

The background of the top half of the page features a white silhouette of a city skyline against a blue sky. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of trees and two people walking on a path. The bottom half of the page is a solid dark blue gradient.

**City Of Alexandria**  
Department of Recreation,  
Parks and Cultural Activities

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# STRATEGIC PLAN: 2018-2023



**I am fortunate to do what I love. It drives me to reach for excellence, and to encourage all staff to do the same.**

Every time a customer encounters us or our work, we have an opportunity to give them a great experience. Regardless of age or background, our services make people and our community better.

As an organization leader, I firmly believe that we serve best when staff are treated with respect. If people do not feel valued and supported, then it is hard to show a caring attitude towards customers. My chief aim is to support your well-being as a staff member by showing respect for the work you do.

It takes all of us working together to get a great job done. When we do this, we are not only connected to each other in service, but support our community's well-being through meaningful experiences. **We do this together, the RPCA way.**

- Jim Spengler, *Director*

## Mission

We enrich the City of Alexandria by creating meaningful experiences through public space, cultural activities, and programming.

## Vision

We will improve the well-being of every person in our community by connecting them to each other and their environment.

## Values

**Equity.** We are committed to equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs.

**Exceptional Customer Experiences.** We provide service that is responsive, professional, courteous, and accountable.

**Safety.** Our parks and facilities are safe, clean, and accessible.

**Continuous Learning.** We believe in lifelong learning for ourselves and our community.

**Integrity.** We are honest, fair, and respectful in all interactions.

**Civic Responsibility.** As public servants, we strive to better the world around us.

# Connect the Community

Our parks and facilities are the public's common ground that equitably bring together our vibrant and diverse community.

- Engage with all sectors of the population and other city departments.
- Create environments and programs that encourage social interaction in safe settings.
- Evolve partnership opportunities and foster relationship building.

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**It makes me feel good when I see people interacting in an area that I took care of.** Fields are a place of congregation for family and friends. If these fields weren't taken care of, a lot of kids, or even adults, wouldn't have a place to come. It's a positive outlet for their energy.

- Michael Reed Jr., *Maintenance Operator*



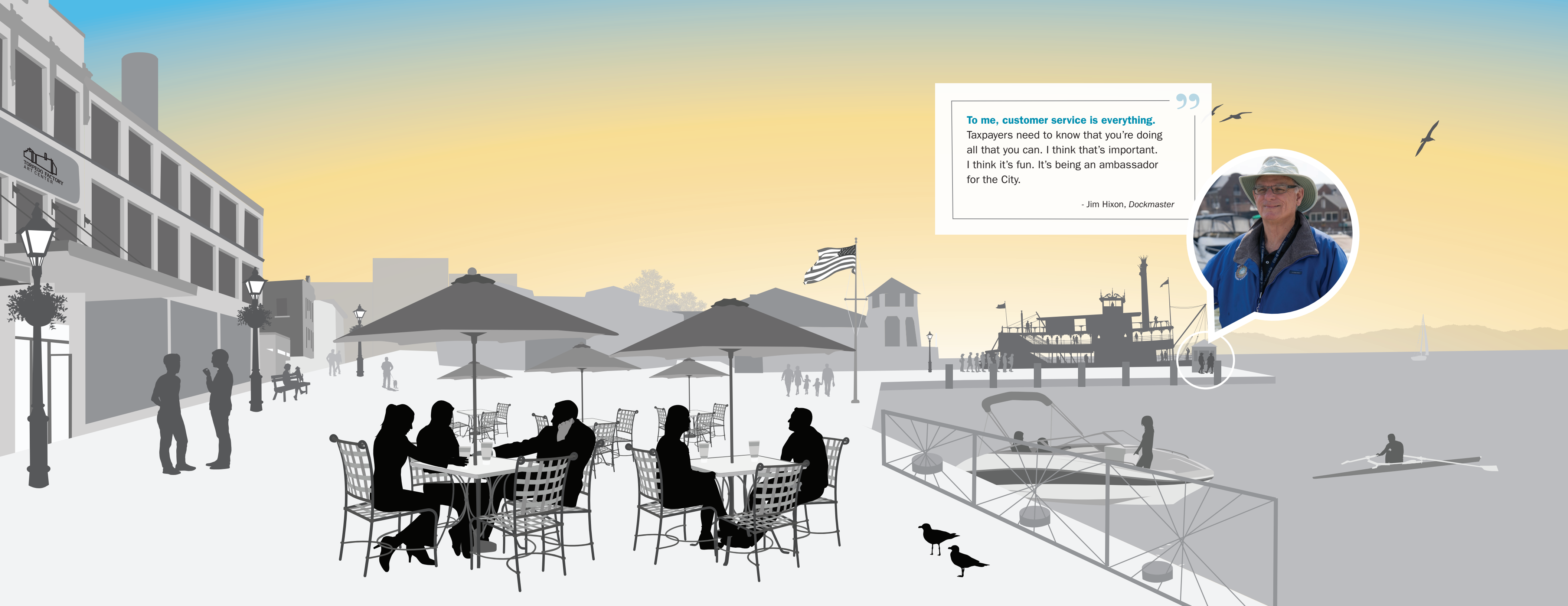
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When you hear the noise of laughter, you know that you're doing a good job. **It's a good feeling.**

