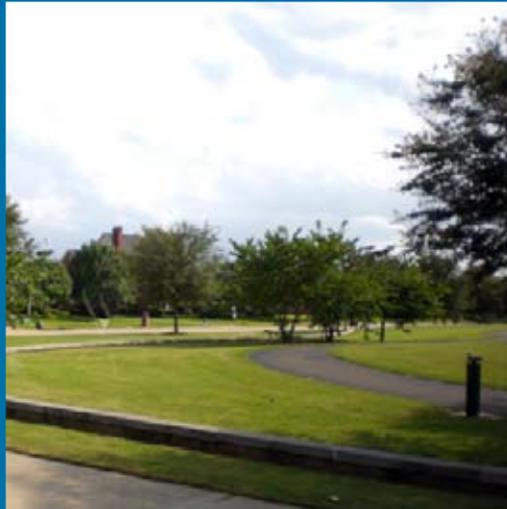
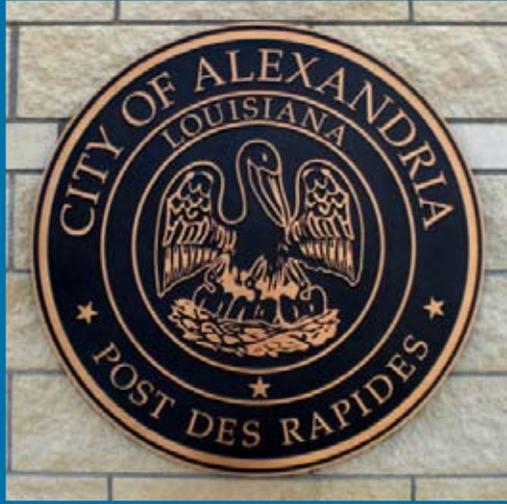


CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



2009 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Prepared by





CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

2009

Comprehensive

Parks and Recreation

Master Plan

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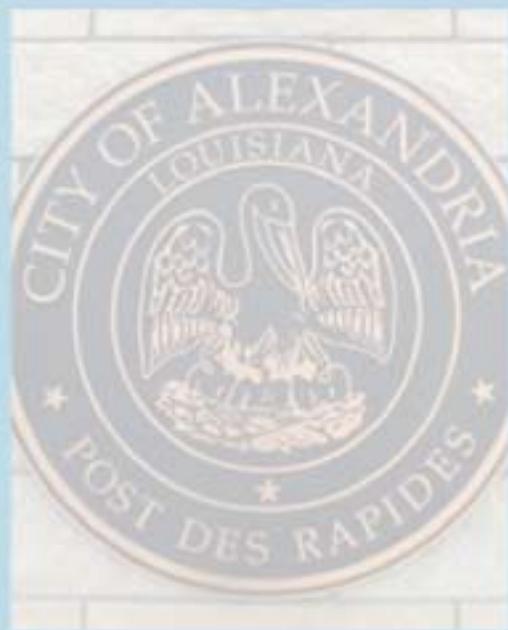
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Nestled along the quiet waters of the Red River, the City of Alexandria sits in the heart of central Louisiana. As the seat of Rapides Parish, the city provides a crossroads for various regional transportation routes including the Port of Alexandria, the Kansas City-Southern Railroad and Interstate 49. As a result of its ideal location, Alexandria serves as an economic hub, drawing in resources from the entire central Louisiana region. The city was founded in 1818 as a central trading location for other cities in the region and later chartered in 1882 as the port grew into a regional distribution center for various goods. Alexandria also served as the home for the England Air Force Base, which housed a contingent of the prized A-10 aircraft until it was closed in 1992. Today, Alexandria's regional draw continues to grow as the city continues to position itself as the go-to destination for Central Louisiana.

The City lies along a level plain containing several waterways that meander throughout the area, including several bayous such as Bayou Rapides, Bayou Roberts, and Hynson Bayou. These waterways provide green corridors containing an abundance of natural vegetation and wildlife that are integral to the overall environment of the area. Alexandria has already begun to take advantage of these natural resources through the establishment of trails and greenways to provide recreational opportunities to its citizens. The land lends itself to additional outdoor recreation due to the flat, open terrain but is often limited by the surrounding development that has occurred over the years. As a result of this sprawling development, park lands have become disconnected and scattered, creating a strain on government resources to provide sufficient, quality recreational opportunities for its citizens. Recently, there has been a demand for a revitalization of the parks system, along with a need for new and updated facilities and programs.

Currently, parks and recreation services are provided through a variety of public and private agencies. The Parks and Recreation Department is under the realm of the Department of Public Works, which operates primarily as a maintenance group but also coordinates the use of several athletic facilities. In general, athletic programs offered to the public are run through private associations, which rent facilities from the City as needed. Another government entity, the Division of Community Services, organizes additional recreation programs, particularly those geared toward community outreach, health and wellness programs for adults and youth summer camps. Other entities such as the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA and church groups account for the remainder of major recreation providers for



Alexandria Zoo

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



Links on the Bayou

the city. As a result of the current configuration, the parks and recreation system for Alexandria lacks the necessary structure to provide a single, efficient public recreation provider that is committed to a common goal, maximizing funding available for such services.

In November of 2007, the City's Division of Community Services recognized the City's need for an efficient, cohesive recreation system and sent out a request for proposals for a City Recreation and Parks Master Plan. The purpose of this Master Plan is to evaluate the current system and submit recommendations in order to achieve a shared vision for meeting the City's recreation needs over the next ten years - from 2008 to 2018.

Lose & Associates, Inc., a landscape architecture firm with offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Atlanta, Georgia, was selected to conduct this Master Plan. Using demographics, population projections, assessments of current facilities, National Standards, and public input, Lose & Associates developed a 10-year Master Plan. This document serves as both a strategic plan and an action plan, providing the City of Alexandria with guidelines for future program planning efforts and capital improvement projects.

Previous Planning Efforts

In 1992, the City Council hired RM Plan Group, a Nashville planning consultant, to produce a *Comprehensive Development Strategy*. This publication outlined a vision, goals, objectives, plan and implementation for ensuring quality growth and economic development by the year 2010. One of the outcomes of this document was a review of existing parks and recreation facilities as well as recommendations for the future. Over the years, the City has taken action on some of these points in an effort to revitalize parks services. Unfortunately, the recommendations made in this report were very general and neglected to reform the fragmented parks administrative system. As a result, enforcement of these recommendations was limited in scope, and the overall parks and recreation system ultimately fell into further disrepair.

Another report, the *Alexandria Urban Master Plan* was composed, in part, by Moore Planning Group in 1999. This plan sought to revitalize the City's downtown district through revised land use, structural rehabilitation, and development of parks and open space, particularly trails and greenway linkages. While some of the proposed greenways have been developed, their context within the park system has not yet been realized, and connections to areas outside of this urban core have not been made.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

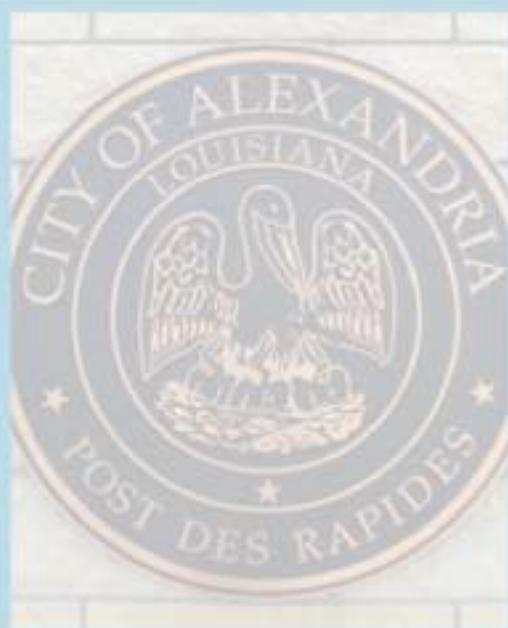
The *Alexandria Developmental Strategic Plan*, published in 2004 by McElroy, Ward & Associates Architects, is essentially an updated version of the two previous plans, seeking to combine design and economic principles into feasible solutions for the future. Parks and open space are mentioned briefly in this document, but no true analysis of existing conditions was performed, nor any specific recommendations made, to the benefit of the parks and recreation system.

