years to support the goals of the department and to maximize public access to services.

2. Develop technology standards that provide for efficiency of operations and service delivery.

3. Provide volunteer opportunities in the department that provide lifetime experiences for members of the community when they volunteer their services. A dedicated staff person should oversee the volunteer opportunities.

4. Enhance human resource standards through licensing, accreditation, certification and training of personnel.

5. Enhance private or not-for-profit partnerships that provide services beyond the city's capability and/or for efficiency purposes.

6. Enhance and support the role of commissions, committees and advisory groups to maintain a constant flow of information both into and out of the Department.

Conclusion

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. Many of the recommendations and strategies will require additional staff training to accomplish the desired impact.

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.

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.
- The 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 are key issues that need to be addressed.
- Bike trails review is needed.
- Game fields that are multi-purpose are needed.
- 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 Responses are from the Department Head 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

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 CITIZENS SURVEY

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%.

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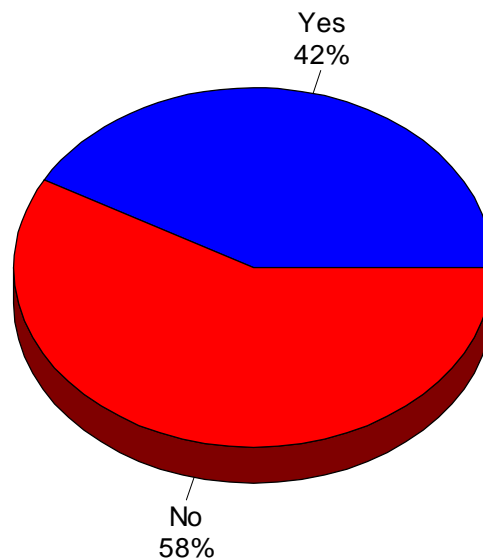
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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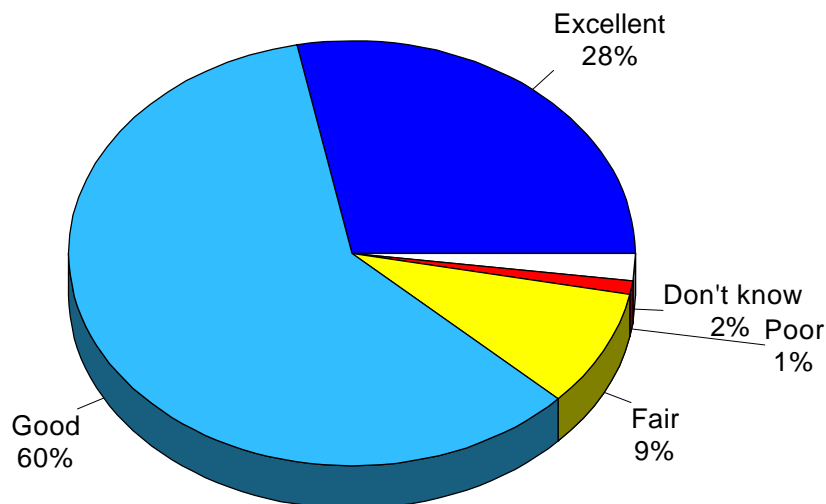
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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</u> <u>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%
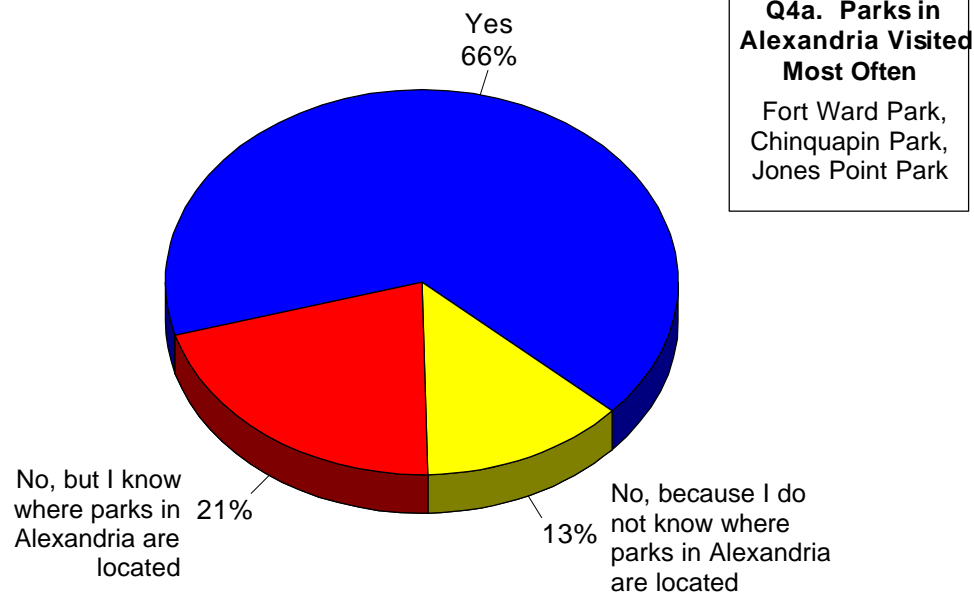
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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
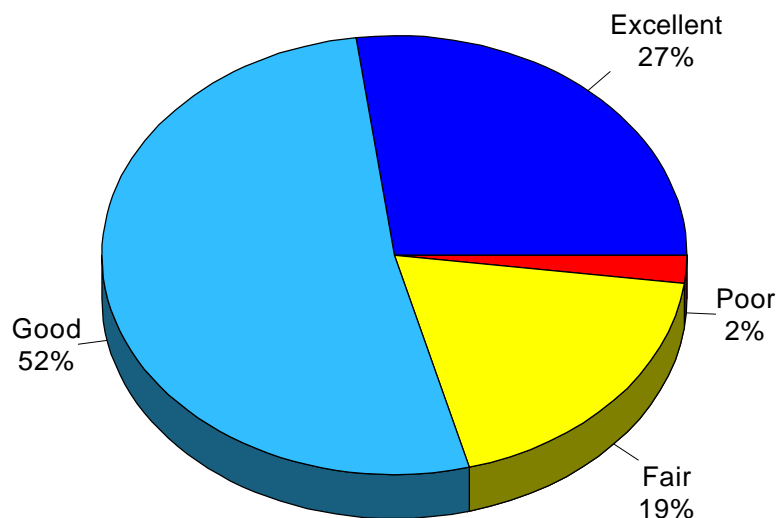
Excellent
27%

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%	42%	11%		
Walking/jogging	46%	33%	12%	5%	4%
Swimming	34%	37%	20%	4%	5%
Biking	31%	37%	21%	8%	3%
Fitness/aerobics	30%	32%	26%	9%	3%
Summer camps	30%	30%	34%	3%	
Exercising dogs	33%	25%	18%	12%	12%
Dance/Music	31%	27%	33%	7%	
Baseball	17%	34%	42%		6%
Softball	25%	26%	39%	9%	
Tennis	23%	28%	33%	10%	6%
Environmental education	22%	29%	40%	5%	4%
After school care	30%	21%	42%	4%	3%
Soccer	26%	24%	35%	10%	5%
Basketball	21%	29%	41%	4%	5%
Boating/canoeing & kayaking	30%	19%	43%	5%	3%
Gardening	20%	28%	40%	5%	7%
Football	19%	26%	50%		4%
Senior activities	21%	22%	47%	9%	
Fishing	21%	20%	46%	7%	6%
Racquetball	14%	26%	50%	10%	
Preschool	23%	13%	56%	6%	
Programs for people w/ disabilities	18%	12%	64%	4%	
Volleyball	13%	11%	63%	9%	4%

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%).
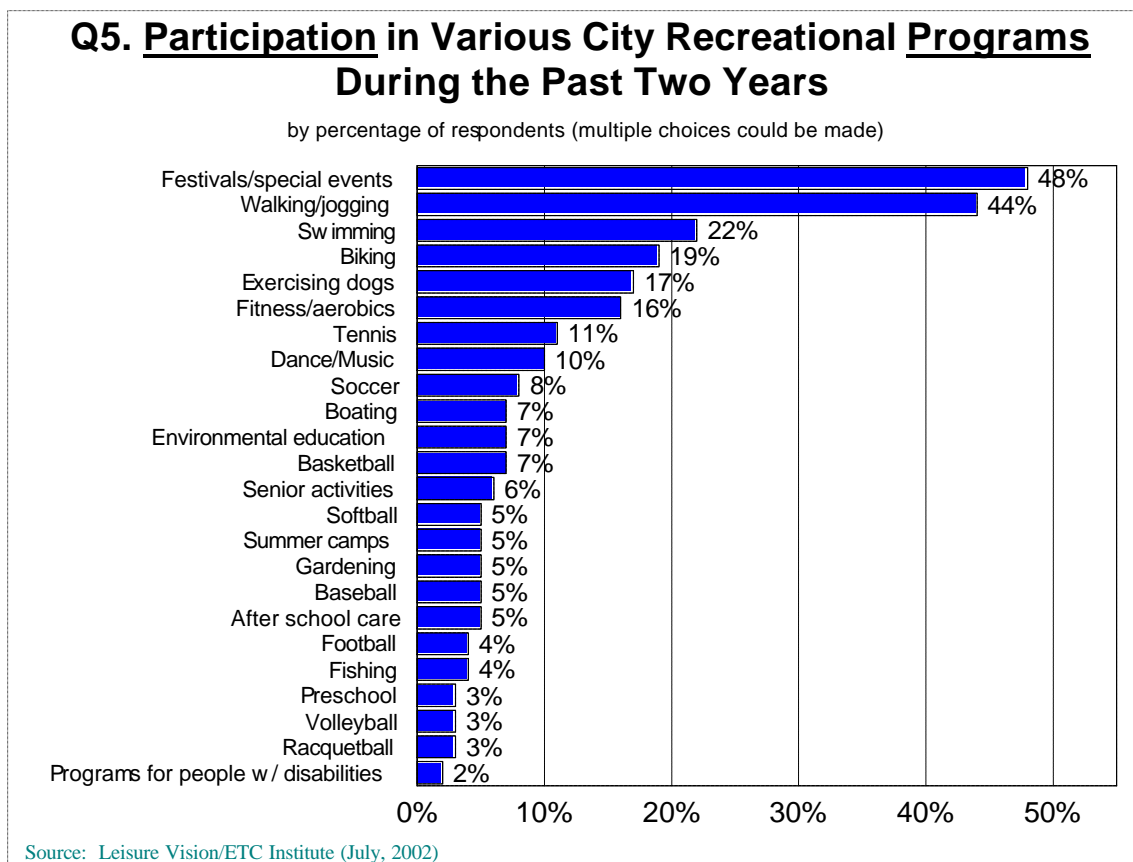
Q5. <u>Participation</u> in Various City Recreational <u>Programs</u> During the Past Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

Program	Percentage
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)

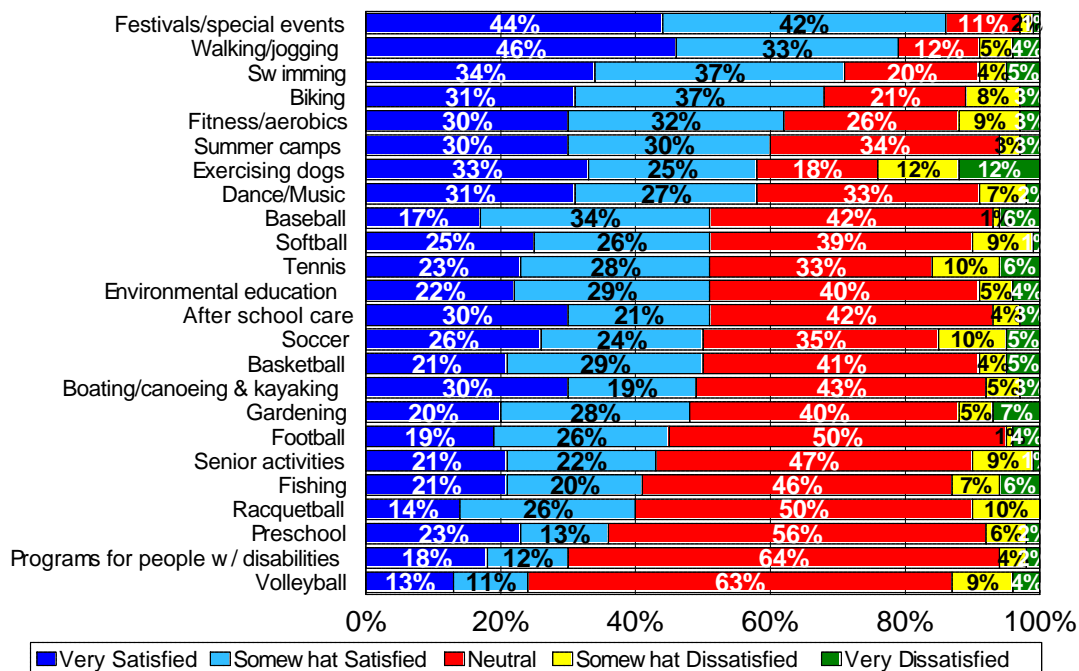## Most Important Recreational Programs

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%

Legend: 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 <u>one</u> they <u>use the most</u> for recreation and parks programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:
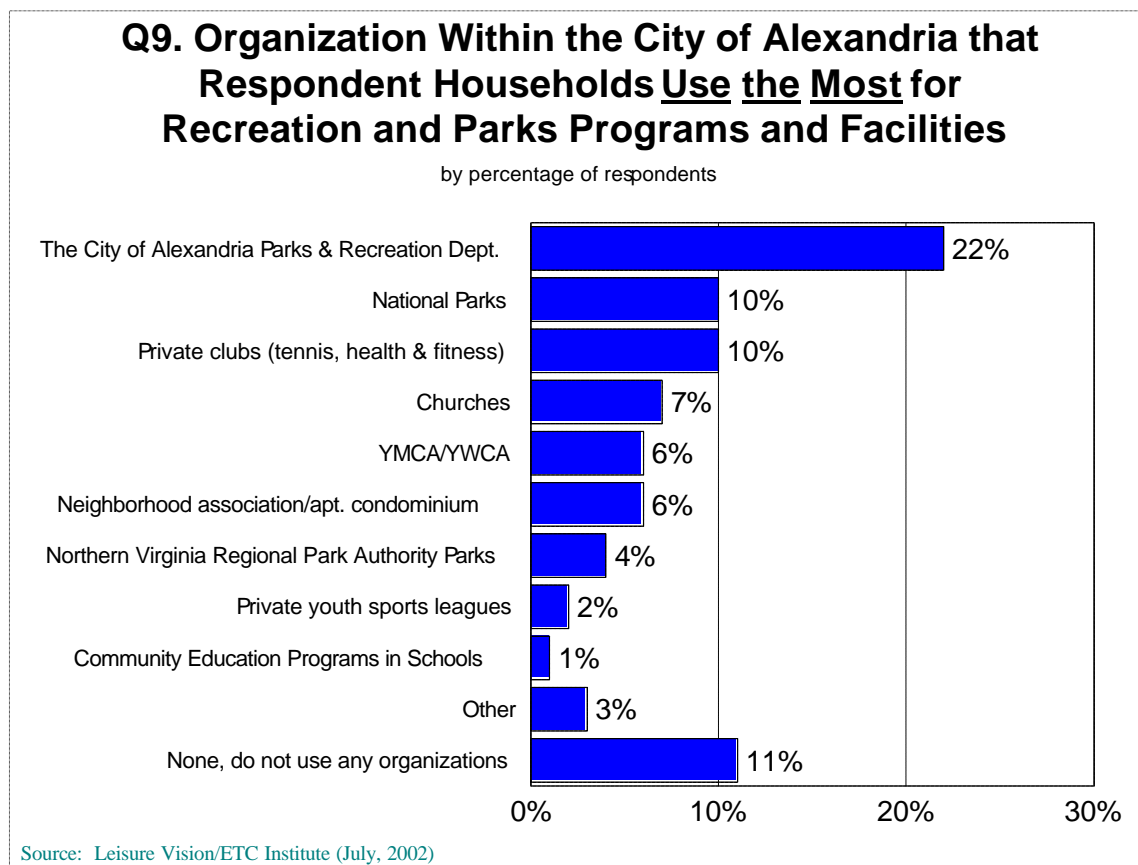
The City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department (22%) is the organization that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most. There are two other organizations that at least 10% of respondent households indicated as the one they use the most. They are National Parks (10%) and private clubs (10%).