- Keith Beasley, *Facility Maintenance*







TORPEDO FACTORY  
ART CENTER

**To me, customer service is everything.**  
Taxpayers need to know that you're doing  
all that you can. I think that's important.  
I think it's fun. It's being an ambassador  
for the City.

- Jim Hixon, Dockmaster



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The rec centers really get in touch with the community. People come here, and they leave happier. Exercise is positive. It goes hand in hand with mental health. **That's why I feel like I'm really impacting the community.**

- Elmer Lazo, *Recreation Leader*

We are educators in a sense. We are teachers, coaches. **We support our education system by doing some of the things we do.** We try to build social skills, leadership skills, and all those things combined in one.

- Michael Johnson, *Outreach Coordinator*



## Improve Well-Being

**Our programs and facilities motivate the community to make healthy choices and live active lifestyles through all stages of life and at all levels of ability.**

- Increase engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyles to improve health.
- Provide affordable programs that support family stability, security, and community connections.
- Enrich the community through lifelong learning opportunities.



# Invest in Our Natural Environment

**Our commitment to natural spaces provides physical, mental, and community benefits, while offering opportunities to engage with and conserve our natural resources.**

- Conserve and manage our open space.
- Preserve and expand a healthy urban tree canopy.
- Provide environmental engagement opportunities for the community.
- Reduce our impact on the environment in our workplace and the community.



**I think nature is a huge part of well-being.**

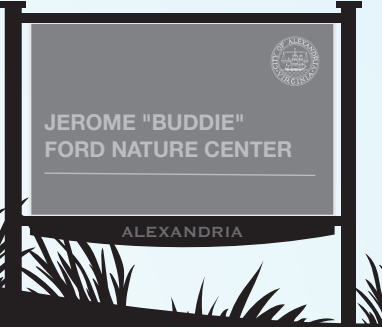
We're surrounded by this urban area, so people get a chance to escape and breathe fresh air. They get to exercise and whatever it is they want to do. We are trying to appeal to all ages and get everyone healthy.