It is the goal of this plan to review and consider recommendations made in previous planning efforts combine them with a full analysis of the entire park system, including its funding, administration and capitol improvements. In doing so, this document will produce a comprehensive guideline for revitalizing and streamlining the Alexandria Parks and Recreation System over the next ten years.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE



SECTION 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Alexandria sits at the epicenter of Rapides Parish, an area known for its regional attraction throughout central Louisiana. Despite this, the City has witnessed a gradual decrease in population over the past two decades, in part, due to the loss of England Airbase. However, Alexandria remains poised for substantial growth in the coming years.

To better understand the demographics of Alexandria and the surrounding area, a community profile has been developed to more clearly define the fluctuations in the City's population. Researchers have utilized the latest United States Census and other demographic tools to profile the community's character, define how the population is currently affecting services, and what population changes may occur over the next decade.

Analyzing the demographics of a city like Alexandria reveals many characteristics, including:

- The ethnic diversity of a community
- The age diversity within a community
- The population changes within a community
- The average household income of an area
- The average number of vehicles per household in an area

In order to properly plan for any community's future needs, a thorough understanding of its current composition must be gained in order to effectively project growth trends over the life of the master plan. Performing a demographic analysis will provide a barometer for gauging where population change will occur over the next decade; it provides the composite nature of that growth and aids in the determination of facility need and make-up to serve the individual needs of a community.

Demographic Profile

Tucked against the banks of the Red River, Alexandria serves as the governing seat for Rapides Parish. At only 27 square miles in area, it is considerably smaller in size than comparable cities in the state such as Baton Rouge (79 square miles) and Shreveport (118 square miles). However, the population density of Alexandria, at 1,669 people per square mile, is nearly identical to that of Shreveport (1670 people/square mile), but is a stark contrast to Baton Rouge (2808 people/square mile). According to statistics for the state of Louisiana, the population of Alexandria in 2000 was estimated at 46,342, indicating a 6.5% decrease over 1990 figures.

It should be noted that during this period of time, the England Air Force Base within the city was closed and relocated outside of the city limits. This is likely the determining factor for the drop in population during this decade. Concurrently, Rapides Parish suffered from a similar drop while other areas of Louisiana and the U.S. generally encountered an increase in population during this period of time.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Table 2.1: Population Trends and Projections

	1990 Census	2000 Census	Percent Change	2008 Estimate	Percent Change	2013 Projection	Percent Change
Alexandria	49,549	46,325	-6.5%	45,323	-2.2%	43,762	-3.4%
Baton Rouge	222,869	227,688	2.2%	227,188	-0.2%	222,142	-2.2%
Shreveport	200,266	199,608	-0.3%	193,124	-3.2%	184,704	-4.4%
Rapides Parish	131,559	126,337	-4.0%	129,507	2.5%	127,831	-1.3%
Louisiana	4,219,973	4,468,976	5.9%	4,338,182	-2.9%	4,412,709	1.7%
United States	248,710,012	281,421,906	13.2%	305,316,813	8.5%	319,924,911	4.8%

Source: DemographicsNow

Figure 2.1: Alexandria Zip Codes

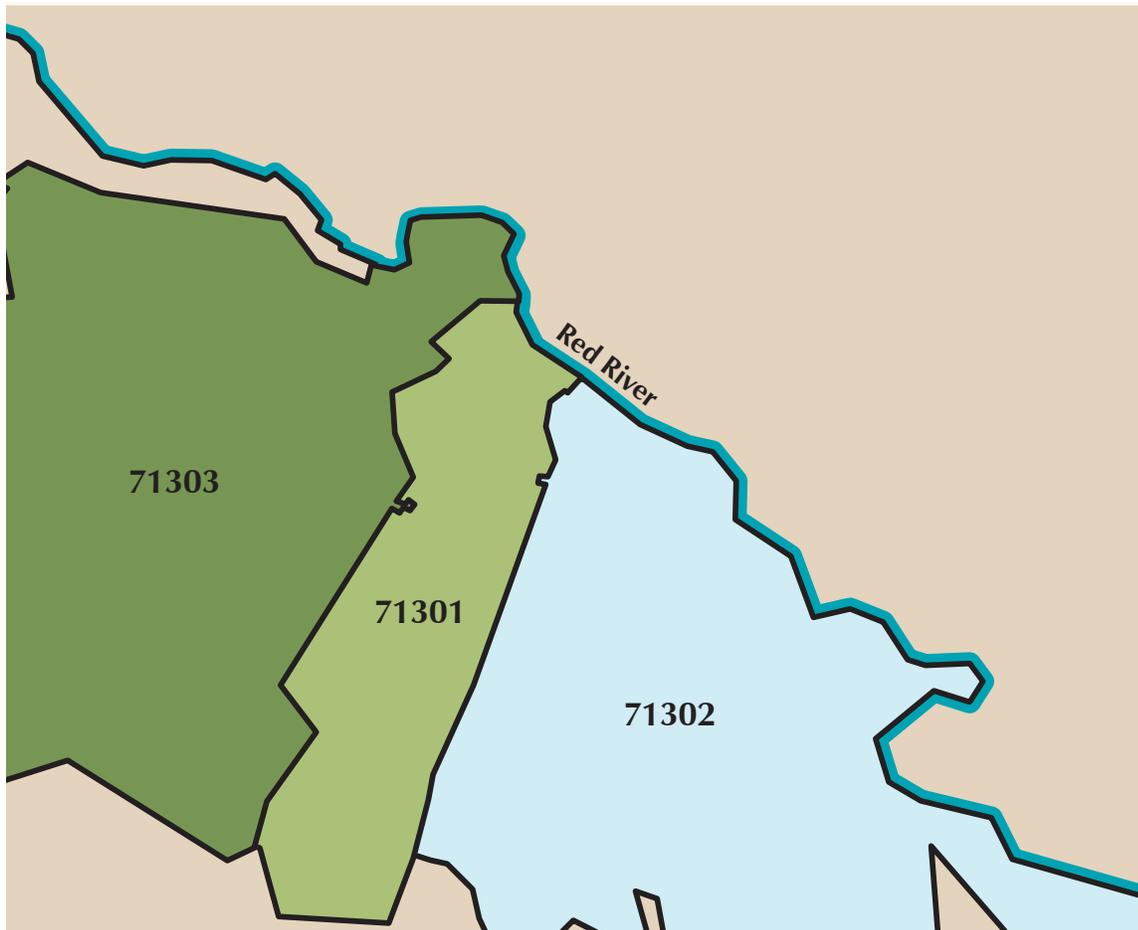
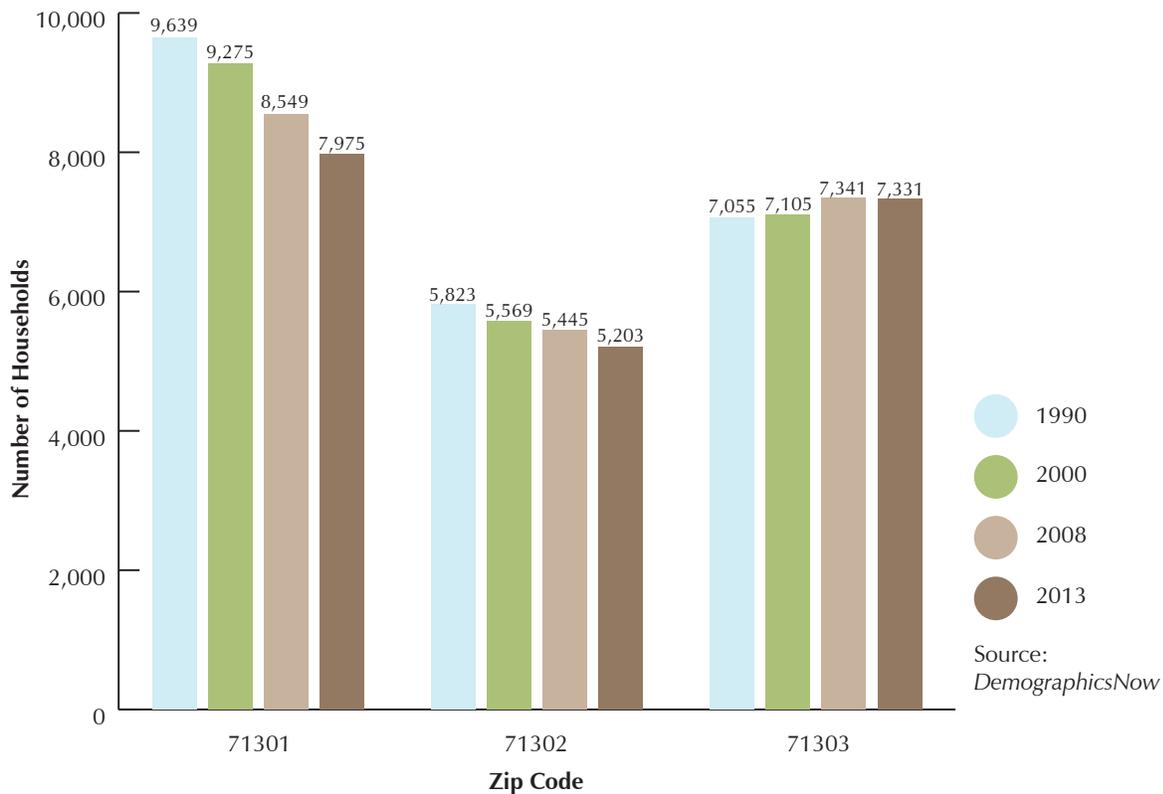