Q9. Organization Within the City of Alexandria that Respondent Households <u>Use</u> <u>the</u> <u>Most</u> 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%

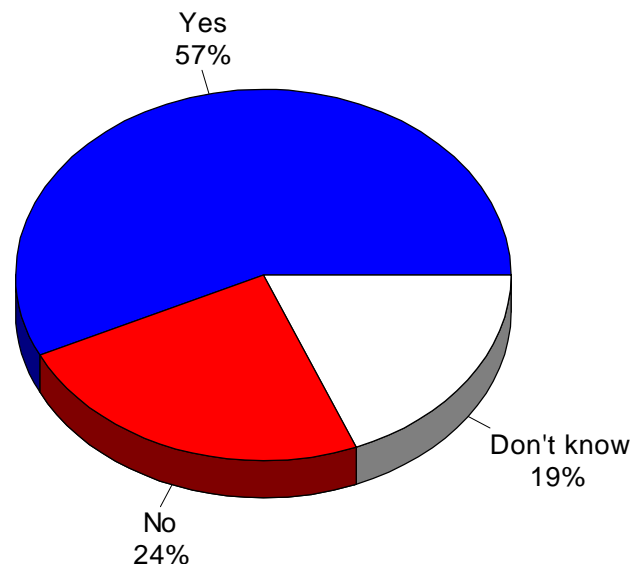Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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%

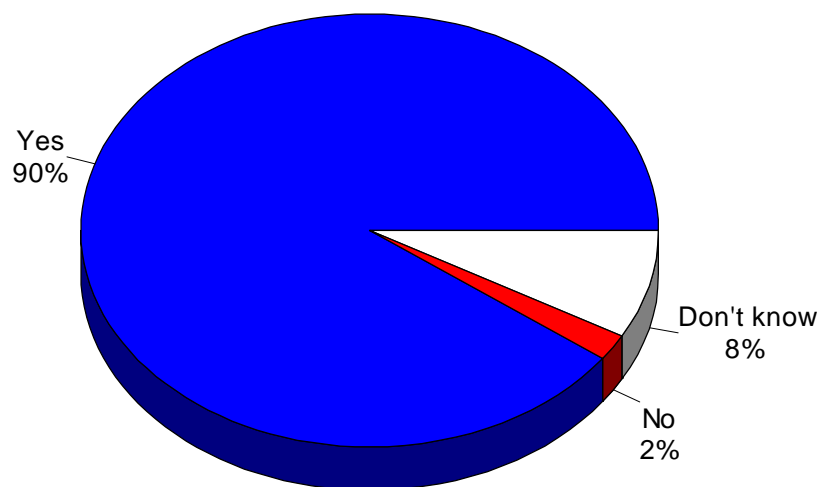Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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?

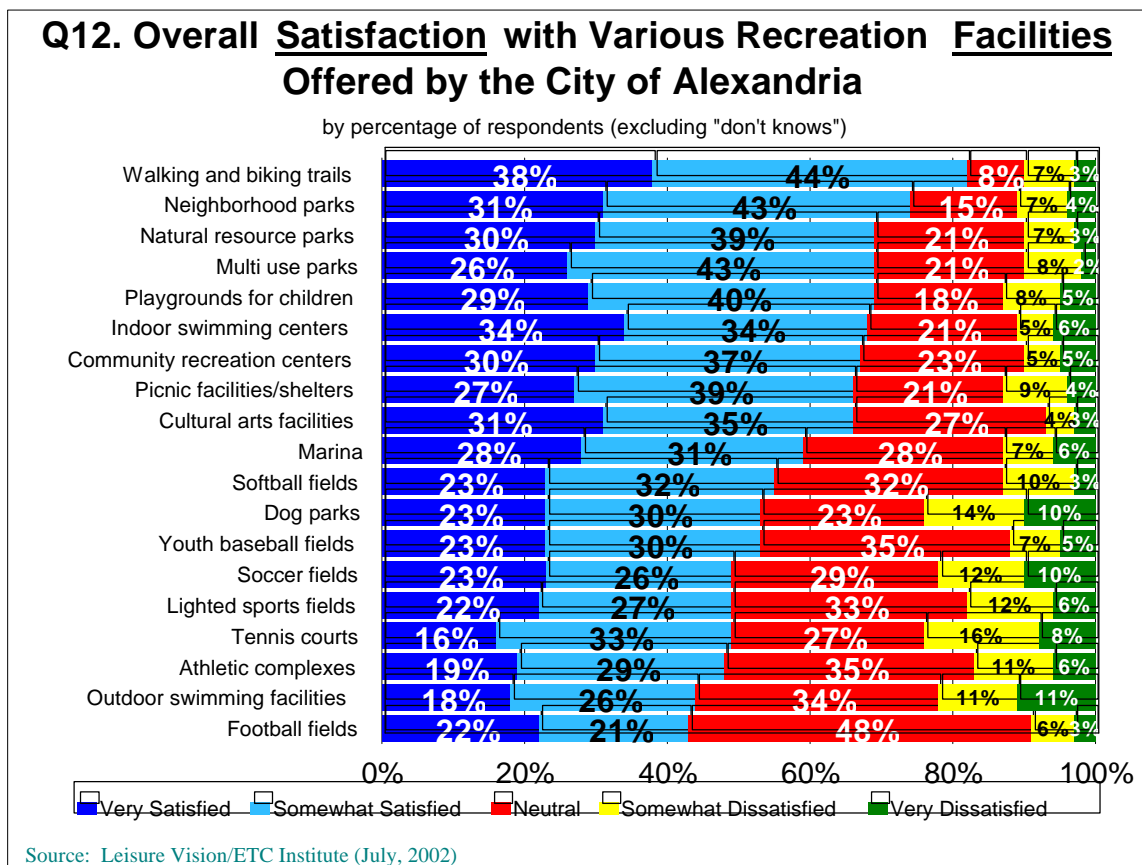by percentage of respondents

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:
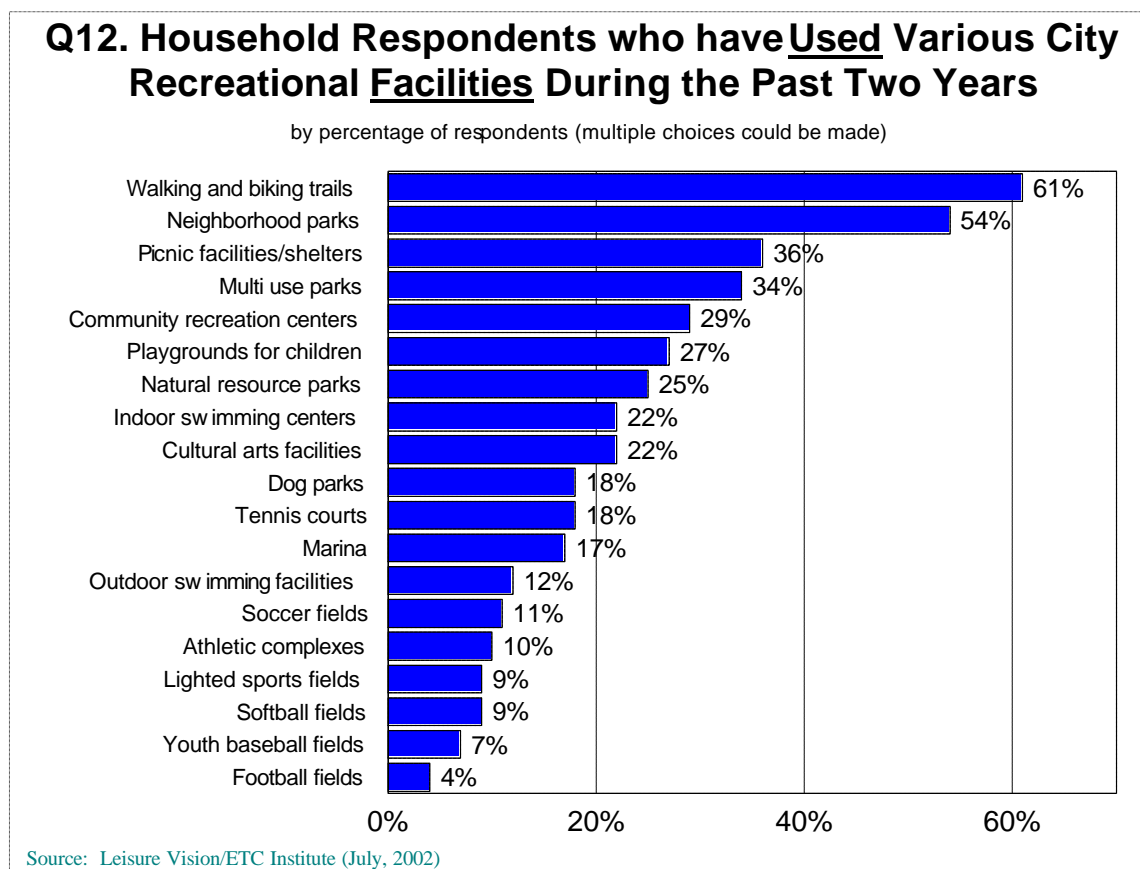
Walking and biking trails is the facility that had the highest percentage of respondents indicate they are either very satisfied (38%) or somewhat satisfied (44%) with it. There are six other facilities that over two-thirds of respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with. They are: 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%

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:
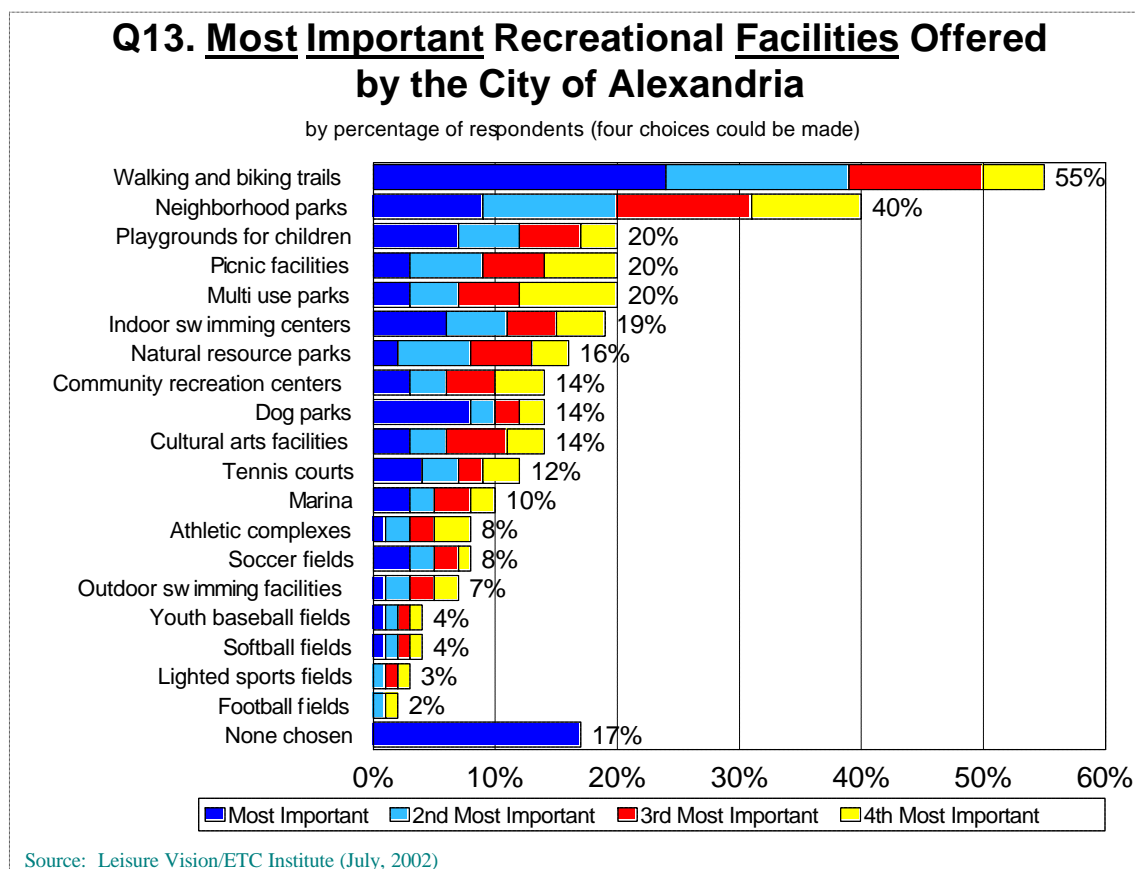
Walking and biking trails (61%) is the facility that the highest percentage of respondent households had used during the past two years. There are three other facilities that over one-third of respondent households had used during the past two years.   They are: neighborhood parks (54%); picnic facilities/shelters (36%); and multi use parks (34%).

Q12. Household Respondents who have Used Various City Recreational Facilities 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%

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 four 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 first choices as the most important facility.