- Coline Hay, *Naturalist*

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If I'm properly taking care of a tree it can last for 80, 100 years. That's multiple generations of people who are going to, even on a small scale, be affected by what I do. **That's something that gives me great joy to be a part of.**

- Matthew Barker, *Arborist*

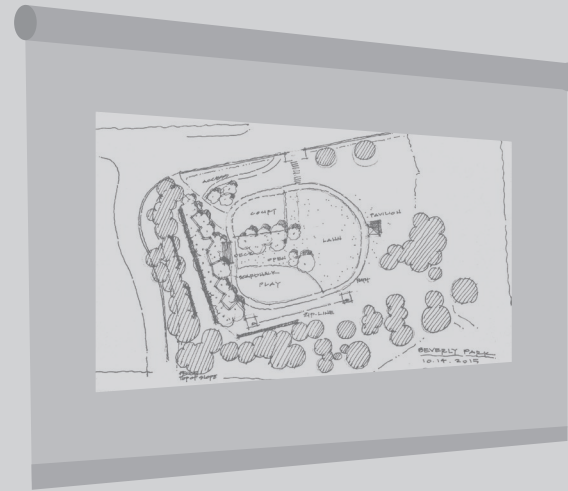




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You may have that one shy person sitting at a desk, but they're scared to say, "I want training. I want to move up. I want to do something else." Then you see a guy who came in as a Labor 1, but now he's a Park Manager. **That's because they are getting the education and training they deserve.**

- Wendy Irving, Human Resources



**Teamwork and collaboration are crucial to every capital project.** We get better results when we listen to different perspectives, ideas, and voices. Whether it's frontline staff, managers, other city departments, or our customers, great ideas and solutions can come from anywhere.

- Judy Lo, Park Planner and Landscape Architect

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## Support a Responsible and Engaged Workforce

**Our workforce embodies RPCA's values and makes us a trusted and valued resource.**

- Recruit and retain high-performing employees.
- Guarantee a superior customer experience to all who participate in our programs or visit our parks and facilities.
- Manage assets and resources responsibly and in a manner that reflects the highest standards of personal integrity.
- Provide a safe and healthy work environment.







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**At the end of the day we know that, the citizens, even though they don't see what we've done, everything is for them.**  
 It's kind of like your overall objective is to make things as fun as possible for people. To me, that's exciting. To be like, "I can do this for you guys." People are usually pleased and say, "You guys are awesome. We love the city."  
 - Jorge Guzman, Facility Maintenance



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 I'm trying to reach audiences we haven't reached before. **That's my mission, that's my goal, to do something fun and innovative.** I want to let people know that Alexandria is a place where you want to be.  
 - Tia Bural, Mobile Art Lab Coordinator



# Strategic Plan

## Mission

We enrich the City of Alexandria by creating meaningful experiences through public space, cultural activities, and programming.

## Vision

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## Values

**Equity.** We are committed to equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs.

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**Safety.** Our parks and facilities are safe, clean, and accessible.

**Continuous Learning.** We believe in lifelong learning for ourselves and our community.

**Integrity.** We are honest, fair, and respectful in all interactions.

**Civic Responsibility.** As public servants, we strive to better the world around us.

## Connect the Community

**Our parks and facilities are the public's common ground that equitably bring together our vibrant and diverse community.**

**Engage with all sectors of the population and other city departments.**

- Conduct and utilize research and data collection to understand the community's needs and interests.
- Use various outreach methods to involve the community, other city departments, boards and commissions, and the City Council in our programs, plans, and decision-making process.
- Apply marketing tools and strategies that convey our offerings and attract users.

**Create environments and programs that encourage social interaction in safe settings.**

- Design and maintain our parks and facilities in ways that are safe, inviting, and vibrant to create a sense of community and activate public space.
- Produce events, programs, and cultural activities that bring people together and create enduring memories.
- Explore and generate dialogue about the city and within the community through public art.

**Evolvement partnership opportunities and foster relationship building.**

- Continue to cultivate and collaborate with volunteers, community organizations, and sponsors.
- Sustain existing affiliates and attract new affiliates to provide exceptional programming.
- Team with other governmental agencies, including other departments, jurisdictions, and quasi-governmental organizations.

