

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
Park and Recreation Commission**

REGULAR MEETING

**Thursday, March 21, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
Cora Kelly Recreation Center
25 W. Reed Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia**

Agenda

- I.** Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake.
- II.** Large Parks Master Plan Update
- III.** Presentation- Fields Allocation Policy
- IV.** Update-Green Play Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy
- V.** Play Space Policy-Carrie Fesperman Redden
- VI.** Approval of Summary Minutes from January 17, 2013 and February 21, 2013
- VII.** Election of Officers and update of Commissioner Assignments
- VIII.** Division Updates:
 - A. Recreation Programs and Service Update - William Chesley
 - B. Park Operations Report – Dinesh Tiwari
 - C. Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations - Jack Browand
 - D. Park Planning Reports – Ron Kagawa and Division Team
- IX.** Director's Report - James Spengler.
- X.** Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):
 - A. Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum
 - B. Youth Sport Committee.
 - C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes
 - D. Freedmen's Cemetery.
 - E. ACPS & Capital Improvements - Judy Guse-Noritake
 - F. Community Gardens Policy- Judy Guse-Noritake
 - G. Ft. Ward - Ripley Forbes
 - H. ACPS School Projects- Judy Guse-Noritake
 - I. Jefferson Houston School - William Cromley
 - J. Beauregard Corridor Plan Task Force - Stephen Beggs
 - K. Open Space - Judy Guse-Noritake
 - L. Braddock Plan Park- Judy Guse-Noritake
- XI.** At the close of the meeting, the Commission will take comments on any other topic from the public
- XII.** Agenda items for April 18, 2013, meeting and location

XIII. List of upcoming public meetings



PROCESS

From September through early December 2012, the public was invited to provide input on the existing conditions and possible future uses for Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks, Chinguapin Park, Four Mile Run Park, Hensley Park, Holmes Run Park, and Simpson Stadium Park. Combined, over 585 Alexandria people responded to the surveys and 45 attended workshops.

To gather information, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA) held a public workshop for each park to discuss park needs, distributed an online survey asking for feedback, and placed hard copy surveys in boxes located at entrances to the park and in the mailboxes of adjacent neighborhood homes. The survey asked park users to identify their usual point of access into the park, the mode of transportation they use to get there, their typical park activities, what they like about the park, and what areas of the park need improvement. Survey participants also prioritized their improvement needs.

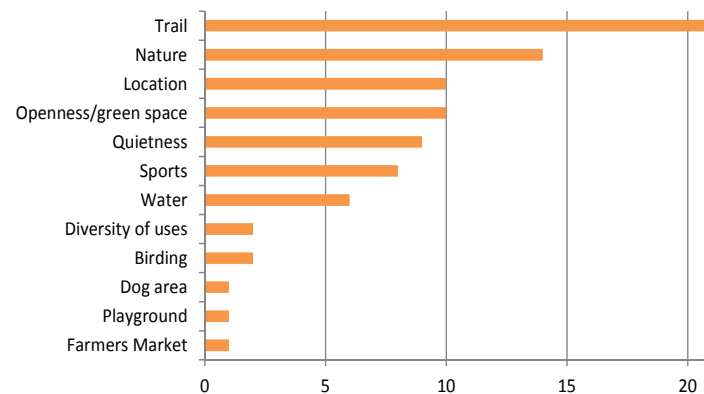
RPCA acknowledges that results of the workshop and survey is not statistically accurate. Rather, the responses are from those who saw the survey and chose to participate. While this is a sample of Park users, it is not representative of all users. As an example, through sports permitting, we know that many more soccer and ballfield users visit the Park than are reported through the survey. For this reason, the information below will be supplemented with site observation and additional data to inform recommendations in the Park Improvement Plans.

Throughout the 2013 winter and spring, RPCA will use the information gathered to determine Park needs and priorities to develop Park Improvement Plans. Staff will ask for feedback on draft recommendations for each Park online and at public workshops in late Spring 2013. Ultimately, these plans will help inform budget decisions and on-going use and facility considerations.

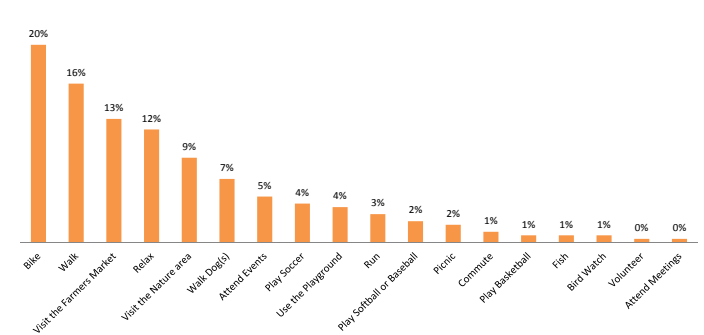
The results of the community feedback are shown below in an abridged version. A full report can be read at: <http://alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=65170>

Four Mile Run Results

What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



What needs improvement in the Four Mile Run Park? *The full Community Feedback Report shows selected statements that support the need for identified improvements.*

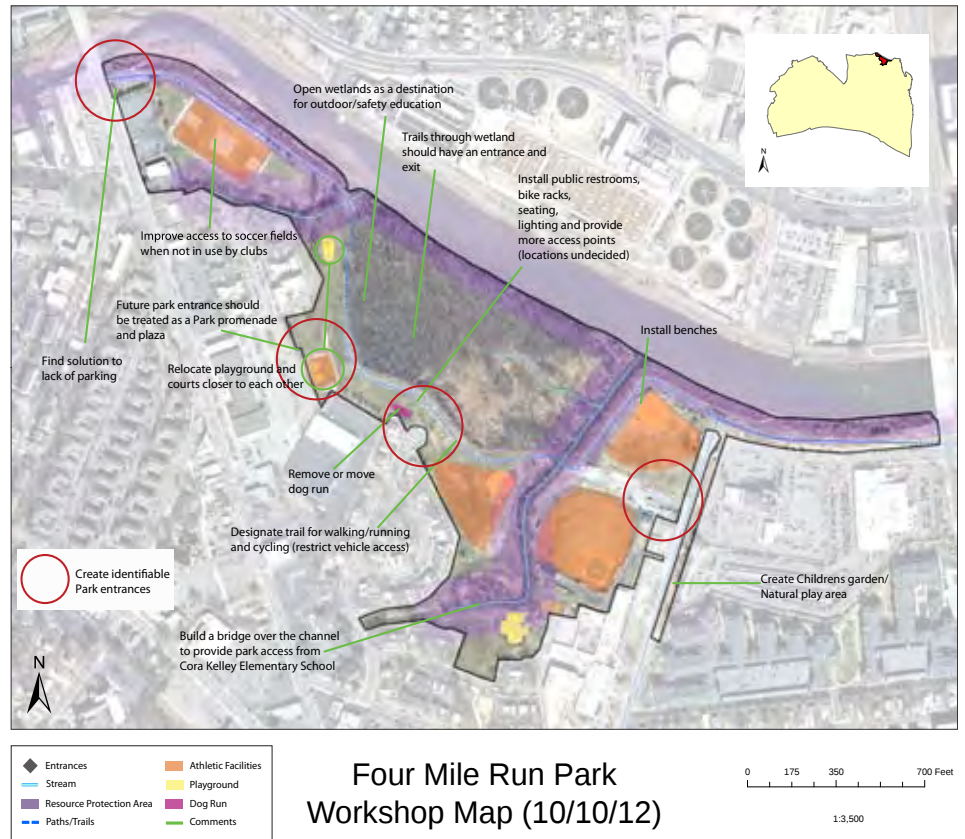


Workshop Exercise

A Four Mile Run workshop was held on October 10, 2012 . The map below shows the aggregated groups comments.

Additional feedback included:

- Promote alternative transport such as biking, install plenty of bike racks and safe places to store them
- Park should have more access points, thinking about new development
- Pavilion for community to gather and interact
- Trails look like a road and invite traffic causing an important safety issue



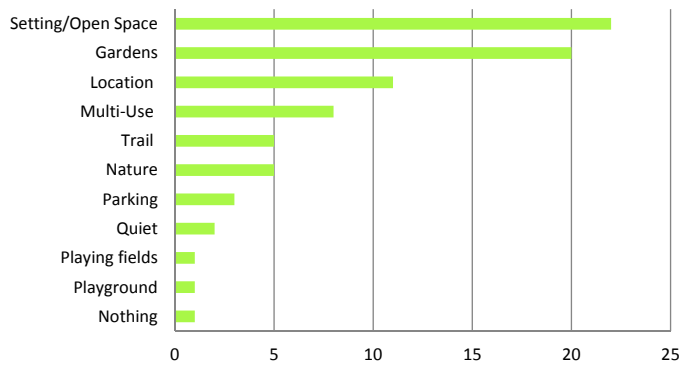
FOUR MILE RUN PARK SUMMARY

There are some consistent themes throughout the community feedback. These include:

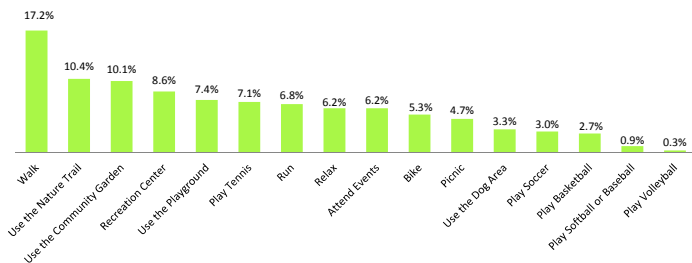
1. **Nature:** The survey and workshop clearly indicated the Park's highest asset and priority for improvement are the Park's natural areas. The Park's features, such as the wetlands and stream, are rare in an urban environment and create bird habitats and unique ecological resources. Yet, the Park's current design and the growth of invasive species have masked these resources and opportunities for environmental education.
2. **Trails and Connections:** One of the dominant uses of the Park is its pedestrian and bicyclist trail. As indicated in the survey and the workshop, the trail is a local and regional destination. However, the trail mainly serves as a connection through the park, rather than attracting people to stay in the Park. Trail amenities, such as bike racks and park activities, would allow people to not only pass through, but to visit. Additionally, more trails through the wetlands and to the Cora Kelly Recreation Center would allow greater park usage and connections to nature.
3. **Security and Park Activities:** The playgroup's major concern with using the Park is its security. This was also emphasized in the workshop and survey. Park activities, such as the playground, are not fully used because they are hidden from the street and isolated, often attracting illegal uses. As suggested in the workshop, one solution to enhance the Park's activities is to cluster uses near the park entrances. This would create a convergence for mixed age groups and programs, allowing more "eyes on the park" and the perception of active, safe spaces. The new Four Mile Run Community Building on Mt. Vernon Avenue has set an example as an active and visible Park area.
4. **Parking:** The majority of Park visitors bike or walk to the Park. However, there are many users that drive, particularly to use the athletic fields. It is likely that most sports players will continue to drive as they are coming from all over the City to use the fields and often carrying athletic equipment. Appropriate parking accommodations must be met for sports field use, but while doing so natural areas will need to be preserved.
5. **Natural play spaces:** The workshop participants indicated an interest in seeing more areas in the park for kids to play on informal park elements, such as boulders and climbing features. The survey also supports the need for a renovated playground with park furniture, while the playgroup hoped to see play features in more visible locations. All three of these interests may be incorporated near park entrances and other locations.

Chinquapin Park Results

What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



What needs improvement in Chinquapin? *The full Community Feedback Report shows selected statements that support the need for identified improvements.)*

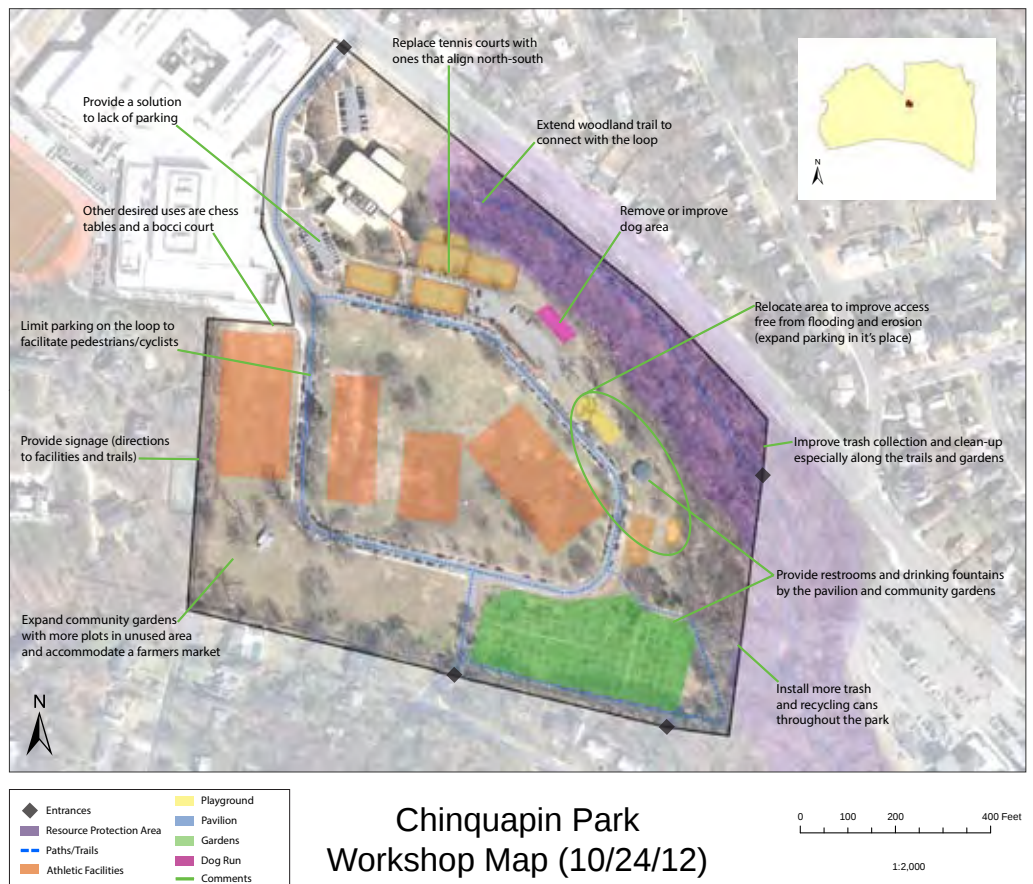


Workshop Exercise

A Chinquapin workshop was held on October 24, 2012. The map below shows the aggregated groups comments.

Additional requests included providing:

- Drinking fountains
- Benches
- Chess tables
- Signage along the trails (educational and directive)
- Distance markers



Chinquapin Park
Workshop Map (10/24/12)

T.C. Williams Students

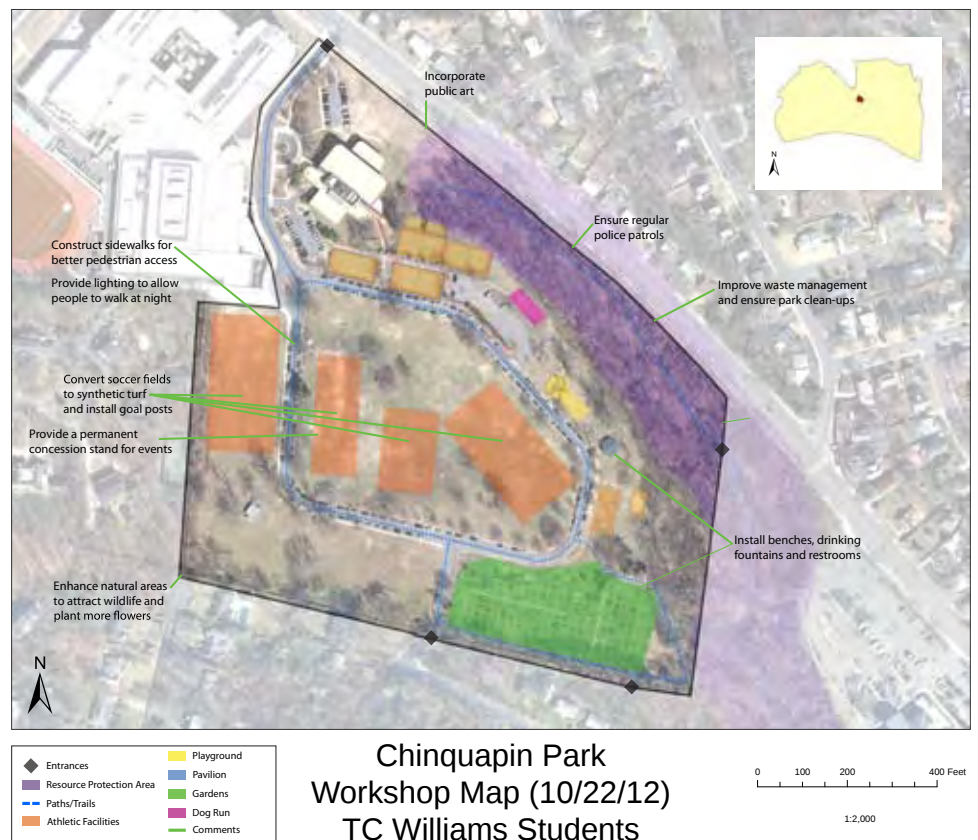
On October 22, 2012, RPCA staff met with thirty T.C. Williams High School students in an after-school program sponsored by Liberty's Promise. The students identified their top five assets as:

1. You can play soccer
2. Walk/run and play tennis (tied)
3. Close proximity for students
4. The field is free to use

Other responses included:

- It's clean and safe
- You can park in it
- There are diverse activities
- You can play lacrosse and basketball
- There is space to ride bikes
- There are places to sit on benches

The aggregated recommendations are shown on the right.



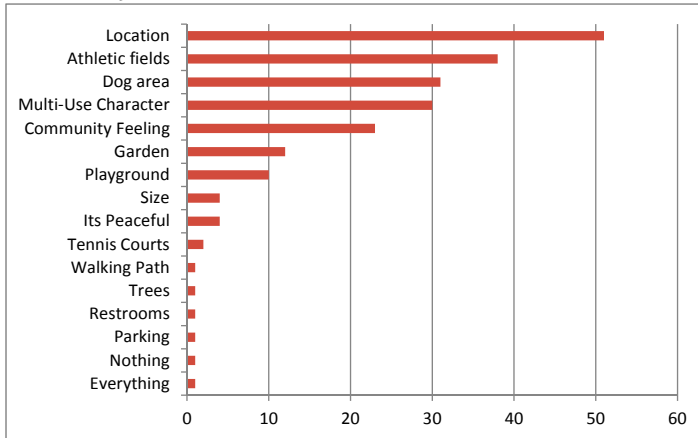
CHINQUAPIN PARK SUMMARY

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

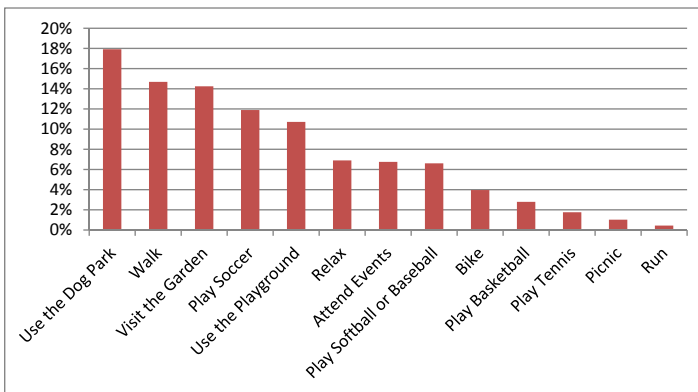
1. **Improve mobility for pedestrians and vehicles.** The survey and both workshops indicated that a parking management strategy is needed to determine how to maximize use of the parking lots and limit parking along the Loop. This may allow the development of a car free lane for walkers and runners, better supporting one of the Park's main uses.
2. **Preserve the pastoral green space, while accommodating multi-use sports.** The survey results clearly stated that the people like the Park because it is open and green. However, the T.C. students remarked that the green space is not usable for their recreational activities. Chinquapin's future design will need to be flexible enough to support multiple uses, such as sports, while still open and natural in character.
3. **Expand or improve the community gardens.** The gardens are highly active, year-round, and create a vibrant community within the Park. The land dedicated to gardening is currently limited and the plots have a very infrequent turnover rate. New ways to expand the gardens and access to gardening will be explored in the improvement plan.
4. **Improve the playground.** As shown in the survey results, the playground is a priority for Park improvements. The workshop also indicated the need to renovate the picnic area, frequently used for summer camps. These two renovation projects may be combined in order to create a multi-use outdoor activity center with equipment geared towards various age groups and abilities.
5. **Improve general maintenance.** The survey and workshop results both stated the need for improved general maintenance of the Park, including better distribution of trash receptacles. Many maintenance improvements can begin prior to other projects and continue as park renovations trigger the implementation of park facility standards.

Eugene Simpson Park Results

What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



What needs improvement in Simpson Park? *The full Community Feedback Report shows selected statements that support the need for identified improvements.)*

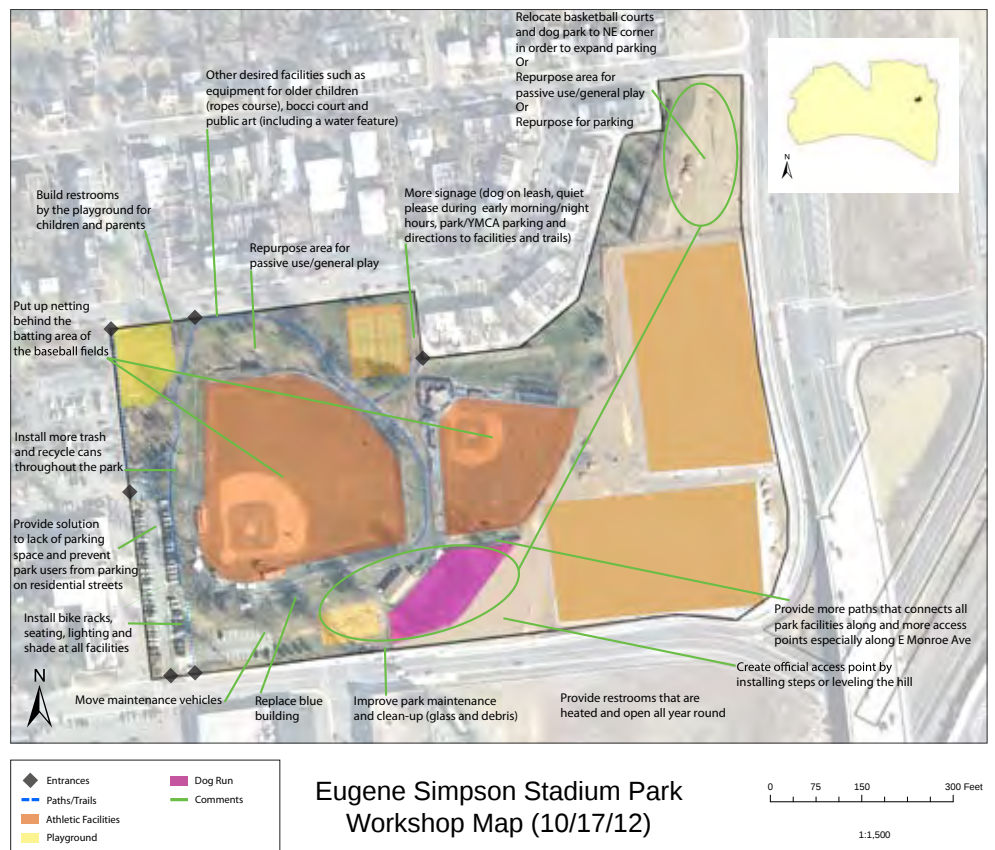


Workshop Exercise

A Simpson workshop was held on October 17, 2012. The map on the right shows the aggregated groups comments.

Additional feedback included:

- Fields are too restricted by fencing/permits
- Turf fields are overused
- The park is generally unattractive and run down
- There are a lack of entrances



Eugene Simpson Stadium Park
Workshop Map (10/17/12)

Del Ray Citizens Association

On November 12, 2012, RPCA staff attended the monthly Del Ray Citizens Association meeting at Mount Vernon Community School. This meeting provided an opportunity for Del Ray residents who were unable to attend the Simpson Workshop to provide feedback. Suggestions included:

- Provide a vegetable garden
- Install distance markers along the running/walking trail
- Enforce an overall landscape plan
- Create a succession plan for the garden
- Install bike racks and a Capital Bike Share platform
- Manage the parking by clearly marking the parking spots for park and YMCA use
- Open the soccer field for the public when its not scheduled through permits
- Create a traffic calming plan for East Monroe Avenue
- Preserve the park and prevent the fields from being a future school site
- Provide more trees and open space

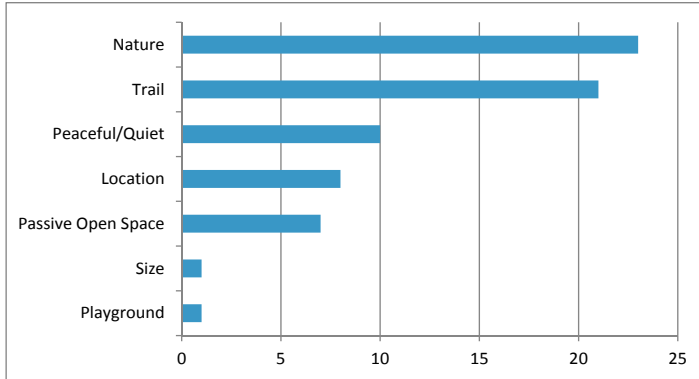
SIMPSON PARK SUMMARY

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

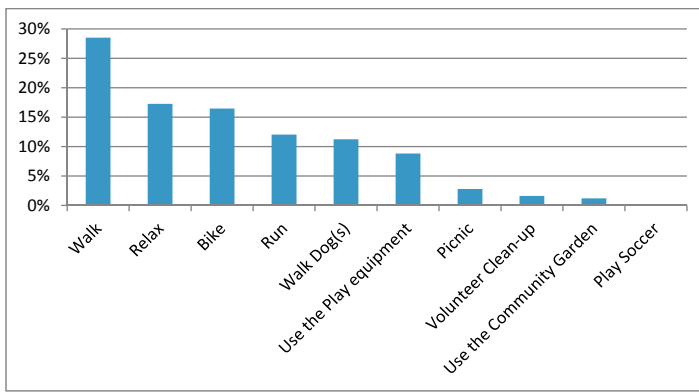
1. **Parking.** The survey and both workshops indicated that a parking management strategy is needed to determine how to control parking during heavy use of the soccer fields. From the users perspective, there needs to be easier access to the fields from parking spaces, yet from the neighborhood point of view, park users should be limited from parking on residential streets. A multi-pronged strategy must be determined to address the parking issue. This may include providing increased access to the fields from Monroe Avenue, altering the field use schedules to minimize conflicting use, better management of the existing spaces, or finding a location for additional spaces.
2. **Access and Circulation.** The community feedback clearly shows the need for improved pathways and entrances to the Park. Currently, park users enter where convenient, such as from Monroe Avenue, rather than where there are formalized paths. These informal entrances have become dangerous and caused erosion. Pathways that better connect park facilities and user patterns would create a more cohesive site.
3. **Dog Park.** The dog park is highly active, year-round and facilitates a strong community among dog owners. Many dog park users feel that the facility lacks amenities such as shade, lighting, new surfacing, and seating. A landscape plan that accommodates the dog park needs would provide more specific recommendations and implementation strategies to improve the site.
4. **Playground.** As shown in the survey results, the playground is a priority for Park improvements. As suggested, a playground renovation should include rubberized surface, areas for ages over five, and more shade. The design could also be better connected to passive use areas, making it family friendly for multiple age groups.
5. **Passive Community Space.** Simpson Park has many facilities to support organized activity for specific user groups. It lacks, however, a welcoming space to throw a frisbee, gather for a picnic, or let kids just “run around.” While the park is compact, better circulation could help carve out open areas for unorganized passive use. Additionally, the fields may be opened on occasion for monitored use without a permit.