Figure 2.2: Population Trends and Projections by Zip Code



During the review process, researchers noted that various demographic trends within Alexandria generally occurred within distinct geographic locations. In order to effectively convey the disparities identified in the research, zip codes were used to consolidate the various data groups while still demonstrating the differences in composition and growth within a specific area of the city. Figure 2.1 shows the three zip codes located within the city limits that were used to delineate and compare current trends in Alexandria.

To better understand what types of differences can occur between zip codes, a breakdown of the changes in number of households was performed to demonstrate how certain statistics for the City as a whole do not fully reflect the changes occurring over time.

Figure 2.2 shows that each zip code in the city has a unique trend in terms of household composition. Zip code 71301, which encompasses downtown and the more historic sections of City, has witnessed a steady decline in the number of households in this area. While the cause of this decline is undetermined, the results are clearly visible as one walks along the streets. Many of the businesses in the downtown area are closed and residential housing, with the exception of the more historic homes along Hynson Bayou, is vacant or in disrepair. Concurrently, the number of households present in 71302 has also been declining over the years. In contrast, zip code 71303 has witnessed steady growth in the number of households over the years, indicating that the city population is becoming more decentralized as it moves out of the urban core and into surrounding areas. In general, this analysis assists in identifying target areas where city services, such as Parks and Recreation, will have to adjust in order to efficiently accommodate the needs of its citizens. While these breakdowns help to provide a more accurate description of city trends, others are better viewed as a whole.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Table 2.2: City of Alexandria Population by Age Group

	Age 0 to19	Percent of Total Population	Age 20 to 54	Percent of Total Population	Age 55+	Percent of Total Population
1990 Census	15,740	31.8%	22,292	45.0%	11,517	23.2%
2000 Census	14,235	30.7%	20,964	45.3%	11,126	24.0%
2008 Estimate	13,056	28.8%	20,114	44.4%	12,151	26.8%
2013 Projected	12,283	28.1%	18,771	42.9%	12,708	29.0%
Percent Change (2000-13)	-13.7%		-10.5%		14.2%	

Source: *DemographicsNow*

Population by Age

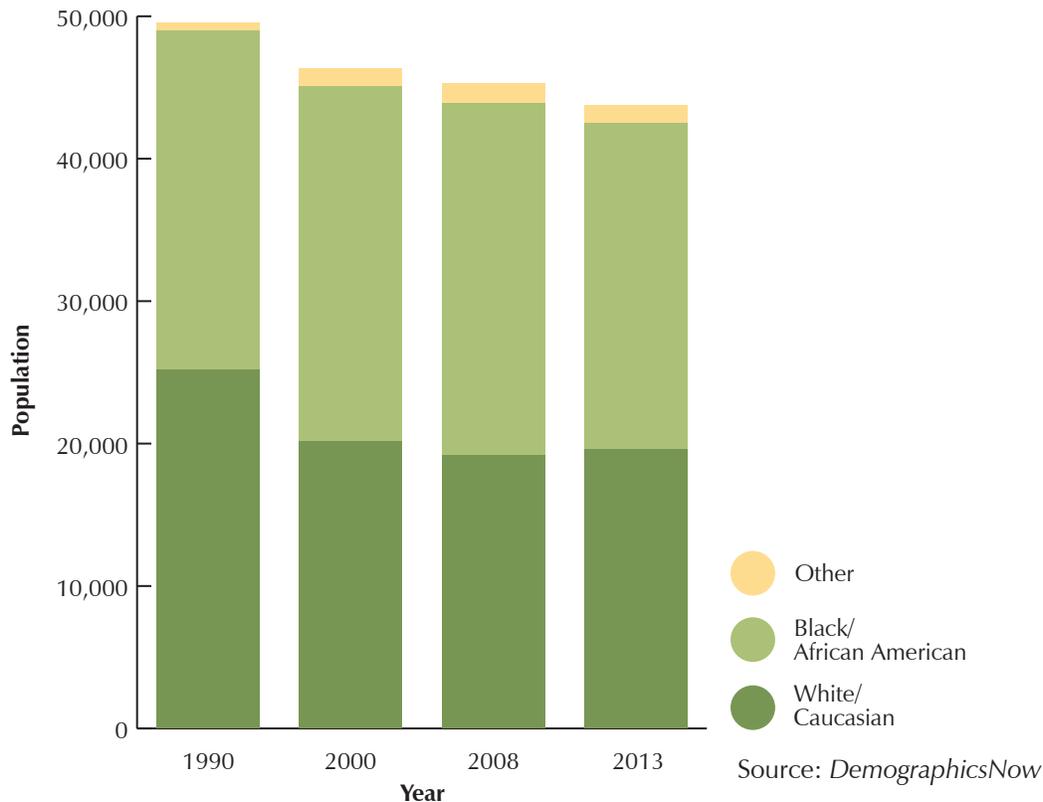
Understanding the composition of your population in terms of age groups is a critical component to providing adequate parks and recreation services to citizens. Shown in Table 2.2 is the makeup of the community by age. The majority of the population is comprised of adults age 20 to 54 while another large contingent are children ages 0 to 19. However, the current trend shows that both groups are currently in decline while the percentage of older citizens is on the rise.