## Improve Well-Being

**Our programs and facilities motivate the community to make healthy choices and live active lifestyles through all stages of life and at all levels of ability.**

**Increase engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyles to improve health.**

- Offer sports, aquatics, healthy lifestyle and fitness programs with instruction or coaches for all ages.
- Ensure and enhance opportunities for self-directed exercise and activities at parks, fitness facilities, pools, and trails.
- Promote play throughout the city.

**Provide affordable programs that support family stability, security, and community connections.**

- Promote financial assistance opportunities to all eligible residents.
- Offer programs for children of all abilities during out-of-school hours.
- Ensure teens have access to safe spaces and engaging programming to develop into strong adults.
- Conduct activities that promote active and independent lifestyles for seniors.

**Enrich the community through lifelong learning opportunities.**

- Create environments that expose people to the visual and performing arts.
- Offer hands-on and informative nature programs to help us appreciate our natural resources.
- Provide instructional programs for community members to acquire knowledge and skills.

## Invest in Our Natural Environment

**Our commitment to natural spaces provides physical, mental, and community benefits, while offering opportunities to engage with and conserve our natural resources.**

**Conserve and manage our open space.**

- Ensure careful stewardship of natural resources and biodiversity.
- Protect open space through acquisition, conservation, and careful long-term planning to maintain appropriate acres of protected land for the city's growing population.
- Equitably and appropriately balance recreational uses and natural resources in city open spaces.

**Preserve and expand a healthy urban tree canopy.**

- Strategically plant and maintain trees on public property.
- Develop partnerships to encourage tree plantings and long-term care on private properties.
- Ensure that new development complies with tree planting requirements.

**Provide environmental engagement opportunities for the community.**

- Offer interactive nature-based exhibits and learning experiences.
- Increase the presence of environmental education in schools.
- Enlist and enable volunteers to be stewards of their natural environment.

**Reduce our impact on the environment in our workplace and the community.**

- Integrate environmental best practices into our daily work behavior, materials, and tasks.
- Provide developers, property owners, and the general public with expectations and strategic methods for preservation of existing vegetation and for proposed plantings.
- Implement restoration efforts to reintroduce biological diversity as historically known to the area.



## Support a Responsible and Engaged Workforce

**Our workforce embodies RPCA's values and makes us a trusted and valued resource.**

### **Recruit and retain high-performing employees.**

- Seek a diverse and qualified pool of candidates to fill key positions in the organization when vacancies arise.
- Provide development and enrichment opportunities to promote professional growth.
- Encourage cross-departmental interaction to boost collaboration and innovation and improve productivity.
- Inspire staff to be leaders at all levels within the department.

### **Guarantee a superior customer experience to all who participate in our programs or visit our parks and facilities.**

- Develop a base of loyal customers who are actively engaged in programs, services, and facilities by participating, volunteering and advocating.
- Actively seek and act upon customer input and feedback to consistently provide solutions that meet customers' needs, ensuring a high level of satisfaction among all user groups.
- Bring our Customer Service Guarantee of being responsive, professional, courteous, and accountable to life when working with internal and external customers.

### **Manage assets and resources responsibly and in a manner that reflects the highest standards of personal integrity.**

- Strategically plan for fiscal efficiency, including implementation of the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy to provide services funded through a combination of user fees, taxes, grants and donations, and financial assistance.
- Improve efficiencies by applying best practices for process improvement.
- Utilize the most effective technology and equipment to support daily tasks.
- Ensure that employees comply with all City administrative regulations as well as department rules and regulations.

### **Provide a safe and healthy work environment.**

- Ensure that physical workplaces are clean, safe and pleasant.
- Guarantee that all equipment meets safety standards.
- Build relationships throughout the department to enhance trust and accountability among co-workers.
- Support each other with a "We Care" attitude that makes family, caregiving and health a priority.



We enrich our community.

We create meaningful experiences.

We improve the well-being of Alexandria.

**We do this together, the RPCA way.**



**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION,  
PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

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