Holmes Run Park Results

What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



What needs improvement in Holmes Run Park? *The full Community Feedback Report shows selected statements that support the need for identified improvements.)*



WORKSHOP EXERCISE

A Holmes Run Park workshop was held on November 7, 2012. The map on the right shows the aggregated groups comments. Additional feedback included:

- Fields are too restricted by fencing/permits
- Turf fields are overused
- The park is generally unattractive and run down
- There are a lack of entrances



Holmes Run Park
Workshop Map (11/07/12)

HOLMES RUN PARK SUMMARY

There are some consistent themes throughout the three methods of community feedback. These include:

1. **Security.** The survey and workshop indicate that security is a major concern in the Park. As mentioned earlier in the summary, this concern follows several sexual assaults that occurred in the Park in 2012. Since that time, the Alexandria Police Department has increased their presence in the area and has worked closely with the neighborhood groups to be alert to unusual park user behavior. As suggested by the police and discussed in the workshop, one easy way to address the security situation is to clear brush where it creates hiding locations and to install mile makers along the trail so that park users can easily identify where in the park they are. Many respondents asked for better lighting in the park as well. Lighting in some locations, such as along the Beatley Bridge may be appropriate, however, a careful lighting plan must also consider the fact that increased park lighting may have a negative effect by inviting illegal activity to take place in the park at odd hours.
2. **Shared-Use Trail.** The shared-use path in Holmes Run is highly active and used by runners, cyclists, and pedestrians. Because the path is so heavily used, better markings to separate the uses may help avoid dangerous situations such as collisions between cyclists and children. Flood control is also a big concern along the trail. The City of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services is currently reviewing options for improving the portion of the trail underneath the 395 overpass. Areas of the trail near the Tarleton Park portion of the Park may be studied in the future for better flood control.
3. **Natural Areas.** Holmes Run Park is set within one of the most beautiful, natural areas of the City. Its quiet, peaceful setting is what draws many people to the neighborhood to live and recreate. However, throughout the park there are areas where invasive plants pose a threat to the native wildlife. There are also many locations within the All Veterans Park area of Holmes Run Park where invasive species have grown so dense that they block the view of the stream and have created dangerous, hidden areas. An effort to remove and curtail the overgrowth could help enrich the Park's natural health.
4. **All Veterans Park.** Throughout the survey results, many people stated that there needs to be a draw to the Park for their family to use it. The All Veterans Park portion of the Park has the potential to be an area to meet the need for passive play, such as picnics, frisbee throwing, or other unorganized recreational activity. It also, has a beautiful setting along the stream, though currently hidden by overgrowth. As suggested during the workshop, a re-design of this portion of the park may open the space to be more usable and bridge connections between the library and shared-use Holmes Run trail could lead people to the Park and activate the site.
5. **Play equipment.** Many of the play equipment pieces scattered throughout the Park are dated. While some pieces have recently been replaced, more equipment and natural play features that cater to all ages could help draw more people to the Park and become a greater neighborhood asset.

Hensley Park Results

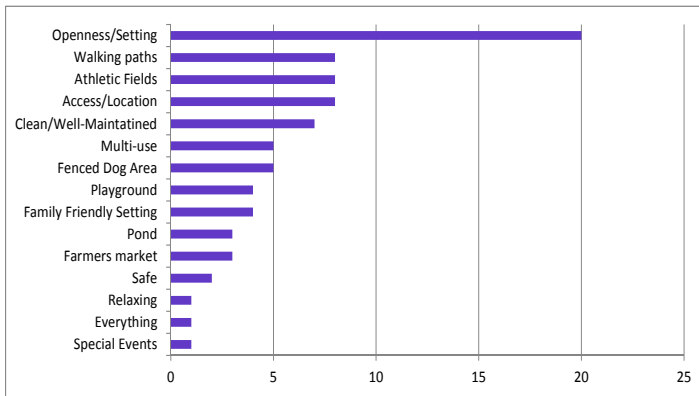
Despite efforts to obtain community feedback, including online and hard copy-survey distribution and communication through athletic coaches, Park Planning only received seven completed surveys for Hensley Park. There were no participants for the Hensley workshop. Therefore, Park Planning relied on information provided by the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) members for feedback on Hensley Park.

The YSAB comments and comments from the seven completed surveys included the following:

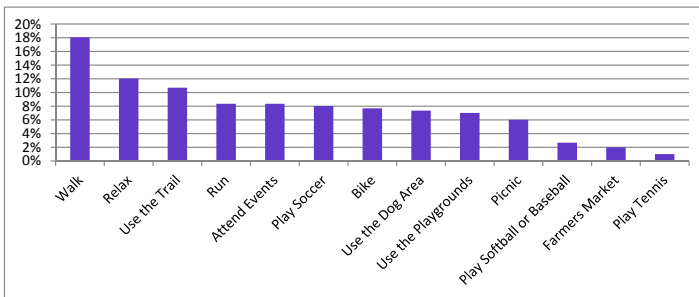
- Address drainage issues on all three fields
- Turf the upper field and improve parking
- Add more trees
- Improve parking
- Improve the turf condition of the softball fields

Ben Brenman and Boothe Parks Results

What do you like about the Park?



What do you do in the Park?



What needs improvement in Brenman and Boothe Parks?

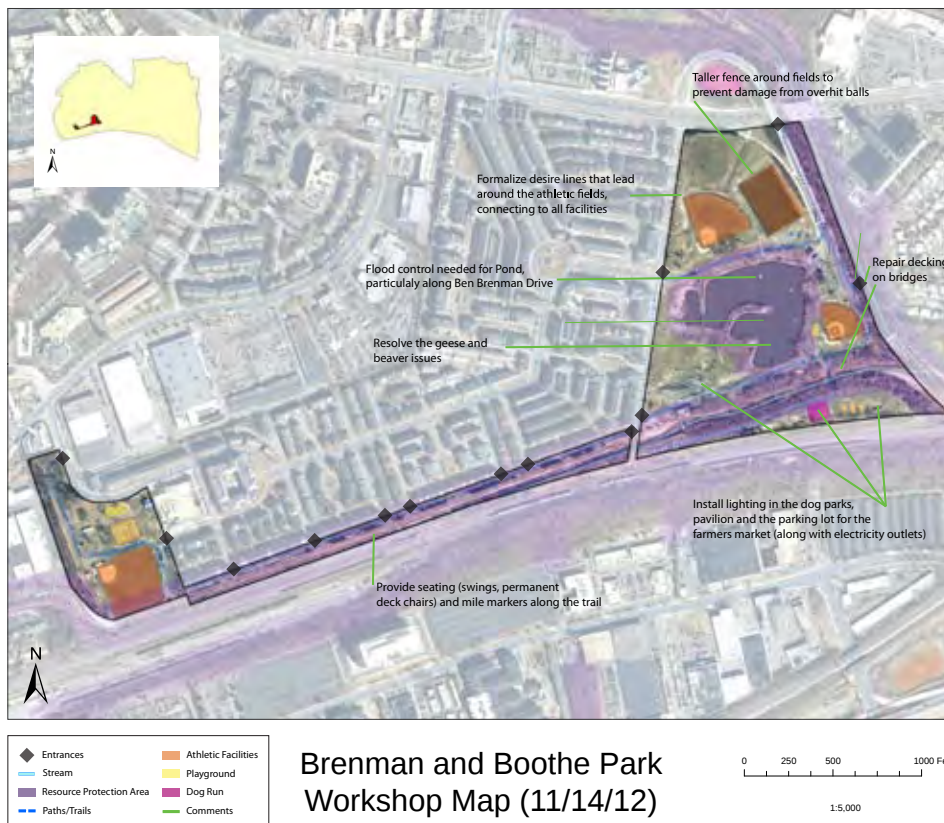
The full Community Feedback Report shows selected statements that support the need for identified improvements.)



WORKSHOP EXERCISE

A Boothe and Brenman Parks workshop was held on November 14, 2012 The map below shows the aggregated groups comments. Additional feedback included:

- Need wayfinding signage
- Improve trash can placement



Brenman and Boothe Park Workshop Map (11/14/12)

BEN BRENNAN AND BOOTHE PARKS SUMMARY

There are some consistent themes throughout the two methods of community feedback. These include:

1. **Dog area.** Participants in the workshop and the survey named the dog area and its surrounding landscapes as Brennan Park's highest improvement need. This particular area of the Park is very isolated and dog park users feel unsafe walking to such a hidden location, particularly when visiting after work hours in the Fall and Winter. Adding lighting to the area may not be feasible because it would require bringing electrical conduit over Backlick Run, however, there is potential for installing alternative lighting such as solar lighting. In addition, a basic site clean-up and minor re-design of the picnic and dog park area could increase site activity and visibility.
2. **Stormwater Pond.** The Brennan Pond is a working stormwater retention pond, fed by rainwater traveling through the City storm sewers, the pond treats the water with aeration fountains before the water works its way to the Potomac River. The system is designed to capture any trash traveling with the water before it makes its way into the pond. However, as many respondents noted, trash often escapes the filters and enters the pond. The trash trap is difficult to clean and maintain. An increase of maintenance funds would be required to maintain the pond to its highest standard. As technology improves, new filter systems can also be explored.
3. **Boothe Playground.** Many survey respondents stated that the play equipment in Boothe Playground is outdated and spread out around the Park. For reasons acknowledged in the comments, this playground was previously identified for renovation, which is anticipated to occur in 2013/2014. The playground will be relocated and consolidated into two areas; a new playground will be located near Samuel Tucker Elementary School to provide better access and security for school children. Younger children, not enrolled in school, will have access to a new tot lot located near the exiting picnic pavilion, during school hours. Consolidating the equipment to these locations will also allow more open, passive space near the picnic pavilion.
4. **Wayfinding signage.** The Brennan and Boothe Park system is large and many people have difficulty finding their way around the Park and to certain activities. As suggested in the workshop, directional wayfinding signage would help visitors navigate their way around the Park and give a stronger identity to the Park through coordinated graphics.
5. **Park furniture.** According to the survey, one of the highest Park uses is "relaxing." To supplement this activity, respondents and workshop participants commented on the need for additional park benches, as well as more bike racks.

Next Steps and Timeline

Using information gathered in the Community Feedback process and existing condition reports, the Park Planning Division is currently developing draft park improvement plans. The plans include site recommendations and phasing and funding strategies.

Once the drafts are complete, the Division will present the plans to the Park and Recreation Commission and the public both online and in workshop sessions. Subsequently, Park Planning will refine the draft plans to reflect community feedback and then release final plans in Summer 2013.

The implementation of the plans will be incremental so that changes in the parks will occur over time as resources are available.



For more information on the Park Improvement Plans, contact Dana Wedeles at dana.wedeles@alexandriava.gov or (703) 746-5491.



Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Policy, and Model

DRAFT
March 2013



Acknowledgements

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Allison Silberberg, Vice Mayor

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Timothy B. Lovain

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I. Foreword

January 25, 2013

The Honorable Mayor William D. Euille and Members of City Council
Room 2300, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Model for the Department of Recreation,
Parks and Cultural Activities

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council:

The City's Guiding Principles call for our organization to align its work-plan with our strategic plan, execute against our strategy, promote a culture of leadership and ownership at all levels of the organization, and to promote a culture of service excellence, creativity, and entrepreneurship. To these ends, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) is recommending a Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Model and Policy to help guide in decision-making. The policy will provide the department with a tool to help make strategic recommendations for resource allocation for programs and services. Additionally, the policy outlines a benefits-based methodology (an industry benchmark) for setting program and service fees.

Cost recovery for recreation and parks programs and services is a standard practice throughout the country. Determining a cost recovery rate addresses the policy question of how much of the service costs the public should support versus costs assessed to the participants. National benchmarks show that on average, parks and recreation departments recover approximately 34 percent of their total annual operating budget through fees and charges. Currently, the cost recovery rate for Alexandria is 12 percent. In the Northern Virginia area, cost recovery rates vary widely from Alexandria (12%) and Arlington (22.4%) at the lower end; to Loudon County (63%) and Fairfax at (59%), at the higher end.

RPCA used best practice research from GreenPlay LLC to develop a resource allocation and cost recovery model specific to Alexandria. The work draws from the 2011 Recreation Community Needs Assessment and additional citizen focus group sessions held in 2012. A specific model and policy will support equity among all potential users of services provided through RPCA. Services that provide a mostly public benefit would receive more tax dollar allocation versus those with a mostly participant only benefit. In addition, RPCA will continue to provide fee reductions to citizens for core services based on the economic needs under its Fees Assistance Policy.

Our intent is to use this policy, once approved by City Council, to determine updates to the recreation fee schedule presented during the annual budget process. In the future, fees for programs and services will reflect the community/individual benefit methodology. Those programs and services with the highest community benefit will receive the highest subsidy, while those programs and services with an individual benefit will receive little or no subsidy and will pay a user fee. The recommended cost recovery model and the practices contained in the plan are consistent with our City's strategic plan.

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will continue to engage the community in the implementation of this plan, and staff will provide regular updates to City Council on its progress.

Sincerely,

Rashad M. Young
City Manager

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II. Abstract

In an effort to continually improve and enhance services and overall organizational effectiveness, the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) Department began an extensive process to create a ***Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy***. This process included an analysis of the Department's core values, vision, and mission; how department operations align with the City Council's Strategic plan; and the City's Four Guiding Principles. The process included a review and assessment of services including programs and facilities, categorization of Departmental services based upon the level of community versus individual benefit, identification of direct and indirect costs, and an evaluation of current pricing methods. All of the components of this process directly influence current cost recovery and subsidy allocation levels, the establishment of future cost recovery and subsidy allocation goals, and future pricing strategies and methods. In keeping with Council's FY 2014 Budget Guidance Resolution, this comprehensive review and analysis will assist the Department in refining its service delivery and financial management philosophy as it moves forward in efforts to sustain services over both the short and long-term.

Policy Issue

According to GreenPlay's experience with agencies all over the United States, and Dr. John Crompton, a leading expert on parks and recreation financing, the national average of cost recovery in public parks and recreation is approximately **34 percent**. Although RPCA cost recovery level (12 percent) is considerably lower than the national average, it is important to note that communities across the country vary in terms of how they allocate direct and indirect costs; qualifiers such as availability of resources, size, scope of services, community demand, and ability to pay have an impact. Therefore, different departments must maintain cost recovery/subsidy levels that are appropriate based upon their own community's characteristics, values, and available funding.

The City of Alexandria is very much behind the industry standard in determining pricing for programs and services. The Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy will provide a rational, thoughtful approach to allocating resources and for setting fees for programs and services that will begin to bring our City closer to what is occurring in the industry. The City is always mindful of those residents who are financially challenged. The City believes that a fee structure should not be a barrier to participation, and to that end, has included in this proposal a Fee Assistance Policy to assist those in financial need.

Recommendations to Council

Included in this document are two policies for approval by City Council.

1. Resource Allocation Philosophy, Model, and Policy
2. Financial Assistance Policy

Proposed Resource Allocation Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model and Policy



Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Financial Policies and Procedures

Resource Allocation Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model and Policy

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department

Draft Created: January 1, 2013

Approval Level: City Council

Approval Date:

Scheduled review date (frequency)

Primary Contact: James Spengler

Summary

The department is tasked with cost recovery goals in accordance with the City's annual budget allocation and financial constraints. To that end, the department sets fees and charges in relation to these goals, market conditions, benchmarking, demand, cost recovery targets, and industry trends. A financial assistance policy and process was also developed to allow for maximum resident participation in City Programs and to ensure that no one has a barrier to participation.

Cost Recovery Policy

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department offers services that are funded through a combination of user fees, taxes, grants, and donations. Fees and charges shall be assessed in an equitable manner in accordance with the following fee and charge assessment schedule. Through a special initiative, services that provide recreational opportunities for populations with the fewest recreational alternatives (youth, limited income, seniors, and families) may be more heavily supported by grants, donations, or property taxes than user fees to ensure that the population is well served by Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities programs. Percentages shall be considered as guidelines; however, special circumstances, the nature and cost of each program, and persons to be served should be taken into consideration.

Process

- The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities shall conduct an annual comprehensive review of cost recovery targets.
- Programs will be sorted and assigned a cost recovery tier using the Pyramid Methodology.
- A Fee Structure/Rate review will be done annually to determine viability of programs.
- Programs plans are developed and approved with fees set within the tier cost recovery target minimum.
- As part of the City's annual budget submission the Department's Fiscal Year fee schedule will be submitted.

City of Alexandria's Cost Recovery Model

The following model represents all categories of services currently provided or those which may be provided in the future by the Department. It is based upon the degree of benefit to the community (Tier 1 [Low end of the pyramid] Mostly Community Benefit) or individual (Tier 5 [Top of the pyramid] Mostly Individual Benefit); the values of the Alexandria community; and the vision and mission of the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department. This model and policy forms the basis for setting fees and charges (see Final Cost Recovery Model, Resource Allocation Philosophy, and Policy Document dated January 1, 2013).

Services can always perform better than the target tier minimum cost recovery goals due to demand and market conditions.

- a. **Tier 5 and Tier 4** Programs and services that have a high individual benefit and should incur no subsidy. Our Tier 4 and 5 programs are revenue positive over direct costs.
Tier 5 services are targeted to recover a minimum of **175 percent** of direct costs.
Tier 4 targeted at **125 percent** of direct costs.
 - Concession/Vending
 - Merchandise
 - Private/Semi-Private Lessons
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Private
 - Organized Parties
 - Permitted Services
 - Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Advanced
 - Tenant Leases
 - Equipment Rentals
 - Trips
 - Specialized Activities/Camps
 - Drop-in Childcare/Babysitting
 - Professional Services
- b. **Tier 3** Programs and Services provide a balance of community and individual benefit. Primarily fee supported services with little or no tax investment (as an average, **Tier 3** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **50 percent** of direct costs, and some of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers).
 - Classes and Programs – Intermediate
 - Tournaments and Leagues – Adult (100% cost recovery to support youth)
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Government
 - Tournaments and Leagues – Youth (50% cost recovery)
 - Work Study/Internship/Community Service Program
 - Social Affinity Groups
- c. **Tier 2** Services are programs and services with a primary community benefit, and a substantial tax investment with minimal to partial fee support (as an average, **Tier 2** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **20 percent** of direct costs, and many of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers).
 - Monitored Park/Facility Usage
 - Classes and Programs – Beginning/Multi-Ability
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Affiliates/Grantees
 - Community-wide Events
 - Preschool
 - Out-of-School-Time Program/Summer Camps

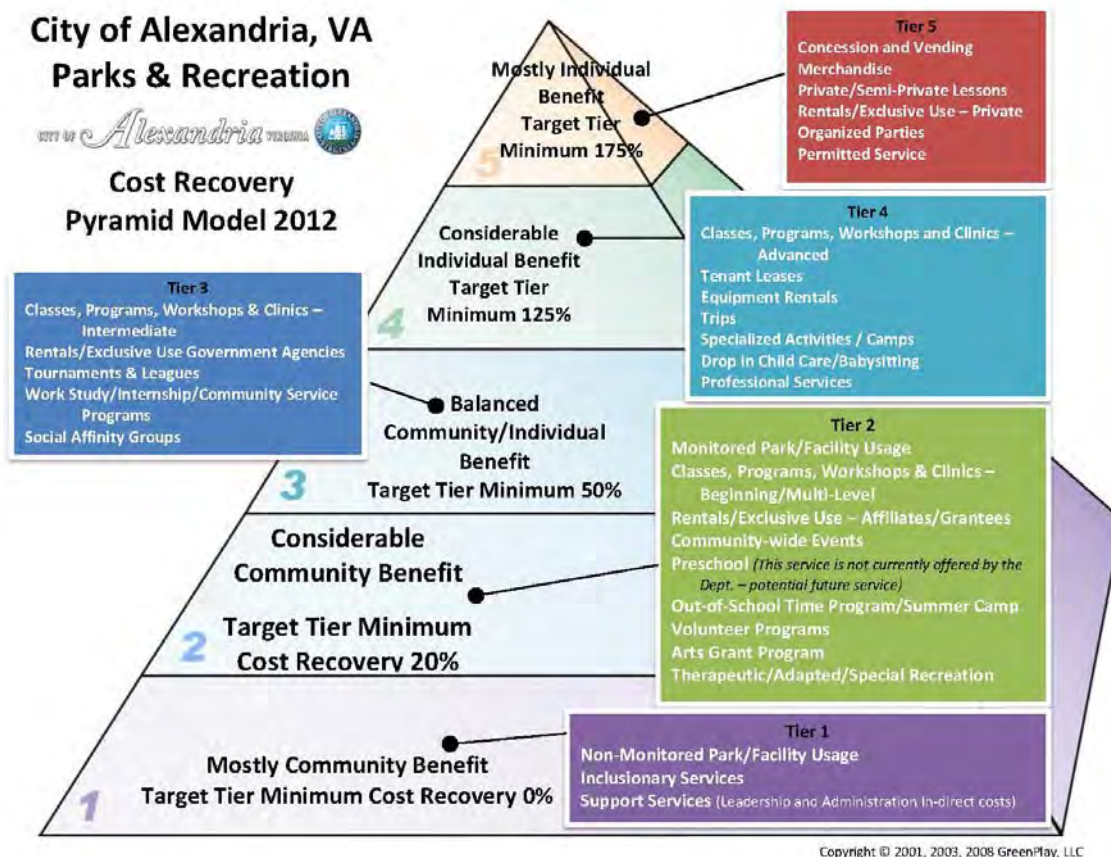
- Volunteer Program
 - Arts Grant Program
 - Therapeutic/Adaptive/Special Recreation
- e. **Tier 1** programs and services are completely community benefit. Full tax investment with little or no fee support (**Tier 1** services are targeted to recover **0 percent** of direct costs, although some of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers).
- Non-Monitored Park/Facility Usage
 - Inclusionary Services
 - Support Services

Cost of Services

The following general definitions will be used to determine the cost of providing all services.

Direct Cost: Includes all of the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service, program, or facility. These expenses would not exist without the program or service and often increase exponentially.

Indirect Cost: Encompasses overhead (fixed and variable) including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would exist without any of the specific programs or facilities.



Current Financial Assistance Policy



Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Financial Policies and Procedures

Financial Assistance Policy-Recreation Services

Draft Created: July 20, 2012

Approval Level: City Council

Approval Date:

Scheduled review date (frequency)

Primary Contact: William Chesley

Summary

The Department encourages resident participation in City programs. A financial assistance policy and process is developed to allow for maximum resident participation in City programs.

Eligibility

All City residents who meet qualifications are eligible. All City programs or affiliate programs are eligible for financial assistance. Some classes in the Market Rate portfolio may have limited availability to ensure cost recovery goals.

Policy: Fee assistance may be granted according to the following schedule:

- 40% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch at an Alexandria City School.
- 50% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch and the family receives nutrition assistance.
- 70% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch, and also receives TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), or where they reside in a City of Alexandria temporary shelter.

Procedures:

1. Resident completes the application and submits accompanying documentation to the Recreation Program Manager/Center Director. Applications must be accompanied by written documentation.
2. Recreation Program Manager/Center Director are to review documentation and verify.
3. Recreation Program Managers/Center Directors may approve and sign the application as the Department Director Designee.
4. The applications must be stored with the registrations and made available upon request.
5. Any fee assistance requested that differs from the stated policy, or without documentation, must be approved by the Division Chief or Deputy Director of Recreation Services.

Roles and Responsibilities

All Regional Program Directors, Recreation Managers, and Managers on Duty, along with Front Desk Personnel are to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

Contacts

William Chesley Deputy Director, Recreation Services

David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services

A Sample application can be found in Appendix C.

Recommendations: Goals and Strategies

GreenPlay has made several recommendations and strategies for consideration that will assist the City's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities department in becoming a more sustainable organization. The recommended Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery strategies provide a logical and thoughtful philosophy that supports the City's Guiding Principles and Strategic Plan. The summary of the recommended goals are as follows.

Goal 1: Formally adopt revised Departmental policies to guide pricing decisions.

Goal 2: Fund and leverage the *Financial Assistance Program* (reduced or waived fees) through various funding sources.

Goal 3: Define the role and responsibilities of "Affiliates/Grantees" so that resource allocation can be tied to those with allied interests.

Goal 4: Adjust fees to align with Tier Minimum as recommended. Adjust fees that have the greatest departure from cost recovery targets.

Goal 5: Review, seek, and implement alternative funding sources in lieu or addition to fees.

Goal 6: Seek strategies to Reduce expenditures.

Goal 7: Adjust program management strategies in determining program offerings.

Goal 8: Improve marketing efforts.

Goal 9: Consider additional potential future opportunities.

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III. Policy Development Executive Summary

In an effort to continually improve and enhance services and overall organizational effectiveness, the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) Department began an extensive process to create a **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy**. This process included an analysis of the Department's core values, vision, and mission; a review and assessment of services including programs and facilities; categorization of Departmental services based upon the level of community versus individual benefit; an identification of direct and indirect costs; and an evaluation of current pricing methods. All of the components of this process directly influence current cost recovery and subsidy allocation levels, the establishment of future cost recovery and subsidy allocation goals, and future pricing strategies and methods. This comprehensive review and analysis will assist the Department in refining its service delivery and financial management philosophy as it moves forward in efforts to sustain services over both the short and long-term.

Having a **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** will assist in answering challenging questions from City leadership and from citizens such as:

- Are our programs priced fairly and equitably?
- How will we continue to fund Departmental facilities and services in relationship to future budget constraints?
- Are we using funding in a responsible manner?
- Is there a methodology for the distribution of subsidy (funds used in excess of what is collected by direct fees)? If so, are we transparent?
- Does the way we charge for services (facilities, programs, etc.) support the Departmental values, vision, and mission?

Core Values, Project Vision, and Mission

The initial step in the process included a review of the **City's Strategic Plan and 4 Guiding Principles** and how the Department's **mission** fulfills that plan. The City of Alexandria RPCA Department has a current mission statement.

"The mission of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities is to promote a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity through the development of effective and efficient recreation programs, facilities and parks for all citizens and residents to enjoy."

Project Vision

This **Resource Allocation, Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** establishes a rationale for resource allocation and cost recovery, and identifies and recommends areas for fee increases or pursuit of alternative funding.

The project focused on short and long-term implementation strategies that efficiently and effectively utilize the community's investment for critical parks and recreation needs. This study aligns available and future resources with services and commitments to include desired level of service, sustainable fiscal stewardship, and industry best practices in operating and maintaining the Department's infrastructure and providing services. The process produced a systematic implementation plan to ensure that the Department is moving in the right direction to meet the needs of the Alexandria community.