Baby-boomers have finally entered into the 55+ age group and are beginning the preliminary phases of what is commonly referred to as “senior citizens.” It has been predicted that this group will never think of themselves as growing old; therefore, we are compelled to find new terminology when referring to them. Across the country, a trend has been growing to design Active Adult Communities (AAC) that cater to the empty-nest adults along with the early and recent retirees. In general, this is an energetic and participatory group in park and recreation activities, as empty-nesters have more time to spend than when they were raising families. Recent retirees in the 65-75 age group also fit this active and participatory description. As a result, attention should be given to some of the activities most often utilized by this age group, including: tennis, swimming, golf, walking, hiking and running.

According to one nationally recognized consultant for Active Adult Communities, William Parks of PDC in Scottsdale, Arizona, the three most highly rated features of an ACC are natural greenways, nature areas, and golf availability. This is important to keep in mind during program and capitol planning for a parks department after evaluation of the 55+ age group.

The largest percent change projected by 2013 is in the age group 55+ with predictions of a 14.2% increase within Alexandria. When coupled with the anticipated drops in both younger age groups, the demand for activities and programs that support senior citizens will continue to grow over the coming years. As mentioned earlier, this age group was previously viewed as senior citizens with sedentary activity levels and interests. Today’s 70-year-old is generally far from that description. Many are retired with disposable income and flexible time. With a unique awareness of the benefits of healthy exercise to the quality of their lives, many remain active in sports longer than prior generations. This group participates in the same activities as 20-54 age group since they tend to continue to participate in the same activities they did as younger adults. This 55+ are group is generally interested in daytime activity whereas the younger, working adults with families have nights and weekends free to participate in programs. In addition, this age group is often found to be a wealthy pool of potential volunteers for various activities.

Figure 2.3: Population Trends and Projections by Ethnicity



Population by Ethnicity

An analysis of the ethnic composition of the city's population revealed that the vast majority of the citizens fall into one of two categories: "White/ Caucasian" or "Black/ African American." Several other ethnic groups were identified, such as Hispanic, Asian, or Native American; however, the small numbers of these groups when compared to the population as a whole were negligible and are more effectively conveyed as a group identified by "Other". As demonstrated in Figure 2.3, the ethnic composition of the city changed over the last two decades from having a majority of White citizens to being comprised of a mostly African-American population. Although other ethnic populations experienced some form of fluctuation over the years, none was nearly as profound as this switch between majorities.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Table 2.3: Population by Education, Income and Employment

	Average Household Income	Employed Blue Collar	Employed White Collar	Did Not Graduate High School	High School Graduates	Education Beyond High School
Alexandria	\$40,983	40.6%	59.4%	27.2%	30.5%	42.3%
Baton Rouge	\$46,377	35.1%	64.9%	19.8%	23.7%	56.5%
Shreveport	\$44,248	43.3%	56.7%	21.3%	30.9%	47.9%
Rapides Parish	\$42,366	42.1%	57.9%	25.4%	33.8%	40.9%
Louisiana	\$44,833	43.4%	56.6%	25.2%	32.4%	42.4%
United States	\$56,644	39.7%	60.3%	19.6%	28.6%	51.8%

Source: *DemographicsNow*

Table 2.4: Education, Income and Employment by Zip Code

	Average Household Income	Employed Blue Collar	Employed White Collar	Did Not Graduate High School	High School Graduates	Education Beyond High School
71301	\$38,629	43.5%	56.6%	28.7%	31.0%	40.3%
71302	\$31,745	48.6%	51.4%	34.0%	33.6%	32.5%
71303	\$54,679	32.3%	67.7%	17.4%	30.0%	52.6%

Source: *DemographicsNow*

Education, Income and Employment Profiles

Understanding the community in terms of education, income and employment is important in determining the type of recreation opportunities a community should plan for in a parks and recreation master plan. The Table 2.3 reveals some interesting statistical comparisons between Alexandria and other benchmark areas.

It is difficult to understand income figures without looking at the type of employment because they are often reflective of each other. Alexandria’s average household income from the 2000 Census was \$43,319, over 8% less than the State of Louisiana Average and almost 12% less than that of the City of Baton Rouge. However, aside from Baton Rouge and the United States, Alexandria has one of the lower percentages of blue-collar labor forces. The lack of higher income in this area is likely reflective of lower education levels within the city.

Education statistics represent those residents age 25 and older and the highest level of education that they received. The “High School Graduates” column represents that percentage of adults over 25 who attained a high school degree but did not pursue further education. The percentages in the last column represent the citizens whose education went beyond high school. As seen in Table 2.3, over one quarter of Alexandria citizens 25 and over did not graduate high school, the highest percentage between it and similar sample areas such as Baton Rouge and Shreveport.

Further analysis of the income, employment, and education levels within the City uncovered another disparity between local areas.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

As Table 2.4 shows, the average household incomes, employment profiles and education levels of citizens within each zip code vary greatly. Statistics for residents within 71301 closely resemble those for the entire City and may be considered a benchmark for comparing the other two zip codes. Residents of 71302 reported an annual household income that is over 29% lower than averages reported for the State of Louisiana, along with the highest rates of blue-collar work and the lowest education attainment levels. It should be noted that this area was previously identified as a predominantly African American population. Conversely, the average household income reported in 71303 was substantially higher than almost all sample groups, including the State of Louisiana (approximately 22% higher). This same area was also identified as a predominantly Caucasian population.

Vehicles Available per Household

Another aspect of the population that needs to be taken into account when assembling a parks and recreation master plan is the level of private transportation available to citizens. This statistic, which is often closely linked to average household income, helps determine the level of accessibility that must be established for recreation areas within a given geography. In other words, if an area is found to have lower numbers of private vehicles, park services must be provided in association with public transportation systems, or, more importantly, pedestrian access must be available and feasible for all citizens within a service area.

Table 2.5 shows a comparison of the average number of vehicles available per household between Alexandria and other benchmark areas. While the statistics show that Alexandria traditionally has one of the lower averages over the years, the difference between it and other areas is minimal. In fact, it is anticipated that the City will have the second highest margin of increase by 2013. Such numbers would lead one to conclude that the availability of private transportation in Alexandria is similar to others, but they would be wrong.

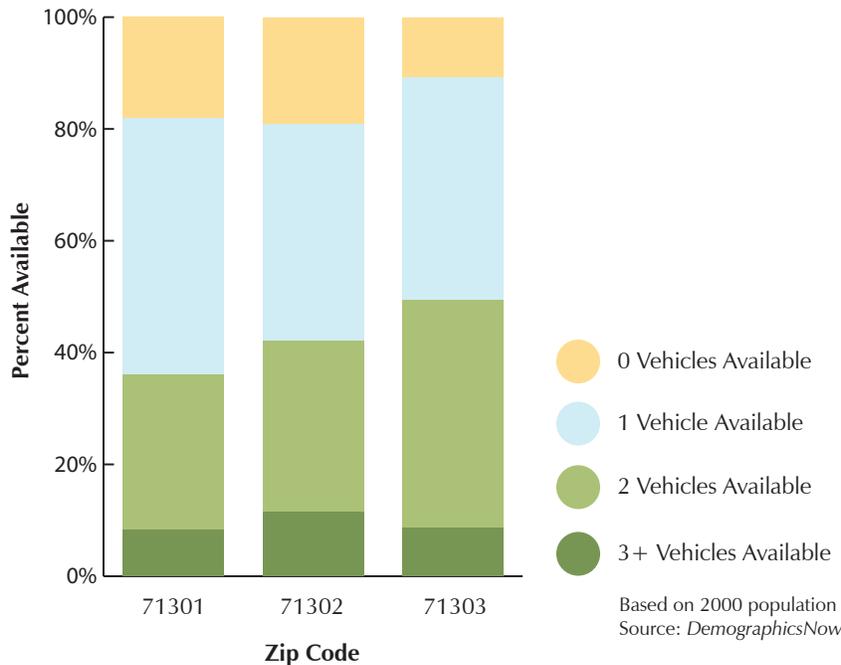
Table 2.5: Vehicles per Household

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2008 Estimate	2013 Projection	Percent Change (2000-13)
Alexandria	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.7	41.7%
Baton Rouge	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.8	28.6%
Shreveport	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.6	23.1%
Rapides Parish	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.9	35.7%
Louisiana	1.5	1.4	1.8	2.0	42.9%
United States	1.7	1.5	1.9	2.0	33.3%