Q13. Most Important Recreational Facilities 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%

Legend: ■ 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 <u>two</u> 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)
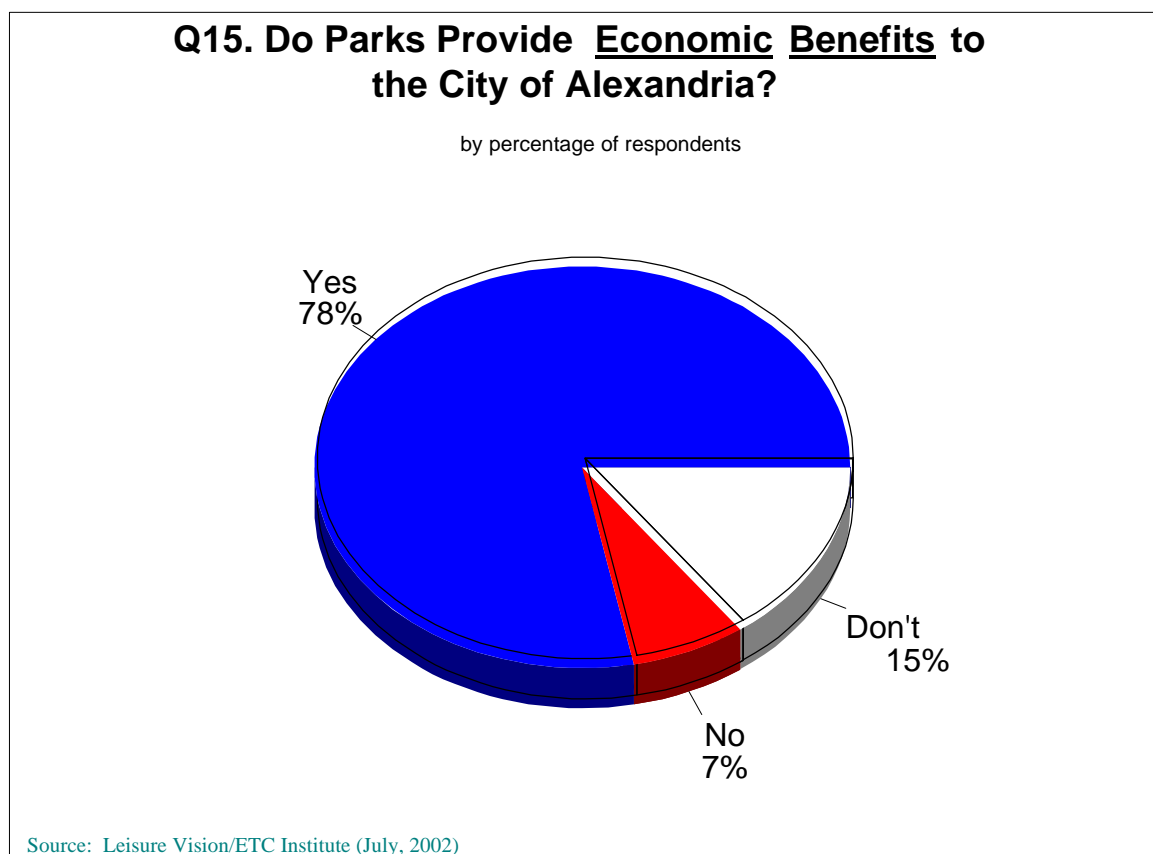
Support for Users of Recreation Programs Paying User Fees

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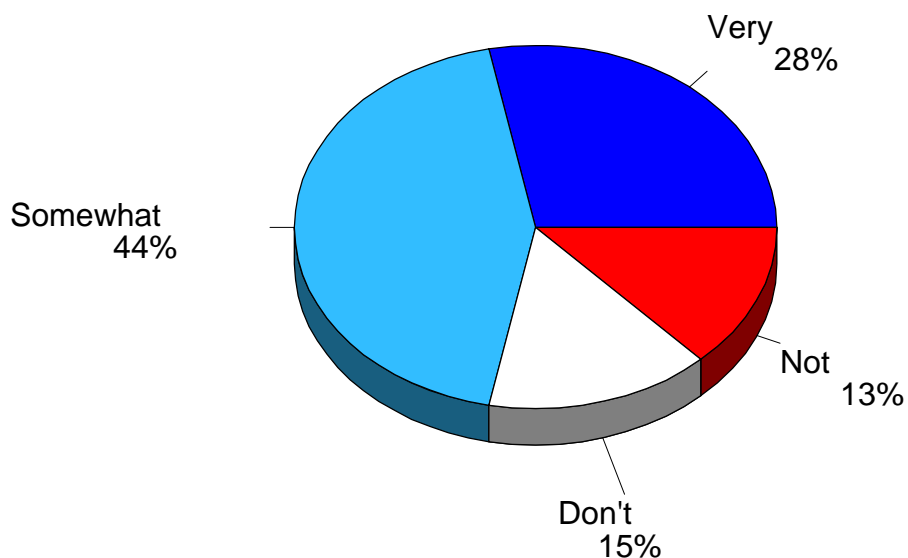
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Importance of Developing Various New Parks and Recreational Facilities

Based on a list of 16 various <u>new</u> 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 space (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%

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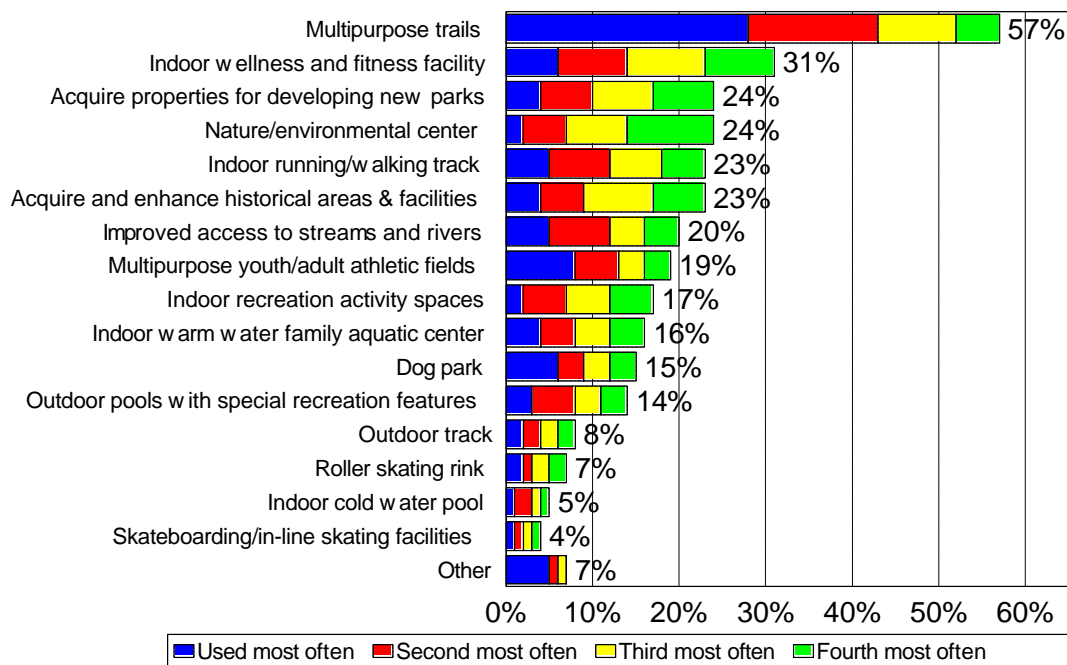
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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%

■ 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 <u>two</u> 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 <u>a multi-generational indoor center that serves all ages</u>. Thirty-one percent (31%) indicated that the City should develop a <u>special Teen Center to be used only by teens</u>, and 26% indicated that the City should develop a <u>special Senior Center to be used only by seniors</u>. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that <u>no new indoor recreation programming spaces are needed</u> 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)

Category	Percentage
Develop a <u>multi-generational indoor center that serves ALL AGES</u>	66%
Develop a <u>special Teen Center to be used ONLY BY TEENS</u>	31%
Develop a <u>special Senior Center to be used ONLY BY SENIORS</u>	26%
None, <u>No NEW INDOOR RECREATION programming spaces are needed</u>	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%
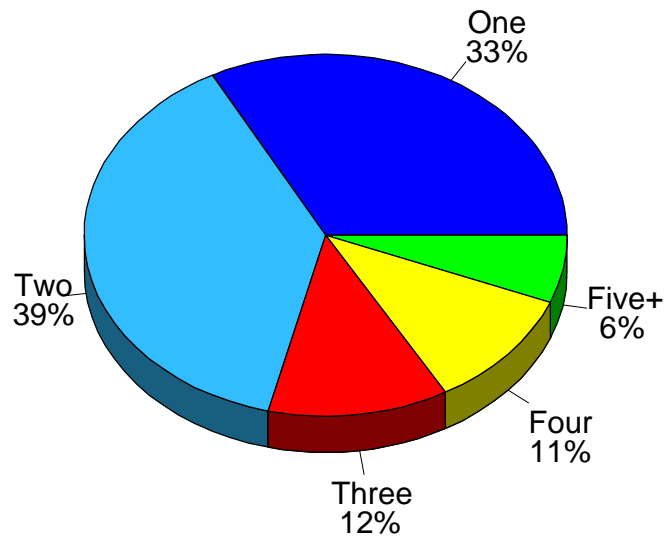
Three 12%

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%
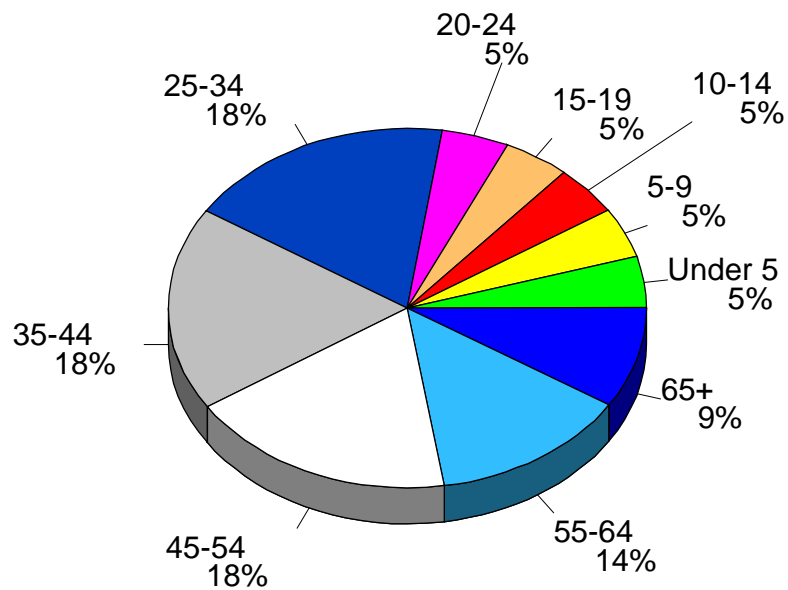
Q21. Demographics: Zip Code

by percentage of respondents

22304
31%

22314
29%

22301
12%

22311
2%

22302
13%

22305
13%
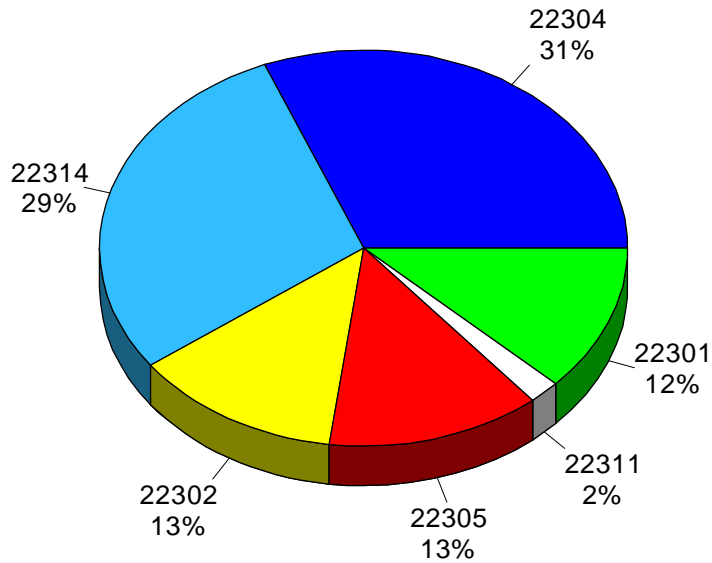
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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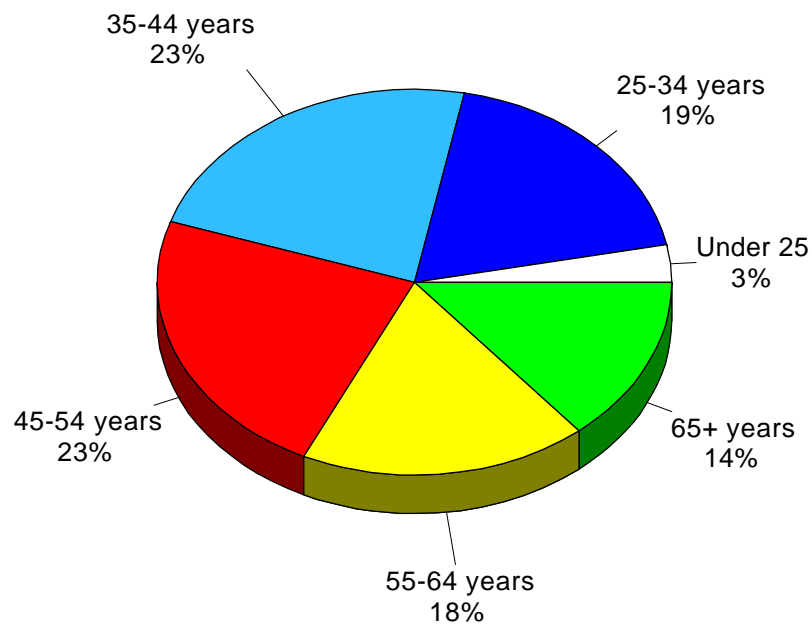
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q24. Demographics: Gender

by percentage of respondents

Male
41%

Female
59%
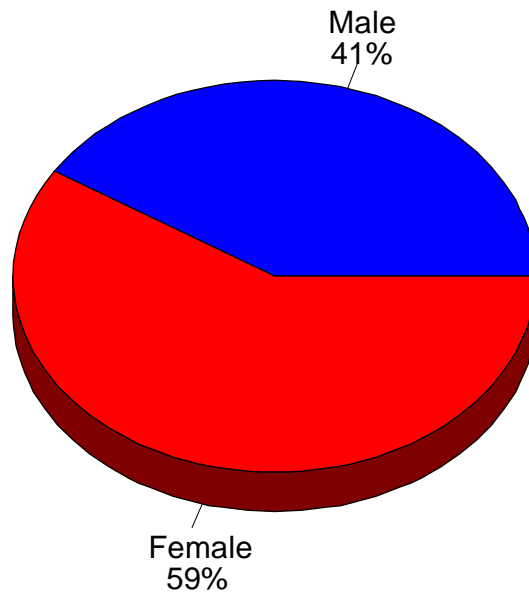
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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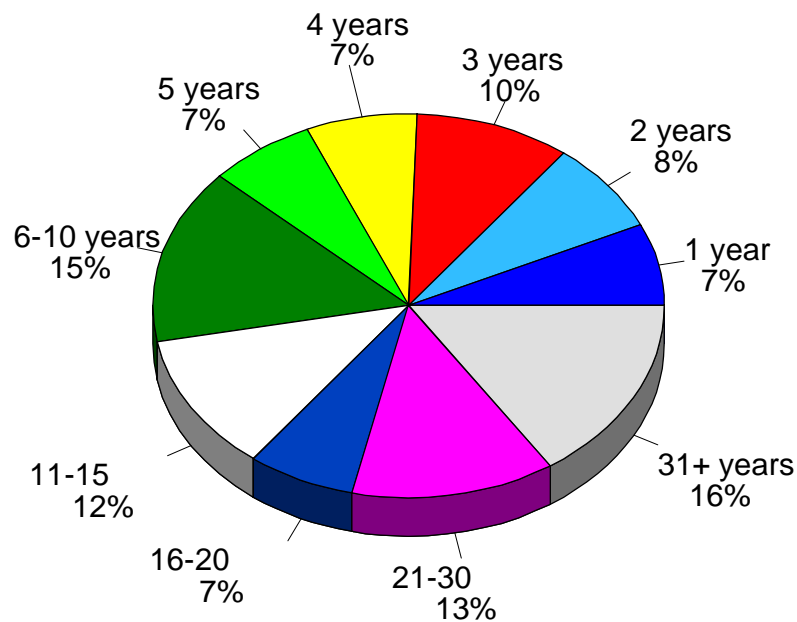
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q26. Demographics: Do Respondents have a Dog in their Household