Cost Recovery and Subsidy Allocation

As part of the *Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy* project, and in light of current budgetary conditions, the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities elected to examine their resource allocation practices and develop a consensual philosophy, model, and policy. Every City department was asked to take budget cuts this fiscal year. The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities department made its reductions. Some adjustments were made due to the Department's commitment to increase projected revenue from higher program fees. In light of this, the goal is to improve the Department's financial sustainability forecast. Its leadership is forward thinking and desires to have a philosophy, model, and policy in place if and when hard decisions need to be made.

Cost Recovery is the basis for the degree to which operational and maintenance costs of service provision are financially supported by user fees and/or other applicable funding mechanisms such as grants, partnerships, donations, sponsorships, volunteers, or other alternative funding sources. In contrast, **subsidy** includes designated General Fund sources such as property taxes, or other taxing mechanisms that financially support operations and maintenance of services. Subsidy dollars provide for service costs that are not recovered by either user fees or other forms of alternative funding. Essentially, subsidy is the community's investment in parks and recreation.

The City strives to meet the demand for high quality facilities and programs. Efforts to meet this demand could be possible through an increase in cost recovery for appropriate programs and services. This enhances the ability to generate revenue while maintaining or increasing the participation needed to generate new dollars. The *Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy* takes into account the funding philosophies that will guide future pricing and allocation of resources.

One outcome of this project is to lay the foundation for development of a philosophy for how to determine and implement fees. Another outcome is a mechanism and consistent language for communicating how taxpayer funding is used. The ambitious long-term financial goal is to lessen the Department's dependence on tax funds by approaching, or even exceeding cost recovery goals to be determined through this process.

Current Cost Recovery Accounting

The Department also collects specific amounts of revenue through fees and charges for the various services provided. These revenues are primarily collected from participants utilizing somewhat individualized services such as classes, lessons, admissions, rentals, and merchandise purchases.

Current Cost Recovery

Total cost recovery (non-tax revenue sources) for the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is currently around 12 percent in the General Fund. This means that the Department is recovering 12 percent of the total operating expenses from fees and other forms of alternative funding such as sales, grants, gifts, transfers, and interest income. This may, along with community satisfaction ratings, indicate very high City Council and community support for use of tax dollars to fund the many existing services of the Department.

FY 12 Total Expense Budget (actual)	\$19,817,697
FY 12 Total Revenue (projected)	\$2,362,900
FY 12 Cost Recovery	12%

Cost Recovery by Division or Cost Center:

Recreation Services

FY 12 Total Budget	\$8,878,946
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$2,022,674
FY 12 Cost Recovery	23%

Park Operations

FY 12 Total Budget	\$6,819,854
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$0
FY 12 Cost Recovery	0%

Cultural Activities

FY 12 Total Budget	\$697,157
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$0
FY 12 Cost Recovery	0%

Park Planning

FY 12 Total Budget	\$493,315
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$0
FY 12 Cost Recovery	0%

Leadership and Management

FY 12 Total Budget	\$1,788,624
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$0
FY 12 Cost Recovery	0%

Marinas and Special Events

FY 12 Total Budget	\$1,160,000
FY 12 Total Revenue	\$340,256
FY 12 Cost Recovery	29%

Pyramid Model and Focus Groups

The City held an internal meeting, as well as four public forums in which residents representing the Alexandria community and a variety of interest groups, were engaged in focus groups. This served to introduce them to the **Pyramid Methodology**, a current best practice approach that assists agencies in identifying a financial management philosophy detailing the level to which all Department services should be subsidized, if at all. Residents were asked to rank, in order of the degree of community or individual benefit, services for diverse populations with varying interests. They subsequently guided the development of proposed resource allocation levels for the City of Alexandria and the RPCA Department, categorizing each Department service based upon perceived beneficiaries of services, community values, vision, and mission.

The resulting Pyramid Model target cost recovery levels are intended to account for all direct and indirect costs, while working toward increasing the cost recovery of many services. The intent is to help the City adjust to the current economic climate and budget restraints, while not decreasing services.

Recommendations – Operational and Financial Strategies

Once the analysis and process detailed above was completed, City staff developed **Operational and Financial Strategies** outlining planning and implementation efforts intended to put the **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** into action. This internal working document articulates the broader goals and action steps that must be achieved to realize the intended results of this comprehensive process. These goals and actions will move the organization forward in a logical and organized way while maintaining connectivity to the steps in the financial planning process.

The **Recommendations – Operational and Financial Strategies** address the following priority broad-based thematic goals:

- Formally adopt revised departmental policies
- Fund and leverage the formal Financial Assistance Program
- Clearly define the role and responsibilities of “Affiliates/Grantees”
- Make fee adjustments
- Review, seek, and implement alternative funding sources
- Reduce expenditures
- Adjust program management strategies
- Improve marketing efforts
- Consider additional potential future opportunities

Goals and action steps have been addressed in detail in the **Recommendations: Operational and Financial Strategies** portion of this document.

Cost Recovery Targets, Pricing, and Goals Workshop

As a last step, staff participated in a **Cost Recovery Targets, Pricing, and Goals Workshop** intended to create a consistent, fair, and equitable approach to the development of cost recovery targets and service fees and charges based upon established resource allocation goals.

The outcome of this comprehensive process resulted in the proposed **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** intended to prove the current fee setting practices and annual Council approval process. The purpose is to guide the future development and management of the Department’s operational budget and serve as the foundation for setting fees and charges. It is also a resource for identifying opportunities for using alternative funding sources.

Conclusion

The primary goal of the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) Department’s **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** is to establish organizational sustainability through a logical and thoughtful philosophy that supports the core values, mission, and future vision of the City of Alexandria and its community.

As a result of this comprehensive process and impending results, the Department will begin implementing strategies that align financial resource allocation with newly developed cost recovery goals. These efforts are intended to create financial and service sustainability for the organization and as a result from the following steps in the process:

- Introduction to the Pyramid Methodology – Resource Allocation Philosophy
- Cost Recovery Targets, Pricing, and Goals Workshop – Development of a Pricing Philosophy
- Recommendations: Operational and Financial Strategies – Internal Goals and Action Plan



Cost Recovery Pyramid – Operating Budget

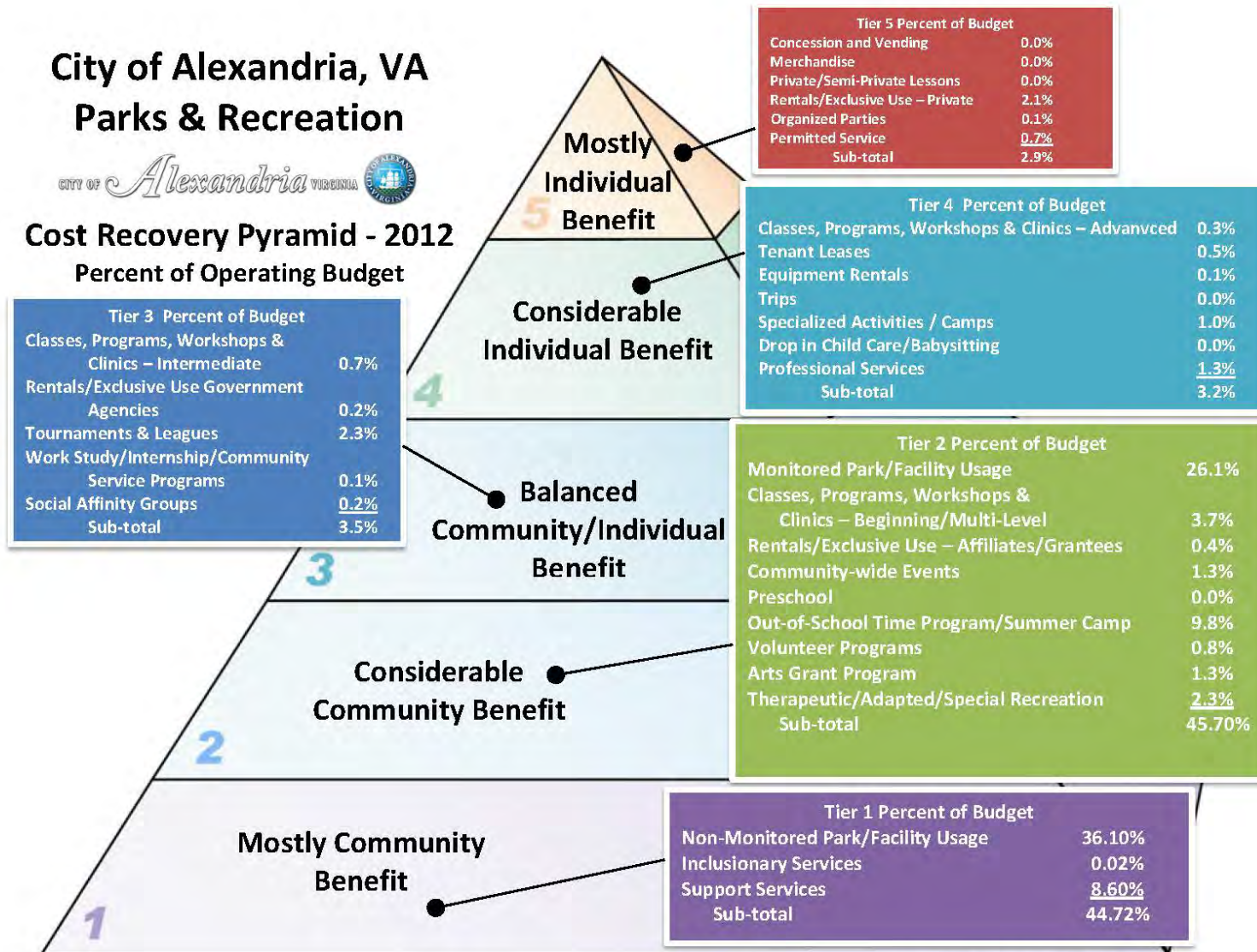
The Pyramid on the following page shows the resulting consensus placement of the categories of service on the five tiers of the Pyramid, and the percent of the current operating budget allocation represented by the foundational two tiers (which represents 90.4% of the total operating budget of Alexandria RPCA Department).

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City of Alexandria, VA Parks & Recreation



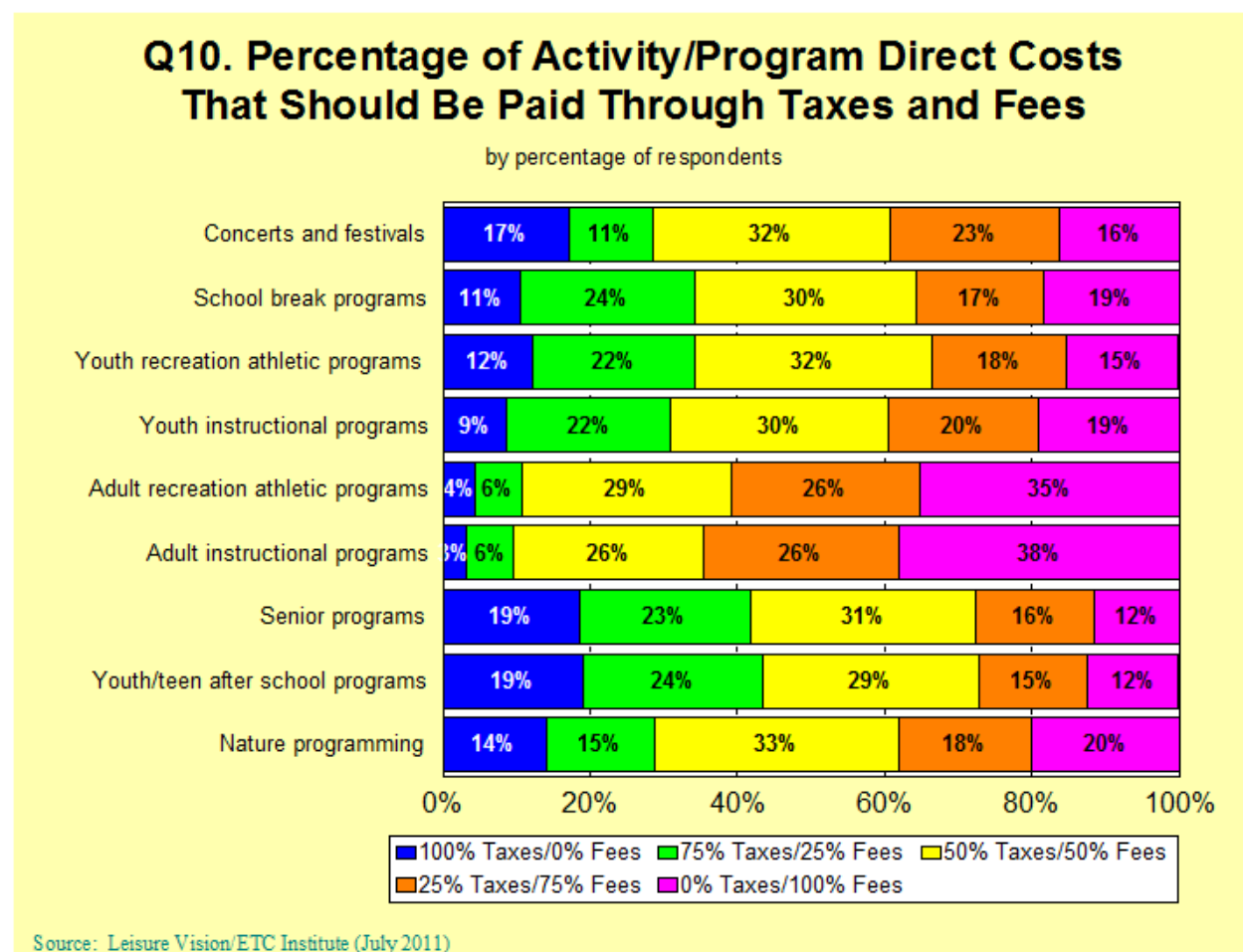
Cost Recovery Pyramid - 2012 Percent of Operating Budget



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IV. The Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model and Policy Process

In July 2011, the Department conducted a survey in which the public was asked the percentage of direct costs for a selection of programs or activities that should be paid through taxes, and the percentage that should be covered by fees and charges. It was evident that the majority of the respondents felt that there should be some percentage of direct costs recovered through fees and charges. This led to the administration deciding that they needed to develop a resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy to guide the fair and equitable taxpayer investment choices, and to be the basis for establishing fees and charges.



The Core Team

A core team of staff members was formed to initiate the **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** process. This team was comprised of staff from the RPCA and Finance Departments. The team was also assisted by several support staff during various portions of the project.

David Miller – Team Leader Division Chief Recreation Services
Jack Browand- Division Chief Marinas/Waterfront/Special Events
William Chesley-Deputy Director Recreation Services
Cheryl Anne Colton-Regional Program Director Cultural Activities
Barbara Farrington-Recreation Manager II
Mark Kelly- Naturalist/Recreation Manager
Faye Maslaki-Fiscal Officer
Lyndon Murray-Regional Program Director Recreation Services
Robert Taylor-Division Chief Park Operations
Dana Wedeles-Urban Planner Park Planning
Sheila Whiting- Regional Program Director Recreation Services

Engaging the Community

Stakeholder engagement is critical to collective “buy-in,” consensus, and endorsement of the process. Development of the **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** included a significant number of educational workshops. These workshops introduced each component of the process and engaged stakeholder groups in interactive dialogue and exercises that led to the design and development of each of the major components of the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy, and the Operational and Financial Strategies for implementation.

Four specific community engagement workshops and one staff workshop were held, at which **141** participants representing the Alexandria community had an active “place at the table” for their voices to be heard. Subsequently, these individuals helped guide the development of the **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Model**. A variety of participants representing diverse interests were invited to take part in the process.

The process also required extensive time and effort by many Department staff members. Educational workshops were the foundation for the development of the Alexandria RPCA Department’s **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Model**. These workshops provided the groundwork for many intensive work sessions, and ultimately, for the recommended Model.

STRATEGIC KICK-OFF MEETING

Strategic Kick-Off – The Core Team – May 24, 2012

- Introduced team and project organization
- Established project expectations
- Requested start up materials
- Determined Critical Success Factors
- Planned public and stakeholder involvement and outreach efforts
- Began assessment of current cost recovery levels

THE PYRAMID METHODOLOGY – INTRODUCTION, PROCESS, AND SERVICE CATEGORIES

Workshop I (a) – The Core Team, participating staff, City Manager’s Office, Parks and Recreation Commission Members, and City Council Representative – July 3, 2012

- Reviewed current cost recovery picture and why this project is being undertaken at this time
- Introduced the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy process
- Reviewed the Department’s Mission statement

Workshop I (b) – The Core Team – July 3, 2012

- Debriefed from Workshop I (a)
- Discussed logistics for and roles of table facilitators for Workshop II Public Forums
- Developed the Alexandria RPCA Department’s categories of service (see **Appendix A**)
- Held a preliminary discussion of direct and indirect costs (see **Appendix B**)
- Held a preliminary discussion of other financial terms and definitions, and assigned small group to develop glossary of terms (see **Appendix C**)

THE PYRAMID METHODOLOGY – SORTING SERVICE CATEGORIES

Workshop II (a) – 4 Citizens Focus Group and Department Staff – Week of September 10, 2012

- Presented the Pyramid Method
- Reviewed the Department’s Mission Statement
- Reviewed Department’s categories of service
- Reviewed primary beneficiary filter and secondary filters
- Sorted categories of service on the pyramid according to beneficiary and RPCA mission

Workshop II (b) – The Core Team – September 14, 2012

- Debriefed from Workshop II (a)
- Developed the Consensus Pyramid – results and disconnects
- Defined direct and indirect costs
- Applied costs to sample services – zero-based budgeting principals
- Discussed process to determine current cost recovery levels
- Discussed policies to address

THE PYRAMID METHODOLOGY –TARGET COST RECOVERY, PRICING, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Workshop III – The Core Team – November 14-16, 2012

- Presentation to the City Manager’s office
- Presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Applied direct costs to all services – zero-based budgeting principals
- Determined minimum targets of cost recovery for each tier
- Discussed the disconnects
- Determined relative pricing strategies
- Discussed recommendations and action steps
- Created the Glossary of Terms (see **Appendix C**)
- Provided sample Partnership and Sponsorship policies as staff level documents for Alexandria Parks and Recreation to modify as needed

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V. Review and Analysis of Values, Vision, and Mission

These fundamental principles create a logical, philosophical framework that guides and directs decision-making efforts. They are the foundation for all organizational decisions and processes.

A Department's vision helps determine those community conditions the Department wishes to impact through the organizational mission. The Department's mission helps guide management decisions, often substantiating difficult decisions making them justifiable and defensible.

The City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department has a current mission statement but not a current vision statement. It is recommended that in the future, the Department creates a **vision statement** to guide future budget and planning decision-making.

Alexandria RPCA Mission Statement

"The mission of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities is to promote a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity through the development of effective and efficient recreation programs, facilities and parks for all citizens and residents to enjoy."

The mission statement of the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities department fully supports the City's Strategic Plan and the City's **Four Guiding Principles**:

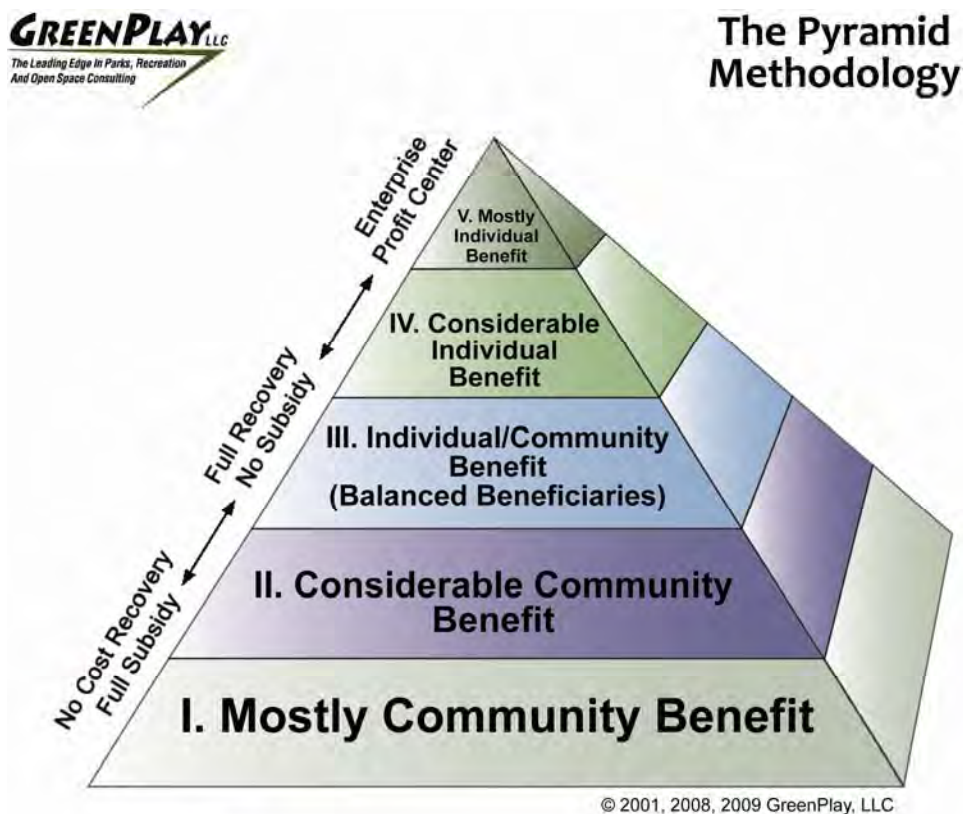
1. *Aligning the work we do with our strategic plan*
2. *Executing against our strategy ensuring accountability for our results*
3. *Promoting and encouraging a culture of leadership and ownership at all levels of the organization*
4. *Promoting a culture of service excellence, creativity and entrepreneurship*

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VI. The Pyramid Methodology: Cost Recovery and Subsidy Allocation Philosophy

The creation of a cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy and policy is a key component to maintaining an agency's financial control, equitably pricing offerings, and helping to identify core services, including programs and facilities.

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and buy-in of elected officials and advisory boards, staff, and ultimately citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the organization should be certain that it philosophically aligns with its constituents. The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy and policy is built upon a very logical foundation, based upon the theory that those who benefit from parks and recreation services ultimately pay for services.



The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy can be separated into the following steps:

Step 1 – Building on the Organization's Values, Vision, and Mission

The premise of this process is to align agency services with organizational values, vision, and mission. It is important that organizational values are reflected in the vision and mission. Often times, mission statements are a starting point, and further work is needed to create a more detailed common understanding of the interpretation of the mission and a vision for the future. This is accomplished by engaging staff and community members in a discussion about a variety of **Filters**.

Step 2 – Understanding the Pyramid Methodology, the Benefits Filter, and Secondary Filters

Filters are a series of continuums covering different ways of viewing service provision. **Filters** influence the final positioning of services as they relate to each other and are summarized below. The **Benefits Filter**, however, forms the **foundation** of the **Pyramid Model** and is used in this discussion to illustrate a cost recovery philosophy and policies for parks and recreation organizations.

Filter	Definition
Benefit	Who receives the benefit of the service (Skill development, education, physical health, mental health, safety)?
Access/Type of Service	Is the service available to everyone equally? Is participation or eligibility restricted by diversity factors (i.e., age, ability, skill, financial)?
Organizational Responsibility	Is it the organization's responsibility or obligation to provide the service based upon mission, legal mandate, or other obligation or requirement?
Historical Expectations	What have we always done that we cannot change?
Anticipated Impacts	What is the anticipated impact of the service on existing resources? On other users? On the environment? What is the anticipated impact of not providing the service?
Social Value	What is the perceived social value of the service by constituents, city staff and leadership, and policy makers? Is it a community builder?

THE BENEFITS FILTER

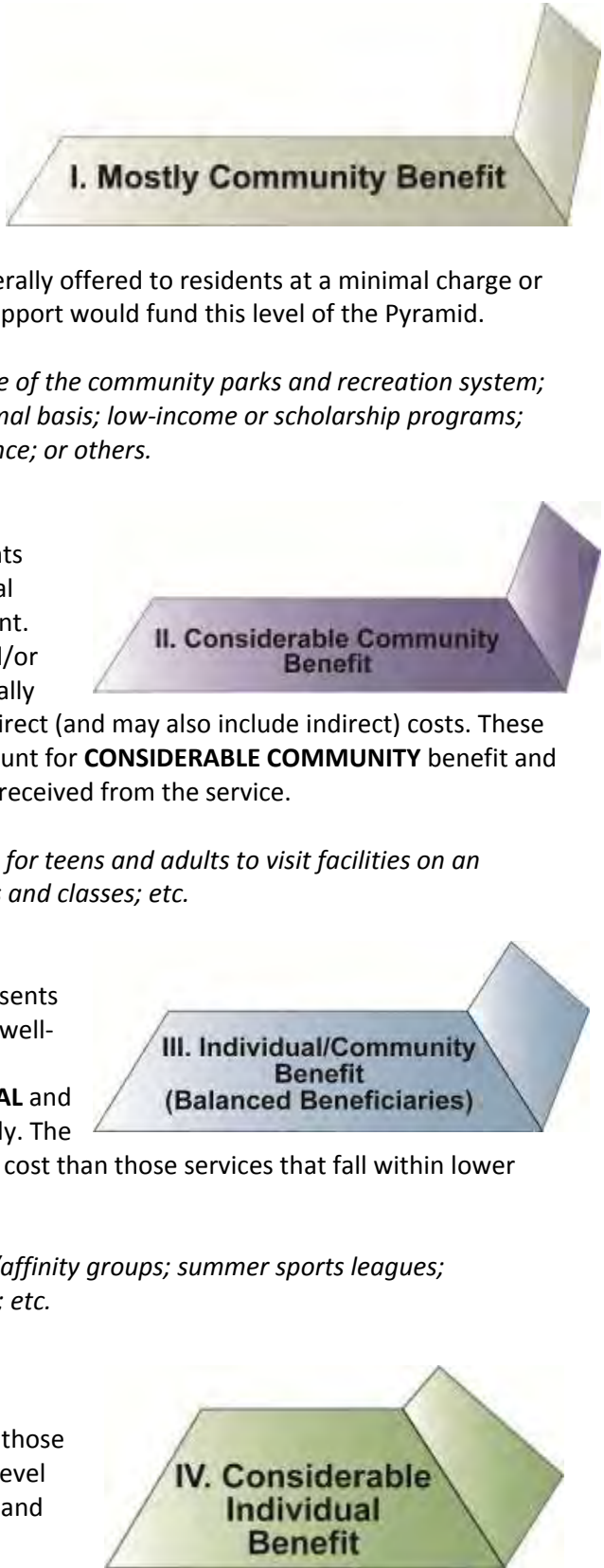
The principal foundation of the Pyramid is the **Benefits Filter**. Conceptually, the base level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation system. Services appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid should only be offered when the preceding levels below are comprehensive enough to provide a foundation for the next level. This foundation and upward progression is intended to represent public parks and recreation's core mission, while also reflecting the growth and maturity of an organization as it enhances its service offerings.