Source: *DemographicsNow*

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Figure 2.4: Vehicles per Household by Zip Code



During the research phase of this report, numerous complaints regarding the lack of private transportation revealed yet another disparity between geographic locations, as seen in the Figure 2.4.

Both 71301 and 71302, the urban, predominantly African American portions of the City, report more than double the amount of no vehicles available than 71303, the rural, White population. This trend is concurrent with the aforementioned income levels of each area. Due to the lack of private transportation in these areas, additional consideration to provide recreation opportunities that are accessible by pedestrians will need to be given in 71301 and 71302.

Conclusions

Over the past two decades, the City of Alexandria has witnessed a steady decline in overall population, partially due to the closing of the England Air Force Base. This decline, however, is not isolated to Alexandria, as Rapides Parish and other cities, such as Shreveport witnessed similar drops in population. During this time period, Alexandria also saw a decentralization of the population where citizens have been departing the older, more urban core for new developments in the rural outskirts of the city. An example of this is most readily available in the downtown area, where businesses and residences alike have been boarded up and left vacant. In planning for an efficient park and recreation system, service areas must be established that will provide optimum service levels without spreading the system too thin, thereby taxing it.

As Alexandria's population went into recession, it was noted that the younger contingent of the population was leaving the City. As a result, projected statistics regarding the age of the population show that within the next decade, a surplus of senior citizens will be present in the City. Unlike previous seniors, this group is generally more active and participatory and will require a realignment of public services, particularly in parks and recreation, to provide for the needs of these active adults.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

A study of the City's ethnic profile revealed that during this population decline, the racial majority in the city changed from predominantly White/Caucasian to Black/African American. No evidence was provided to show that this was also linked to the closing of the military base. Further analysis showed that the City is geographically segregated, having Black majorities in the older urban core and a White majority in the new rural areas.

Similar disparities between these geographic locations were revealed during an analysis of the City's average household income, employment profile and education levels. When compared to other benchmark populations, Alexandria's average household income level and education level is consistently one of the lowest. These statistics do not hold true to the population as a whole, however, as further studies show. Residents of the older, urban core rate substantially lower in income and education levels when compared to other parts of the state, whereas the contingent located in the new, rural areas is well above similar statistics for Louisiana. These findings translate into other aspects of the population, as well.

While Alexandria is, statistically, in stride with other areas of Louisiana and the nation in terms of private transportation, a deeper analysis reveals an all too familiar trend. Vehicular availability for private transportation is lower in the urban core than the areas of new growth. As a result, special consideration must be given to provide local, accessible recreation opportunities to the urban core, which is less likely to have transportation to more distant parks and recreation services.

If the parks and recreation system in Alexandria is to be successful during the transition implemented by the master plan, additional effort must be placed on providing equal recreation opportunities to all citizens. Current service levels are biased towards the rural population and lack and emphasis on a central location accessible to all. Amending the divisions within the population through a quality, streamlined level of service will assist providing a sense of community and civic pride. Alexandria stands poised for success; it only needs to take the proper steps in order to achieve it.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

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SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT



SECTION 3

PUBLIC INPUT

Public input is the driving force behind all parks and recreation master plans. For the plan to be effective it must accurately reflect the facilities and programs most desired by the citizens of the community. The citizens are the participants in and users of the parks system and recreation programs, and without strong support and usage by them, the parks system becomes ineffective. The recommendations contained later in this master plan were driven by public input gathered through a variety of forums—input recorded in interviews with City staff, key government employees, community leaders, other recreation providers, public meetings and a user survey. Quotes throughout this section are selected from the comments on the returned surveys.

One of the key objectives expressed by the City of Alexandria for conducting a master plan was to gain a clear understanding of public opinion and desires regarding the programs and facilities offered through parks and recreation services. Gathering this public input is, by far, the most valuable component of the master planning process; it provided the planning team with a basis upon which they could formulate recommendations.

We used other methods of obtaining the necessary amount of public input, as well. A Steering Committee, comprised of city residents and stakeholders, volunteered to participate in an evening workshop to help planners determine a direction for the park system's future. In addition, a system-user survey was distributed in February 2009, providing the opportunity area residents to offer opinions about community parks and recreation. Furthermore, six public meetings were held between October and December 2008, offering residents the opportunity to come out and speak on issues that were important to them. The wealth of information gathered through these processes has been recorded and assimilated as follows:

Interviews

Interviews with parks staff, city officials, and government employees were conducted over a four-day period from August 11-14, 2008. These interviews and subsequent follow-up interviews and telephone conversations explored administrative, maintenance, and support staff responsibilities, as well as factors related to funding and park usage. These interviews served to provide an internal evaluation of the system as well as a historical perspective of the evolution of parks and recreation in the city. Additional information about relationships with leagues and organizations was also provided, as well as recommendations for existing and new facilities.

In general, these interviews reflected an overall assumption that a key ingredient to stimulate the city is a rejuvenation of the entire parks system. Over the years, the administration overseeing parks and recreation has become compartmentalized, adding confusion over the jurisdiction and responsibilities of staff members. Much of the city's funding for recreation programs and facilities is scattered through various sources, with little or no control over how such funds are allocated. As a result, this inefficiency has resulted in old, worn facilities requiring high levels of maintenance and limited programming to meet the needs of the community. With so many individuals controlling the direction of the system, a common goal is lost and the overall perspective by the community is degraded. However, current leaders are looking towards the future, displayed through strong support by the Mayor and associated department heads, and Alexandria is eager to accept a revitalized system to better serve its citizens.

Steering Committee Workshop

A steering committee workshop was held on October 7, 2008 at the Public Safety Complex to obtain additional community input. This committee was composed of 25 community members selected for their involvement in parks and recreation activities and/or their ability to provide good representation for a particular segment of the population. Committee members were divided up into five teams of five and asked to work through a series of sessions lasting approximately four hours. Directions for this activity were, among others, that each member participate fully, listen to others and accept responsibility for making the meeting a success. Participants were encouraged to present fresh ideas, new perspectives and even crazy notions. The resulting information provided by the steering committee workshop helped identify specific focus areas for future public input and provided a basis for survey questions. The following are the results that were recorded the day of the workshop:

1) What are the five most critical issues facing the city of Alexandria's Division of Community Services and Parks and Recreation Department?