by percentage of respondents

Yes
21%

No answer
1%

No
78%
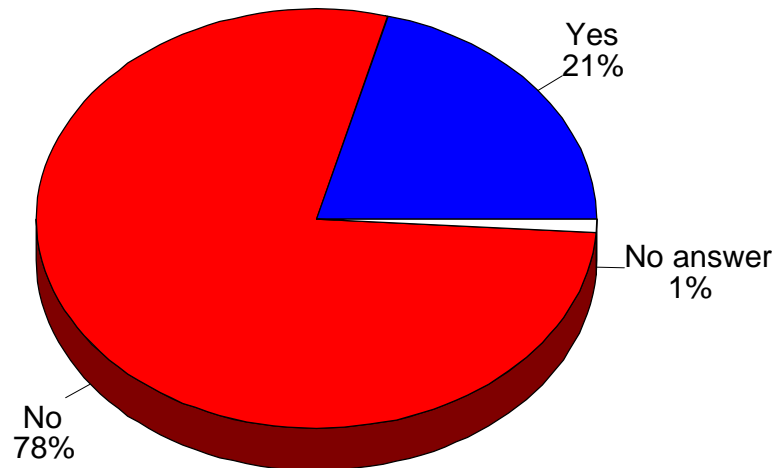
Q27. Demographics: Are Members of Household of Hispanic, Latino, or other Spanish Ancestry

by percentage of respondents

Yes
12%

No answer
1%

No
87%
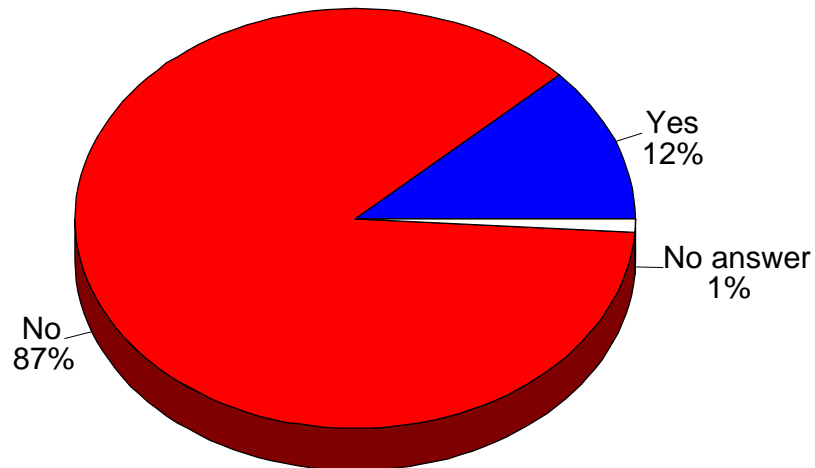
Q28. Demographics: Total Annual Household Income

by percentage of respondents

$50,000 to
17%

$25,000 to
15%

$75,000 to
14%

Under
5%

$100,000
29%

Prefer not to
19%
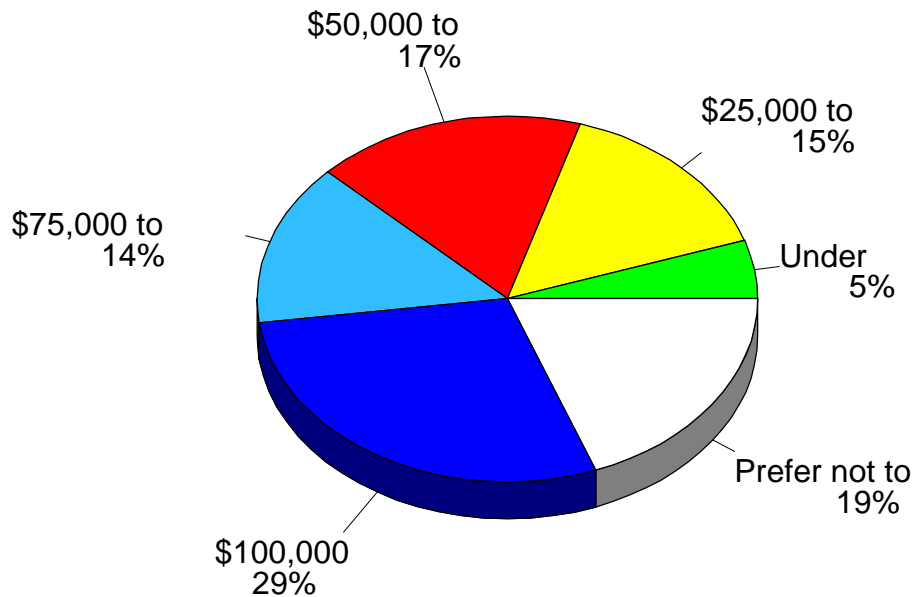
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

Q29. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents

White
63%

Other
5%

Asian
4%

Black/African American
16%

Hispanic
12%
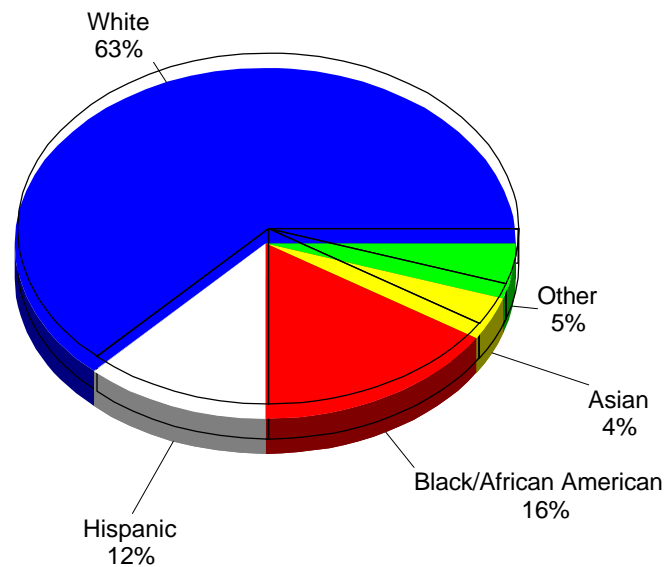
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (July, 2002)

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 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%.
- 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%.

- 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.

*Planning Area Map can be found on Page 75 of the appendix.

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
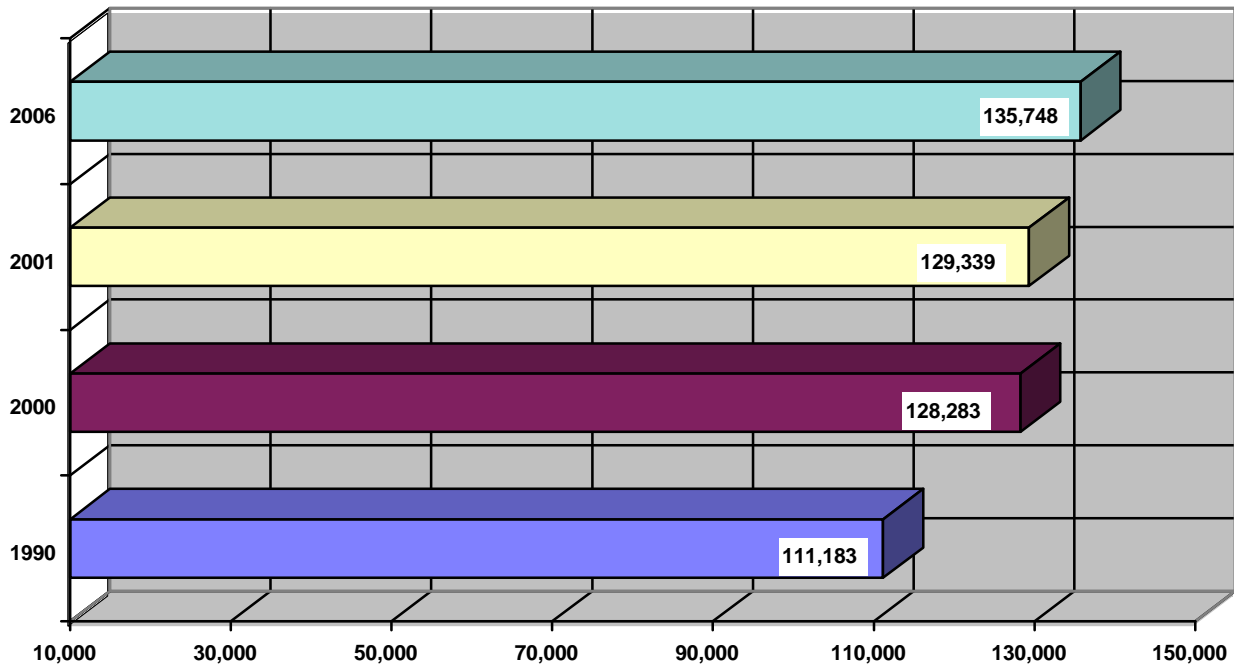
Alexandria Population by Age Groups

1990 Census
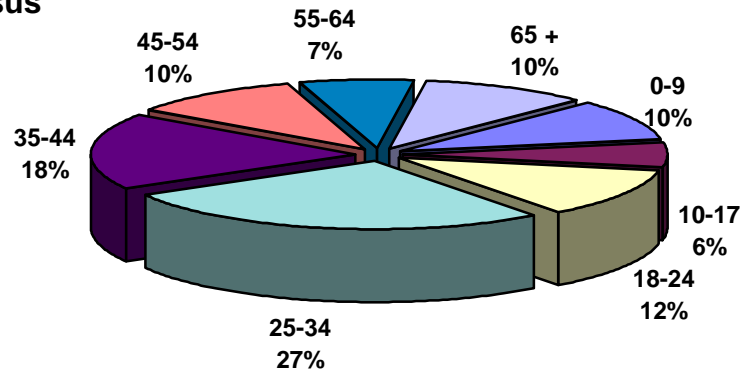
2001 Estimate
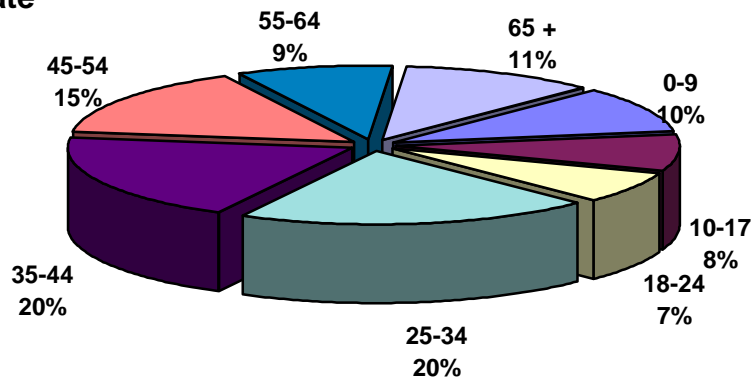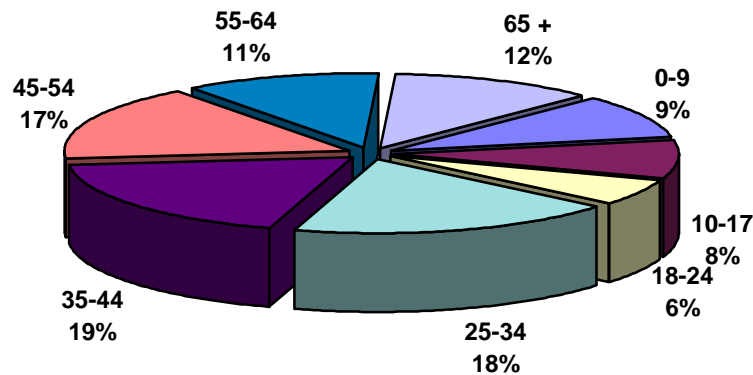
2006 Projected

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

Black/African Am.
22%

Hispanic
10%

Asian
4%

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%
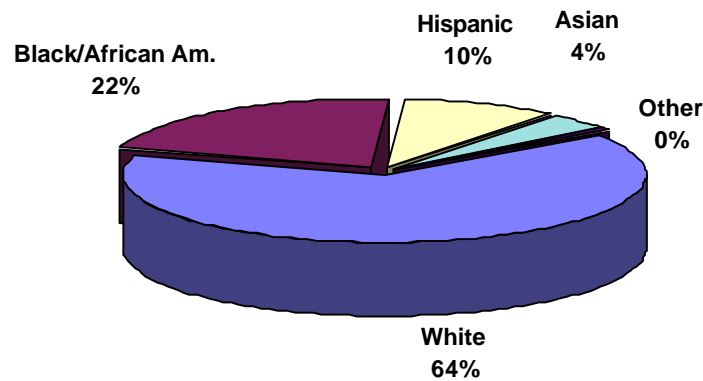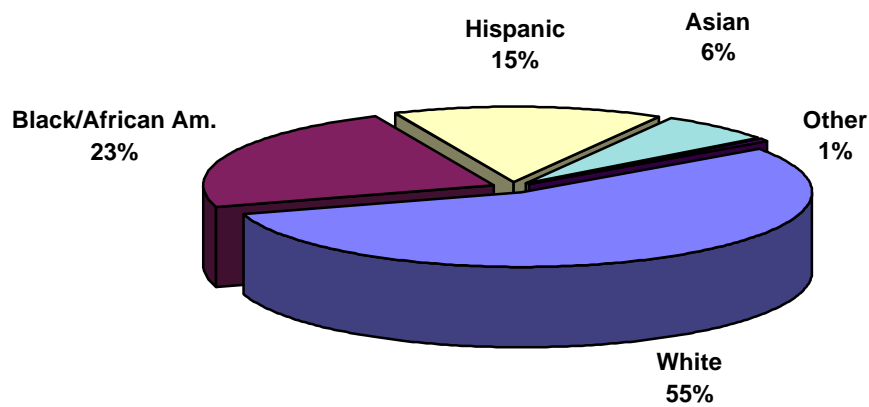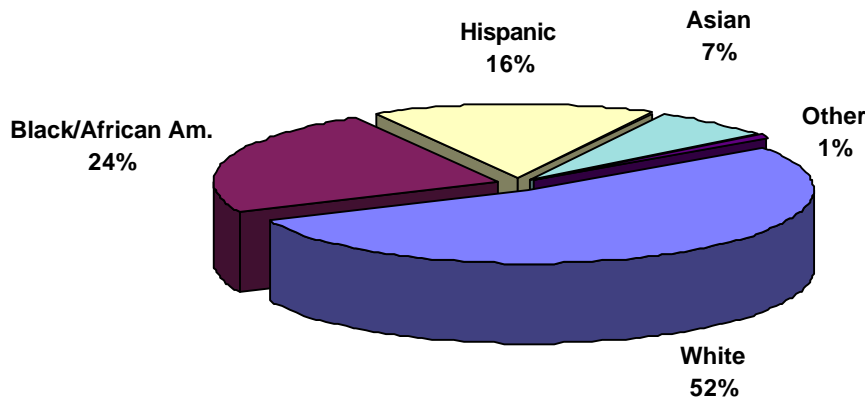
*These figures are rounded up.