It is often easier to integrate the values of the organization with its mission if they can be visualized. An ideal philosophical model for this purpose is the pyramid. In addition to a physical structure, *pyramid* is defined by Webster's Dictionary as, "an immaterial structure built on a broad supporting base and narrowing gradually to an apex." Parks and recreation programs are built with a broad supporting base of core services, enhanced with more specialized services as resources allow. Envision a pyramid sectioned horizontally into five levels.

NOTE: All of the following examples are generic – individual agencies vary in their determination of which services belong in the foundation level of the Pyramid based upon agency values, vision, mission, demographics, goals, etc.

MOSTLY COMMUNITY Benefit

The foundational level of the Pyramid is the largest, and includes those services including programs and facilities which **MOSTLY** benefit the **COMMUNITY** as a whole. These services may increase property values, provide safety, address social needs, and enhance quality of life for residents. The community generally pays for these basic services via tax support. These services are generally offered to residents at a minimal charge or with no fee. A large percentage of the agency's tax support would fund this level of the Pyramid.



I. Mostly Community Benefit

Examples of these services could include: the existence of the community parks and recreation system; the ability for youngsters to visit facilities on an informal basis; low-income or scholarship programs; park and facility planning and design; park maintenance; or others.

CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY Benefit

The second and smaller level of the Pyramid represents services which promote individual physical and mental well-being, and may begin to provide skill development. They are generally traditionally expected services and/or beginner instructional levels. These services are typically assigned fees based upon a specified percentage of direct (and may also include indirect) costs. These costs are partially offset by both a tax subsidy to account for **CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY** benefit and participant fees to account for the **Individual** benefit received from the service.

II. Considerable Community Benefit

Examples of these services could include: the capacity for teens and adults to visit facilities on an informal basis; beginning level instructional programs and classes; etc.

BALANCED INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY Benefit

The third and even smaller level of the Pyramid represents services that promote individual physical and mental well-being, and provide an intermediate level of skill development. This level provides balanced **INDIVIDUAL** and **COMMUNITY** benefit and should be priced accordingly. The individual fee is set to recover a higher percentage of cost than those services that fall within lower Pyramid levels.

III. Individual/Community Benefit (Balanced Beneficiaries)

Examples of these services could include: social clubs/affinity groups; summer sports leagues; intermediate level instructional programs and classes; etc.

CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL Benefit

The fourth and still smaller Pyramid level represents specialized services generally for specific groups, and those which may have a competitive focus. Services in this level may be priced to recover full cost, including all direct and indirect expenses.

IV. Considerable Individual Benefit

Examples of these services could include: specialty classes and events; advanced/competitive level instructional programs and classes; etc.

MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit

At the top of the Pyramid, the fifth and smallest level represents services which have positive revenue potential, may be in an enterprise fund, may be in the same market space as the private sector, or may fall outside the core mission of the agency. In this level, services should be priced to recover full cost in addition to a designated revenue positive percentage.



Examples of these activities could include: private lessons; food concessions; company picnic rentals; and other facility rentals such as for weddings or other services, etc.

Examples of the Applied Benefits Filter

The following example illustrates the benefit filter as it might apply to aquatic services.

The Benefits Filter in Action

- MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL - elite swimming or diving team
- CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL - swim team
- INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY - swim lessons
- CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY - pool
- MOSTLY COMMUNITY - spray ground, non-monitored lake

A photograph of a man in a grey tank top and blue jeans, sitting on a bench and lifting a dumbbell with his right arm.

The following illustrates the benefits filter as it might apply to park services.

The Benefits Filter in Action

A photograph of a man in a dark jacket and blue jeans, kneeling in a grassy area with a yellow flag in the background.

- MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL - marina concessions
- CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL - boat launch or reserved camp site
- INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY - monitored nature garden or interpretive park
- CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY - farmer's market
- MOSTLY COMMUNITY - non-monitored open space park or trail

Step 3 – Developing the Organization’s Categories of Service

In order to avoid trying to determine cost recovery or subsidy allocation levels for each individual agency service including every program, facility, or property, it is advantageous to categorize agency services into like categories. This step also includes the development of category definitions that detail and define each category and service inventory “checks and balances” to ensure that all agency services belong within a developed category. Examples of Categories of Service could include: beginner instructional classes, special events, and concessions/vending.

Step 4 – Sorting the Categories of Services onto the Pyramid

It is critical that this sorting step be done with staff, governing body, and citizen representatives involved. This is where ownership is created for the philosophy, while participants discover the current and possibly varied operating histories, cultures, and organizational values, vision, and mission. It is the time to develop consensus and get everyone on the same page – the page that is written together. Remember, this effort must reflect the community and must align with the thinking of policy makers.

Sample Policy Development Language (which follows)

“Sample” community brought together staff from across the Department, agency leadership, and citizens to sort existing programs into each level of the Pyramid. The process was facilitated by an objective and impartial facilitator in order to hear all viewpoints. It generated discussion and debate as participants discovered what different people had to say about serving culturally and economically varied segments of the community; about historic versus active-use parks; about the importance of adult versus youth versus senior activities; and other philosophical and values-based discussions. This process gets at both the “what” and “why” with the intention of identifying common ground and consensus.

Step 5 – Determining (or Confirming) Current Subsidy/Cost Recovery Levels

This step establishes the expectation that the agency will confirm or determine current cost recovery and subsidy allocation levels by service area. This will include consideration of revenue sources and services costs or expenses. Typically, staff may not be cost accounting consistently, and these inconsistencies will become apparent. Results of this step will identify whether staff members know what it costs to provide services to the community; whether staff have the capacity or resources necessary to account for and track costs; whether accurate cost recovery levels can be identified; and whether cost centers or general ledger line items align with how the agency may want to track these costs in the future.

Step 6 – Defining Direct and Indirect Costs

The definition of direct and indirect costs can vary from agency to agency. What is important is that all costs associated with directly running a program or providing a service are identified and consistently applied across the system. Direct costs typically include all of the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service. These expenses would not exist without the service and may be variable costs. Defining direct costs, along with examples and relative formulas is necessary during this step.

Indirect costs typically encompass overhead (fixed and variable) including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would exist without any specific service but may also be attributed to a specific agency operation (in which case they are direct expenses of that operation). If desired, all or a portion of indirect costs can be allocated to a service, in which case they become a direct cost allocation.

Step 7 – Establishing Cost Recovery/Subsidy Goals

Subsidy and cost recovery are complementary. If a program is subsidized at 75 percent, it has a 25 percent cost recovery, and vice-versa. It is more powerful to work through this exercise thinking about where the tax subsidy is used rather than the cost recovery percentage. When it is complete, you can reverse thinking to articulate the cost recovery philosophy, as necessary.

The overall subsidy/cost recovery level is comprised of the average of everything in all of the levels together as a whole. This step identifies the current subsidy level for the programs sorted into each level. There may be quite a range within each level, and some programs could overlap with other levels of the pyramid. This will be rectified in the final steps.

This step must reflect the community and must align with the thinking of policy makers regarding the broad picture financial goals and objectives.

Examples

Categories in the bottom level of the Pyramid may be completely or mostly subsidized, with the agency having established limited cost recovery to convey the value of the experience to the user. An established 90-100 percent subsidy articulates the significant community benefit resulting from these categories.

The top level of the Pyramid may range from 0 percent subsidy to 50 percent excess revenues above all costs, or more. It is possible that the agency may not have any Categories of Service in the top level.

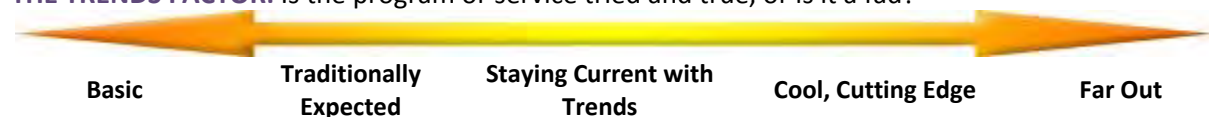
Step 8 – Understanding and Preparing for Influential Factors and Considerations

Inherent to sorting programs onto the Pyramid model using the **Benefits** and other filters is the realization that other factors come into play. This can result in decisions to place services in other levels than might first be thought. These factors also follow a continuum; however, they do not necessarily follow the five levels like the Benefits Filter. In other words, a specific continuum may fall completely within the first two levels of the Pyramid. These factors can aid in determining core versus ancillary services. These factors represent a layering effect and should be used to make adjustments to an initial placement on the Pyramid.

THE COMMITMENT FACTOR: What is the intensity of the program; what is the commitment of the participant?



THE TRENDS FACTOR: Is the program or service tried and true, or is it a fad?



THE POLITICAL FILTER: What is beyond our control?

This filter does not operate on a continuum, but is a reality, and will dictate from time to time where certain programs fit in the pyramid

THE MARKETING FACTOR: What is the effect of the program in attracting customers?



THE RELATIVE COST TO PROVIDE FACTOR: What is the cost per participant?



THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FACTOR: What are the financial realities of the community?



FINANCIAL GOALS FACTOR: Are we targeting a financial goal such as increasing sustainability, decreasing subsidy reliance?



Step 9 – Implementation

Across the country, ranges in overall cost recovery levels can vary from less than 10 percent to over 100 percent. Each agency sets its goals based upon values, vision, mission, stakeholder input, funding, and/or other criteria. This process may have been completed to determine present cost recovery levels, or the agency may have needed to increase cost recovery levels in order to meet budget targets. Sometimes, simply implementing a policy to develop equity is enough without a concerted effort to increase revenues. Upon completion of steps 1-8, the agency is positioned to illustrate and articulate where it has been and where it is heading from a financial perspective.

Step 10 – Evaluation

The results of this process may be used to:

- Articulate and illustrate a comprehensive cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy
- Train staff at all levels as to why and how things are priced the way they are
- Shift subsidy to where it is most appropriately needed
- Benchmark future financial performance
- Enhance financial sustainability
- Recommend service reductions to meet budget subsidy targets, or show how revenues can be increased as an alternative
- Justifiably price new services

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VII. The Pyramid Methodology: Target Cost Recovery

As the project progressed, a consensus pyramid from the public process was created along with recommendations for minor adjustments (this pyramid follows). The target cost recovery percentages were established based on current cost recovery when all direct and indirect costs were allocated, and with the goal of increasing cost recovery for the Department.

Direct Cost: Includes all the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service, program, or facility (see **Appendix B**). These expenses would not exist without the program or service and often increase exponentially.

Departmental Administration or Indirect (Support Services) encompasses remaining overhead (fixed and variable) not identified as Direct Costs. These *Indirect Costs* would generally exist without any one specific service.

Chinquapin Aquatics Facility and Recreation Center generates revenues through fees and charges on their own through drop-in admission and passes. All of the facility operating cost is allocated directly to the facility.

Costs Allocation Methodology for:

- **Aquatics/Recreation Centers Rentals** – Hourly costs for these types of facilities are based on a formula using expenditures directly related to the cost of operating the facility. Expenditures include utilities, telecommunications, custodial services and supplies, a percentage of FTE staff, and a percentage of hourly staff. Those costs are divided into operating hours in each facility and the square footage of the facility. This formula establishes per hour/per square foot rates for each facility. The rate is used to determine cost recovery levels for rentals.
- **All In-House or Contract Programs** – The cost of a program is determined by calculating all direct expenditures associated with the program. Expenditures include FTE and hourly staff time (program development and scheduling, registration and maintenance, and instruction/leader), services and supplies, and contractor percentage, when applicable.

If each rental is charged a facility allocation use cost, then the typical and average annual hours of programs or rentals should be subtracted from the annual operating costs of a facility.

Target Tier Minimum

The Target Tier Minimum Cost Recovery Percentages were established by analyzing which category or categories of service the majority of resources were allocated to by each tier or level, typically coupled with current cost recovery based on the definitions of direct and indirect costs. The Target Tier Minimum Cost Recovery Percentages represent the minimum cost recovery for categories of service within that tier. The intent is that the average of all categories on that tier does not fall below that Target Tier Minimum. They are only attempting to recover **Direct Cost** of service provision, not all costs, or fully loaded (direct and indirect) costs.

Actual Current Cost Recovery Ranges per Tier

The percentages listed here are based on the actual costs to provide the service. The ranges are due to the many different interest areas or services that fall into each category type. For instance, there is a wide variety of group lessons in that sub-category – some that have a higher percentage of cost recovery because of higher demand or participation. Other types of group lessons may have a lower percentage of cost recovery because of lower demand. Both of these types of group lessons fall within the same category of service (Classes, Programs, Workshops & Clinics – Beginning/Multi-Level), on Tier 2 along with a wide variety of other types of beginning level and multi-ability classes, programs, workshops, and clinics, and the cost recovery will vary greatly. In general, and as a group of services, they should be expected to recover a minimum percentage of the cost to continue to offer the program or be offset by other higher-performing services.

▪ Tier 5 – Mostly Individual Benefit	206-767%
▪ Tier 4 – Considerable Individual Benefit	89-135%
▪ Tier 3 – Balanced Community and Individual Benefit	0-168%
▪ Tier 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	0-70%
▪ Tier 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	0%

It is important to recognize that, because of the community service aspect of offerings, the vast majority of the cost of services and facilities offered by the RPCA Department will be spent on elements that benefit the entire community, and not those elements that have a mostly individual benefit. This is exemplified by the parks, natural areas, trail system, community-wide events, and numerous volunteer opportunities, which have limited or no expectation of cost recovery.

According to GreenPlay’s experience with agencies all over the United States, and Dr. John Crompton, a leading expert on parks and recreation financing, the national average of cost recovery in public parks and recreation is approximately **34 percent**. Although the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department’s cost recovery level (12%) is considerably lower than the national average, it is important to note that communities across the country vary in terms of how they allocate direct and indirect costs qualifiers such as availability of resources, size, scope of services, community demand, and ability to pay. Therefore, different departments must maintain cost recovery/subsidy levels that are appropriate based upon their own community’s characteristics, values, and available funding.

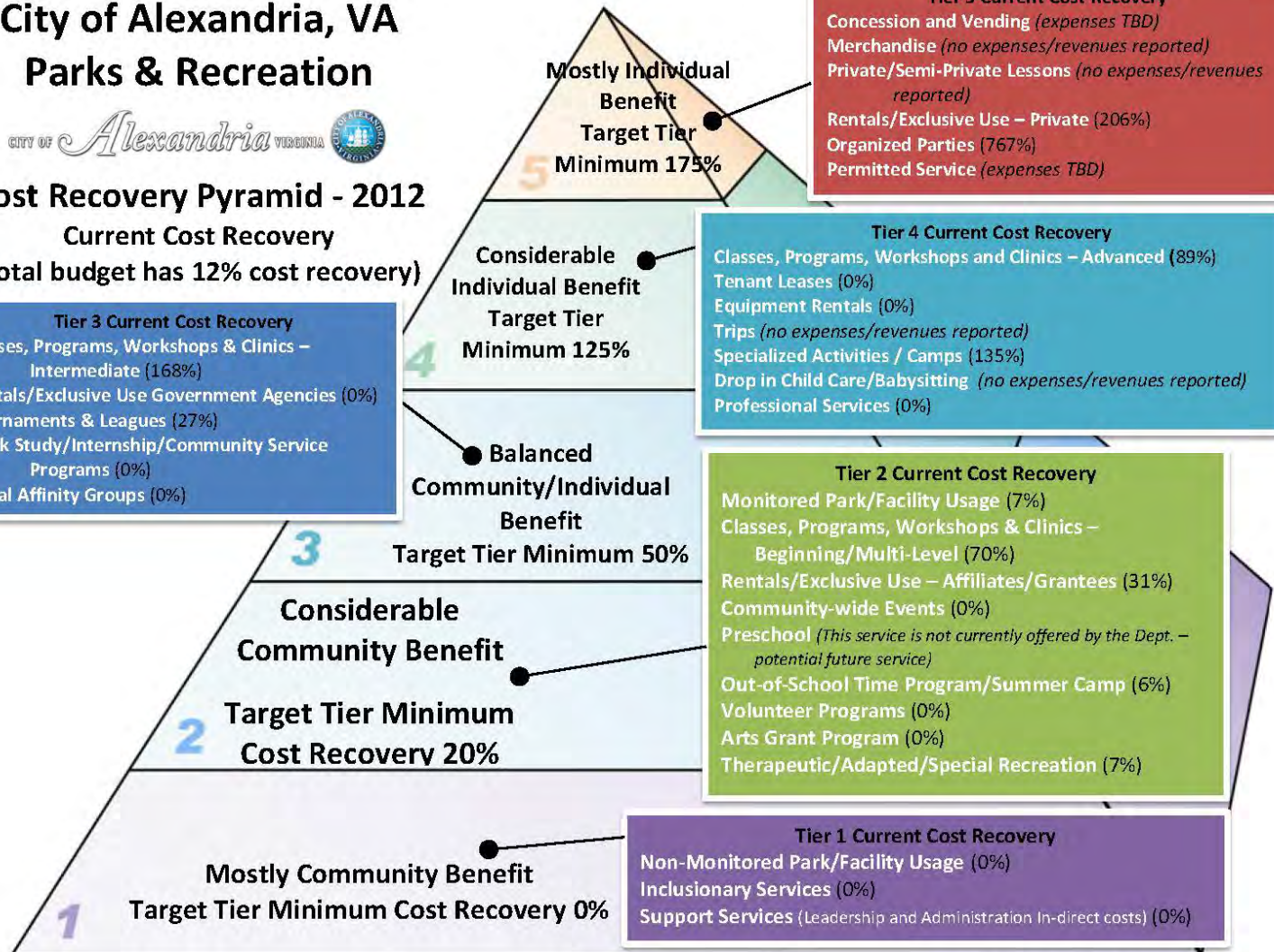
City of Alexandria, VA Parks & Recreation



Cost Recovery Pyramid - 2012

Current Cost Recovery
(total budget has 12% cost recovery)

Tier 3 Current Cost Recovery
Classes, Programs, Workshops & Clinics – Intermediate (168%)
Rentals/Exclusive Use Government Agencies (0%)
Tournaments & Leagues (27%)
Work Study/Internship/Community Service Programs (0%)
Social Affinity Groups (0%)



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VIII. Pricing 101: Developing a Pricing Strategy

As the final step in the development of the ***Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy***, a high-level pricing discussion was introduced for supervisory staff. This discussion should continue in the future, and the following topic areas should be included and applied:

1. Understanding financial trends

The increasing complexity and resulting shifts of our society's economy have led to what can be deemed as constant fiscal change in government. Public sector administrators and managers must be prepared to respond to the fiscal realities that have resulted from these economic shifts. Trends that impact fiscal and pricing decisions include:

- Increased governmental accountability
- Increased demand for people's "leisure dollar"
- On-going or increased demand for services with no/limited additional funding, or decreased funding
- Disinterest in service reductions or increased fees and charges
- Increased operating expenses (e.g., utilities, fuel, personnel, supplies)

2. Understanding the budget process and fiscal year cycle

Budgets are viewed as annual financial plans and include planning and forecasting, establishing priorities, and a way to monitor fiscal process. This overview allows for an abbreviated look at the process and how it impacts and is impacted by pricing.

3. Understanding the costs of service provision

Prior to making pricing decisions, it is important to understand the different types of service provision costs. Having a grounded knowledge of the various types of costs allows staff to make better informed pricing decisions. The different types of service provision costs are as follows:

- Direct costs
 - Fixed costs
 - Changing fixed costs
 - Variable costs
- Indirect Costs

Refer to **Appendix C** for definitions.

4. Understanding the purpose of pricing

There are many reasons to develop service fees and charges. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Recover costs
- Create new resources
- Establish value
- Influence behavior
- Promote efficiency

5. Pricing strategies – differential pricing

Differential pricing is grounded in the notion that different fees are charged for the same service when there is no real difference in the cost of providing the service. There may be many reasons why Alexandria may wish to expand use of this pricing strategy including:

- To stimulate demand for a service during a specified time
- To reach underserved populations
- To shift demand to another place, date, or time

6. Alternative funding sources

In general, there has been a decrease in the amount of tax support available to public parks and recreation departments across the nation. Alexandria has experienced this and is forward thinking in its planning. As such, the need to look at alternative funding sources as a way to financially support services has become commonplace. Alternative funding sources are vast and can include:

- Gifts
- Grants
- Donations
- Sponsorships
- Collaborations
- Volunteer contributions

7. Examining the psychological dimensions of pricing

In addition to the social and environmental issues that surround pricing, the human elements of pricing must be considered. Regardless of how logical a price may seem, customer reactions and responses are their own and can be vastly different than what one might expect. The psychological dimensions of pricing include:

- Protection of self-esteem (pricing in such a way as to not offend certain users)
- Price-quality relationship (value received for every dollar spent)
- Establishing a reference point (worth of service in comparison to others)
- Objective price (price has a basis in fact, is real and impartial)
- Subjective price (perception of bias or prejudice)
- Consistency of image (perception of the brand and identification with product or service)
- Odd price (perception of arbitrary or incongruent pricing)

8. Establishing initial price

Establishing an actual price for a program can be based upon a variety of strategies. Arbitrary pricing is not encouraged as it is impossible to justify; however, these strategies include:

- Arbitrary pricing: a fee based on a general provision such as raising all fees by \$2.00 to meet budget goals – ignores market conditions and cost recovery goals.
- Market pricing: a fee based on demand for a service or facility or what the target market is willing to pay for a service. The private and commercial sectors commonly use this strategy. One consideration for establishing a market rate fee is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (i.e. private sector providers, municipalities, etc.), and setting the highest fee. Another consideration is setting the fee at the highest level the market will bear.

- Competitive pricing: a fee based on what similar service providers or close proximity competitors are charging for services. One consideration for establishing a competitive fee is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (i.e. private sector providers, municipalities, etc.), and setting the mid-point or lowest fee.
- Cost recovery pricing: a fee based on cost recovery goals within market pricing ranges.

9. Understanding price revisions

Once a price is established, there may be a need to periodically review the price and examine the potential for revision. In some cases, “revised” may be viewed as “increased”; therefore, a systematic approach to pricing revision is important. Factors to consider in pricing revision include:

- Customer tolerance: the degree to which small increases in price will not encounter client resistance.
- Adjustment period: the period of time where the value of the service is assessed by the customer in relation to the price increase. The value of the service from the customer’s perspective must meet or exceed the impact of the increased cost. Adjustment periods may lead to diminished participation or termination of participation altogether based upon customer loyalty and other factors.
- Customers’ perceived value of the service: the degree to which services including programs, facilities, and parks impact the public (individual and community), or in other words, the results or outcomes of services. Value is the judgment or perception of worth or the degree of usefulness or importance placed on a service *by personal opinion*. The intent or intention of a service is the purpose, aim, or end.

10. The pricing process – developing a method

Staff participating in the series of resource allocation workshops engaged in interactive cost identification and pricing exercises that applied the cost recovery goals of their respective service areas. The workshops prompted discussions leading to recommended changes to selected current pricing practices with the intention of attaining recommended cost recovery and subsidy allocation goals and establishing a new method for setting fees and charges. This method is based upon using cost recovery goals as a primary pricing strategy, followed by either market pricing (for services with low alternative coverage – few if any alternative providers) or competitive pricing (for services with high alternative coverage – other alternative providers offer similar or like services).

Comparative Analysis Criteria

As part of a pricing methodology, comparative analysis of differing fees structures can reveal market rates and competitive pricing in the market place. Comparative analysis (benchmarking) is an important tool that allows for comparison of certain attributes of the Alexandria’s management practices and fee structure. This process creates deeper understanding of alternative providers, your place in the market, and varying fee methodologies, which may be used to enhance and improve the service delivery of parks and recreation. The suggested criteria are located in **Appendix D**.

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IX. Recommendations: Operational and Financial Strategies

Implementing the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy

The Department's **Recommendations: Operational and Financial Strategies** will act as an internal work plan spanning a one-year period. The recommended strategies will be the implementation catalyst for the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy.

These considerations include the establishment of broad-based emphasis areas and subsequent action strategies. These strategies outline financial service planning and operational efforts intended to move the organization forward in a logical and organized way while maintaining connectivity to the previous steps in the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy development process. The following outlines the Action Plan's components.

The primary goal of the Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department's **Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy** is to establish organizational sustainability through a logical and thoughtful philosophy that supports the core values, vision, and mission of the Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department, and its community.

As a result of the comprehensive process and impending results, as illustrated in the Cost Recovery Pyramid Model, the Department will begin the process of implementing strategies and aligning financial resource allocation with newly developed cost recovery goals. These efforts are intended to guide goals and objectives, and the decision-making proven to create service sustainability for the organization.

Operational and Financial Strategies to Meet Cost Recovery Goals

On the following pages, nine strategies or goals, along with corresponding objectives and action steps were developed with the Core Team. These were presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission for input and consideration in November. The Commission gave their support to recommend that City Council adopt the pyramid methodology and the recommendations. Following these goals, objectives, and action items is the recommendation for revisions to the current approach to setting fees by City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Goal 1: Formally Adopt Revised Departmental Policies

Objective 1: Replace existing Department Fee Policy with a Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model, and Policy versus fee policy (instead allowing staff to respond to market conditions, etc.)

Objective 2: Indicate that staff will set fees and charges to achieve the approved cost recovery targets by tier using the appropriate pricing strategies as appropriate – cost recovery percentage, competitive, and market rate (see revised Policy recommendations which follow)

Objective 3: Allow staff to respond to changing market conditions and trends

Objective 4: Refine Financial Assistance Program (reduced or waived fees/scholarships)

Action Item 1: Review criteria and qualifications

Action Item 2: Determine maximum amount per year or limits

Action Item 3: Apply to only to the following Department-run programs:

- i. Monitored Park/Facility Usage
- ii. Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics –Beginning/Multi-Level or Intermediate
- iii. Out-of-School Time Program/Summer Camp
- iv. Tournaments & Leagues

Objective 5: Refine definition of Affiliates

Objective 6: Consider differential fees for age groups

- i. Add youth admission fees at a lesser fee
- ii. Limit senior discount to admission fees only

Objective 7: Define resident as those who live or own property inside the City limits

Goal 2: Fund and Leverage the *Financial Assistance Program* (Reduced or Waived Fees)

Objective 1: Fund the program with a general fund allocation

Objective 2: Leverage funding through revenue generated from well-performing services in high demand and place in the Financial Assistance Program

Objective 3: Transfer these funds into the revenue line items of programs

Objective 4: Seek additional or seed funding for the program through an endowment or sponsorship

Goal 3: Define the Role and Responsibilities of “Affiliates/Grantees”

Objective 1: Define affiliates/grantees as groups identified as having allied interests with the agency, fulfills a core service in lieu of the agency, and are of interest to the community at large (examples: sanctioned youth sports associations, annual city grant art organizations, local conservation and environmental organizations, civic organizations, etc.)