Group 1:

1. Lack of Parks and Recreation staff (programs and maintenance)
2. Bigger Parks and Recreation budget (programs included)
3. Parks and Recreation pride! City taking "ownership" of complexes
4. Complex policies and procedures
5. Focus on sports diversity (or lack of focus)

Group 2:

1. Funding
2. Maintenance issues
3. Leadership
4. Community Support
5. Providing recreation for teens/ seniors
6. Accessibility

Group 3:

1. Organized parks and recreation department for fulfilling enthusiastically our mission and vision.
2. More sports facilities, indoor and outdoor- Little league, soccer, basketball, swimming, etc.
3. Bike trails and walking trails in safe areas- well maintained
4. More activities for children and teens especially on weekends and summers
5. More facilities- amphitheater for concerts (fix coliseum), world-class zoo with Africa experience

Group 4:

1. Lack of funding
2. Personnel to man the facilities
3. Not enough facilities
4. Disconnected geographically
5. Outdated facilities
6. Need to address all age groups

Group 5:

1. Limit staff available for current facilities (maintenance/ security)
2. City's vision needs to be clearly defined and communicated to the community.
3. Clear communication plan focused on access and usage of city facilities
4. Define recreation- what is the scope of proposed programs? (understand community needs!)
5. Facilities are outdated and limited
6. "\$\$\$"

2) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Division of Community Services and Parks and Recreation Department's programs and facilities.

Group 1:

Strengths

1. Lots of programs: YMCA and YWCA swimming, Community center summer programs, ASH sports camp, RJR, soccer camps (Rapsa & Crossroads)

Weaknesses

1. No staff person 100% dedicated to gathering info regularly for programs
2. Most involved COA department in APD
3. Park and Recreation Emblem Needed!

Group 2:

Strengths

1. Elected officials' support
2. Community support
3. Red River potential

Weaknesses

1. Can everyone agree on what the community wants?
2. Outdated facilities
3. Poor maintenance
4. Too many small parks
5. Didn't know there was a Director of Parks & Recreation

Group 3:

Strengths

1. Rachel of Parks and Recreation and Thompson and Tompkins of Public Works CARE but lack staff and money.
2. Strong programs- Little League, Soccer, Swimming and excellent golf course- Links on Bayou

Weaknesses

1. Lack of Leadership- lending to lack of mission and organization
2. Lack of coordination
3. Lack of needed facilities
4. Lack of maintenance and control
5. Lack of diversity in programs- do not meet the needs of all of the community

SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

Group 4:

Strengths

1. Very dedicated staff
2. Compton Park- excellent example
3. Existence of strong athletic groups/ clubs
4. Political climate that encourages growth and community involvement
5. Private/ public agreement for lawn care

Weaknesses

1. No coherent long-range plan
2. Small volunteer base
3. Not enough equipment to go around
4. Decentralized approach to recreation/ development

Group 5:

Strengths

1. The city has identified the need to create an effective Parks and Recreation program and is taking action to improve it.

Weaknesses

1. No leadership for Parks and Recreation- need a director
2. No mechanism to find out what the community wants (on an on-going basis)
3. City needs to take the lead on recreational activities rather than depending on residents to run programs and bring tournaments to community
4. Transportation and accessibility needs to improve with the facilities

3) Working with your team, determine if the standard suggested by NRPA is an appropriate standard that should be achieved by the City of Alexandria or if the standard is too high or too low.

For this exercise, the group worked as a whole to discuss appropriate facility standards that should be used as benchmarks for future park development. As mentioned, the discussion took into consideration the standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The NRPA standards were developed in the 1980s and were intended as guidelines for communities to follow when determining the appropriate number of facilities provided for residents. These standards have not been updated since their original inception, and even though recreation trends have changed over the past three decades, most of their guidelines are still applicable. Table 3.1 represents the new standards that were suggested by the group. As shown, several of the standards were determined to be too high while others were considered too low.

According to this table, workshop participants determined that the park system should encompass an area nearly twice the national standards. Furthermore, soccer fields were also increased from 1 per 10,000 to 1 per 1,500, over six times the NRPA standard. These standards will also be used to assess the current condition of the parks system in comparison to the desired goals outlined in this chart.

SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

Table 3.1: NRPA Standards and Community-based Desired Level of Service or Park Facilities

NRPA Standards for Park Facilities	NRPA Recommended Level of Service	Community-based Desired Level of Service (developed by Steering Committee)
Acreage	10.5/1000	18/1,000
Outdoor Basketball	1/5,000	1/2,500
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000
Baseball/Softball	1/2,500	1/5,000
Football	1/20,000	1/15,000
Soccer	1/10,000	1/1,500
Aquatic Center	1/20,000	1/50,000
Running Track	1/20,000	1/50,000
Developed Standards for Park Facilities**	Recommended Level of Service	Community-based Desired Level of Service (developed by Steering Committee)
Trail System	1 mile/3,000	1 mile/3,000
Playground	1/1,000	1/2,000
Community Center	1/50,000	1/50,000
Picnic Pavilion	1/2,000	1/2,000
Skate Park	1/100,000	1/100,000

*NRPA standards only address outdoor pools.

**Standard developed by Lose & Associates, Inc. to respond to recreation trends and growth in certain sports since 1983.

SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

4) If money and politics were not issues, what programs would you include in the ideal park system for Alexandria? What facilities would you include?

The **top five facilities** desired are as follows:

1. Zoo Expansion (17)
2. Aquatic Center/Park (14)
3. Mega Recreation Center/ Community Park (12)
4. Biking/walking trails (11)
5. Sports facilities for youth (8)
Large Passive Park with walking/nature trails (8)

Other facilities mentioned include:

- Pavilions (7)
- Skate Park (7)
- Discovery Center on the River (4)
- Fitness Facility (4)
- Connected Mini Parks (3)
- Indoor Swimming Pool (3)
- Teen Center (3)
- Covered Basketball Courts (3)
- IMAX/Sciport (3)
- Youth Arts Facility (3)

The **top five programs** desired are as follows:

1. Weekend Youth Activities (11)
2. Swimming (9)
Baseball/Softball (9)
4. Youth Art Programs (8)
Walking/ Running Clubs (8)
Fitness (8)

Other programs mentioned include:

- After-school Programs (7)
- Adult Sport Leagues (7)
- Age-appropriate sport programs (6)
- Teen program (6)
- Martial Arts (5)
- Inner City Youth Golf (5)
- Arts and Crafts (5)
- Inner City Youth Tennis (3)
- Boxing (3)
- Basketball (1)

Finally, the group collaborated on possible sources of funding for the previously discussed programs and facilities. The following is a list of suggested funding options:

1. Taxing Authorities
2. Bonds
3. Public/ Private sources
4. User Fees

5. Hotel Tax
6. Grants
7. Sponsorships – B16, Small

Public Meetings

In conjunction with the research phase of this plan, six open public meetings were held in various locations across the city to gain input from the community about their needs and concerns about the city's parks and recreation services. Local city media sources were used to notify residents of the public meetings. During this time, citizens were given a presentation on the usefulness of a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan and shown examples of what other parks and recreation providers are doing around the country. Following this presentation, participants were presented with specific questions, and the floor was then opened up to those present to answer these questions as well as to provide any additional comments. Responses from each meeting are as follows:

Martin Community Center

October 6, 2008

Approximately 25 citizens attended this meeting, including local police officers, senior citizens and church representatives. Their comments expressed a distinct desire to enhance not only services geared to their local community, but the entire system as well. As the responses below demonstrate, this group is interested in overall safety, recreation opportunities for children and equal service levels.

Tell us what you would like to see improved or added to the Alexandria Parks System?

- Skate Parks
- Sports Fields- All ages and sports
- Indoor/Outdoor Aquatics
- Gymnasiums with fitness/exercise equipment
- River Park- Available for various uses
- Playgrounds for 2-5 yr olds
- More permanent restrooms versus portable toilets
- More structured programs everywhere
- More community centers and recreation centers with specific programs identified with each kind of facility
- Better salaries to support the park system
- Provide more G.E.D. programs

What programs and facilities do you currently use most often?