Population by Ages for Alexandria1990 – 2000 – 2001 –2006
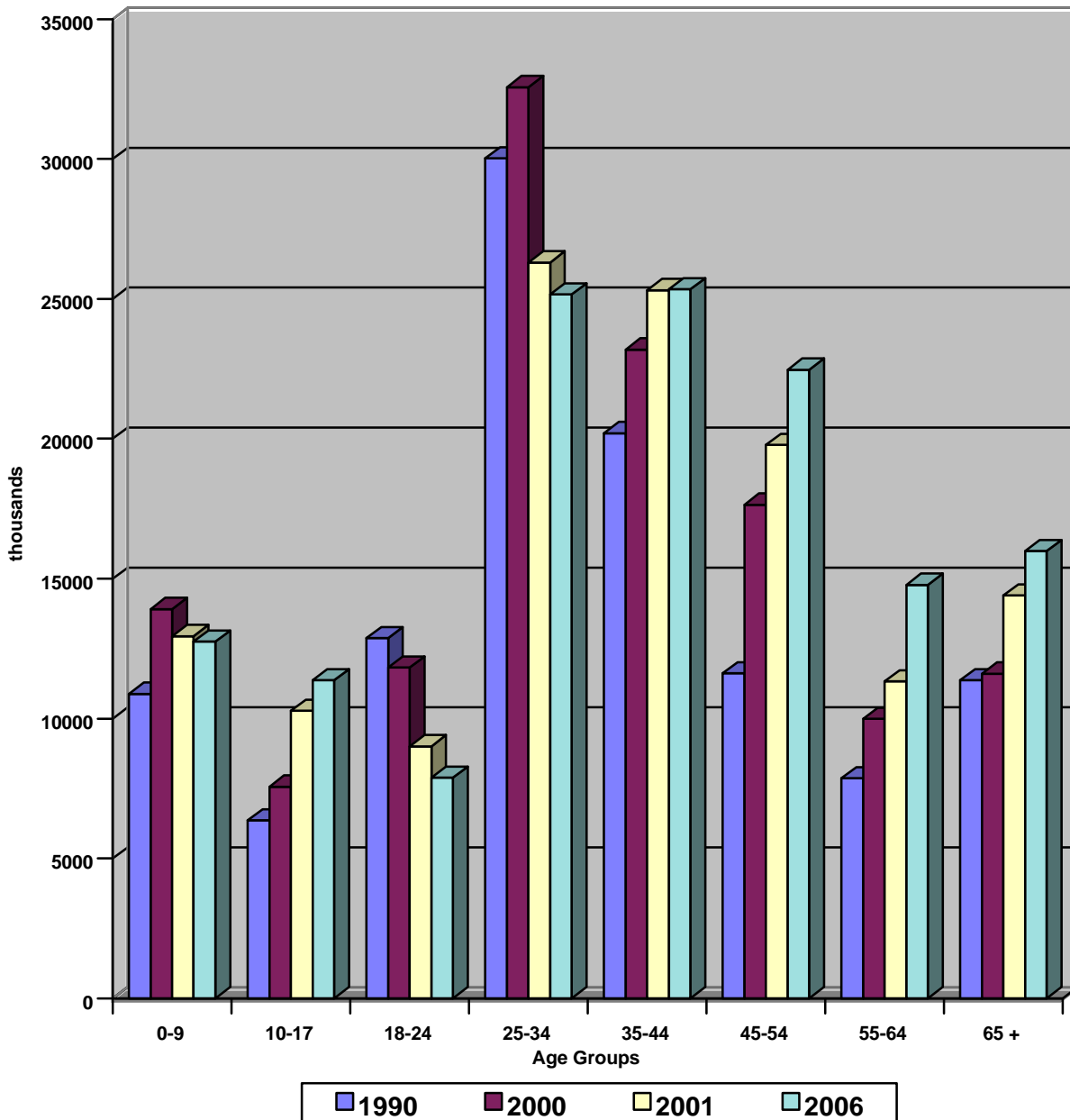
Number of Households by Income for Alexandria
2006 Projected
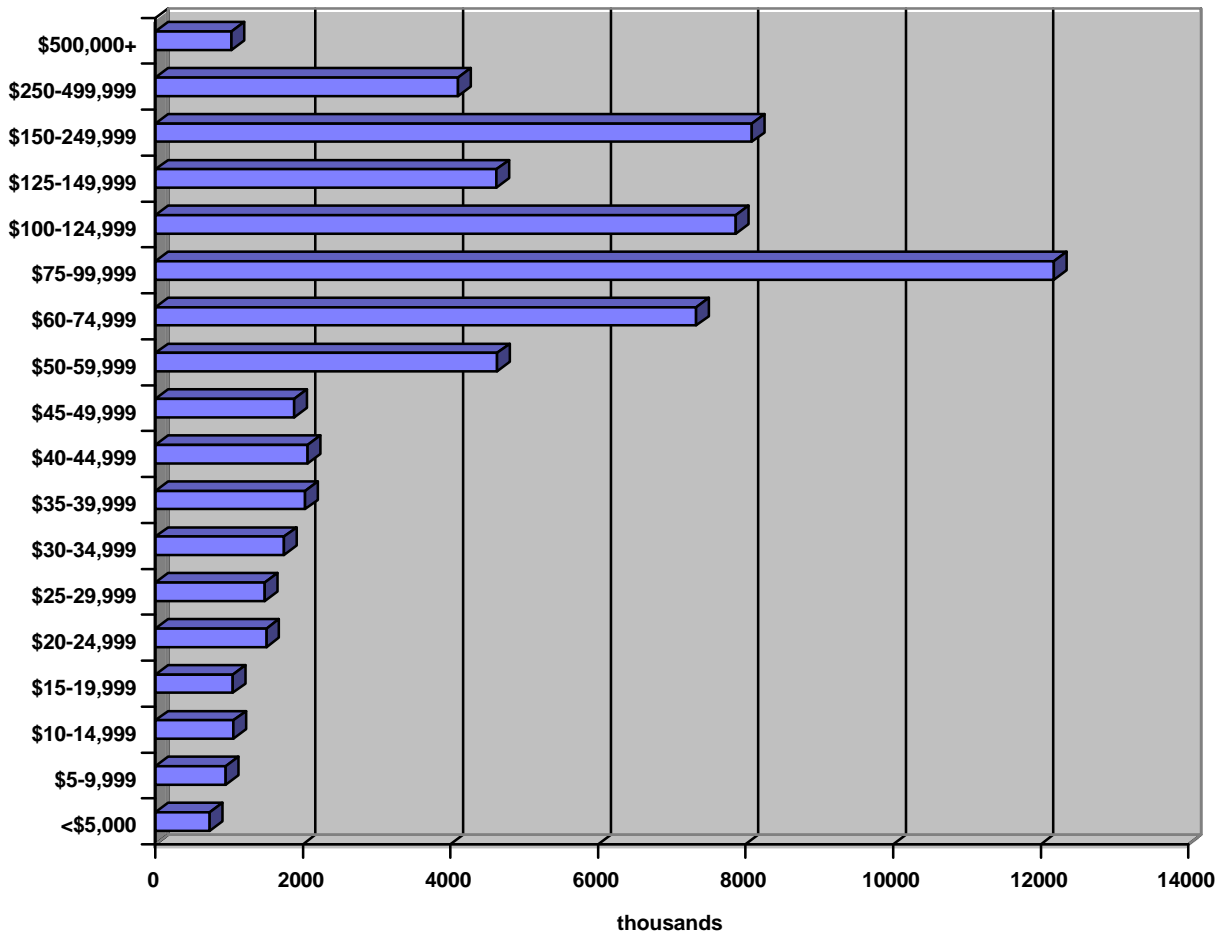
Income Data by Households for Alexandria
1990 Census - 2001 Estimated - 2006 Projected

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**	

**Household Income by Age for Alexandria
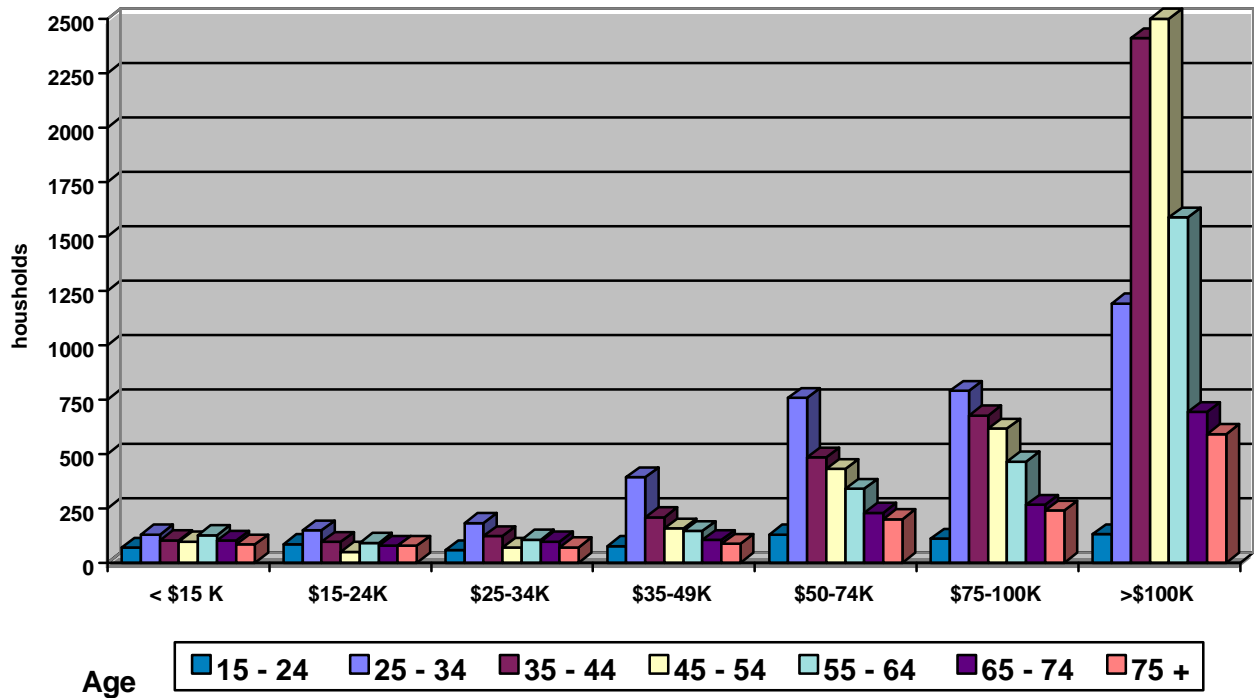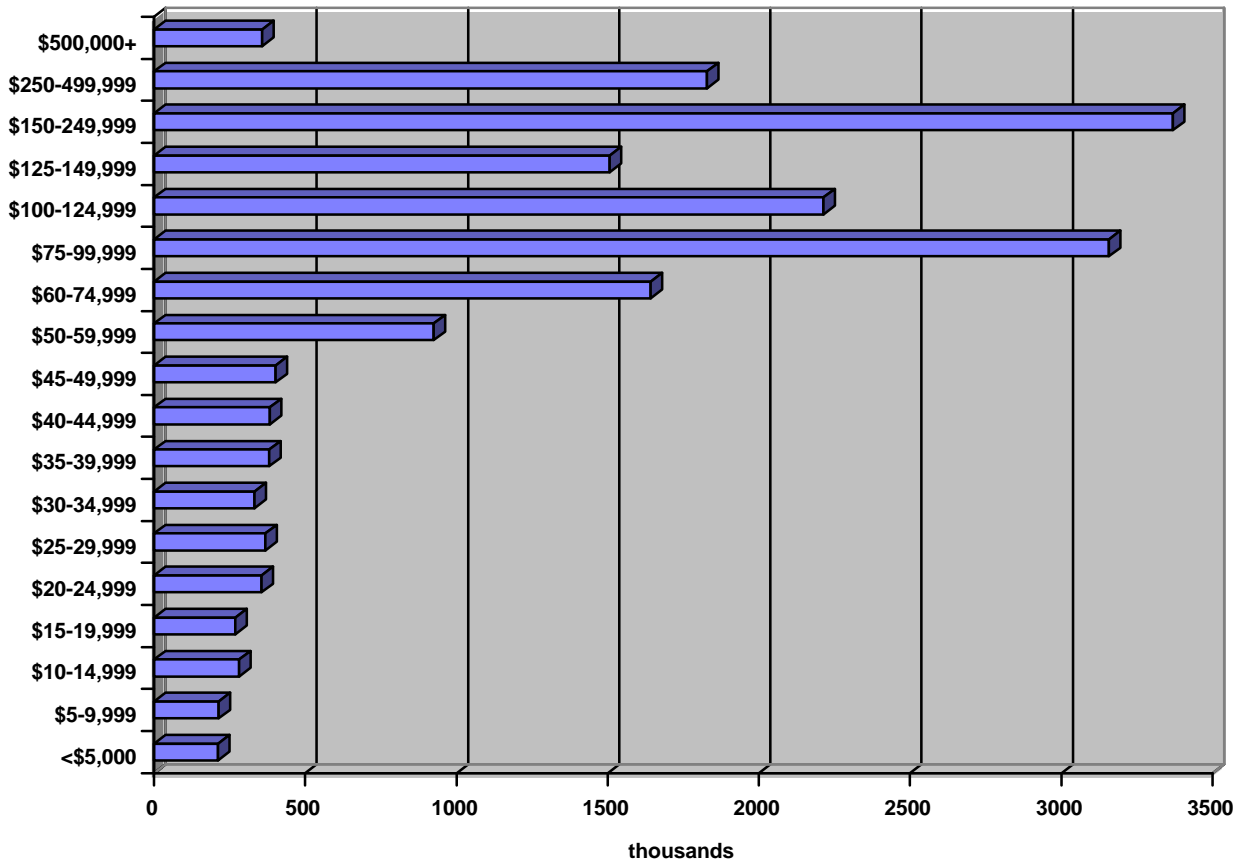2006 Projected**
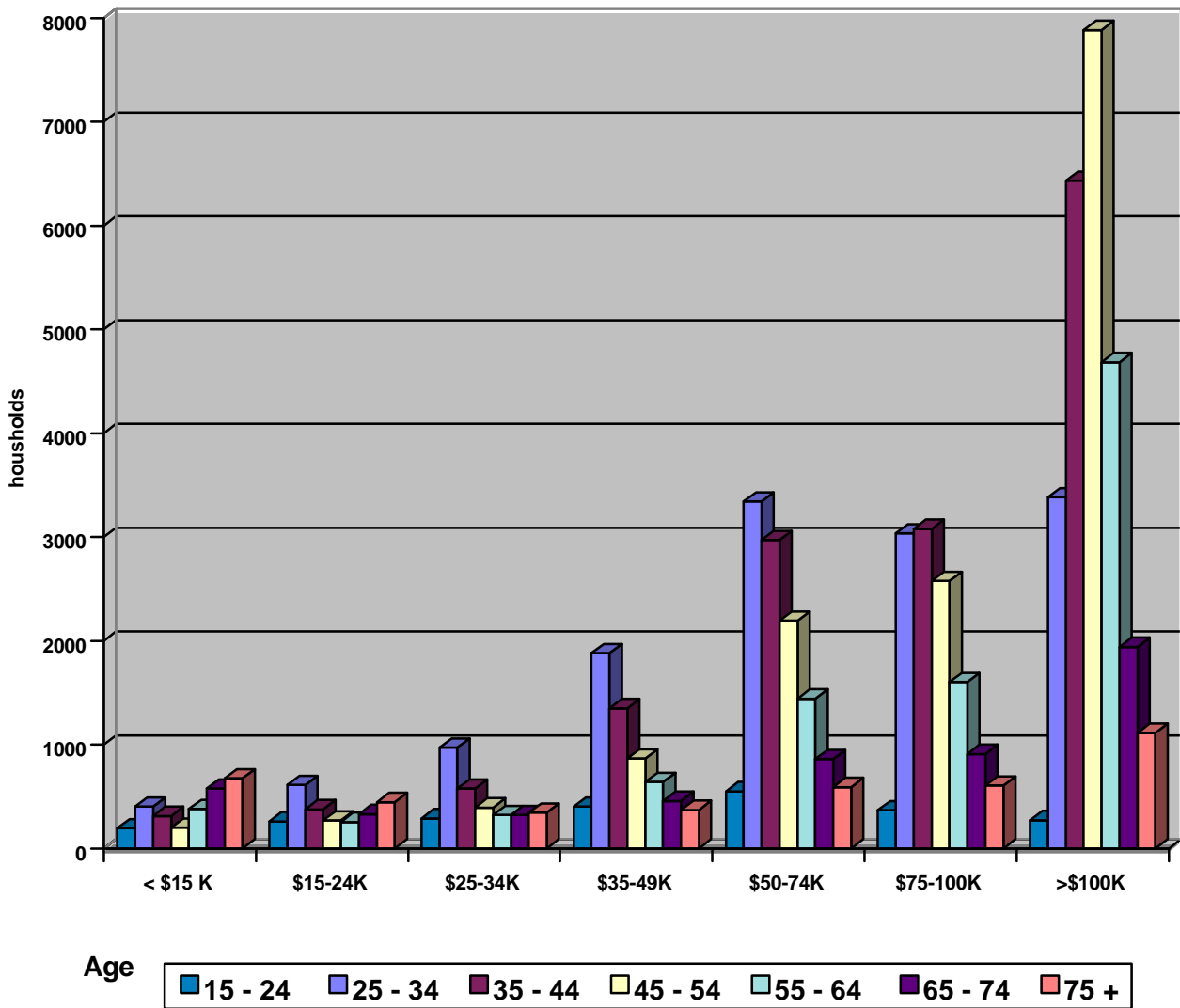
PLANNING AREA I – TOTAL POPULATION