Objective 2: *Ensure that all approved agreements are in writing*

Objective 3: *Seek collaboration opportunities for affiliates/grantees*

Goal 4: Adjust Fees to Align With Target Tier Minimum

Objective 1: *Adjust fees for services that have the greatest departure from cost recovery targets*

Action Item 1: Tier 2 – Monitored Park/Facility Usage

- i. *Monitored Park/Facility Usage*
- ii. *Eliminate “memberships” concept because everyone in the City is a “member”*
- iii. *Investigate the concept of a passive, non-programmed use area being free (lobby/community living room with computers/registration kiosks, game room, etc.)*
- iv. *Investigate what areas of the facilities are appropriate for a drop-in admission fee (gym, pool, fitness, etc.)*
- v. *Institute a daily drop-in admission fee structure*
- vi. *Review the daily admission fee structure for alignment with cost recovery goals*
- vii. *Investigate instituting a youth daily drop-in admission fee*
- viii. *Institute a user volume discount package (for admissions)*
- ix. *Promote volume discounted use*

Action Item 2: Tier 2 – Community-wide Events

- i. *Create sponsorship packages*
- ii. *Consider admission fees, vendors, concessions, etc.*

Action Item 3: Tier 2 – Out-of-School Time Program/Summer Camp

- i. *Determine if continuation of the service is necessary and what is the Department’s role or if the Department is the best provider*
- ii. *Look at individual services/offerings within the category to determine performance metrics and design (cost to provide, program component costs, participation statistics, user demographics, market conditions, capacity, student to recreation leader ratio costs and needs, etc.)*
- iii. *Determine the intent of this service, who are we trying to reach and why, etc.*
- iv. *Scale the services to the needs, capacity, available resources, and service intent*
- v. *Targeted outreach to market these services to the intended audience*
- vi. *Explore alternative funding sources*
- vii. *Consider charging market rate pricing*
- viii. *Consider charging additional fees (currently free) for the pre and post extended services*

Action Item 4: Tier 2 - Therapeutic/Adapted/Special Recreation

- i. *Determine if continuation of the service is necessary and what is the Department’s role or if the Department is the best provider*
- ii. *Look at individual services/offerings within the category to determine performance metrics and design (cost to provide, program component costs, participation statistics, user demographics, market conditions, capacity, student to recreation leader ratio costs and needs, etc.)*
- iii. *Communicate the City’s resource allocation goals in relation to this policy with the Schools, Advisory Boards and the public as a whole*
- iv. *Determine which program fees can easily be raised or expenses decreased*
- v. *Tier resident and non-resident fees*
- vi. *Market to non-residents if there is capacity*
- vii. *Seek partnerships (for client identification) and sponsorships for alternative funding*
- viii. *Educate staff on TR support options; including unified services*

Action Item 5: Tier 3 – Tournaments and Leagues

- i. Increase the use of volunteer coaches*
- ii. Consider fee increases based on the results of benchmarking*
- iii. Maximize staffing efficiencies*
- iv. Add sponsorship program (banners, etc.)*
- v. Market to non-city areas (as this provides additional revenue streams)*
- vi. Consistently structure current fees as the “early-bird” discounted fee, and add a regular deadline fee*

Action Item 6: Tier 3 – Rentals/Exclusive Use Government Agencies

- i. Determine if continuation of the service is necessary and what is the Department’s role or if the Department is the best provider*
- ii. Look at individual services/offers within the category to determine performance metrics and design (cost to provide, participation statistics, user demographics, market conditions, capacity, etc.)*
- iii. Formalize all agreements with a written MOU, review them annually, and apply agreements consistently*
- iv. Communicate the City’s resource allocation goals in relation to this policy with the Government Agencies*
- v. Explore trade for services options to reach cost recovery targets*
- vi. Evaluate current fees (especially any free rental agreements)*
- vii. Research value to market ROI (a benchmark of fees or rates charged to value received of like or similar providers, of like or similar spaces, with like or similar services/amenities, etc....)*
- viii. Amend agreement to include value of alternative funding (in kind service) and/or fee increases to reach cost recovery goals*
- ix. Bring forward those agreements deemed appropriate by Director for Council action*

Action Item 7: Tier 4 – Professional Services

- i. Capture the value of alternative funding (in kind service) and/or fee increases to reach cost recovery goals*

Action Item 8: Tier 4 – Equipment Rentals

- i. Evaluate current fees in relation to wear and tear replacement costs*

Action Item 9: Tier 4 – Tenant Leases

- i. Review all long-term leases for disconnects from the target cost recovery minimums*
- ii. Evaluate current fees and agreements (especially any free or \$1 per year rental agreements)*
- iii. Research value to market ROI (a benchmark of fees or rates charged to value received of like or similar providers, of like or similar spaces, with like or similar services/amenities, etc.)*
- iv. Amend agreement to include value of alternative funding (in kind service) and/or fee increases to reach cost recovery goals*
- v. Bring forward those agreements deemed appropriate by Director for Council action*

Action Item 10: Tier 4 – Trips

- i. Eliminate selective trips which are not able to meet their cost recovery goals with minimal participation*
- ii. Evaluate the minimum required participants and the cost/value of each trip*
- iii. Offer higher demand trips selectively*

Objective 2: Consider fee adjustments (and alternative funding) for selected services to reach cost recovery goals

Action Item 1: Tier 2 – Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Beginning/Multi-level

- i. Review contracts with instructors to be sure all costs are included based on cost recovery goals*
- ii. Consider raising fees on higher demand programs*
- iii. Eliminate selective programs which are not able to meet their cost recovery goals with minimal participation*

Action Item 2: Tier 2 – Rentals/Exclusive Use Affiliates/Grantees

- i. Determine if continuation of the service is necessary and the Department's role or if the Department is the best provider*
- ii. Look at individual services/offerings within the category to determine performance metrics and design (cost to provide, participation statistics, user demographics, market conditions, capacity, etc.)*
- iii. Determine and formalize criteria for becoming an Affiliate (examples: percent of residents being served, aligned mission, who authorizes and how, create a written MOU and review annually, etc.) and apply consistently*
- iv. Communicate the City's resource allocation goals in relation to this policy with the Affiliates/Grantees*
- v. Explore trade for services options to reach cost recovery targets (Arts Grantees to teach art classes, maintenance responsibilities like trash or weeding, gym monitors, etc.)*
- vi. Evaluate current fees (especially any \$1 per year rental agreements)*
- vii. Research value to market ROI (a benchmark of fees or rates charged to value received of like or similar providers, of like or similar spaces, with like or similar services/amenities, etc.)*
- viii. Amend agreement to include value of alternative funding (in kind service) and/or fee increases to reach cost recovery goals*
- ix. Bring forward for Council action those agreements deemed appropriate by Director*

Action Item 3: Tier 3 – Tournaments and Leagues

- i. Ensure that City-run adult sports is sustainable (100% cost recovery) to off-set City-run youth sports which is subsidized (50% cost recovery)*

Action Item 4: Tier 3 – Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Intermediate

- i. Review contracts with instructors to be sure all costs are included based on cost recovery goals*
- ii. Consider raising fees on higher demand programs*
- iii. Eliminate selective programs which are not able to meet their cost recovery goals with minimal participation*

Action Item 5: Tier 4 – Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics –Advanced

- i. Review contracts with instructors to be sure all costs are included based on cost recovery goals*
- ii. Adjust fees to meet cost recovery goals*
- iii. Consider raising fees on higher demand programs*
- iv. Eliminate selective programs which are not able to meet their cost recovery goals with minimal participation*

Objective 3: Compare selected fees to alternative providers in the service’s target market and service area – benchmark fees

Action Item 1: Admission fees

Action Item 2: Classes

Action Item 3: Out-of-School-Time Programs/Summer Camps

Action Item 4: Adult Sports

Objective 4: Improve rental cost recovery by evaluating “peak” and “off-peak” pricing

Objective 5: Use competitive or market-rate pricing methodologies dependent on the service’s market position

Objective 6: Consider creating other packages for programs and admission options

Objective 7: Adjust all tier 4 and 5 services so that they at least break even

Objective 8: Address suggestions regarding Permitting and Rentals/Exclusive Use (all types)

Action Item 1: Review and revise the special-event permitting policy and procedures

Action Item 2: Define “co-sponsoring” of special events by others and what this means

Action Item 3: Coordinate the Special Events Policy with the Resource Allocation

Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model, and Policy – comments have been provided to staff regarding the Special Event Policy language and coordination with definition of costs and either the Permitting category of services on Tier 5 or the Rentals/Exclusive Use categories for Affiliates/Grantees on Tier 2, Government Agencies on Tier 3, or Private individuals or businesses on Tier 5

Action Item 4: Determine if the pricing structure needs adjustment

Action Item 5: Explore trade for services options to reach cost recovery targets (Arts Grantees to teach art classes, maintenance responsibilities like trash or weeding, gym monitors, etc.)

Action Item 6: Ensure that the after-hours rental policies are meeting the requirement to cover 100% of those direct costs.

Objective 9: Adjust all non-resident rates so they are higher than the cost recovery rate, which reflects the resident discount

Goal 5: Review, Seek, and Implement Alternative Funding Sources

Objective 1: Revise and use the “Partnership/Affiliate/Grantee” and “Sponsorship” Sample Policies provided to Alexandria

Objective 2: Consolidate and coordinate a sponsorship and partnership policy (across the City) and empower departments to implement

Objective 3: Develop program/event sponsorship packages

Objective 4: Create a 501(c)(3) “Friends Group”

Action Item 1: Create a fundraising protocol to include the goal, match efforts with goals

Action Item 2: Connect funds to projects or outcomes through an endowment

Action Item 3: Create a designated carry-over fund for these funds

Objective 5: Establish designated carry-over funds for a planned life-cycle replacement program

Objective 6: Track the value of volunteerism at the Independent Sector's State of Virginia rate

Goal 6: Reduce Expenditures

Objective 1: Develop cooperative agreements with non -profits, neighborhood associations, and school district PTA and PTOs to support youth programs

Objective 2: Utilize volunteer staff where it makes sense, instead of part time permanent, seasonal, or hourly paid staff

Objective 3: Employ donations from retailers to enhance volunteer recognition and stipends

Goal 7: Adjust Program Management Strategies

Objective 1: Modify or cancel programs and services that do not consistently meet their minimum cost recovery goals, and eliminate programs with minimal participation

Objective 2: Re-evaluate program registration deadlines and consider post-deadlines up charges

Objective 3: Create new sustainable (100% cost recovery of direct costs) programs – ensure that they align with the new cost recovery model

Objective 4: Create new subsidized or grant supported programs – evaluate the ROI and cost recovery implications prior to adding or replacing other services

Goal 8: Improve Marketing Efforts

Objective 1: Increase target marketing efforts for under-utilized programs and facilities

Objective 2: Increase target marketing efforts for non-peak hours

Goal 9: Consider Additional Potential Future Opportunities

Objective 1: Align parks and recreation programs to the overarching initiatives of the City

Suggested Resource Allocation Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model and Policy



Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Financial Policies and Procedures

Resource Allocation Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model and Policy

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department

Draft Created: January 1, 2013

Approval Level: City Council

Approval Date:

Scheduled review date (frequency)

Primary Contact: James Spengler

Summary

The Department is tasked with cost recovery goals in accordance with the City's annual budget allocation and financial constraints. To that end, the Department sets fees and charges in relation to these goals, market conditions, benchmarking, demand, cost recovery targets, and industry trends. A financial assistance policy and process was also developed to allow for maximum resident participation in City Programs and to ensure that no one has a barrier to participation.

Cost Recovery Policy

Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department-offered services are funded through a combination of user fees, taxes, grants, and donations. Fees and charges shall be assessed in an equitable manner in accordance with the following fee and charge assessment schedule. Through a special initiative, services that provide recreational opportunities for populations with the fewest recreational alternatives (youth, limited income, seniors, and families) may be more heavily supported by grants, donations, or property taxes than user fees to ensure that the population is well served by Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities programs. Percentages shall be considered as guidelines; however, special circumstances, the nature and cost of each program, and persons to be served should be taken into consideration.

Process

- The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities shall conduct an annual comprehensive review of cost recovery targets.
- Programs will be sorted and assigned a cost recovery tier using the Pyramid Methodology.
- A Fee Structure/Rate review will be done annually to determine viability of programs.
- Programs plans are developed and approved with fees set within the tier cost recovery target minimum.
- As part of the City's annual budget submission the year's fee schedule will be submitted.

City of Alexandria's Cost Recovery Model

The following model represents all categories of services currently provided, or those which may be provided in the future, by the Department. It is based upon the degree of beneficiary to the community (Tier 1 – Mostly Community benefit) or individual (Tier 5 – Mostly Individual Benefit), the values of the Alexandria community, and the vision and mission of the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department. This model and policy forms the basis for setting fees and charges. (See Final Cost Recovery Model, Resource Allocation Philosophy, and Policy Document dated January 1, 2013).

Services can always perform better than the target tier minimum cost recovery goals due to demand and market conditions.

- a. Revenue positive over direct costs (**Tier 5** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **175 percent** of direct costs, **Tier 4** targeted at **125 percent** of direct costs)
 - Concession/Vending
 - Merchandise
 - Private/Semi-Private Lessons
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Private
 - Organized Parties
 - Permitted Services
 - Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Advanced
 - Tenant Leases
 - Equipment Rentals
 - Trips
 - Specialized Activities/Camps
 - Drop-in Childcare/Babysitting
 - Professional Services
- b. Primarily fee supported services with little or no tax investment (as an average, **Tier 3** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **50 percent** of direct costs, and some of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers)
 - Classes and Programs – Intermediate
 - Tournaments and Leagues – Adult (100 percent cost recovery to support youth)
- c. Partial fee supported services with some tax investment (as an average, **Tier 3** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **50 percent** of direct costs, and some of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers)
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Government
 - Tournaments and Leagues – Youth (50 percent cost recovery)
 - Work Study/Internship/Community Service Program
 - Social Affinity Groups

- d. Partial tax investment with minimal to partial fee support (as an average, **Tier 2** services are targeted to recover a minimum of **20 percent** of direct costs, and many of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers)
 - Monitored Park/Facility Usage
 - Classes and Programs – Beginning/Multi-Ability
 - Rentals/Exclusive Use – Affiliates/Grantees
 - Community-wide Events
 - Preschool
 - Out-of-School-Time Program/Summer Camps
 - Volunteer Program
 - Arts Grant Program
 - Therapeutic/Adaptive/Special Recreation
- e. Full tax investment with little or no fee support (**Tier 1** services are targeted to recover **0 percent** of direct costs, although some of these services may be appropriate for use of alternative funding sources like grants, donations, and volunteers)
 - Non-Monitored Park/Facility Usage
 - Inclusionary Services
 - Support Services

Cost of Services

The following general definitions will be used to determine the cost of providing all services.

Direct Cost: Includes all the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service, program, or facility. These expenses would not exist without the program or service and often increase exponentially.

Indirect Cost: Encompasses overhead (fixed and variable) including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would exist without any of the specific programs or facilities.

Fee Structure/Rate Review

The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department shall conduct an annual comprehensive review of cost recovery targets. The following pricing strategies to be used by the Department's Director to alter or adjust any necessary specific fees and/or charges to reflect service demand changes, the ability of users to support the demand, trends or changing market conditions, and concerns for other City operations.

- Market pricing: a fee based on demand for a service or facility or what the target market is willing to pay for a service. One consideration for establishing a market rate fee is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (i.e. private sector providers, municipalities, etc.), and setting the highest fee. Another consideration is setting the fee at the highest level the market will bear.
- Competitive pricing: a fee based on what similar service providers or close proximity competitors are charging for services. One consideration for establishing a competitive fee is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (i.e. private sector providers, municipalities, etc.), and setting the mid-point or lowest fee.
- Cost recovery pricing: a fee based on cost recovery goals within market pricing ranges.

Use of Volunteers

Through an aggressive volunteer recruitment program, the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department shall seek to minimize the amount required for full tax investment with little fee support (Tier 1 services) and partial tax investment with minimal to partial fee support (Tier 2 and 3 services).

Alternate Funding Sources

Solicitation of funds through donations, fund raising events, non-traditional sources, and various other modes shall be encouraged by the Parks and Recreation Commission and other advisory committees. Funds collected for any special purpose shall be earmarked for that purpose.

Contacts

William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services

David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services.

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Appendix A – Service Categories

Prior to sorting each service onto the Pyramid, the Project Team was responsible for creating the Department’s Categories of Services, including definitions. These 30 categories of services and their definitions are summarized below.

ALEXANDRIA’S CATEGORIES OF SERVICE

Concession and Vending – food and beverage sold for individual use or consumption.

Merchandise – items sold for individual or team use or consumption (examples: gasoline, pro-shop items, tennis balls, socks at soft play room, athletic wear, etc.).

Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Beginning/Multi-Level – entry level group recreational and/or instructional programs and activities; no pre-requisite for attendance.

Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Intermediate – focus on intermediate activities; has a pre-requisite for attendance.

Classes, Programs, Workshops, and Clinics – Advanced/Competitive – focus on advanced activities, certification, or competitive activities; has a pre-requisite for attendance.

Private/Semi-Private Lessons – lessons arranged for one to three students with a specific instructor and/or time.

Rentals/Exclusive Use – Private – temporary and exclusive use of spaces and facilities including parks, on a *one-time or one season* basis by a private individual, group, organization, or business, etc.

Rentals/Exclusive Use – Inter-Government Agency – temporary and exclusive use of spaces and facilities including parks, on a *one-time or one season* basis to other government departments or groups (examples: city meetings/trainings, council meetings, school districts, etc.).

Rentals/Exclusive Use – Affiliates/Grantees – temporary and exclusive use of spaces and facilities including parks, on a *one-time or one season* basis through a formal agreement to groups identified as having allied interests with the agency, fulfills a core service in lieu of the agency, and are of interest to the community at large (examples: sanctioned youth sports associations, annual city grant art organizations, local conservation and environmental organizations, civic organizations, etc.).

Tenant Leases – long-term exclusive use of spaces and facilities for *ongoing or multiple time-periods* by a private individual, group, non-profit, or for-profit business (examples: Child and Family Network Preschool, Boxing Club, federally mandated communication leases, and easements).

Equipment Rentals – various department-owned equipment available to renters for exclusive use (examples: banquet chairs/tables, audio/video equipment, stage, etc.).

Non-Monitored Park/Facility Usage and Maintenance – stewardship of public spaces, rights-of-way, and facilities, and drop-in use of a park/facility/activity that is non-registered and non-instructed, and is not monitored by agency staff/volunteer supervision (examples: trail use, playgrounds, passive park areas, dog exercise areas, skate park, self-guided tours, public art, etc.).

Monitored Park/Facility Usage and Maintenance – drop-in use of a park/facility/activity that is non-registered and non-instructed, but is monitored by agency staff/volunteer supervision (examples: drop-in gym, drop-in swimming, weight room/fitness room, billiards/cards, computer lab, guided tours, nature and art exhibits, open field use days etc.).

Trips – day, overnight, and extended trips that provide opportunities for participants to visit selected destinations (examples: college tours, boat tours, dinner and theater, etc.).

Organized Parties – includes an organized activity provided by staff as well as use of space; could include food, cake, entertainment, and favors (examples: birthday party packages, etc.).

Tournaments and Leagues – scheduled one-time sporting and/or multi-game events for various age groups that are organized and/or managed by staff (examples: tennis, softball, basketball, swimming, baseball, cheerleading, soccer, Swim Meets, etc.).

Community-wide Events – community-wide events typically organized by the Department and offered on an annual basis (examples: Earth Day, USA/Alexandria Birthday, Parades, Ethnic Festival, Concerts, Races, etc.).

Specialized Activities/Camps – targeted annual, individualized activities, events and non-traditional camps requiring registration that are typically offered on a one-time or limited basis (examples: Junior Prom, Doggy Swim, Technology or Sports Camp, Spring/Summer Nature Camp, Afterschool Buddies Nature Program, etc.).

Out-of-School Time Program/Summer Camp – generalized after school program during school year with a supervised social, nature-based, recreational or enrichment focus (examples: Power On Afterschool, Power Up Afterschool, Summer Power On Camp, Summer Power Up Camp etc.).

Preschool – structured curriculum-based licensed or license exempt education and enrichment programs provided by the Department for children 2.5-5 years old that prepare them for kindergarten. Programs may or may not include full day childcare. *(This service is not currently offered by the Department).*

Drop-In Childcare / Babysitting – drop-in on-site child care for participants using agency facilities and/or programs.

Professional Services – services provided by Department staff through contract to outside groups or other agencies.

Permitted Services – non-rental allowable services that require a permit by the City (examples: filming/photography rights, parking, concession/vending cart operations, alcohol consumption, temporary public art, etc.).

Volunteer Program – managing individuals or groups to donate their time and effort to a structured or scheduled experience (examples: adopt-a-park, adopt-a-field, trail maintenance, museum docent, naturalists, Boards and Commissions, etc.).

Work Study/Internship/Community Service Program – managing individuals to provide services that support educational or community service requirements.

Inclusion Services – providing reasonable accommodation and programs to any Department activity, park, and/or facility providing leisure opportunities to people with disabilities. Inclusion services are intended to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA federal mandate).

Therapeutic/Adapted/Special Recreation Services – specialized recreation opportunities for people with disabilities designed and managed to be specific to the physical, cognitive, social, and affective needs of these populations.

***Arts Grant Program** – Department administered operating, project, and special opportunity grants awarded to individuals and arts organizations to provide low cost art events and programs, and services to the community.

Social Clubs/Affinity Groups – City recognized, self-managed special interest group meetings and get-togethers (examples: coin, bingo, card clubs, car club, playgroups, etc.).

Support Services – “Leadership and Administration” services and facilities that are provided by the staff and volunteers that support the Department (examples: information technology, financial, human resources, department-wide marketing, internal trainings, risk management services, Director’s office, etc.). These are considered in-direct costs.

** This service was added after the public sorting process and was placed on the Considerable Community Benefit level by the consultant.*

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Appendix B – Direct and Indirect Costs

Direct Cost: Includes all of the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service or program. These expenses would not exist without the program or service and often increase exponentially.

All Programs and Services:

- Full-time staff salary directly attached to the program
- Part time permanent staff directly attached to the program
- Seasonal or hourly salaries for instructors, leaders, aides, field supervisors, officials, coaches, etc.
- All relative personnel benefits including FICA and Medicaid, Social Security, Worker's Compensation Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, Retirement, Health, Dental, and other Insurance premiums, as applicable; for full-time benefited employees, and for part time/permanent and seasonal employees
- Contractual services for coaches, officials, instructors, etc.
- Consumable equipment and supplies like ping pong balls, paper, clay and glazes, kiln firing, art supplies provided by instructor or agency, chalk, food, paper
- Uniforms, tee shirts for participants and staff
- Temporary help for vacancies and absences
- Employment ads
- Non-consumable equipment purchased only for the programs that require periodic, continual replacement or are necessary for the start of the program like yoga mats, blocks, stability balls, basketballs, low free weights, racquets, and goggles
- Training specifically for the program or service like CPR and First Aid, on-going or reimbursed training, and certifications
- Transportation costs like van driver and mileage, parking, tolls, detailing, or rental of busses, taxis, metro, etc.
- Entry fees, tickets, admissions for participants and leaders/instructors
- Rental fees for facilities, spaces, janitors, charge backs, etc.
- Marketing/promotion/printing/distribution/fliers/etc. associated directly for programs
- Pro-rata share of general marketing expenses for brochure space
- Repair or maintenance of program or service specific equipment like piano tuning, pottery wheel, kiln, etc.
- Any other costs associated or attributed specifically with the program or service

Parks, Facilities, and Spaces: Includes applicable direct costs above which should be tied to a facility or space and not a program, and:

- Full-time staff salary directly attached to the facility to include Deputy Director through Coordinator levels
- Part-time permanent staff directly attached to the facility
- Seasonal or hourly salaries for directly attached to the facility
- All relative personnel benefits including FICA and Medicaid, Social Security, Worker's Compensation Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, Retirement, Health, Dental, and other Insurance premiums, as applicable; for full-time benefited employees, and for part time/permanent and seasonal employees
- Contractual services directly attached to the facility
- Temporary help for vacancies and absences
- Employment ads
- General operational services and supplies like janitorial/custodial staff and cleaning supplies, restroom supplies, maintenance, etc.
- Maintenance of grounds, capital equipment, and building structure (PLCR or General Services)
- Building monitoring, insurance, utilities, etc. (may be contracted directly or may be allocations from another Department or General Services)

- Licensing Agreements like ASCAP, BMI, Motion Pictures, etc.
- Marketing and research – general support
- General contractual services like janitorial, security, armored car
- Technology support, computers, cell phones, smart phones, etc.
- Facility operating costs and utilities
- Office equipment and supplies
- Office furniture
- Vehicles used for park operations and recreation, and relative mileage reimbursement

Indirect Cost: Encompasses all remaining overhead (fixed and variable) not identified as Direct Costs including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would generally exist without any one specific service. These costs will be carried in the category of service called “Support Services” which will live on the foundational level of the pyramid. These are identified as Leadership and Administration costs in the Department’s Budget.

- Fund debt service
- Full employees and contractors of Director’s office, Park and Planning unit, Human Resources unit, Finance unit, and relative administrative staff
- All relative personnel benefits including FICA and Medicaid, Social Security, Worker’s Compensation Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, Retirement, Health, Dental, and other Insurance premiums as applicable; for full-time benefited employees, and for part time/permanent and seasonal employees.
- Temporary help for vacancies and absences
- Employment ads
- Office equipment and supplies for Director’s office
- Office furniture for Director’s office
- Technology support, computers, cell phones, smart phones, etc.
- Vehicles used for administration and mileage reimbursement
- Various other appropriated costs

Capital Costs are not included in either Direct or Indirect operating costs (CFMP and CIP).

Chinquapin Aquatics Facility and Recreation Centers generates revenues through fees and charges on their own through drop-in admission and passes. All of the facility operating cost is allocated directly to the facility.

Costs Allocation Methodology for:

- **Aquatics/Recreation Centers Rentals** – Hourly costs for these types of facilities are based on a formula using expenditures directly related to the cost of operating the facility. Expenditures include utilities, telecommunications, custodial services and supplies, a percentage of FTE staff, and a percentage of hourly staff. Those costs are divided into operating hours in each facility and the square footage of the facility. This formula establishes per hour/per square foot rates for each facility. The rate is used to determine cost recovery levels for rentals.
- **All In-House or Contract Programs** – The cost of a program is determined by calculating all direct expenditures associated with the program. Expenditures include FTE and hourly staff time (program development and scheduling, registration and maintenance, and instruction/leader), services and supplies, and contractor percentage, when applicable.

If each rental is charged a facility allocation use cost, then the typical and average annual hours of programs or rentals should be subtracted from the annual operating costs of a facility.

Appendix C – Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Ability to Pay:

Ability to pay is based on an individual's financial circumstances and is not related to who benefits from the programs and services. Implementation strategies for addressing inability to pay include scholarship or fee assistance programs, grants, volunteerism opportunities, or other programs and management practices.

Activity Based Costing (ABC):

Defines all costs associated with providing a service or product. It is a tool to determine what a specific service or product costs, and also what the costs are to service a given customer, including those services that are non-revenue generating.

Administrative and Support Services:

These are internal support services that have indirect costs to provide and are not attributable to any particular external public service. They include Leadership and Management, information support services, finance, human resources (training, safety services, insurance, and benefits), Park Planning, research and evaluation, and intergovernmental services.

Advisory Groups:

These groups (Boards or Commissions) are created by the City Council or through agreements with other agencies to provide recommendations to the City Council pertaining to specified operational and/or planning functions. Membership may include City Council/Commission, or Board members, staff members, and/or citizens. These groups can be long-standing or temporary project specific advisory groups.