- Johnny Downs
- Que-'in on the Red
- Downtown Rocks
- Diamond #1

If you could change one thing about the parks and recreation delivery system, what would it be?

- More structure in the system
- More hands- on (7days/ week)
- Provide more indoor facilities to accommodate desired programs
- Better safety and security
- More football fields needed
- More senior programming (Arts/Crafts, social events)

SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

- More community centers in Black communities
- Safer access to Overton St. Park- heavily traversed road
- Provide more park land through adjudicated property
- Provide more bike racks
- More security lighting
- Provide recreation supply rental program (bikes, boats, sports equipment, etc.)
- More involvement with police in inner neighborhoods (8 community police officers at this location)
- Safer pedestrian access to the parks is needed system-wide
- Boys and Girls Club needs to be revitalized/ relocated
- Mason St. Park needs more play features and fencing (possibly relocate)

How do you feel about the current level of service with respect to park facilities?

- Turf maintenance is good
- Better distribution of parks and recreation services needed
- Funding needs to be adjusted
- There is a lack of events in blighted communities

"I really enjoy the meeting about addressing the parks situation."

-from comment card

Public Safety Complex

October 6, 2008

Over 20 citizens and community representatives were on hand at this second meeting of the evening. Like the previous group, attendants at this meeting provided comments in terms of the system as a whole, but they also noted a need for administrative restructuring.

Tell us what you would like to see improved or added to the Alexandria Parks System?

- More and safer trails (could connect neighborhoods)
- More fitness facilities than just baseball
- Training for bicycle riding
- Martin Park Area needs community center, exercise facility, walking trails, and after-school programs
- Link city and parks together
- Levee trail - Make more usable, provide better maintenance, and have more interpretive signage along the trail.
- Need gathering places and walking areas for seniors
- Skate facilities
- Convert old rail lines to trails
- Water Park - Spar facility nine thousand to ten thousand go through Aquatic Club in 2 months in summer
- Need bicycle/running lanes in streets
- Trails do not have to be paved; Can follow drainage systems to connect
- Community festival area/ central gathering area in City Park- with support facilities
- Wedding and garden centers
- Don't forget neighbors' concern at City Park
- Develop a Master Plan for the City

What programs and facilities do you currently use most often?

- Kinkade Lake Mountain Bike Trail
- City Park
- Johnny Downs (baseball, soccer)
- Links on the Bayou

If you could change one thing about the parks and recreation delivery system, what would it be?

- Update the system, give it more centralized control
- Address the look of the parks
- Add more lighting in parks
- Not a true department, needs more traditional recreation department with a true board
- Define park boundaries and protect them

How do you feel about the current level of service with respect to park facilities?

- Parks are safer than people think

Broadway Resource Center

October 7, 2008

This meeting, which was advertised as an input session for the senior citizen community, lived up to the generalizations made in the community profile section of this report. Over 60 seniors attended this session, all noting their need for both active and passive recreation opportunities, as well as a concern for the lack of youth recreation.

Tell us what you would like to see improved or added to the Alexandria Parks System?

- Provide swimming pools on this side of town that are indoor/heated with health-oriented programs
- The community needs a stand-alone Senior Activity Center
- Provide a Multipurpose Community Center - it may include a senior activity center - proposed locations in the Rustin-Foundry Area or the Lower 3rd Area
- Frank O. Hunter Park- complete the planned phased projects
- Teen Activity Center needed with strategy games and exercise equipment; suggested location at Frank O. Hunter Park
- Cheatham Park requires trails, lighting and restrooms
- Need regular senior trips/ senior days
- Summer Camp Programs
- After-School Programs (4-6pm) – both youth programs should have sliding-scale costs, scholarships and qualified staff
- Summer Work programs for the youth
- Debra Bowman Park and other parks need updated facilities

What programs and facilities do you currently use most often?

- Senior Health/ Exercise Programs
- Meeting Space at the Martin Center

If you could change one thing about the parks and recreation delivery system, what would it be?

- Overall update of parks (immediate)
- Better/ more communication and advertising from parks system - those present suggested using the following venues for communication - newspapers such as The Light, Town Talk, Alexandria News Weekly, Focus (entertainment section); utility bills; quarterly schedule of events from the City; radio; flyers from the school system

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How do you feel about the current level of service with respect to park facilities?

- Insufficient park upgrades
- Needs stronger promotion and transportation - shuttle to events
- Needs to create interaction between age groups

Frank O. Hunter Park Gymnasium

October 7, 2008

Rather than respond to each question individually, this group of nearly 40 citizens from the local neighborhood vocalized their opinions and concerns for the city's park and recreation system. The majority of their comments surrounded local issues rather than the system as a whole. Strong notions of neglect and broken promises on the part of the city government were also brought forth as citizens questioned the City's willingness to implement changes recommended by this plan. Additional points of discussion are as follows:

- Riding trails for bicycles, tricycles and foot scooter
- Need more public bathrooms, especially in Cheatham Park
- Need wooden/ metal swings or benches under trees
- Add landscaping to make parks look safe, inviting and peaceful
- Add more water fountains
- Need a large gazebo for fall and winter musical entertainment; handicapped people can not easily access the levee amphitheater.
- Propose mini parks on vacant lots in neighborhoods without sidewalks and large concentrations of children where they can use portable basketball goals, bounce balls, etc.
- Use vacant lots for neighborhood gardens (flower and vegetable) with gateway signage and different forms of art. This can be incorporated with grants from local CENLA Pride and Keep America Beautiful
- More active policing by community police
- More football facilities needed, could coordinate with schools. Alexandria has a growing semi-pro football team called the Red River Raiders who are looking for a facility where they can play their games. Would be great if this lighting, lockers rooms, auxiliary facilities were available as well.
- Lincoln Road needs mini parks as well as Acadian Village.
- Frank O. Hunter park needs better vehicular access; possible to have additional entrance?
- Parks need to provide sufficient shelters/ pavilions at each location.
- Ballfield maintenance varies between certain facilities. Standards need to be equal throughout the system.
- Proper park staffing required at all facilities
- Provide shaded outdoor play areas; sun and heat makes outdoor facilities virtually unusable during the summer.
- Add aquatics facilities
- Could a theme park be integrated into the park system - proposed one at Frank O. Hunter Park?
- Gymnasium at Frank O. Hunter Park is outdated and needs upgrades to accommodate new programming and beautify.
- Better site drainage is needed at all parks
- The lack of transportation in Alexandria is a serious issue; therefore, parks must be easily accessed by all.
- There needs to be a Youth Activity Center with structured programming at Frank O. Hunter Park. Previously, such programs were provided by the Boys and Girls Club.