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
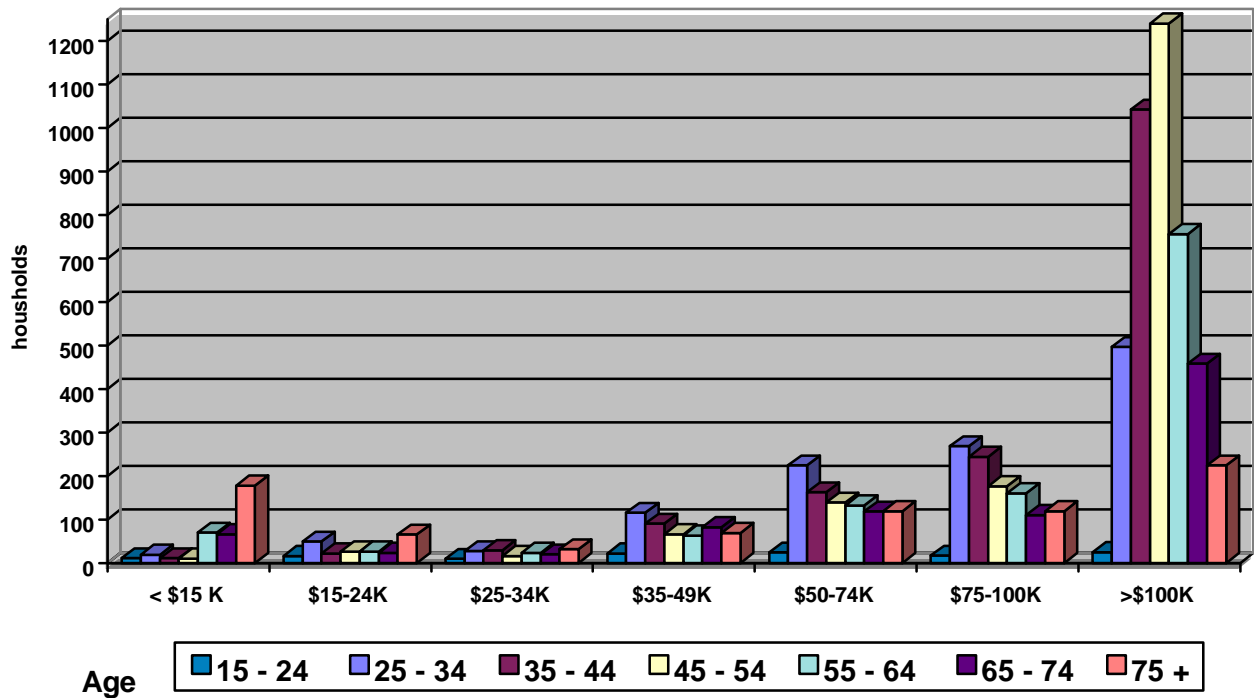
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME PLANNING AREA 1
2006 PROJECTED

thousands

2006 PROJECTED RACIAL POPULATION

Black/African Am.
12%

Hispanic
4%

Asian
3%

Other
1%

White
80%
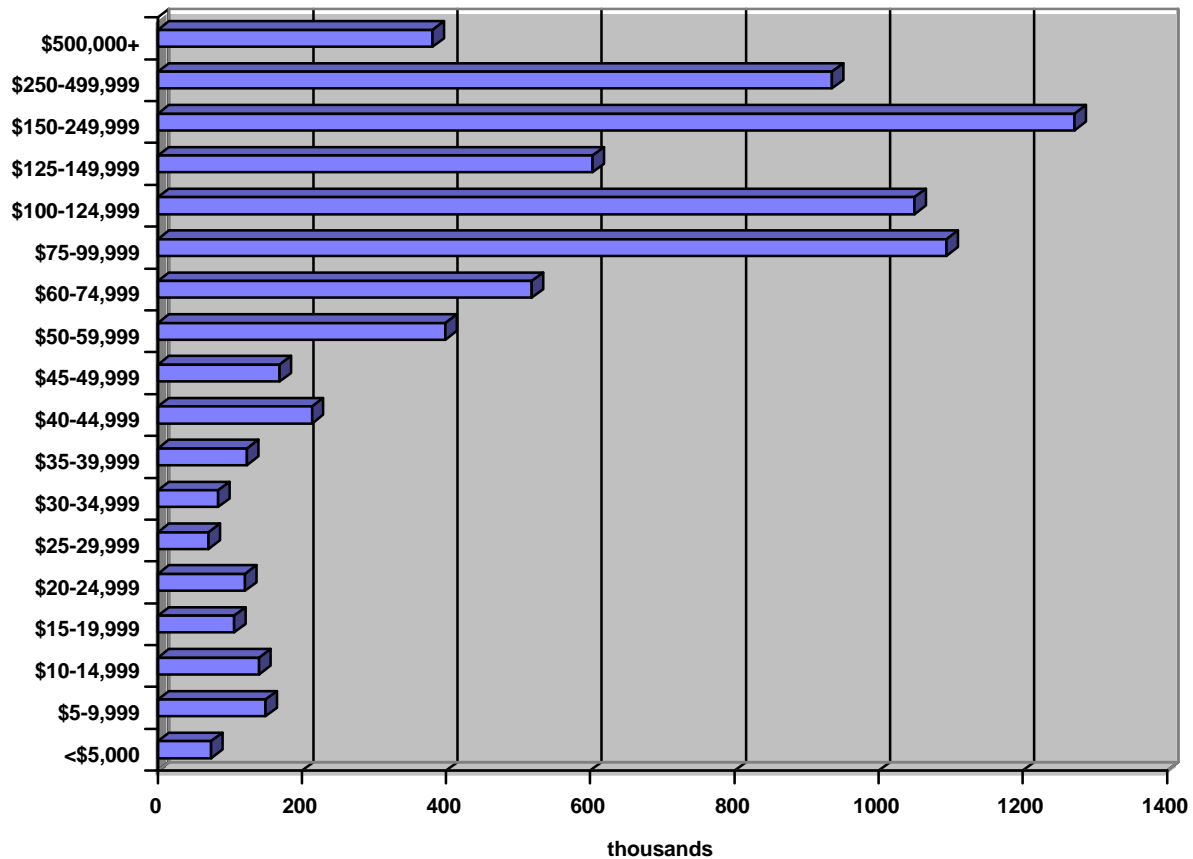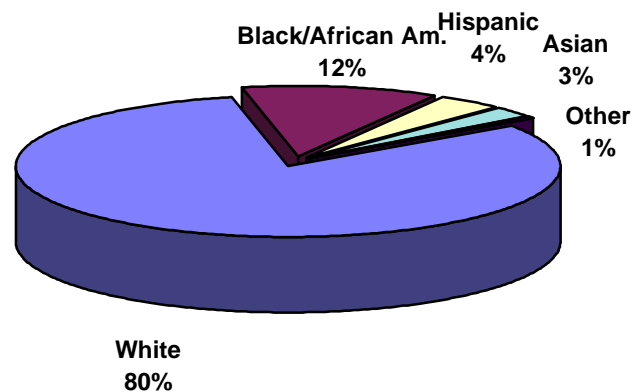
PLANNING AREA II – TOTAL POPULATION

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

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
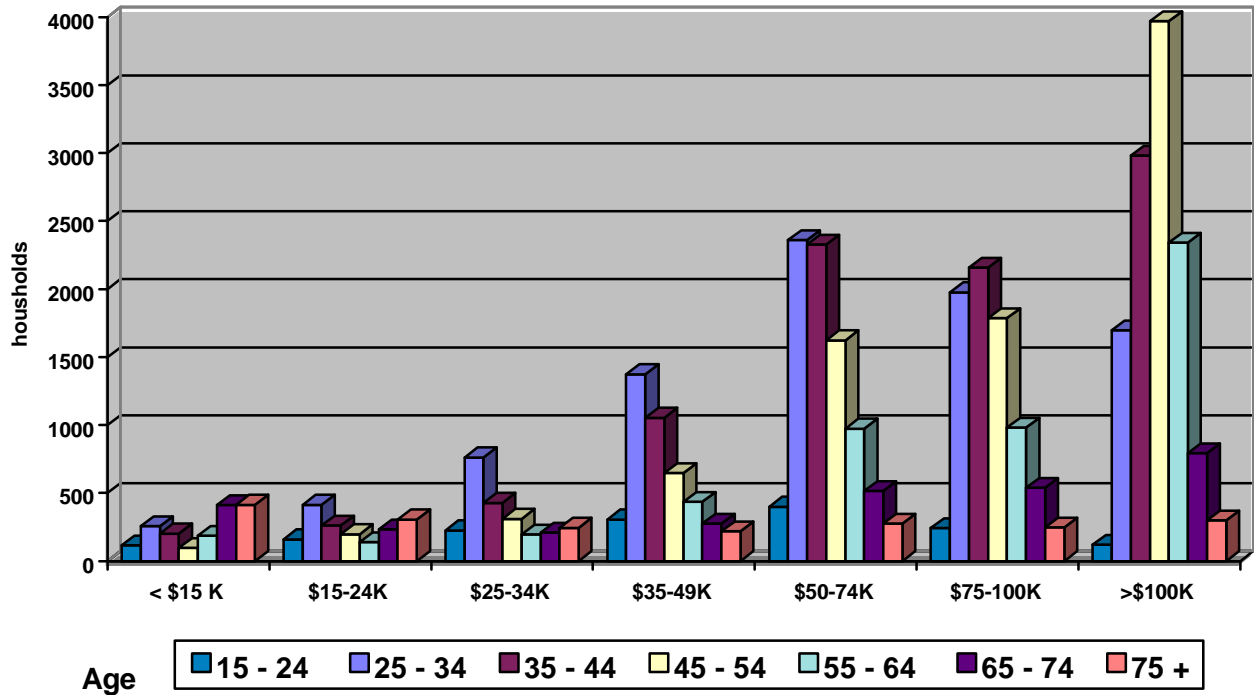## 2006 PROJECTED-PLANNING DISTRICT 2

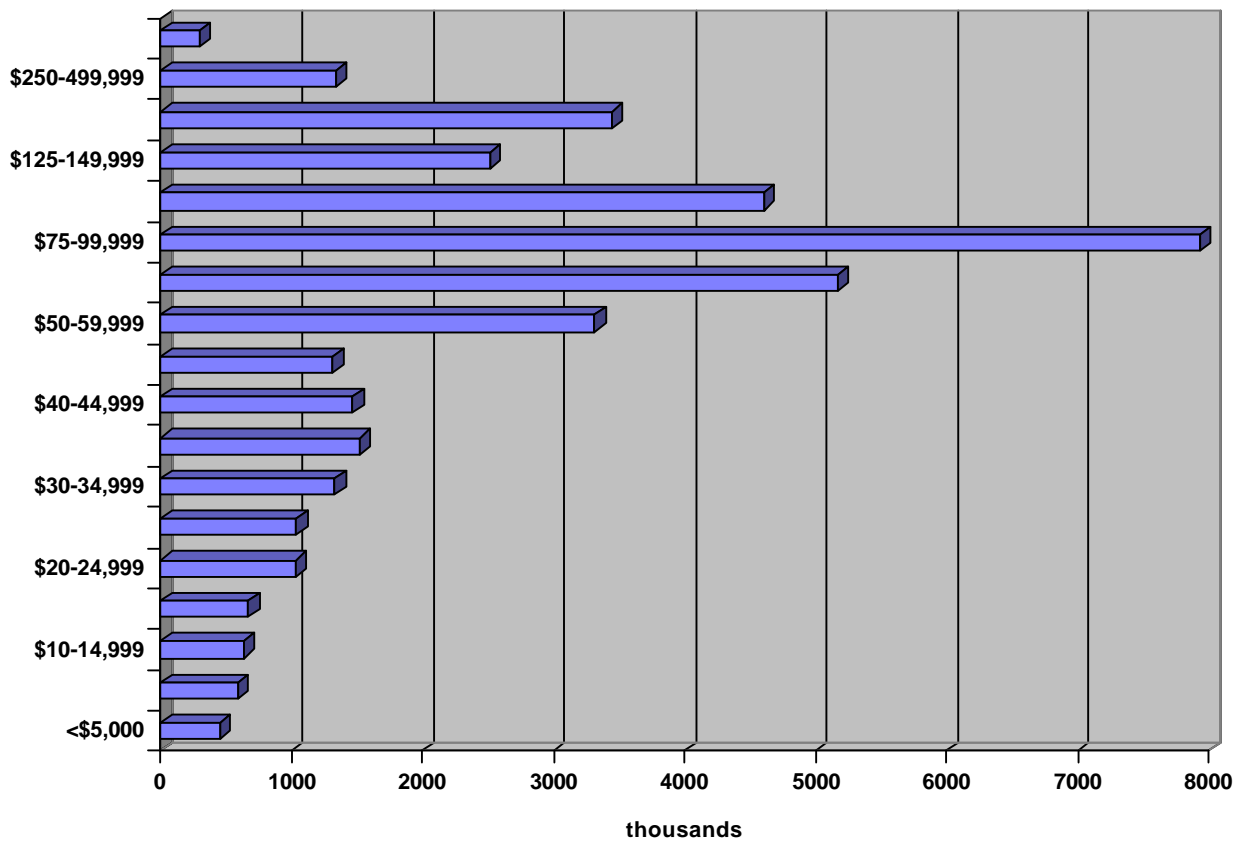## 2006 PROJECTED RACIAL POPULATION-PLANNING DISTRICT
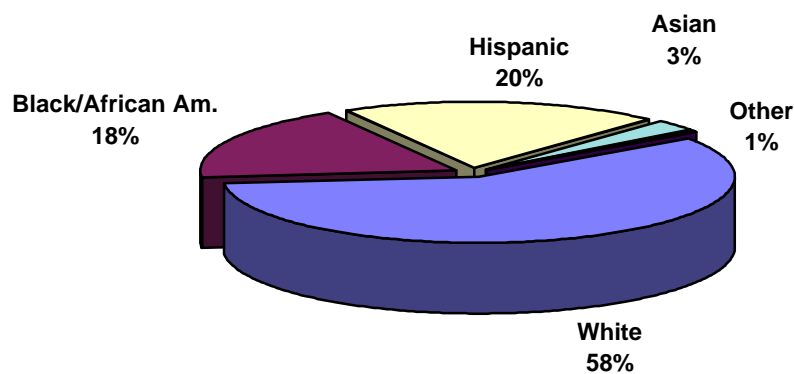
PLANNING AREA III – TOTAL POPULATION