Affiliate Groups:

Civic and advisory councils; committees, boards or commissions; associations like Alexandria Soccer Association, or others that provide programs or give back to the community.

Age Categories:

Categories based on age (i.e. child, youth, adult, etc.), for the purposes of assigning user fees, into which participants and users can be classified. Categories may also include groupings, such as "family."

Alternative Funding:

Other ways to improve cost recovery in addition to fees and charges. May include grants, sponsorships, volunteer programs, etc.

Attendance:

Attendance is measuring the total number of times per week per session that a participant attends the class. It is the total number of spectators and participants in a tournament, festival, or event. It is the total number of visitors or attendees at a rental function or meeting. It measures the users and non-users all in attendance.

Benefit:

The degree to which programs and services positively impact the public (individual and community), or in other words, the results of programs and services. Are the individual and/or the community better off, worse off, or unchanged as a result of programs and services?

The National Recreation and Park Association defines the benefits of Park and Recreation as:

- Socialization
- Healthy Lifestyle – lifelong wellness
- Economic Development and Vitality
- Environmental Stewardship

Benefit versus Value or Intent:

Benefit is defined as the advantage, use, or outcome to a group or individual. Value is the judgment of worth or the degree of usefulness or importance placed on a service or activity by personal opinion. The intent or intention of a program is the purpose, aim, or end.

Capacity – Occupancy or Participation Rates:

The number of available spaces. Occupancy or Participation rates are the ratio of filled spaces to available spaces. Over and under-capacity issues can be addressed by giving residents pre-registration priority, adjustments to the price based on peak or off-peak time, or a market price differential.

Consensus:

Consent or harmony reached among all differing opinions after discussion or deliberation and compromise, sometimes referred to as “informed consent.” It does not necessarily mean 100 percent agreement with everything.

Cost Accounting:

The process of allocating all costs associated with generating a sale or performing a service – both direct and indirect. Routinely a percentage of the business’ overhead costs are allocated to each service offered. In other words, all fixed overhead and general expenses are allocated on a basis that ignores how much effort or time is spent, or how much of the resources are associated with the product or service being provided.

Cost of Goods Sold:

The cost of goods sold is traditionally the cost (dollars spent) of materials and production of the goods a business sells. For a manufacturing company this is materials, labor, and factory overhead. For a retail shop, it would be the amount paid to buy the goods that it sells to its customers. For service businesses that do not sell goods, the same concept is normally called “cost of sales,” which should not be confused with “sales and marketing expenses.” The cost of sales in this case is directly analogous to cost of goods sold. For example, a consulting company’s cost of sales would be the compensation paid to its consultants plus the costs of research, photocopying, and production of reports and presentations.

In standard accounting, costs of sales or costs of goods sold are subtracted from sales to calculate gross margin. These costs are distinguished from operating expenses, because gross profit is gross margin less operating expenses. Costs are not expenses.

Golf = Cost/Round <less all other attributable costs like restaurant, pro-shop, driving range>

Cost Recovery:

The degree to which the cost (direct and/or indirect) of facilities, services, and programs is supported by user fees and/or other designated funding mechanism such as grants, partnerships, etc. versus tax subsidies.

Cost versus Price or Fee:

Cost is defined as all costs associated with an activity or service. Price or fee is the amount charged to the customer for the activity or service.

Customer Satisfaction:

Meeting and exceeding the wants and preferences of customers. This is measured by asking the customer, not by the number of visitors, users, or participants.

Enterprise/Quasi-enterprise:

A governmental accounting tool established to record transactions similar to those utilized in the private sector, allowing for tracking of services through a separate fund that records all transactions. All revenues and expenses, as well as assets and current liabilities are included. This type of fund is generally required to break even, or generate excess revenues over expenditures. Any revenues earned in excess of expenses are carried over, used for capital improvements or transferred to the General Fund. Collected gross revenues are not deposited in the General Fund, but rather are intended to be used to expand or improve services. These funds typically include services such as Utilities or Golf.

Exclusive Use:

Scheduled, planned, or programmed use of a facility or space that is limited or restricted to a reserved or rented party. They have the right to the space for the specified period of time.

For-Profit/Private Group:

A group that does not have an IRS status that exempts it from paying taxes.

Full Cost Recovery Fee:

The fee recovers the total cost of a service or program including all direct and all indirect costs, enabling the breakeven point to be reached. Full-cost recovery is often used as a strategy for services perceived as "private," benefiting only users while offering no external benefits to the general community.

Regular Full-Time Employee:

An employee who is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week. Regular full time employees are eligible for full fringe benefits package, are eligible for transfer or promotion to other regular positions within the City, and are eligible for other rights applicable to regular employment.

Governmental Group:

Any inter-agency, county, or other federal, state, or local governmental group.

Inventory Turn (applies to merchandise for resale):

What the inventory is really worth. It is based on how fast the inventory is "turned" (or sold). Two agencies may each have \$20 million sitting in inventory, but if one can sell it all every 30 days, and the other takes 41 days, there is less of a risk of inventory loss with the 30 day company.

Finding out how fast an agency turns its inventory is simple. The formula is as follows:

Current Year's Cost of Goods Sold or Cost of Revenues (for enterprise and for-profit businesses, it is found on the *income statement - not the balance sheet*)

----- (Divided By) -----

The average inventory for the period

Inventory in Relation to Current Assets (applies to merchandise for resale):

When analyzing a balance sheet, it is also necessary to evaluate the percentage of current assets inventory represents. If 70 percent of an agency's current assets are tied up in inventory and the business does not have a relatively low turn rate (less than 30 days), it may be a signal that something is seriously wrong and an inventory write-down is unavoidable.

Market Rate Fee:

Fee based on demand for a service or facility. The market rate is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (i.e. private sector providers, other municipalities, etc.), and setting the fee at the highest level the market will bear.

Membership:

This is a count of how many belong to a club or group. Membership is the number of people who have purchased a membership to a facility or program (also often used for annual, semi-annual, or monthly pass holders). Membership can be paid or unpaid.

Minimum Service Level:

The "acceptable" service level at facilities, a function of maintenance levels, staffing levels, types and numbers of amenities available (picnic sites, nature trails, restrooms, recreation centers, etc.), types and numbers of additional program offerings, quality of customer service, etc.

Net Profit Margin (applies to merchandise for resale):

The remainder after cost of goods sold, other variable costs revenue, or simply, total revenue minus total cost. Net profit margin can be expressed in actual monetary values or percentage terms.

Non-Profit Group:

Agencies outside of the organization's system with IRS non-profit status.

Non-Resident:

A person whose primary residence is outside of the organization's service area and does not meet the residency test in any way.

Non-User:

Those who have never stepped into the parks and facilities, taken the programs, or used the organization's facilities or services.

Optimum Service Level:

The "best" program and facility service; a function of maintenance levels, staffing levels, types and numbers of amenities available (picnic sites, nature trails, restrooms, recreation centers, etc.), types and numbers of additional program offerings, quality of customer service, etc.

Off-Peak:

Period of least demand for services and programs.

Regular Part-time Benefited Employee:

Regular part time employee who is regularly scheduled to work 10-30 hours per week on a year-round basis, at least 25 percent full-time equivalent, but less than 1.0 full-time equivalent. Part-time Benefited employees are eligible for prorated annual leave accrual, and a reduced medical/hospital insurance package, for transfer or promotion to other regular positions and are eligible for other rights applicable to regular employment.

Part Time Temporary:

Employees who work no more than 180 consecutive calendar days in any 12 month period.

Partial Overhead Cost Recovery Fee/Cost:

Fee recovers something less than full cost. This partial cost fee could be set at a percentage of direct costs, all direct costs, all direct costs plus a percentage of indirect costs, or some combination. The remaining portion of the costs will be subsidized.

Participant/Guest/User/Visitor:

Persons who use facilities and services, visit parks, and participate in programs and activities.

Participation:

Participation refers to the number of those who are enrolled in a program, workshop, activity, or event. They are the doers or users, the enrollees, or class attendees.

Peak:

Period of highest demand for services and programs. Peak and off-peak categorizations may vary for services and programs within a facility or park. For example, in a park, day use may be highest during the same time period in which demand for interpretive programs is low.

Performance Measures:

Performance measures are quantifiable evaluations of the organization's performance on a pre-determined set of criteria measured over time. The agreement upon standard performance measures allows the organization to judge its progress over time (internal benchmarking) and identify areas of strength and weakness.

Price Differentials:

Offering variations of the price to a particular group, which may achieve more equitable and efficient service delivery. Different groups are charged different prices for the same service, even though there is no direct corresponding difference in the costs of providing the service to each of these groups. Price differentials can be based on resident (tax payer)/non-resident, age categories, location of facility, time or season, quantity of use, incentives, etc.

Product Lifecycle:

The expected usable life of a particular piece of equipment or product before replacement.

“Profit”:

The additional **revenue** generated by the particular program or service when comparing the user or participant fees to the direct and/or indirect costs. In government, or in parks and recreation, one defines profit as excess revenue, and it is not distributed or carried over, but offsets other subsidies. This is not the traditional definition of private sector profit where distribution of excess “profit” goes to the stakeholders or shareholders as profit sharing or a distribution on their investment.

Program:

The activities and special events offered by the agency at various locations with specific participant purposes such as education, skill development, socialization, or health.

Refund Policy:

Refunds will only be processed for classes and programs cancelled by the department. Full credit or refund will be applied if the department cancels the class or program.

- A full credit may be requested in writing no later than five (5) days prior to the class or program start date.
- Registrants dissatisfied with a class or program may request a credit before the date of the second class. Processing fee applies.
- Registrants unable to attend a class/program due to illness or injury may request a credit/refund within five (5) days of the last class attended and must include a doctor's note. Credits will be applied to remaining unattended dates, less a processing fee.
- Registrants unable to attend a class/program due to relocation of more than 20 miles from the City of Alexandria may request a credit/refund within five (5) days of the last class attended and must include proof of address change. Refunds will be applied to all remaining unattended dates, less a processing fee.
- Credits are not issued for personal convenience or schedule conflicts.

Allow 30 days for refund processing. Credit card charge refunds will be made directly to the charge card account.

Rentals:

This includes external customer service for Facility Rentals for camping, parking for boat trailers, room rentals, picnic sites, pavilions, cabins, and trails, boat slips, as well as Equipment Rental for skis, snowshoes and snowboards, canoes and kayaks, bikes, picnic games, climbing wall, show mobile, grills, maintenance equipment, and cooling tanks.

Re-sales and Special Use Permitting:

This is a category of service including external customer service for revenues for food and beverage, merchandise for resale and special use permitting (for push cart vendors, photography or filming, etc.).

Resident:

Currently defined as those who live within the legal boundary of Alexandria City.

Returned Check Policy:

Alexandria, Virginia, Code of Ordinances >> PART II - THE CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES >> TITLE 3 - Finance, Taxation and Procurement >> CHAPTER 2 - Taxation >> ARTICLE Q - Fee for Passing Bad Checks to City >>

ARTICLE Q - Fee for Passing Bad Checks to City

[Sec. 3-2-301 - Generally.](#)

[Secs. 3-2-302 through 3-2-320 - reserved.](#)

Sec. 3-2-301 - Generally.

A fee of \$35 shall be charged for the uttering, publishing or passing of any check or draft for payment of taxes or any other sums due to the city, which is subsequently returned for insufficient funds or because there is no account or the account has been closed. (Code 1963, Sec. 36-130, as enacted by Ord. No. 2457, 4/12/80; Ord. No. 4005, 6/13/98, Sec. 2; Ord. No. 4540, 5/20/08, Sec. 1)

Financial Assistance Policy:



Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Financial Policies and Procedures

Financial Assistance Policy-Recreation Services

Draft Created: July 20, 2012

Approval Level: City Council

Approval Date:

Scheduled review date (frequency)

Primary Contact: William Chesley

Summary

The Department encourages resident participation in City programs. A financial assistance policy and process is developed to allow for maximum resident participation in City programs.

Eligibility

All City residents who meet qualifications are eligible. All City programs or affiliate programs are eligible for financial assistance. Some classes in the Market Rate portfolio may have limited availability to ensure cost recovery goals.

Policy: Fee assistance may be granted according to the following schedule:

- 40% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch at an Alexandria City School.
- 50% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch and the family receives nutrition assistance.
- 70% reduction for households where a child receives free or reduced lunch, and also receives TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), or where they reside in a City of Alexandria temporary shelter.

Procedures:

1. Resident completes the application and submits accompanying documentation to the Recreation Program Manager/Center Director. Applications must be accompanied by written documentation.
2. Recreation Program Manager/Center Director are to review documentation and verify.
3. Recreation Program Managers/Center Directors may approve and sign the application as the Department Director Designee.
4. The applications must be stored with the registrations and made available upon request.
5. Any fee assistance requested that differs from the stated policy, or without documentation, must be approved by the Division Chief or Deputy Director of Recreation Services.

Roles and Responsibilities

All Regional Program Directors, Recreation Managers, and Managers on Duty, along with Front Desk Personnel are to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

Contacts

William Chesley Deputy Director, Recreation Services

David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services

Financial Assistance Application:



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Financial Assistance Application

To be considered for assistance, you must complete the entire application form and return it, with supporting documentation, to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. If the request is for a class or camp, return with completed Registration Form to the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St, Alexandria, VA 22314 or fax to 703.746.5585. Applicants must demonstrate need in order to receive assistance. If you have questions about this form, please call 703.746.4343 or visit our office.
FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE PROGRAM. INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL BE RETURNED.

Participant's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____ email _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Explain the reason for your request (attach additional sheet if necessary) _____

Program Cost: \$ _____ Program Name: _____

Amount you could contribute \$ _____ Amount of assistance requested \$ _____

In return for assistance offered to you through our agency, please check the box to indicate if you are able to volunteer in some capacity. ☐ I can volunteer ☐ I cannot volunteer. If you check that you can, please indicate how:

Do you qualify for free/reduced school meals? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please attach documentation.

Do you receive SNAP ? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, case number: _____ attach documentation

Do you receive TANF? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, case number: _____ attach documentation

(See fee chart on reverse side)

Signature _____ Date _____

For Office Use Only

☐ Approved ☐ Denied Amount of assistance: % _____ \$ _____ Amount required to pay \$ _____

Comments:

Signature of Supervisor _____ Date _____

Signature of Director/Designee _____ Date _____

Seasonal Employees:

Non-regular employees hired to supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project; employment is of limited duration, no more than 180 calendar days in any 12-month period. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Seasonal employees retain their status unless notified of a change. Seasonal employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as workers' compensation and Social Security), but are ineligible for all other benefits programs.

Subsidy:

Funding through taxes or other mechanisms that are used to financially support programs or services provided to users and participants. Subsidy dollars provide for the program or service costs (direct and/or indirect) that are not covered by user or participant fees, or other forms of alternative funding. This is the community's investment.

Taxing Jurisdiction/Authority:

The City of Alexandria receives 57.6 percent of their General Fund subsidy from real estate, (32.7 from residential) and 28 percent from other local taxes. The residents' investment provides for discounted resident fees.

Value (perceived and real):

Participant/user expectations of the worth and quality of a program or service based on the benefits received.

Visits (Daily):

The count of the number of people who use the Organization's facilities each day throughout the year. This number will include multiple counts of a person who has repeat uses.

Registration System Terms:**Household Credit:**

Registrants can be given a credit or debit for a specific amount for a certain course. This can be done for one, selected registrants, or all registrants.

Installment Billing Report:

The Installment Billing Report lets you show all payments due now or about to be due in the specified number of days.

Transaction Listing Report:

The Transaction Listing Report shows registration "events" (course registrations and transfers, withdrawals, and cancellations) for an account within a specified date range.

Global Household Rec Connect:

The Rec Connect Report can be a valuable marketing tool to identify clients with the highest usage in terms of their program registrations, memberships, league registrations, and/or facility rentals.

Household/Activity Invoices:

Account statements for individual households or for specific activity, or for specific rentals can be printed or reprinted. Specific parameters such as only statements for accounts with rental, registration, or membership pass transactions, or with debit, credit, non-zero, or all balances can be set.

Deposit:

The deposit process allows money received through any module to be deposited at the treasury or in the bank.

Bottom Line Report:

The Bottom Line Report lists revenue generated by the selected courses, including course fees, fee adjustments, extra fees, extra adjustments, busing fees, busing adjustments, and any instructor expenses incurred.

Cash Journal:

The Cash Journal Report details how much cash should be in a till at the end of a day or the end of a shift. If the amounts indicated in the report do not match the actual amounts, check that there is proof of all non-cash payments listed in the report.

Household Accounts:

For a household account, enter information for the account's main contact first, and then add other family members to the account.

Transaction History Details:

The Transaction History Details window displays transactions that have happened for a selected entity.

GL Chart of Accounts:

A GL Chart of Accounts contains all account names and numbers listed according to account category. It also indicates whether accounts are system supplied, active, and whether they have a function extension.

Overdue Accounts Receivable Report:

The Overdue Accounts Receivable Report shows account balances that are older than a specified time, such as one year. This details which accounts have old credit or debit balances that could now be written off in the books.

Payment Entry – Batch:

The Payment Entry – Batch process provides ability to enter offsite payments into Class or activity. These payments will have been taken at the bank, bank machine or through Internet banking, or received at the administration office for manual entry.

Refund Processing:

Refund requests made by front desk operators are later processed singly or as a batch when refund checks are written and the credits removed from client accounts. This is usually done by a different department such as finance.

Requesting Refunds:

Payments made by credit card are normally refunded to the same card. Cash or check payments are refunded by check.

Organization Accounts:

For an organization account, enter information for the account's main contact first, and then add other organization members to the account.

Withdrawal Surcharge:

If an agency's site charges a special fee when clients withdraw from courses, withdrawal fees must be created and applied at the time of course withdrawal by choosing "Surcharge."

Sources:

City of Alexandria, VA

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

GreenPlay LLC (www.GreenPlayllc.com)

The leading edge in management consulting for Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and related industries

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Appendix D - Comparative Analysis Criteria

Limits of Comparative Data and Analysis

Comparative analysis (benchmarking) is an important tool that allows for comparison of certain attributes of the City's management practices and fee structure. This process creates deeper understanding of alternative providers, an agency's place in the market, and varying fee methodologies, which may be used to enhance and improve the service delivery of parks and recreation.

It is very difficult to find exact comparable communities, because each has its own unique identity, ways of conducting business, and differences in the serviced populations. The political, social, economic, and physical characteristics of each community make the policies and practices of each parks and recreation department unique. It is important to keep in mind that while many park and recreation departments primarily serve residents, others serve a large portion of non-residents, while others still cater to the tourism market.

Despite efforts to promote uniformity in comparison, organizations often have slightly different fee structures and associated benefits. For example, some parks and recreation departments may not report all benefits associated with the purchase of a center membership, or may not explain the breadth of indoor recreation spaces they have in the same way as another. The availability of detailed information may also be limited.

Additionally, organizations do not typically define the expenditures of parks, trails, facilities, and maintenance the same way. Agencies also vary in terms of how they organize their budget information, and it may be difficult to assess whether or not the past year's expenses are typical for the community. Despite these inherent limitations, the comparative analysis and fee comparisons criteria presented in this document should be used as a catalyst for the City of Alexandria to continue to research fees, market position, and best practices for more specific areas when they are needed.

Comparative Analysis Data Sought

The communities selected for benchmarking data should be chosen primarily for their proximity and perceived similarities to the City of Alexandria. Requested comparative data in addition to service specific fee structure may include:

- Values, vision, and mission of the organization
- Population and demographics
- Median household income and household size
- Prior year budget, actual expenses, and revenues for the entire department
- Prior year budget, actual expenses, and revenues for the parks and recreation divisions
- Number and square footage of Community/Recreation Centers
- Total acres of open space and developed park land
- Number of maintenance acres contracted out and maintenance description
- Total miles of department maintained trails
- Number of indoor and outdoor pools
- Number of lighted and unlighted softball/baseball fields
- Recreation and parks department full-time employees and casual employees

Often, comparative analysis data looks to weigh pertinent data along with comparing against a “per thousand” population calculation for categories including: total department budget, total acres, developed acres, miles of trails, Community/Recreation Center square footage, number of pools, number of softball/baseball fields, and recreation FTEs. Parks expenses and FTEs can be calculated per developed acre. Population, demographics, median household income, and household size estimates can be provided by the US Census.

Fee Comparison Considerations

To compare fees, other factors should be considered along with the price or fee charged for a program, rental, admission, pass, or other services. Be sure to include comparative data for each fee as applicable:

- Program contact hours
- Program session length
- Student/teacher ratio
- Contractor or in-house instructional staff
- Instructor qualifications
- Program quality
- Materials included or additional fees
- Set up/tear down and preparation time included
- Facility amenities included in admission or pass
- Programs included with admission or pass
- Towel service, locker, equipment usage included or extra
- Hours of operation or availability of service
- Peak or off peak pricing
- Packaging
- Value added amenities or services
- Service area demographics
- Subsidy versus cost recovery goals
- Use of alternative funding

City of Alexandria Playspace Policy
DRAFT – February 19, 2013

Proposed Playspace Policy

Policy Statement

The City of Alexandria will strive to provide opportunities for children and youth in Alexandria to achieve optimal health and development through the design, planning, enhancement and renovation of dynamic playspaces.

The playspace policy and its implementation plan provide goals and guidelines to improve access, quality, and distribution of playspaces through park design, transportation systems design (focusing on pedestrian accessibility), and incorporating the need for playspace in land use planning and development decisions.

For the purposes of this policy, a playspace is considered to be a playground, outdoor area, indoor facility, or site where elements specifically intended for children's play and/or unstructured recreation are located. This can include playground structures (e.g., prefabricated equipment) and the surrounding areas (e.g., open space, natural elements), as well as areas with elements that can be intended for play such as interactive fountains, gardens, art, and climbing fixtures. For the purposes of this policy, access refers to the availability of playspaces, as well as safe and convenient multi-modal access to those spaces.

Benefits of Play and Need for Playspace

Physical movement and play experiences are essential parts of child and youth development. Movement and physical activity assist with the healthy growth of a child's brain and body—and have an impact on a child's social, emotional, physiological, cognitive, and physical abilities and behavior.

Play has proven to be a critical element in children's future success and helps develop muscle strength and coordination, language, cognitive thinking, reasoning, and social abilities. Play teaches children how to interact and cooperate with others, encourages problem-solving skills, and may promote executive functioning—a higher-level skill that integrates attention and other cognitive functions such as planning, organizing, sequencing, and decision-making.

Outdoor play and play in natural environments have particular advantages for children's development. Preschool children have the highest physical activity levels while engaged in play outdoors, where free play and gross motor activity in young children are most likely to occur. Playing in environments that incorporate natural elements affects psychological and physical health, with impacts ranging from

enhanced mood and lowered heart rates, to improved social behavior and higher cognitive functioning.

For children and youth to experience the full benefits of play, they need safe space intended for play. Such playspace ideally provides opportunities for children and youth's intellectual, social, and physical development, as well as exposure to nature. Currently, many children and youth in Alexandria lack reasonable access to places to play that are safe, age-appropriate, and effectively designed to promote child development, especially in the West End and in Arlandria.

Furthermore, the City of Alexandria faces a childhood obesity crisis, with over 42 percent of children in the city considered overweight or obese, according to a 2007 study by Inova Health Systems. Physical movement is a critical component of addressing obesity and the accompanying health risks and complications, which can follow children and youth into adulthood.

Policy Goals

The goal of the playspace policy is to provide high-quality and accessible playspaces for all children and youth in Alexandria. The policy aims to guide the City toward that goal through calling for:

- The consideration of playspace quality, access and distribution for children of all age groups and in all areas of the city in relevant Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA), including the design, planning, and renovation processes.
- The consideration of playspaces in current and future land development and land use planning, including the systematic assessment of opportunities for playspace development and maintenance in development plans and re-zoning requests submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z).
- The consideration of playspaces for inclusion in all new publicly funded projects that are intended for use by children and youth, unless playspace is specifically deemed as an inappropriate component of a particular environment.
- The consideration of pedestrian access to playspaces in planning and assessment conducted by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES).
- The engagement of non-profit organizations, community groups and private partners in efforts to enhance playspace.

- The creation of incentives for private and non-profit owners of multi-family housing to provide and maintain playspaces for young children.
- Collaboration with Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) on enhancing, and providing access to, play opportunities for all children on playspaces utilized and/or maintained by ACPS.

Policy Scope

The playspace policy broadly encompasses the play and unstructured recreation needs of all children and youth in Alexandria. The broad scope of the policy is intended to allow for flexibility in implementation and for the ability to adapt to changing playspace needs and/or demographics within the city.

The policy extends to existing and future playspaces on public lands, on land held by private land-owners engaged with the City in the development process, and ACPS property. To the degree possible, the policy encourages City engagement with non-profit organizations, community groups, and owners of private multi-family housing to encourage high-quality and accessible playspace for youth and children in Alexandria.

Funding Sources

Funding to support the playspace policy would stem from the City of Alexandria, including CIP funds from the playground renovation program, and proposed contributions from private developers submitting requests for Development Special Use Permits and zoning changes. Grant funding from public/private partnerships and non-profit sources may also be leveraged when available.

City of Alexandria Playspace Policy DRAFT – February 19, 2013

Background

Planning for Health: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Communities nationwide are recognizing the critical link between our built environments and public health. How well we plan land use, parks, playgrounds, transportation, and residential and economic development has dramatic effects on our communities' health -- including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, cancer and depression -- far into the future. In the past few years, Alexandria has made great strides in planning for health, including:

- In May 2012, City Council adopted the Beauregard Small Area Plan that, given the high density of children expected to live in that area, comprehensively planned for children's playspaces and provided for a greenway network
- In May 2012, City Council approved a resolution to install signs asking residents to refrain from smoking in our parks and playgrounds.
- In April 2011, City Council passed a complete streets policy, which supports access to public transit and safe active transportation.
- In March 2011, City Council passed a breastfeeding support resolution that requested the City Manager establish a breastfeeding policy to support nursing employees as they returned to work.
- In March 2010, Alexandria became the second city in the country to pass a healthy food resolution that supported local foods, community gardens, and increased access to farmers markets through SNAP.
- In 2010, the Alexandria City Council approved of the City of Alexandria Strategic Plan, which, under the third objective of Goal 2, called to create a "Play Spaces for Tots" initiative to address obesity and overall well-being in toddlers and preschoolers by increasing quality play spaces.

Since a 2007 study by Inova Health Systems found that over 42 percent of Alexandria children were overweight and obese, the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN) has been a leader in bringing public and private partners together to better plan for health.

The development of a Playspace Policy is part of a broader, comprehensive strategy by A-COAN to increase: a) access to recreation and awareness of places to play; b) access to healthy foods and knowledge of healthy foods and cooking techniques; and c) community support for breastfeeding.