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**

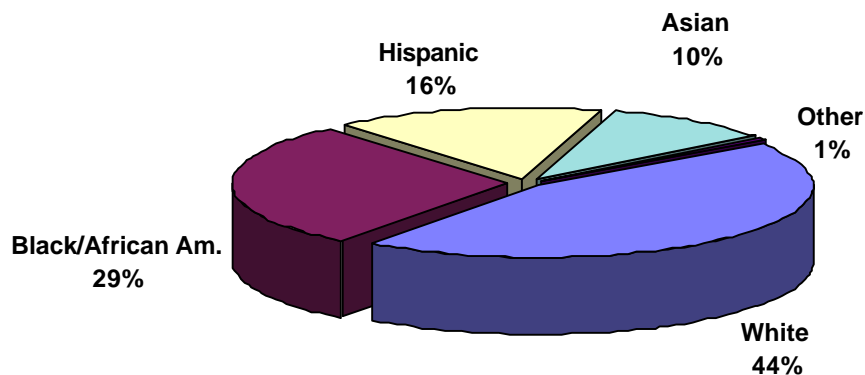## HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD
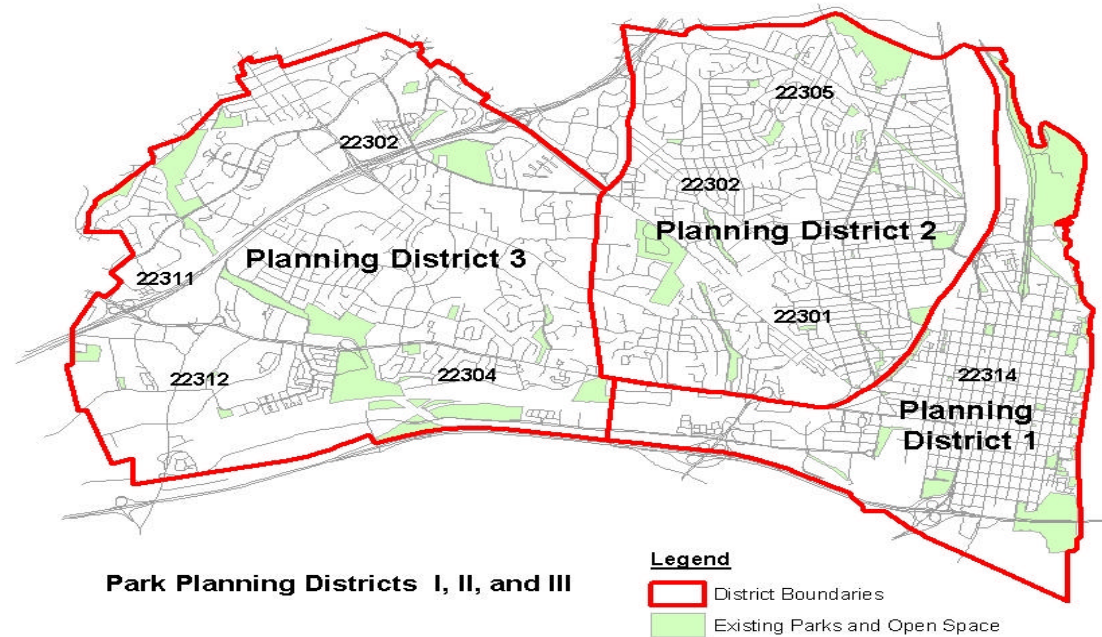## 2006 PROJECTED –PLANNING DISTRICT 3

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
2006 PROJECTED-PLANNING DISTRICT 3

2006 PROJECTED RACIAL POPULATION- PLANNING DISTRICT 3

Planning District Area Map

Park Planning Districts I, II, and III

Legend
District Boundaries
Existing Parks and Open Space

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
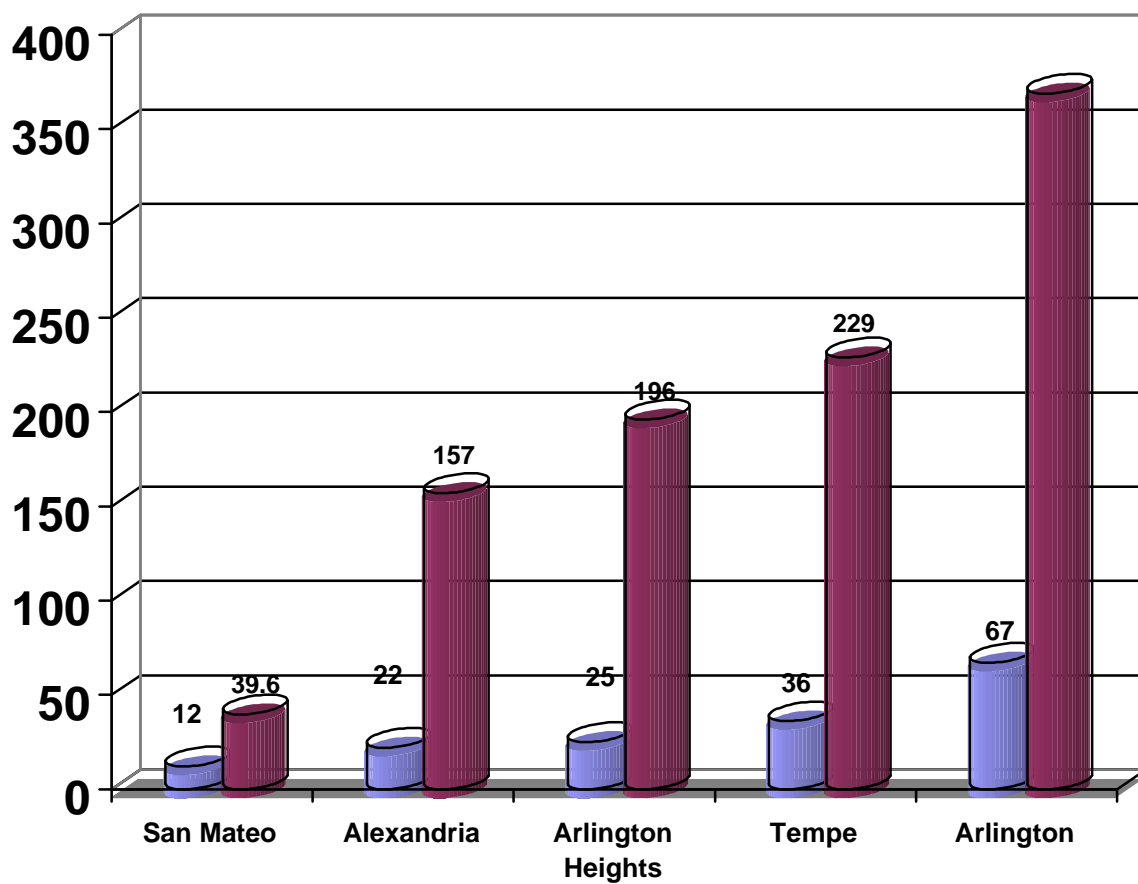
Blue is equal to the number of neighborhood parks acres and purple represents the total acres of neighborhood parks.

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
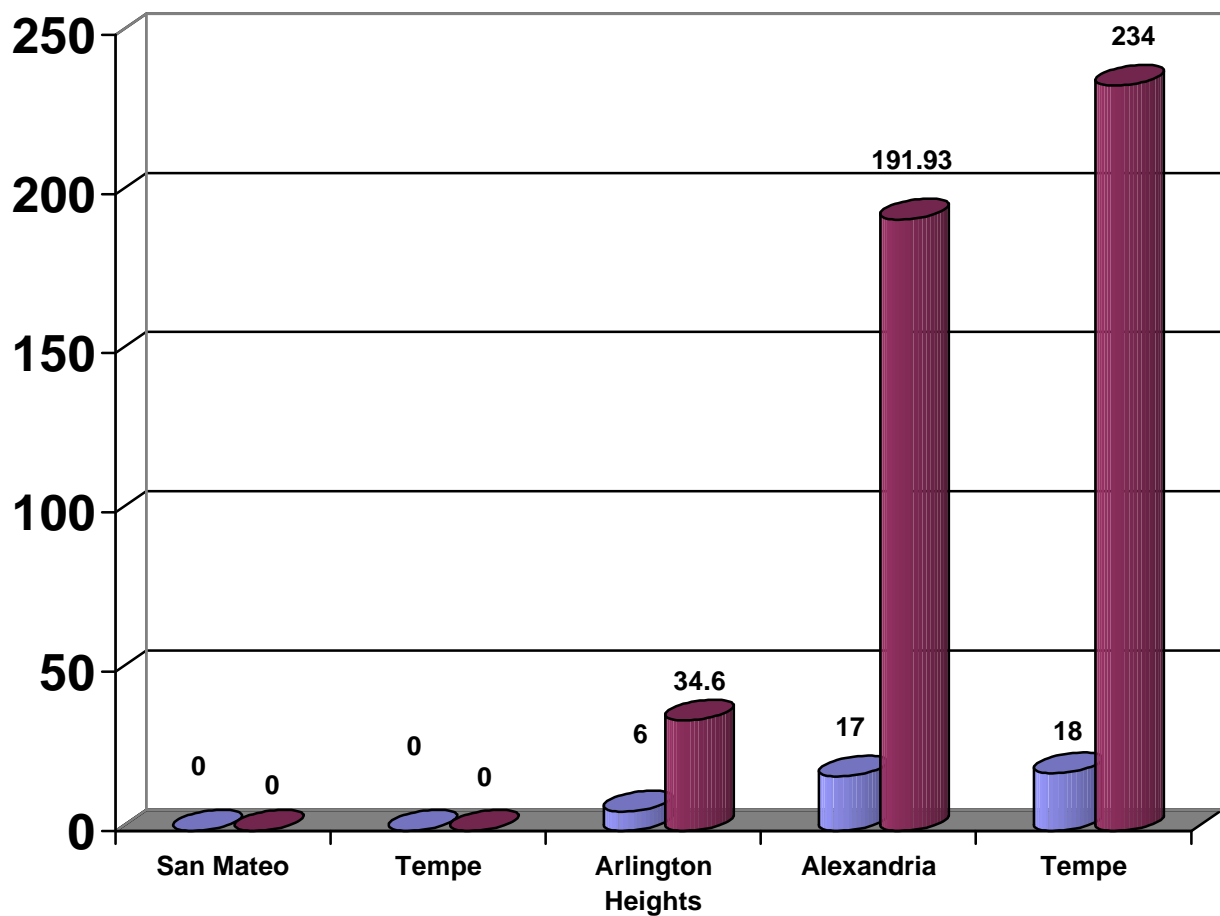
Blue is equal to the number of neighborhood parks acres and purple represents the total acres of school parks.

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
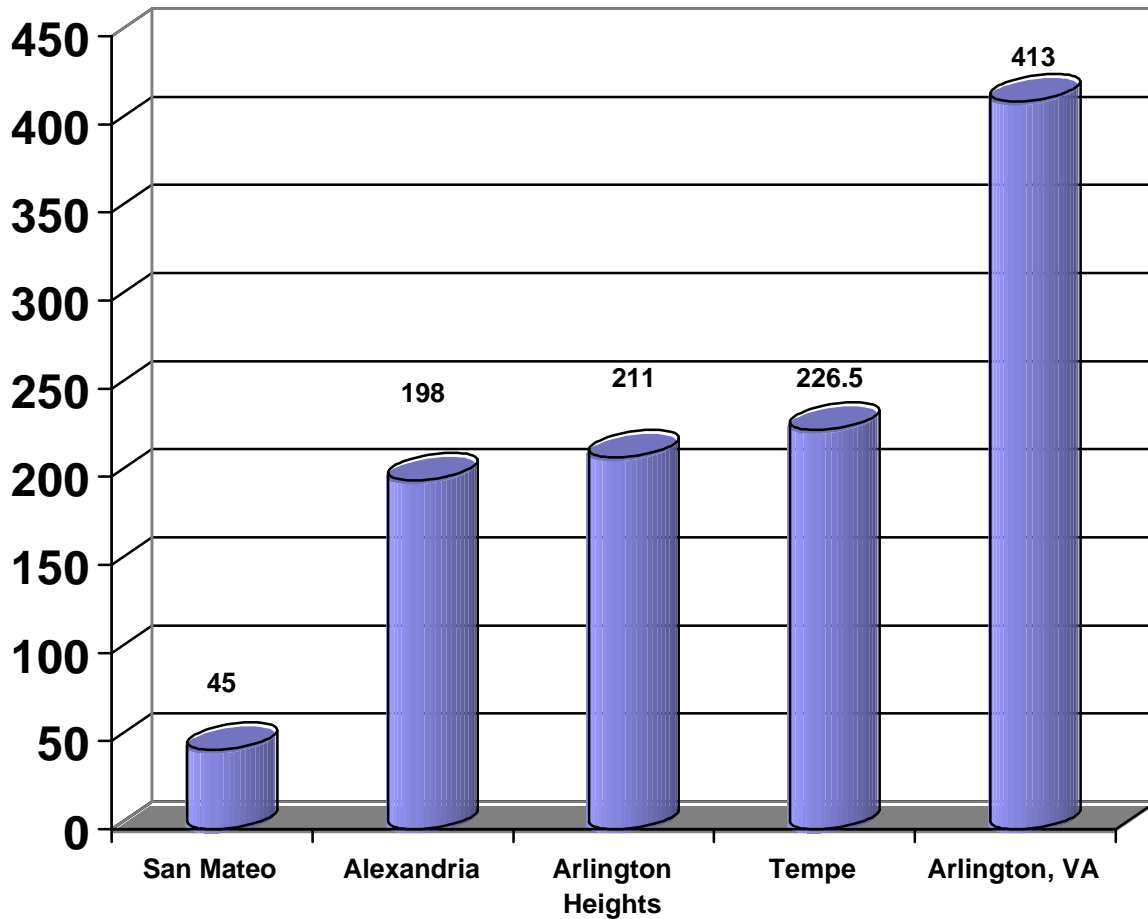
Blue is equal to the number of outdoor recreation facilities in the community.