2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment

The 2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment, commissioned by A-COAN and conducted by expert consultant, Design Concepts, found that playspaces are not adequately distributed throughout Alexandria and that the available playspaces do not adequately meet the needs of children of all age groups. Specifically, the Assessment identified the following:

- (1) There are key areas in Alexandria, in particular the West End and Arlandria, where there is great need for improved access to quality playspaces.
- (2) There are far more playspaces for children ages 5-12 in the city, including the playgrounds on ACPS properties, which are unavailable to young children during school hours. Of the 86 playspaces included as part of the assessment, 67 were identified as appropriate for children ages 2-5, but only 54 of those were available to the public during the day.

In response to the 2012 Playspace Assessment, A-COAN worked with partners to launch Project Play, a community-based effort to expand play opportunities in for all families in Alexandria.

City Council's Strategic Plan

The City of Alexandria City Council has recognized the importance of play and playspace, healthy child development, and recreation in its Strategic Plan, as outlined below:

Goal 2: The City Respects, Protects and Enhances the Health of its Citizens and the Quality of its Natural Environment.

This goal includes an objective to Support Healthy Lifestyles and Disease Prevention and establishes Initiative 3F: PLAYSPACES FOR TOTS

Create the "Play Spaces for Tots" initiative to address obesity and overall well-being in toddlers and preschoolers by increasing quality play spaces.

Measures:

- *Number of neighborhoods with usable play spaces for toddlers and preschoolers.*
- *Number of children using play spaces.*
- *Number of age appropriate naturalistic play opportunities.*

Goal 4: Alexandria is a Community that Supports and Enhances the Well-being, Success and Achievement of Children, Youth and Families.

This goal includes an objective for Alexandria to support quality, evidence-based initiatives that promote the well-being of children, youth and families and establishes initiatives 4E and 4F regarding recreation and early childhood development:

Improve youth recreation and athletic field capacity and quality to meet scholastic and community demand.

Maintain and improve access to pre-natal to age 3 programs that strengthen families, improve birth and children's health and development outcomes.

Current Practice in Alexandria

The City of Alexandria has demonstrated a commitment to play and playspaces in many ways, including dedicating open space for playing fields, maintaining a large network of parks and public playgrounds, partnering with community members to build Indoor Playrooms, and constructing a Miracle Field, among other initiatives. The City and community's commitment to play is evident in Alexandria's recent recognition as a 2012 Playful City by KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit that encourages play in America's communities.

Parks and Recreation

The City, through the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA), is a major provider of playspaces. The RPCA Playground Renovation Capital Improvement Program ensures that City playspaces are compliant with Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) safety standards and are meeting user needs.

This program provides annual capital funding to renovate and to repair playgrounds to meet the industry safety standards. Approximately 37 park playgrounds are scheduled and prioritized for renovation on a 15-20 year cycle. Prioritization criteria include equipment conditions, usage, safety compliance, and accessibility. The renovation process includes site planning and analysis, design, public outreach and construction.

Current funding enables approximately 1-2 playgrounds to be renovated each year. Fifteen percent of funding is reserved for emergency repairs or equipment replacement.

In addition, park operating funds also support a playground maintenance and safety inspection program for all playgrounds. Preventative care and frequent inspections are intended to prolong the life of play equipment and surfacing, identify potential hazards, and to provide clean and safe playspace grounds.

The Strategic Master Plan for RPCA, adopted in 2002, focuses on public recreation facilities and sets policy guidance for public playgrounds and playspaces. Surveys

from the Strategic Master Plan and from the 2011 RPCA Needs Assessment indicate that playgrounds are among the most important recreation amenities to residents of Alexandria (behind hiking and biking trails and neighborhood parks).

Planning and Development

The City's Master Plan sets policy for future development in a number of small area plans and a few citywide thematic plans (Open Space Plan, Strategic Master Plan for Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Transportation Master Plan, etc.).

Most of the City's small area plans were adopted in a comprehensive review of plans in 1992 and have not been significantly updated since that time. Most areas with significant development potential do have area or corridor plans adopted since 2000. These policy plans, in general, do not address specific play area needs.

The most recently adopted area plan in an area with a substantial number of young children is the Beauregard Small Area Plan, adopted in 2011. This plan calls for substantial redevelopment of existing apartment areas for higher density housing organized in walkable neighborhoods.

The Beauregard Small Area Plan (p. 67) addresses children's play spaces, indicating that outdoor play spaces for all ages will be provided in the greenway network, and that children's playgrounds are recommended throughout the plan area. The plan also notes that amenities such as spray parks and other water features should be considered for children's play spaces.

In addition, Policy 4.33 in the plan (p. 76), listing policies for open space, indicates that, "a minimum of one tot-lot will be provided within each residential neighborhood. Additional tot-lots and/or children's play area may be required as part of the development review process. Consider the use of additional amenities such as water features for the children's play spaces."

City of Alexandria Playspace Policy DRAFT – February 19, 2013

Implementation Plan

In implementing the playspace policy, RPCA, T&ES, P&Z, the Alexandria Health Department (AHD), and ACPS will undertake the actions necessary to incorporate the playspace policy into departmental planning and practice and to achieve the goals of the policy.

The playspace policy's implementation should provide a comprehensive, cross-departmental approach to improving playspace quality, access, and distribution in the short and long term.

Specifically, each department will identify how to best incorporate the improvement of playspace quality, access, and distribution in existing and future master plan documents, strategic planning processes, negotiations with relevant stakeholders, and in developing departmental expertise and training, among other areas of work.

Within one year of policy approval, progress will be reported to City Council by the Playspace Advisory Council recommended for establishment.

Implementation Priorities and Flexibility

Existing playspace access and quality varies for children in different areas of the city and for children of different age-groups. Policy implementation should place priority on areas of the city that house significant numbers of children and youth, but currently have limited and/or low-quality playspace or have significant barriers to accessing playspaces. Priority should also be placed on addressing the playspace needs of children within age groups that are currently under-served.

The policy implementation plan can be supplemented with more specific guidance to address particular playspace needs and priorities over time.

Roles and Responsibilities of City Departments

RPCA will serve as the lead implementing agency for improving playspace quality, access, and distribution on city parks. RPCA will accomplish the following specific actions in implementing the policy:

RPCA shall:

- Amend existing strategic plans and master plans, as well as existing and upcoming park planning policy and documents, to reflect the guidance

outlined in this playspace policy, namely the improvement of playspace quality, access, and distribution.

- Ensure that internal processes consider equipment and play opportunities for children and youth of all ages in the design of new playspaces and in the enhancement and renovation of existing playspaces.
- Ensure the following components are considered when planning for new playspaces and/or enhancing and renovating existing play areas:
 - o Access: Proximity of playspaces to the homes of children and youth, following guidelines for reasonable proximity based on children's ages.
 - o Distribution: Equitable distribution of playspaces across the city, with a priority on areas in the city that are currently underserved; and
 - o Quality: Accommodations at playspaces that reflect needs of playspace users, i.e. a playspace for children ages 2-5 should also include caregiver accommodations.
- Create micro-level (neighborhood) playspace plans for underserved areas, including play opportunities for children and youth across each age-group (2-5 years, 5-12 years, and teens).

Plans could include enhancing existing playspaces within the area that are intended for one age group to also accommodate children of other ages; adding play elements to existing pocket parks; working with T&ES to find creative solutions to significant barriers to playspace access; and creative use of small spaces such as non-functioning alleyways, rights of way, and other land as parkland.

- Along with P&Z, seek to identify and acquire appropriate land, in accordance with existing policy and procedures, for future City playspaces.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between P&Z, T&ES, and ACPS in planning for and determining location, design, access to, and distribution of playspaces.
- Create a Playspace Advisory Council, with the assistance of AHD, and incorporate the Advisory Council's input into playspace planning and development.
- Seek grant funding and additional opportunities to promote play and physical activity for children and youth

P&Z will serve as the lead agency, in collaboration with RPCA, in advancing the playspace needs of children and youth in private development and re-development plans and negotiations.

In adherence to the playspace policy, **Planning and Zoning shall:**

- Develop and implement processes to consider playspaces in its land use planning processes, thereby improving playspace access and distribution.
 - o Playspaces are to be considered for inclusion in all new publicly funded projects intended for use by children and youth, in the development of vacant land, and in the re-development of existing built environments, unless playspace is specifically deemed as an inappropriate component of a particular environment.
 - o Appropriateness of including playspace in development should be based on guidelines established by the Playspace Advisory Council, in conjunction with P&Z, that take into consideration demographic projections and factors, such as household and family size expected to fill housing.
 - o Create mechanisms for developer contributions, in-lieu of creating playspace, in development of areas where demographic projections do not point to a sufficient need for playspace.
- Along with RPCA, seek to identify and acquire appropriate land for parks or open space that include playspaces.
- Determine potential funding incentives for private multi-family and institutional property owners to build and maintain playspaces on privately-owned land, specifically in under-served areas.
- Collaborate with RPCA and T&ES to identify potential areas for playspaces on existing City properties such as rights of way, non-functioning alleyways, and parkland.
- Coordinate with RCPA, T&ES, and AHD for advice and guidance on playspace quality, design, access, location, and distribution in the development and implementation of playspaces in private development and re-development plans and negotiations.

AHD will:

- Facilitate communication and coordination between relevant City departments through the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN) and Project Play.

- Provide, through and in collaboration with A-COAN and Project Play, support to RPCA and multi-family property owners regarding the age-appropriate and developmentally optimal design of playspaces for young children, in an effort to improve playspace quality on private land.
- Recruit members and provide any necessary training for the Playspace Advisory Council through A-COAN and Project Play.
- Seek grant funding and additional opportunities to promote play and physical activity for children and youth, through A-COAN and Project Play.

T&ES will:

- Create an action plan, in coordination with RPCA, to identify existing playspaces that currently do not provide safe pedestrian access to potential playspace users.
- Coordinate with RPCA to plan for and provide safe pedestrian routes to new and existing playspaces, especially for playspaces designed for children ages 2-5, who rely heavily on pedestrian access.
- Coordinate with P&Z to ensure the effective planning and design of safe routes to playspaces in new developments and re-developments.

Role of ACPS

ACPS is an important partner in providing playspaces to youth in Alexandria, as substantial areas of available playspaces are on property owned or managed by ACPS, and are used by ACPS exclusively during school hours. Coordination with ACPS could potentially improve access to playspace for children in the city and therefore greatly impact the effectiveness of the playspace policy.

In order to abide by the playspace policy, ACPS shall seek ways to provide public access, within school hours, to a portion of playspace located at each elementary school, following the example of the future Jefferson Houston site. There, members of the community will be able to play, during school hours, on a playground that is on ACPS property, but not used by students during the school day. In addition, planning for future elementary school sites should include sufficient playspace for children ages 2-5 and 5-12, as an increasing number of elementary schools are serving preschool students.

Public Input

Finally, each department involved in the playspace policy should build in methods to seek and incorporate public comment in the planning phase of playspace design,

enhancement, and/or destruction. Special consideration should be given to those residents who are directly affected by proposed playspaces and/or playspace changes.

Implementation Plan APPENDIX I

Recommendations for Enacting the Playspace Policy

I. Establishing the Playspace Advisory Council

The Playspace Advisory Council would be a voluntary body, modeled after other RPCA advisory councils, such as the Youth Sports Advisory Council. The Playspace Advisory Council would work with RPCA to develop annual goals and workplan objectives. The Council would regularly report to City Council with progress on achieving the policy's goals.

The purpose of the Playspace Advisory Council would be to provide advice and support to RPCA staff on the design, quality, maintenance, and enhancement of playspaces for children of all ages in Alexandria. This could include advising and guiding play in outdoor playspaces, natural landscapes, pop-up playgrounds, swimming pools, indoor spaces and other sites intended for children to play. The Playspace Advisory Council would also provide any needed advice or guidance to assist P&Z in aiding developer plans and providing input on the playspace components of future planning processes when needed.

The advisory council should include a broad spectrum of Alexandria residents, City staff, and play and/or playground experts. This may include representatives from the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network, Project Play, residents from the three Alexandria planning districts, representatives from P&Z, ACPS, and T&ES, members from relevant Alexandria boards and commissions, as well as a member with expertise in access and play for children with disabilities, among others.

Through Project Play, AHD can help recruit members for the Playspace Advisory Council and help provide necessary training to council members about the elements of quality play and quality playgrounds.

RPCA should amend internal processes, as necessary, to allow for feedback and support from the Playspace Advisory Council.

II. Creating Incentives for Private Development and Maintenance of Playspaces

Greater access to playspaces for children and youth throughout the city is likely only through increased provision of playspaces by private multi-family property owners

and developers. It is imperative that the City engage with these stakeholders to build and maintain high-quality playspaces if goals for playspace access and equitable distribution are to be achieved.

Development negotiations and agreements, as well as requests for zoning changes, provide opportunities for the City to offer incentives to these private stakeholders to develop and maintain playspaces. The City can look to the following suggestions when considering potential incentives:

- a. The creation of an Alexandria Playspace Easement program, under which private property owners allow construction of publicly accessible playspace on their land and, in turn, receive release from liability related to that land.
- b. The establishment of a Playspace Fund to collect individual, corporate, and developer contributions (in lieu of building playspace) for the City's purchase of land for playspace, installation of new playspaces, and maintenance of playspaces.
- c. Negotiating higher FAR, tax abatement options, or loosening of parking requirements for developers who add high-quality playspaces to their development plans.
- d. Amending open space requirements to allow for inclusion of certain types of qualifying playspace, such as natural play elements (boulders, tree stumps, and berms) in new developments and re-development likely to house young children to include playspace.

III. Leveraging Existing Funds and Seeking Additional Sources of Revenue

In order to achieve the desired outputs and outcomes of the playspace policy, the City will need to increase resources to playspaces for children and youth.

To aid in this effort, RPCA could identify methods to leverage existing funding streams for the development of new playspaces and identify new or unique funding streams from non-traditional sources (e.g., public-private partnerships, grants, playground fund, etc)

Funding for the purposes expressed in the playspace policy could come from a variety of sources, including:

- a. Allocating revenues for RPCA from the City's Capital Improvements Program to playspaces and unstructured recreation.
- b. An expansion of the continuing program for rehabilitation of recreation and parks facilities, within the CIP, to include the development of new playspaces in areas of need.
- c. Utilization of proposed private developer contributions housed in a Playspace Fund (in lieu of developer building of playspace).

- d. Donations from city residents into the Playspace Fund, to be used for the purpose of developing and enhancing playspace.

IV. Encouraging Additional Opportunities to Enhance Play

Partnerships with Non-profit and Community Organizations

There are many organizations in Alexandria that can be leveraged to enhance play, in addition to City resources and potentially private development. Several non-profits and coalitions in the city include the promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyles as part of their core mission. Still others are focused on the well-being and healthy development of young children and on the accessibility of recreational outlets for children with disabilities.

These organizations and coalitions can be seen as natural partners in promoting play and playspace for young children. They often have access to grant funding from donor organizations as well as staff, expertise, and volunteer resources.

The Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN), an initiative of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, received grant funding to conduct a citywide assessment of playspaces for young children, the 2012 Playspace Assessment. This document is a powerful tool for understanding deficiencies in playspace quality and distribution in the city, as well as areas of strength. A-COAN has also conducted parent and child care provider focus groups regarding perceptions of playspaces in the city and a Photovoice project to document the status of playspaces in the city through the lens of caregivers and key elements that families value in a playspace.

Currently, A-COAN and ACTion Alexandria are leaders in launching Project Play, an initiative to implement recommendations from the 2012 Playspace Assessment.

In addition, through collaboration with A-COAN and ACTion Alexandria, ACPS and the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) have received substantial financial and volunteer assistance from KaBOOM!, a national organization that supports and funds high-quality playspaces, to build a playspace on one ARHA site.

Finally, A-COAN and ACTion Alexandria sponsored a Spruce Up Contest where Alexandria residents nominated 17 local playgrounds to receive funding for small equipment, equipment repairs and upgrades, seating and shade trees and other innovative ideas to improve Alexandria playspaces. The Spruce Up Contest benefitted three City playspaces and one ACPS playspace.

Continued partnership with A-COAN, ACTion Alexandria, KaBOOM!, and other organizations can have a significant impact on playspace quality and access in Alexandria.

Creating Demonstration Playspaces

To provide healthy playspaces for children and youth in the city, it is recommended that a program be established for the City to develop three exemplary playspaces in different parts of Alexandria. These demonstration playspaces would be examples of optimal playspaces for children and youth and could serve as laboratories for exploration of design ideas for development of other playspaces throughout the city.

The design and development of these three playspaces could be undertaken through a well-publicized competition or other process that invites a variety of firms and designers to compete for recognition in the city.

Implementation Plan APPENDIX II

Best Practices in Creating High-Quality Playspaces

Not all playspaces are created equal. Researchers agree that when evaluating children's environments the best approach is to look at the environment's ability to support the development of the whole child.

Physically active play has a direct link to healthy growth, but play has the innate potential to improve all aspects of children's well-being: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. It is important for each of these "domains" to be addressed in the places where children play. This requires a play environment with a good mix of activities and features that support children's intellectual, social, and physical development, as well as exposure to nature.

These components provide a great platform for enhancing children's health and learning, along with their connectedness to nature and to other children and adults. Individual play activities on a playground can support one or more developmental domains, depending on the quality of the play structure or the natural features found in the environment.

Increasingly, research and best practices regarding play for young children have noted that optimal playspaces include features and elements that address five domains of play:

1. **Physical** – The playspace should offer opportunities for physical activity appropriate for young children. Active physical play has a positive effect on children's physical development and coordination and helps prevent obesity. Examples include climbing, crawling, walking, running, sliding, climbing through, throwing, skipping, hopping, jumping on/off, lifting, and balancing. Vestibular stimulation that trains the sense of balance is experienced in activities like rolling, swinging, rocking, sliding, twisting, turning, and swaying. Pathways and wheeled toys offer opportunities to move at different speeds. Play structures offer the opportunity to climb up, down, through, and over and to experiment with large motor skills.
2. **Intellectual** – The playspace should offer appropriate opportunities for intellectual development, including language skills, problem solving, perspective taking, memory, and creativity. Loose materials, moveable objects, and props stimulate imagination, discovery, and imaginative play. A sand play area is great for constructive play. Navigating a climbing structure or exploring the topography of a multipurpose, open grassy area develops spatial understanding. Age-appropriate risk and challenge are important elements in an intellectually stimulating environment for young children.

3. **Social** – Play has shown to contribute to the development of social skills such as taking turns, collaborating, and following rules, as well as empathy, self-regulation, impulse control, and motivation. Outdoor environments designed with social activities in mind for child- child interactions and adult-child interactions include quiet spaces for both solitary and parallel play. Small-group play and larger-group play can occur on decks, stages, and sitting and gathering places. Pretend play features include playhouses and other imaginative props or natural objects.
4. **Natural** – Including elements from the Natural Domain provides opportunities for children to be in physical contact with the natural environment. Nontoxic garden plants, hedges, bushes, enclosures, raised-bed gardens and planters, ground covers, multipurpose lawns, hills, and natural objects like logs, leaves, sticks, water, and sand all contribute to this domain.
5. **Free play** – A Free Play area consists of an open space that offer opportunities for lots of movements and social interaction in unstructured play activities, i.e., open areas with appropriate surfacing for larger group play, running, games, and dramatic play.

In implementing the playspace policy, the City and private partners should strive toward the goal of incorporating all five elements of play in the designing, building, enhancing and maintaining places for young children to play.

Implementation Plan Appendix III

Prioritizing Playspaces for Children Ages 2-5

This document supports and supplements the Playspace Policy, which covers children and youth of all ages, by providing particular focus on meeting the play and unstructured recreation needs of children ages 2-5. The first section presents important background information and rationale for placing priority on the playspace needs of 2-5 year olds. The second section expresses the goals of prioritizing playspaces for young children and the sought after outcomes. The third and final section presents guidelines to aid the City in prioritizing young children in the initial implementation of the playspace policy.

Section I: Background

Demographic Data

According to the U.S. Census, children 5 years of age and under made up 8.1 percent of Alexandria's population, with 11,391 children, in 2010. This number had grown by 2,129, or 23 percent, since 2000, substantially exceeding the 9.1 percent growth rate of the city population as a whole. The number of children 5 years of age and under is slightly higher than the number enrolled in grades 1-12 (11,322) in Alexandria City Public Schools in 2012. The large percentage of children ages 5 years of age and younger in the city underscores the need to prioritize playspaces for this age group.

Health of Young Children in Alexandria

A 2007 study completed by Inova Health Systems found that 43.5% of Alexandria children, ages 2-5, are overweight or obese. This rate is substantially higher than in other population groups. Being overweight or obese puts children at the risk of many serious health problems, now and throughout their lives. Cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression are typical threats. Preschoolers who are overweight/obese face an increased risk of obesity and its related health risks in young adulthood. Obese children and adolescents have a greater risk of social and psychological problems, such as discrimination and poor self-esteem, which can continue into adulthood.

According to a 2007 Stanford University study, inactivity among children may result in this generation being the first in American history to have a shorter life span than their parents. Physical education, recess at school, and outdoor play at home are essential to healthy child development. Preschool children seem to have highest physical activity levels while engaged in play outdoors. The outdoors is where free play and gross motor activity in young children are most likely to occur. For this reason, a primary focus is placed in this study on the availability and quality of suitable outdoor playspaces for children between the ages of 2-5.

Current Status of Playspaces for Children Ages 2-5

While the City of Alexandria has demonstrated clear support for play and playspaces, young children in many areas of the city remain underserved. The 2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment identified substantial deficiencies in the availability and quality of playspaces for children aged 2-5 in the city, particularly in Arlandria and the West End. These were the same areas where the greatest number of children resided. Play was particularly limited in areas with high-rise apartments with large populations of children. These locations usually had less well-maintained equipment, if any.

In fact, the area of the city with the highest percentage of children under five has almost no playspaces for those children (straddling I-395 just south of Seminary Rd.). This area is not unique, as many of the other areas in Alexandria that house high numbers of 2-5 year olds have few to no age-appropriate playspaces. Additionally, the area of apartment complexes between Landmark Mall and Samuel Tucker Elementary, which is also home to a large number of children younger than five, does have a few playspaces, but almost all of them score very low on scales of quality. Similarly, the Playspace Assessment noted a general perception among focus group participants that low-income children had less access to places to play.

Furthermore, the Playspace Assessment showed that there are far more playspaces for children ages 5-12 in the city, including the playgrounds on ACPs properties, which are unavailable to young children during school hours, than there are for children ages 2-5. Of the 86 playspaces included as part of the assessment, 67 were identified as appropriate for children ages 2-5. Of those appropriate for children ages 2-5, one-fifth are not available to the public during the day.

Unique Needs of 2-5 Year-Olds

Children ages 2-5 have unique developmental needs and characteristics that can be addressed and engaged with the purposeful use of high quality and age appropriate play elements and/or equipment provided at a playspace. Guidelines for types of play specific for this age range can be found below.

In addition to play elements, the pedestrian accessibility and accommodations for caregivers are critical factors that enable and encourage playspace use by young children.

Pedestrian Access to and Distribution of Playspaces

Young children, ages 2-5, and their caregivers – either parents or childcare providers – face a unique set of challenges accessing playspaces. Driving young children in cars requires car seats for each child and public transport with young children can often take significant planning and effort on the part of the caregiver. Walking is, in many instances, the preferred method to take young children to a playspace. Short walking distances, that do not pose excessive physical challenges to young children or logistical challenges to their caregivers, create greater access to

playspaces for young children, as do surfaces that are easy for strollers to traverse. Importantly, crossing busy streets is often prohibitive for caregivers with young children.

Caregiver Accommodation

Furthermore, because young children are entirely dependent on their caregivers to reach and stay at playgrounds, the needs and comforts of caregivers are important elements in the design and location of playspaces for young children. The 2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment found that key elements such as benches, shade, and trashcans were important in caregivers' decision to take children to a playground.

Section II: Goals and Outcomes of Prioritizing Playspaces for Young Children

The purpose of this supplemental document is to guide the City toward integrating the unique needs of children ages 2-5 into existing playspace policies and practices, developing new policies and practices for children ages 2-5 as needed, and considering the unique opportunities for playspaces for young children in relevant land use planning and development.

The goal of applying the Playspace Policy toward addressing the needs of young children is to provide and encourage high-quality and age-appropriate playspaces for children ages 2-5 within walking distances of their homes, especially in parts of the city that house significant numbers of young children in dense living areas.

Desired Outcomes for Young Children

The ability of children in all areas of the city to reap the physical, social, and intellectual benefits of play by accessing a high-quality and age-appropriate playspace within walking distance of their residences through:

- An increase in the quality of and access to playspaces for children ages 2-5 in Alexandria.
- An increase in the use of playspaces for children ages 2-5 in Alexandria.
- A decrease in the rate of overweight and obese children ages 2-5 in Alexandria.

Section III: Implementation Guidelines for Playspaces for Children Ages 2-5

General Guidelines

In order to address the deficiency in playspace for children ages 2-5 in Alexandria, particularly in the West End and Arlandria, each department involved in the

implementation of the playspace policy shall prioritize efforts toward identifying and meeting the needs of this age group.

In addition, the Playspace Advisory Council shall be called upon to further develop the guidelines for the planning and design of playspaces for children ages 2-5 that are described below and to provide any additional recommendations for meeting the playspace needs of this age group that are deemed necessary by the Council and/or the City departments administering the playspace policy.

These guidelines shall inform administering agencies on how to apply the playspace policy specifically to 2-5 year olds.

Specific Planning and Design Guidelines

Specific guidelines related to playspace location, distribution, design, size, setting and facilities can serve to assist in the playspace policy implementation process. These guidelines are suggestions and could and should be amended as necessary by the Playspace Advisory Council.

Location. Playspaces suitable for children of age 2 to 5 should be located within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, roughly less than 10 minutes of walking with a small child, by safe routes from residential areas where there are concentrations of children in this age group. In areas with lower concentrations of children in this age group, such playgrounds should be located within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of residences likely to house young children.

Distribution. Identify neighborhoods in the city with high populations of young children that lack playspace for children ages 2-5 within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance of most residential dwellings within the neighborhood. The 2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment identified underserved areas within the city and could be used to assist identification of neighborhoods that need focus in order to provide equitable distribution of pedestrian-accessible playspace for children ages 2-5 in the city.

Size. Playgrounds suitable for children of age 2 to 5 need not be large. A play area of 1,200 to 2,500 square feet with appropriate design, location, equipment and support facilities is sufficient to serve a typical service population within a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile (less than 10 minutes with a young child) walk. Adding individual natural play elements in an existing space may take substantially less space.

Design for Play. Each playground designed for ages 2 to 5 should provide for the primary components of healthy play including (defined above):

- Physical activity
- Intellectual activity
- Social interaction
- Contact with nature
- Unstructured free play

Setting and Characteristics. Characteristics of the play area that make it suitable for use by children and their caregivers include ease of access, perceived safety, and a pleasant environment.