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
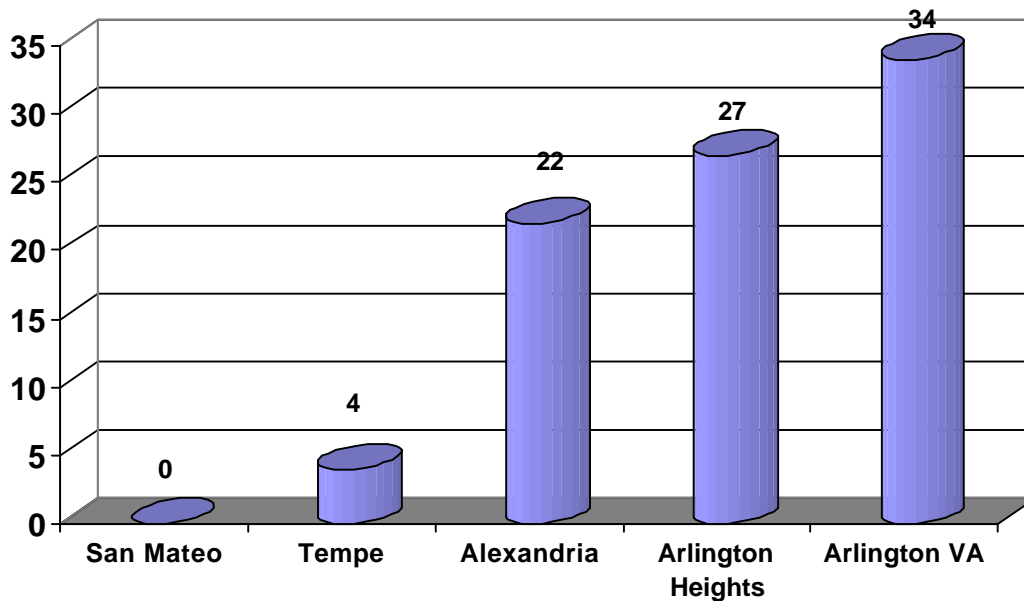
Blue is equal to the number of outdoor recreation facilities in the community.

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
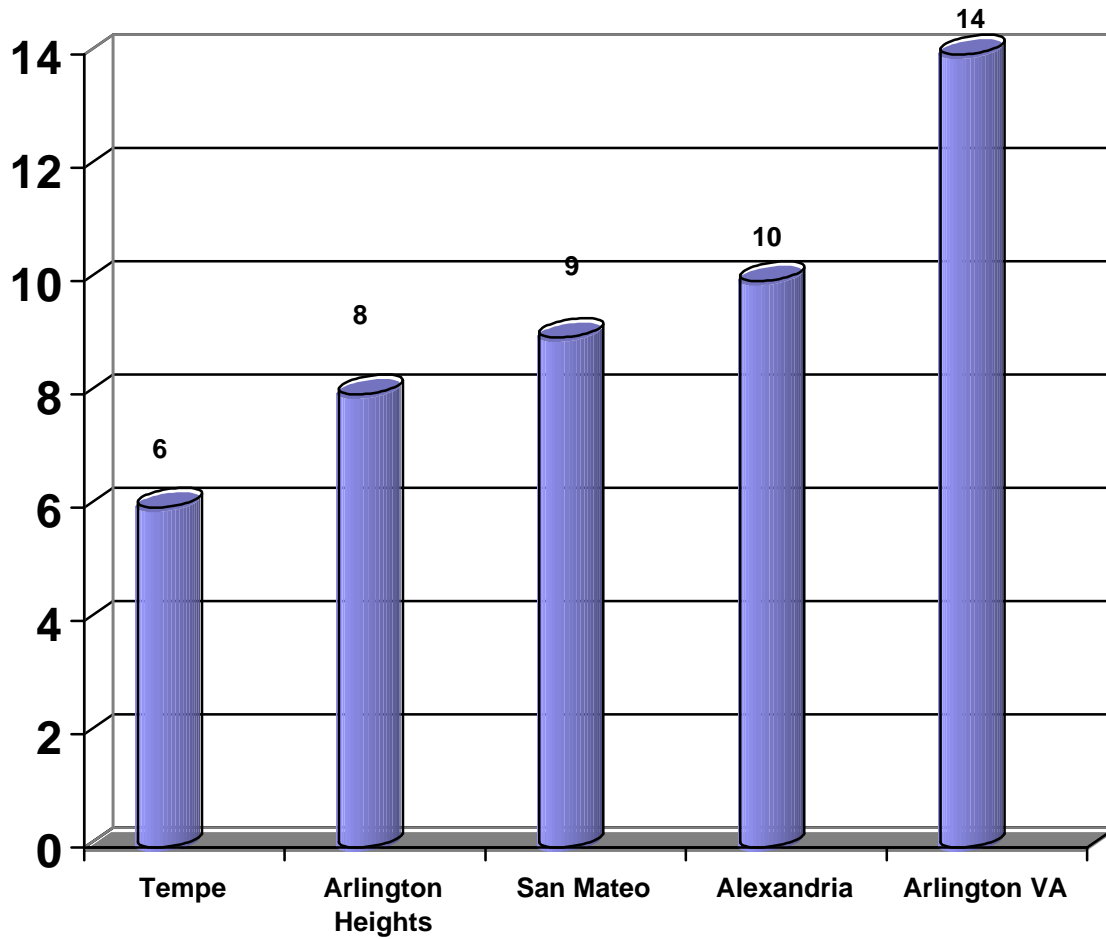
Blue is equal to the number of recreation centers in the community.

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
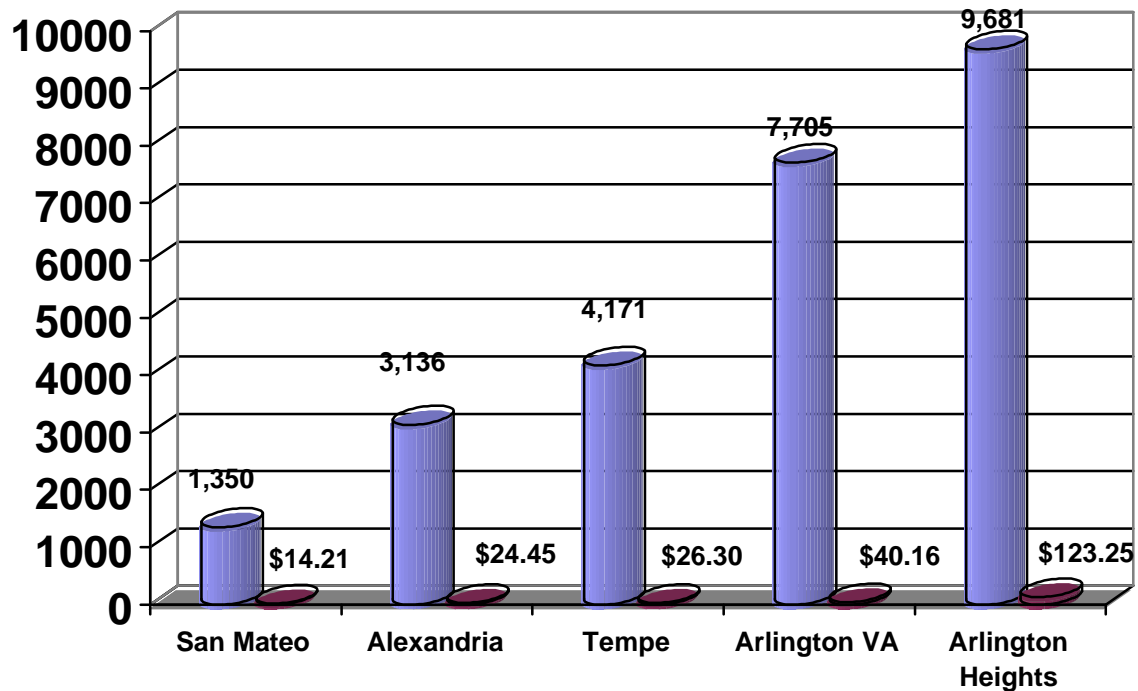
Blue is equal to the six year average of capital improvement in thousands and the purple superimposed number represents the six year average per-capita expense of Capital Budgets in the community.

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
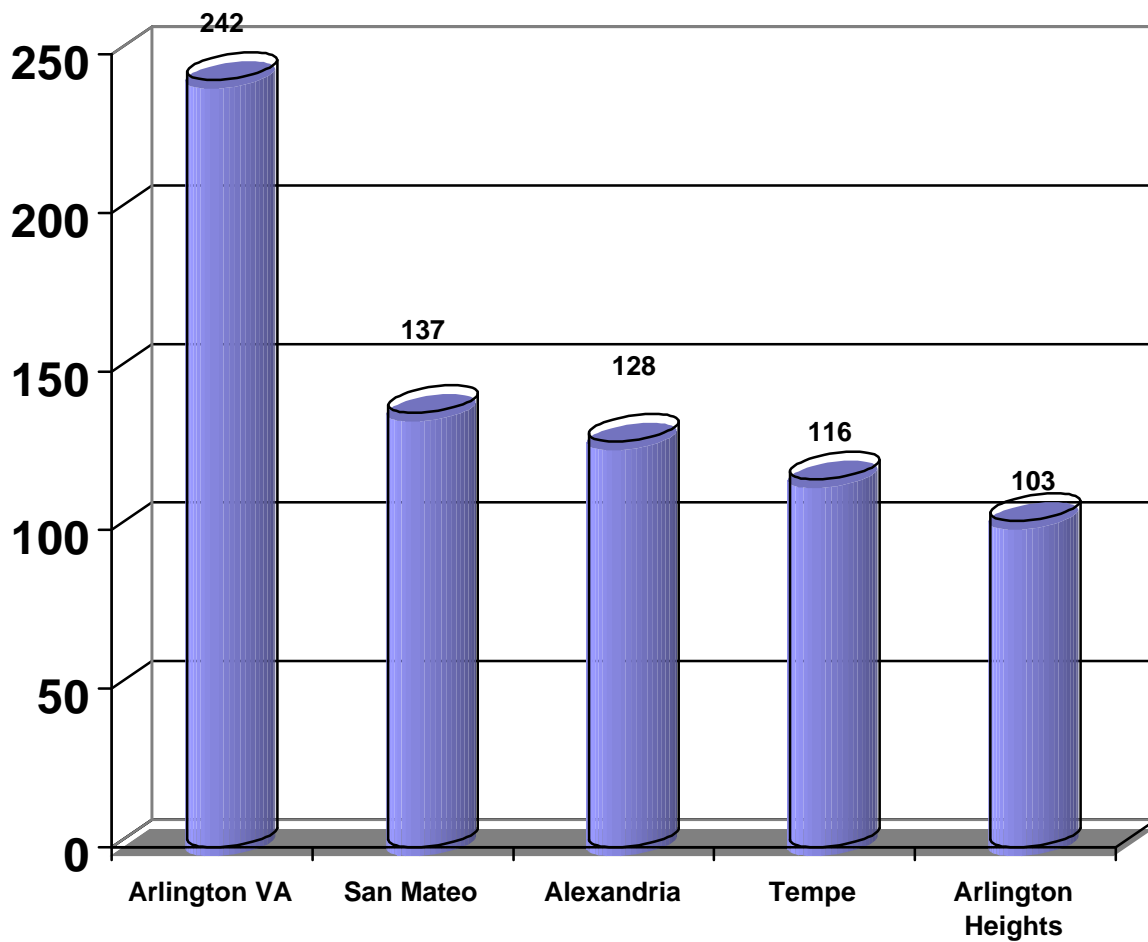
Blue is equal to the total number of full time employees in the community.

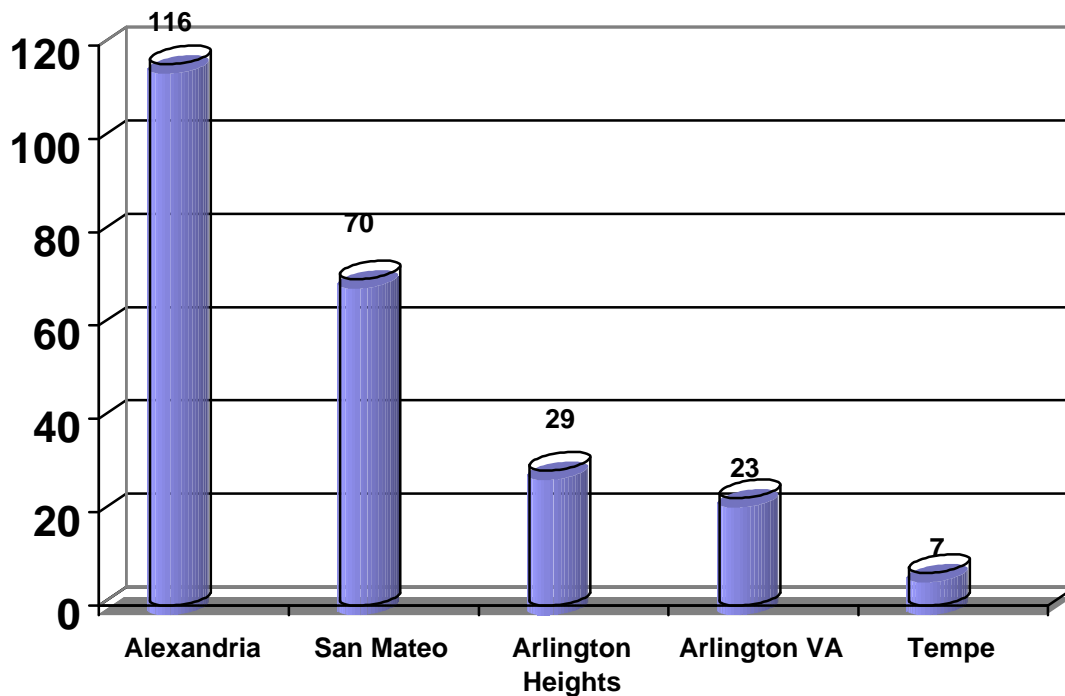**Part-time Permanent**

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

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	585 tm	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 # 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
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 Gms	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 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, 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 another 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 After School 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.

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.

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.