Support Facilities. Important support facilities for children and their caregivers include shade, seating, and drinking water.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2013

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: WILLIAM CHESLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

SUBJECT: MARCH 21, 2013 COMMISSION MEETING ITEM - VIII-A
RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REPORT

Youth Activities

- I met with Deputy Superintendent Madye Henson to discuss a collaborative program proposal to implement the Titan Lounge afterschool program in the 2013-2014 school year. We have provided OMB with funding details for consideration in the FY-2014 budget.
- Staff and I met with Dr. Colleen Mann, head of the Office of Community and Family Partnerships with ACPS, to discuss the implementation of the Safe Place Program in the schools. We are also coordinating a meeting with ARHA to discuss possible implementation of Safe Place in their organization.
- Youth basketball championship games were held at T.C. Williams H.S. on March 9. The games were well attended and we were extremely pleased with the outstanding sportsmanship and conduct on display by spectators and participants conduct during each of the nine games. Staff has already sent program surveys to parents and coaches.
- Registration for the Recreation Department baseball and softball programs, Alexandria Little League, Alexandria Lacrosse Club and the Alexandria Soccer Association is underway for the spring 2013 season.
- In February the Therapeutic Recreation Program collaborated and partnered with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, John Adams Elementary School, Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center and the Kelly Cares Foundation to bring rewarding programs and activities to our program participants.
- Staff from our Power-Up Middle School Program collaborated with Ms. Kim Hurley, DCHS Health & Community Education Specialist, to implement programming for girls on March 5, 12, 19 and 26 tied to the theme of teen dating violence awareness. Activities included health relationship bingo and discussion, crafts, role-play and group discussion.
- The Winter “Kickers” Indoor Soccer Program completed its second year at the Mt. Vernon and Patrick Henry Recreation Centers. One-hundred fifty boys and girls signed up for the eight-week program.

- RPCA's Alexandria City Community Theatre (ACCT) hosted Apollo Live! a tribute to Black History Month on Friday, March 1 from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Kauffman Auditorium at the Lee Center. Children from each of the recreation centers performed (dancing, singing, poetry readings) tied to a specific time (30's, 40's, 50's...80's, 90's, etc.) and developed performances that reflected black culture from that era. Props, costumes and other visual were creatively incorporated into each of the performances. More than 250 people, including the performers, attended the event. We had 30 surveys returned- 93% marked "Very satisfied," and the remaining two surveys marked "Satisfied," one of which said they wished the program lasted longer.

Adult Activities

- Cooperative Extension staff conducted nutrition and other health related workshops for senior adults at the Charles Houston Recreation Center and St. Martin Seniors Center.
- Therapeutic Recreation's Adult Social Club enjoyed community outings to Ben's Chili Bowl, AMC Movie Madness and Arlington's Valentine Dance. Participants had fun socializing with friends, while participating in a variety of trips and outings in Alexandria and the Metropolitan area. Total 63 adults.
- We had 46 teams to register for Adult Sports Basketball and Coed Leagues this winter. The programs are running on time and are projected to finish in late March as scheduled.
- Eight (8) teams participated in the Late Night Basketball League at Charles Houston Recreation Center. We are expanding the program to the Cora Kelly Center for the spring league when we will play games at both Charles Houston and Cora Kelly.

Power Plus (55 & over) Programs

- The Senior Pickleball open play program continues to be strong. There is an average of 12 to 15 players that attend each day.
- A Pickleball Clinic was held in January and February to assist with improving the players' skills. Overall about 18 people participated in the clinic.
- The Senior Bowling League's season ended on March 13. Teams from William Ramsay, Charles Houston and Patrick Henry competed in the program.

Recreation Centers

- Comparative data on School Year Out of School Time Program enrollment and revenue for the 2011-2012 school year and YTD for the 2012-2013 school year is as follows:

	Enrolled	Revenue
2012	1,430	\$ 58,501
2013	1,286	\$205,036

Final Mid-year survey results for the School Year Out of School Time Program are as follows: 379 surveys were completed (30% completion rate) with 92.44% of respondents indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the program.

A couple testimonials: “The Rec Center is a godsend for parents, whether you work outside the home or not. They provide a fun, safe and educational after-school spot where they encourage play, physical activity and help kids get their homework done too! The staff are extremely energetic, kind and make sure there's always something fun to do. My kids always pout when I show up to take them home!”

“I am so grateful that you are there for us whenever we need you. You are like a part of my family.”

- We hired Gladstone Harriott to fill the vacant Center Director position at Charles Barrett Recreation Center. Mr. Harriott worked the past year as a Recreation Manager I at the William Ramsay Recreation Center. Prior to that, he worked for approximately five years as a Program Coordinator in the YMCA system in Norfolk, Virginia. He will start work at Charles Barrett on March 25, 2013.
- We will present a draft of the Green Play Resource Allocation Cost Recovery Philosophy, Policy and Model to the Commission at the March 21, 2013
- The final draft document is being reviewed by staff and will be brought to the Commission's March meeting for review.

Aquatic Program

- We continue to work and coordinate with the staff from the Departments of General Services and Finance/Purchasing to secure contractors to perform the work involved with the facility improvements at Chinguapin Park Recreation Center. Chinguapin is expected to be closed from May 6 – September 23, 2013 to make much needed facility improvements. In order to minimize inconvenience for our customers, the following operational adjustments will be made:
 - 1) All classes and camps normally scheduled for the summer will operate at Francis C. Hammond.
 - 2) Hammond Middle School and other locations throughout the City.
 - 3) All valid Chinguapin Fitness Passes will be honored at all RPCA fitness facilities.
 - 4) All valid Chinguapin Aquatic Passes will be honored at all RPCA outdoor pools.
 - 5) All outdoor pools will have extended hours to accommodate swim lessons and lap swimming. (Weather Permitting).
 - 6) The normal summer swim lessons will continue at the Old Town and C. Houston Memorial pools. See website: www.alexandriava.gov/recreation for each pool schedule of events and lane availability.
- Due to Chinguapin’s anticipated renovation schedule, the Spring Learn to Swim program will be scheduled to occur one month earlier (March-May) than the department’s activity guide is produced. This high demand season will need to be completed by May 5. A variety of swim class offerings are being assembled using all available outdoor pools between June and September.

Other

- The Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFC) commended RPCA staff on several occasions this past month for their work in support of the three

Youth Master Plan Community Forums held in February. The forums were very well attended (related article from a local newspaper included at the end of this report). Nineteen youths representing various recreation centers participated in the forums.

- The winter component of the Rock Your Park program wrapped up this month. Overall, attendance at Ben Brenman has been very good. For December, we had 537 participants and in January 466 participants to use the facility. In summary, the program has continued to receive overwhelming support the public. For February, we had 571 participants to use the facility. In summary, the program has continued to receive overwhelming support the public. The total for the winter days is presently at 1,574 participants.
- Spring and Summer class registration begins on March 20 for residents and 22nd for nonresidents. We are offering a number of new classes for youth, adults, and new camps. We have specifically expanded our gymnastics offerings hoping that it will fill the need of the community. Total Revenue for Adult and Youth classes and camps is up over \$57K from where it was last year at the end of January. Projections for the remainder of the year have us recouping over 100% of cost to operate the section.
- Staff has already allocated fields for RPCA programs and for priority users such as TC Williams High School, Alexandria Soccer Association, Alexandria Little League, Alexandria Lacrosse, and Bishop Ireton High School.
- Division Chief Joseph Petrella and Mac Slover have been working with staff and the Youth Sports Advisory Board to finalize the Field Allocation Policy. The policy was sent to the Youth Sports Advisory Board for review and input prior to the Board's March 11 meeting. Input received from members at the March 11 meeting was incorporated into the policy. The policy is intended to provide formal structure for staff to adhere to when allocating fields and the policy will be reviewed annually with key stakeholders to consider any changes that may be needed to ensure the needs of the community are met.

Adopting a youthful strategy

February 21, 2013 ALEXANDRIA TIMES

Collaborative effort aims

to connect youth with

city programs

By Melissa Quinn

Concerned that Alexandria's adolescents are slipping through the cracks, city officials have teamed up with residents and a Washington nonprofit to craft an overarching strategy to bring them back into the fold. The effort — spearheaded by the children, youth and families collaborative commission — seeks to streamline the plethora of services available to Alexandria's youngest residents. By working with the community, officials hope to pinpoint areas in need of improvement for youth and maximize resources.

Despite being consistently ranked as one of the best communities for young people, officials have grappled with signs that Alexandria's youth are ignoring what the city has to offer them.

Studies conducted by the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria in recent years indicate that many teenagers prefer to spend time alone or hanging out with friends instead of participating in city programs.

“We’re concerned about [young people’s] immediate success and future success to contribute to society,” said Ron Frazier, director of the youth services office.

Frazier’s team is working with members of Washington-based nonprofit Forum for Youth Investment and a design group that includes city residents to tackle the complex issue. At a community meeting earlier this month — one of several that officials have hosted in recent weeks — attendees absorbed an array of data, like the city’s dropout rate, and highlighted the areas they felt most needed improvement. Using this feedback, the design team will work to develop a master plan with the goal to connect youth with city resources.

“We want a more cohesive plan in place,” said Elizabeth Gaines, vice president of policy and solutions for the Forum for Youth Investment. “We want to offer a streamlined way for young people to succeed in the community.”

Tammy Mann, chair of the youth commission as well as president and CEO of The Campagna Center, echoed Gaines’ sentiment. “The whole goal is [to create] a blueprint for issues affecting young people,” Mann said. “Investments should be made to think carefully about where to achieve the outcomes articulated.”

Creating a master plan was a recommendation from the youth commission, Frazier said. The city offers a variety of services — such as tutoring as well as gang prevention and teen pregnancy programs — but many go unused. In addition, programs are divided between two main age groups: from birth to teens and from teens up to age 21. The master plan would provide one document to accommodate children from birth to adulthood.

“There were little opportunities for all those groups to come together in one plan to say this is how we contribute,” Frazier said. “We wanted to see how they plug into the plan, and [how] we could marshal our resources together to produce a better outcome.”

Once city council set aside dollars for the plan’s development, Frazier enlisted the Forum for Youth Investment’s help to draft the overarching strategy. And his target audience has taken notice. “I want to see the kids do better in life,” said 18-year-old Tanisha Bolden, a city resident who attended one of the community events. “I want to see them go to college and do the things their parents want them to do.”

Frazier hopes to implement the plan, which he describes as a living document, by the fall. “We hope to help all youth thrive,” Frazier said. “We want to see some positive direction on some key indicators that contribute to youth success.” The next meeting for the youth master plan is from 10 a.m. to noon at William Ramsey Elementary School on Saturday.

“The city has done a lot around youth development,” Frazier said, “but this is the next step.”

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 18, 2013

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: DINESH TIWARI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PARK OPERATIONS,
RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES,

THROUGH: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR, RPCA

SUBJECT: PARK OPERATIONS UPDATE – ITEM VIII-B

1. **Invasive Plant Management Program** – Staff is carrying out several site management and nuisance plant removal efforts in March. These include bamboo and English Ivy removal at Dora Kelley Nature Park, plant removal and annual mowing at the Beatley and Telegraph Native Meadows, native plantings at the Hammond Middle School Native Plant Conservation Zone, and initial work at the new 5325 Polk Ave. native woodland.
2. **Urban Forestry Management Program** – We have begun our spring tree planting season, which runs from March 15 through June 15. Our goal is to plant approximately 250 trees on City property during this period. The Spring Tree Sale is scheduled for April 20, 2013, in association with the City's Earth Day Celebration.

We have also made good progress on reducing the backlog of tree-related (tree trimming, tree/stump removal and tree planting) work orders which had grown due to the effects of last summer's Derecho and Hurricane Sandy, as well as normal requests for service by residents. We began calendar year 2013 with approximately 800 open work orders. That number has been reduced to 475, and we anticipate continued reduction in this number during the spring planting season and as we continue to tackle the remaining backlog.

3. **Recycling in Parks** - Staff is working with T&ES to establish a pilot program to begin recycling in parks.
4. **Emergency Communication Equipment** – Six new handheld radios have been ordered and five recycled mobile radios will be installed in service vehicles as a backup for communication during emergencies.

5. Seasonal Activities

- Garden Plot Rental Renewal – We are in the midst of the annual rental process for the Community Garden Plots at Chinquapin and Holmes Run Parks. We had a turnover of approximately 35 of the 194 existing plots. In order to accommodate more gardeners, we are also establishing approximately 20 new plots within the existing boundaries of the Chinquapin Gardens.
- Playground Safety Inspection and Maintenance Program – Staff began quarterly inspection of all playgrounds and perform necessary maintenance and repair.
- Seasonal Staff Recruitment – Reviewing applications and conducting interviews for seasonal staff and summer interns.
- Equipment Preparations For Spring – 100% of the work related to the scheduled preventive maintenance (PM) of our grounds maintenance equipment fleet has been completed and replacement equipment is being ordered.
- Maintenance Contract – Mowing contract, including a weed abatement program, for rights-of-way, schools and public facilities is expected to be awarded by the end of March.

6. **Staff Training/Development and Outreach** – Two of our staff members are making a presentation on Invasive Plant Control at the Society for Ecological Restoration Conference at the Univ. of Maryland in late March. We also had one of our staff obtain his Certified Pesticide Applicator designation, in order to be able to use chemical treatments to address nuisance/exotic plant problems. Our staff led a Field Trip (walking tour) for the public of the Holmes River Gorge on the West Side of Alexandria in late February. We also made a presentation on Alexandria's natural resources and our Natural Resources Division at the March meeting of the Holmes Run Park Committee.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2013

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: JACK BROWAND, DIVISION CHIEF
MARKETING, SPECIAL EVENTS & WATERFRONT OPERATIONS
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION: ITEM VIII-C
MARKETING, SPECIAL EVENTS & WATERFRONT OPERATIONS
UPDATE

Beachcombers Building RFP Issued

The City is now accepting proposals for a long term lease agreement for the operation of the Beachcombers Building as a restaurant. The building, located on the Potomac River at 0 Prince Street in Old Town, opened as the City's first waterfront restaurant in 1946. Proposals will involve the renovation of the building as well as the ongoing restaurant operations. The RFP was issued on February 28, 2013 and offers must be received not later than the Opening Date & Time of June 10, 2013 at 3 p.m. Visit <http://alexandriava.gov/generalservices/default.aspx> to review the proposal.

Marina Fees Approved

On Saturday, February 23, 2013, City Council unanimously approved staff recommended City Marina fee increases. The following fees take affect April 1, 2013:

1. City resident pleasure boat annual license fee increase from the current rate of \$8 per foot per month to \$9 per foot per month, an increase of \$1 per foot per month;
2. Nonresident pleasure boat annual license fee increase from the current rate of \$9 per foot per month to 11 per foot per month, an increase of \$2 per foot per month;
3. Pleasure boat overnight docking fee increase from \$2 per foot per night to \$2.50 per foot per night, an increase of \$0.50 per night; and
4. Pleasure boat short-term docking fee for up to four hours increase from \$15 per boat to \$20 per boat, an increase of \$5 for up to four hours per boat.

The new fees, in addition to the increase of available slips for licensing from 48 to 54, are estimated to provide an additional \$58,000 in revenues.

2013 Spring & Summer Program Guide Now Available

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities' 2013 Spring & Summer Program Guide is now available. The program guide highlights City classes, programs, activities and special events occurring April through August 2013. Registration for spring and summer classes and activities begins at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, March 20 for City residents, and Friday, March 22 for nonresidents.

Special Events Policies and Procedures – Policy Amendment

The Special Events Committee is proposing a modification to the City Council approved Special Events Policies and Procedures by removing the prohibition of Founders Park for special event activities. The Draft Proposal was presented to the Waterfront Commission on March 19, 2013 and to the Park and Recreation Commission on March 21, 2013. RPCA is planning a public hearing in April 2013 with submission to City Council in May 2013. ***See Attached Proposal Policy Amendment.***

Community Event Calendar: March through May 2013

Apr 10, 2013	Wed	12:00 PM	Days of Remembrance Each year the City of Alexandria sponsors a civic ceremony observing the days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust.
Apr 20, 2013	Sat	10:00 AM	Alexandria Earth Day 2013 Come out to Alexandria's 20th Annual Earth Day celebration.
May 3, 2013	Fri	10:00 AM	Spring for Alexandria Part of a 4-day celebration where the focus is on philanthropy and service to Alexandria-where we work, play, live and give.
May 4, 2013	Sat	10:00 AM	Spring for Alexandria/Alexandria Gives Part of a 4-day celebration where the focus is on philanthropy and service to Alexandria-where we work, play, live and give. Collection of donations of clothing, furniture and electronics. Food vendors, exhibitors and music.

**City of Alexandria
Special Events Policies & Procedures Manual
Proposed Policy Amendment**

Policy amendment to existing approved Special Events Policies and Procedures Manual

APPROVAL

Requirements to Obtain Approval

The following criteria applies to all areas of the City, with the exception of Founders Park which has additional criteria shown in Appendix I, in deciding whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a permit, the Special Events Committee shall determine:

1. The event, as proposed, can be shown to function safely;
2. The diversion of police and fire resources to support the event will not deny reasonable police and fire protection to the City;
3. The special event will not cause irreconcilable interference with previously approved and/or scheduled construction, maintenance or other activities including any sidewalks, streets and parking spaces;
4. The special event sponsor/applicant provides a transportation management/parking plan for traffic control/parking management which may include accommodating transportation demand management measures;
5. The location/route meets the criteria established in the procedures;
6. All costs for City services associated with the event shall be paid by the event sponsor(s) or if approved by City Council, the portion agreed upon will be covered by the City;
7. The special event sponsor/applicant provides an Event Management Plan for security/safety and which may include accommodating security, first aid and sheltering measures;
8. Events in Old Town with anticipated attendance over 500 are limited to no more than one such event every other weekend in a calendar year. A weekend is defined as beginning Friday, 5 p.m. and continuing through Sunday, 6 p.m.;
9. Events in other areas of the City will be scheduled to not overly burden any one neighborhood on a consistent basis;
10. ~~Events will not be approved to be held in Founders Park;~~
11. The number of foot races in Old Town is limited to those approved by council.
12. The event as proposed shall not severely impact the quality of life within the area it is being held.

**City of Alexandria
Special Events Policies & Procedures Manual
Proposed Policy Amendment**

APPENDIX I

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF EVENTS PROPOSED FOR FOUNDERS PARK

The following criteria establish guidelines for the City of Alexandria Special Events Committee to authorize the use of Founders Park for special events activities.

Events proposed to be held in Founders Park shall abide by all conditions set forth in the approved Special Events Policy & Procedures Manual with the following conditions:

1. Events are restricted to less than 500 and may occur between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. in the southern portion of the park (diagram below);
2. Founders Park will remain open to the general public;
3. Events will be restricted from preparing food and cooking onsite;
4. Events will be restricted with tents not exceeding 200 square feet;
5. Events will be restricted to the use of public and private parking garages or reserved permit parking north of Oronoco Street.;
6. Events will not be permitted to provide amusement park equipment (i.e. moon bounce and other inflatables); and
7. Events will not be permitted to block access to public rights-of-way and interior park trails.



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2013

TO: PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: PARK PLANNING, DESIGN & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
BETHANY A. CARTON, ASLA PARK PLANNER
LAURA D. DURHAM, CITY OPEN SPACE COORDINATOR
DAVID H. GHEZZI, AIA LEED AP ARCHITECT
JUDY LO, ASLA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
DANA W. WEDELES, AICP PARK PLANNER
RON M. KAGAWA, ASLA LEED AP DIVISION CHIEF

SUBJECT: **ACTIVITIES UPDATE, FEBRUARY-MARCH, 2013**
OVERVIEW – SELECTED PROJECTS AT A GLANCE, ITEM VIII-D

- A. Division activities update items are attached:
1. Active Park Projects including Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) – Update of Selected Projects
 2. Active Capital Facilities Maintenance Projects (CFMP) Report – Update on Selected Projects
 3. Large Parks Planning Program-Update
- B. At forthcoming 2013 Commission meetings, the following presentations are anticipated:
- April, 2013
- **EPC/PRC Joint Meeting for discussion of Block 19 on Tuesday, April 02 (location tbd)*
 - *Potomac Yard Metro/Landbay K Park Tour (Park Planning)*
 - *Chinquapin HVAC Renovation/Programming Coordination (Recreation and Park Planning)*
- May, 2013
- *TC Williams Tennis (ACPS)*
 - *Waterfront Plan Implementation: Landscape Architectural Services & Flood Mitigation (Waterfront Operations and Park Planning)*
 - *A meeting/public hearing on plans for the newly acquired property at 5325 Polk Avenue*
- June, 2013
- *City Open Space Master Plan Update on Status and Implementation (Park Planning)*
 - *Four Mile Run (Park Planning)*
 - *Braddock Park – Tentative Post Office Block Site (Park Planning and Planning & Zoning)*
- C. The following items are anticipated for Commission discussion in 2013, however timing/dates remain outstanding. The Commission will be advised as items are scheduled:
- *The projected work plan of the inter-agency storm water management team (Transportation & Environmental Services and Park Operations)*
 - *Stormwater Management planning challenges (TES)*
 - *Fort Ward Management Plan (Park Planning)*

Active Park Planning Projects

Monday, March 18, 2013

1:16:16 PM

Lead	Project Name	Team	%Complete	Est. Completion
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VDOT

Witter Recreational Fields	BC RK	99% CA	12-Dec-12
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Notes: Ribbon Cutting scheduled for April 12.

RPCA

Four Mile Run Restoration	Dana/Ron	90% design	01-Sep-15
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Notes: Project is moving forward with re-design of bank and wetland restoration, per EPA approval on 3/14/13. Funds are available until Sept 2015.

Holmes Run Mile Markers	Dana		01-May-13
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Notes: Allocation in February 2013. Markers will be placed along the Holmes Run Trail every 1/10th of mile from the Animal Hospital to the 395 overpass.

Landbay K	BC RMK	60%	01-Oct-13
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Notes: Construction underway. Park construction completion expected Summer 2013. North Pond to be separated and complete Winter 2013/2014.

Large Park Planning	DW LD		01-May-13
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Notes: Six summaries of park feedback completed and e-mailed to participants. Findings posted online. Presentation to the PRC planned for March 2013. Plan development underway.

Mount Jefferson Playground Renovation	JL	100%	30-Apr-13
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Notes: Playground re-opened to the public. Renovation is complete.

Project closeout/minor misc. items such as site restoration to conclude Spring 2013.

P&Z

Potomac Yard/Landbay I/J Parks	BC	95%	31-Jan-13
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Notes: Phase one (Custis) 95% complete. Awaiting as-builts. Anticipate construction 2013/2014 for phase two (Howell).

ACPS

Jefferson-Houston	DW RMK, DHG		01-Sep-15
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Notes: Plan approved by City Council in December 2012. Project in Final Site Plan. Anticipated release in April, 2013. Construction start in Summer, 2013.

RECREATION CENTERS and FACILITIES

Recently Completed CFMP:

FY12 - FY13

March 21, 2013

Project Code	FY	Facility Name	Project Name	Status	Percent Complete
FM-12-01	FY 2012	Four Mile Run Community Center	Complete ACT Suspended Ceiling	Completed	100%
CN-12-01	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Water leak in basement Storage Room and Boiler Room	Completed	100%
CN-12-02	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Locker Room Renovations: Replace water cooler.	Completed	100%
CN-12-04	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Loading dock	Under Warranty Period	100%
CN-12-03	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Replace existing HM doors	Under Warranty Period	100%
CN-12-05	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Cubicle shelving for pool area	Completed	100%
CN-12-06	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Cabinetry work	100% Completed	100%
CN-12-07	FY 2012	Chinquapin Park Rec Center	Replace shower diverters, new tile work, replace shower heads.	Under Warranty Period	100%
CO-12-01	FY 2012	Colasanto Arts Center	Roof and Gutter replacement	Under Warranty Period	100%
CK-12-04	FY 2012	Cora Kelly Center	Paint gym interior wall surfaces	Completed	100%
WR-12-04	FY 2012	William Ramsay Center	Replace front doors	Under Warranty Period	100%
FM-12-02	FY 2012	Four Mile Run Community Center	Exterior Stage	Completed	100%

LIST OF UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS**March 21, 2013 (DRAFT)****PLANNING & ZONING MEETINGS:** For More Info. go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Planning & Zoning>

- **To View All Planning and Zoning Plans, Projects and Initiatives on their Website**
- (Beauregard Corridor Plan; Braddock Implementation Advisory Group, [Arlandria Implementation Advisory Group](#). BRAC: WHS at Mark Center; Four Mile Run Restoration Plan; Potomac Yards Planning and Development; Waterfront SAP, and others)

Braddock Community Meeting-Future Braddock Park, March 19, 2013 6– 9pm – Charles Houston Recreation Center- 901 Wythe Street.**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES****For More Info. On Recreation Activities and Events:** go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation>**RECREATION CENTERS MONTHLY MEETINGS:**

Charles Barrett -1115 Martha Custis Drive	3rd Thursday	7:00 pm
Charles Houston - 905 Wythe Street	3rd Wednesday	7:00 pm
Cora Kelly-25 West Reed Avenue	3rd Wednesday	7:00 pm
Mount Vernon- 2701 Commonwealth Avenue	3rd Wednesday	7:00 pm
Nannie J. Lee- 1108 Jefferson Street	2nd Monday	7:00 pm
Patrick Henry- 4643 Taney Avenue	1st Tuesday	6:00 pm
William Ramsay- 5650 Sanger Avenue	3rd Wednesday	6:30 pm

YOUTH SPORTS ADVISORY COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING:

Mount Vernon Center-2701 Commonwealth Avenue	2 nd Tuesday	7:00 pm
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<u>FORT WARD AD HOC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP</u>	2 nd Wednesday	7:00 pm
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CITY COUNCIL SCHEDULE (Partial):**For More Info. On City Council Meetings:** go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Mayor&City Council>

Date	Time	Event	Location
Mar 18	6:30 p.m.	33 rd Annual Salute to Women's Award Banquet at the Westin Alexandria	Westin Alexandria
Mar 20	5:30 p.m.	Budget Work Session on CIP	George Washington Middle School
Mar 20	7:30 p.m.	Budget Work Session with ACPS Board	George Washington Middle School
Mar 22	6:00 p.m.	City Council Budget Public Hearing	Council Chambers, City Hall
Mar 23	9:30 a.m.	City Council Public Hearing	Council Chambers, City Hall
Mar 27	5:30 p.m.	Council Work Session with Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association	Council Work Room, City Hall
Mar 29	6:00 p.m.	City Council Legislative Meeting	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr 3	6:30 p.m.	Budget Work Session on Employee Compensation	Sister Cities Room 1101, 301 King St.
Apr 9	5:30 p.m.	Council Work Session-Housing Master Plan	Council Work Room, City Hall
Apr 9	7:00 p.m.	City Council Legislative Meeting	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr 12	6:00 p.m.	City Council Legislative Meeting	Council Chambers, City Hall

Apr 13	9:30 a.m.	City Council Public Hearing	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr 15	6:30 p.m.	Budget Work Session on BFAAC	Sister Cities Room 1101- 301 King St.
Apr 20	9:30 a.m.	City Council Public Hearing	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr 23	7:00 p.m.	City Council Legislative Meeting	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr. 25	8:00 a.m.	Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day	T.C. Williams High School
Apr 26	6:00 p.m.	City Council Legislative Meeting	Council Chambers, City Hall
Apr 29	6:30 p.m.	City Council Budget Work session	Sister Cities Rm 1101, 301 King St.
May 6	6:00 p.m.	City Council Budget Work Session	Council Work Room

Note: This list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change; please check appropriate City Websites to confirm information and dates or call the Department for further information.