Scott M. Brame Middle School

February 19, 2009

Approximately 15 citizens attended this meeting, including neighbors, area residents and school staff. Their comments expressed a desire to enhance the recreation services and facilities within their local community, with an emphasis on safe parks for all. Like other public meeting attendees, this group is interested in overall safety, recreation opportunities for children and equal service levels. The most discussed topics included:

- Paved trails are needed for biking and walking, but safety on the trails is a big issue. Many are not using the City's existing trails because they do not feel safe. They want to see more of a police presence on the trails.
- Several meeting attendees noted that MacArthur Drive is a major divider and a boundary. They would like to see some way to reconnect downtown and the neighborhoods on the "outside" of MacArthur Drive.
- Compton Park is excellent, but it is the only park within the area (southwest of MacArthur Drive). Citizens want more facilities like Compton Park.
- There should be more partnerships with schools for use of facilities and to provide programs for the youth of Alexandria.
- Compton Park would be a good site for a spray park.
- A skate park is needed somewhere in Alexandria. The area near Civitan Field was suggested.
- More senior programs are needed, such as exercise classes.
- A community center is needed within this area that also has park elements outside. Residents pictured a place with indoor and outdoor facilities that appealed to all age groups and offered active and passive recreation. A suggestion was made to convert the Fuhrer Branch Library into a community center since the library has moved out of the building.
- Need a therapeutic pool.
- Residents want to feel safer in parks. Location and supervision were identified as being the key issues relating to safety.
- Need a place where people can socialize and get outdoors.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

February 19, 2009

Over 30 area residents attended this meeting, which was part of a regularly scheduled neighborhood meeting. Meeting attendees shared their opinions regarding parks and recreation services in Alexandria, but also provided a specific focus on the delivery of these services within their neighborhood community. The concerns and needs discussed in the previous meetings were echoed here with the primary focus being equal parks and recreation service levels within their community. Topics and issues discussed included:

- There are currently no parks or recreation service in this area of town. Residents want facilities and programs, particularly walking/biking trails and passive park land.
- Need an off-leash dog park
- Need sidewalks to connect to parks and a safe crossing (underpass or overpass) at MacArthur Drive.
- Need program space for meetings and activities for all ages. Space could be rented at local churches.
- The Teen Center should have weekend programs
- Need a covered basketball court.

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- Swings need to be added at Frank O. Hunter Park.
- Need a gymnasium, which would be part of a larger center, in the community. Martin Park was suggested as a site for a gymnasium.
- The City should provide proper and balanced maintenance in all parks. Some residents feel that certain parks are maintained better than others.
- The City should provide and distribute an annual resource guide that lists all parks and programs.
- Offer parenting classes

Community Survey

In February 2009 a total of 2,500 surveys were mailed out to randomly selected Alexandria citizens. Questions were derived from results of the interview process and the public meetings. A total of 144 of the surveys were returned and tabulated. Survey research shows that a statistical accuracy of 95% with a $\pm 10\%$ sampling error can be achieved with a response of 144 completed surveys in a community the size of Alexandria (Salant and Dillman, *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*). Survey results were intended to provide a confirmation of the community's desires for public recreation that were expressed in the workshop, public meetings and interviews. The survey, which can be found in the Appendix, contained 23 questions assessing the types of programs in which citizens are currently participating and those that show a future interest of participation. Questions also assessed the priority for future facility development and renovations that should be undertaken by the Department as well as possible options for funding the improvements. The following charts and graphs provide a graphic representation of survey results. Also included are selected comments respondents wrote on their survey forms.

Program and Activity Preferences

After tallying the survey responses, a review of the results revealed that general recreation activities, such as visiting the zoo or a park playground, currently have the strongest participation and preference by a wide margin. In fact, 37% of responses to this question were among general park activities. Special events were the second most popular, with 23% of all responses falling into this category. When asked what programs, activities, events or services they or their families have participated in over the past five (5) years, there were four clear winners:

1. Visit Zoo (105 responses)
2. Zoo Events (78 responses)
3. Special Event on the River (77 responses)
4. Visit a Park Playground (66 responses)

Respondents were asked to indicate their *favorite* park programs and activities from the same list as used in the aforementioned questions. Again, visiting the zoo and zoo events ranked high as did other general park activities. Among the favorites, five activities top the list:

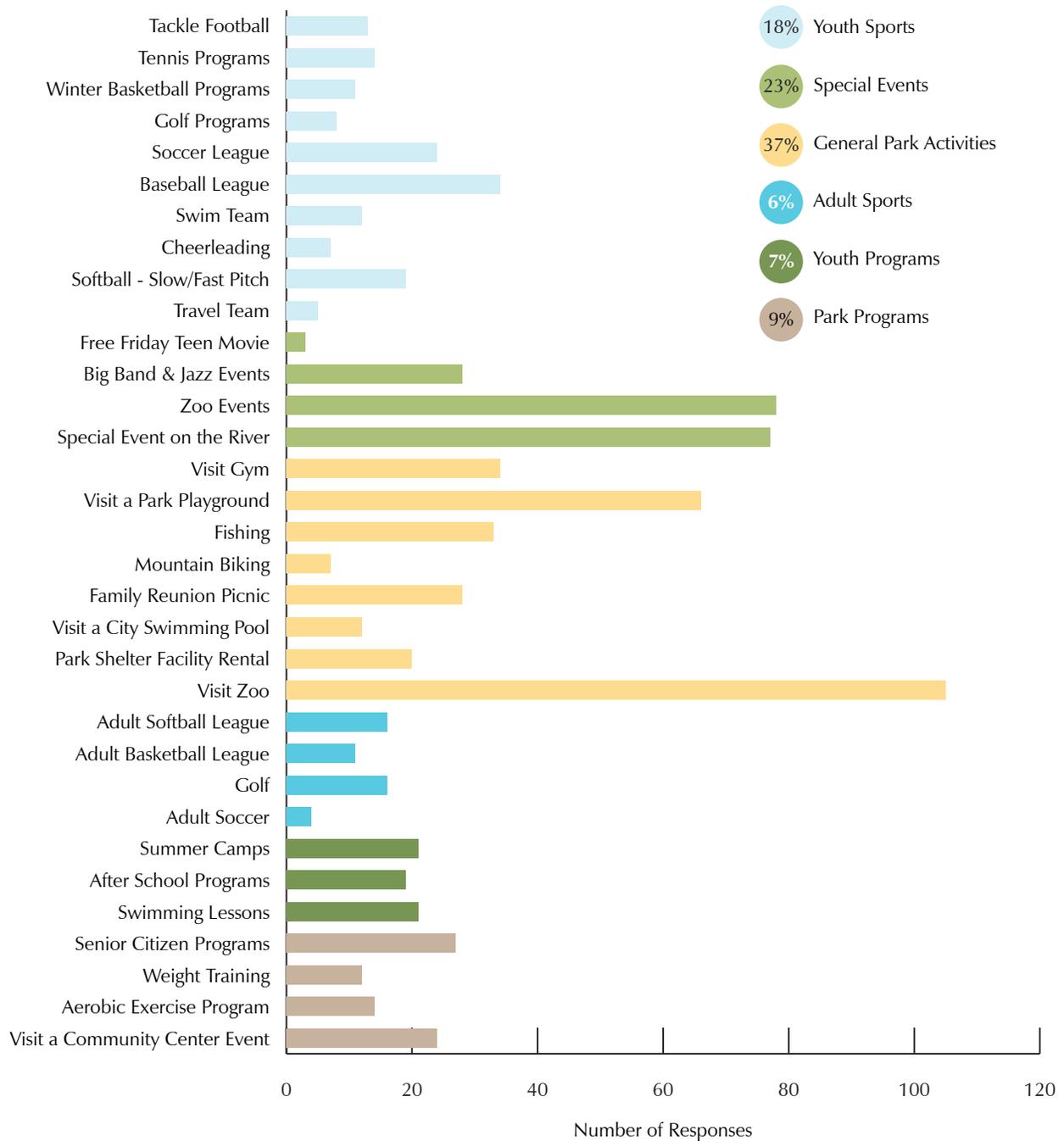
1. Visit Zoo (48 responses)
2. Zoo Events (32 responses)
3. Special Event on the River (27 responses)
4. Fishing (22 responses)
5. Visit a Park Playground (21 responses)

The passive activities that topped both lists are consistent with many other communities' preferences

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Figure 3.1: Program Participation over Past 5 Years

Identify the programs, activities, events or services that you or your family have participated in over the past five (5) years:



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Figure 3.2: Favorite Programs

Identify the programs, activities, events or services that you or your family's favorites:

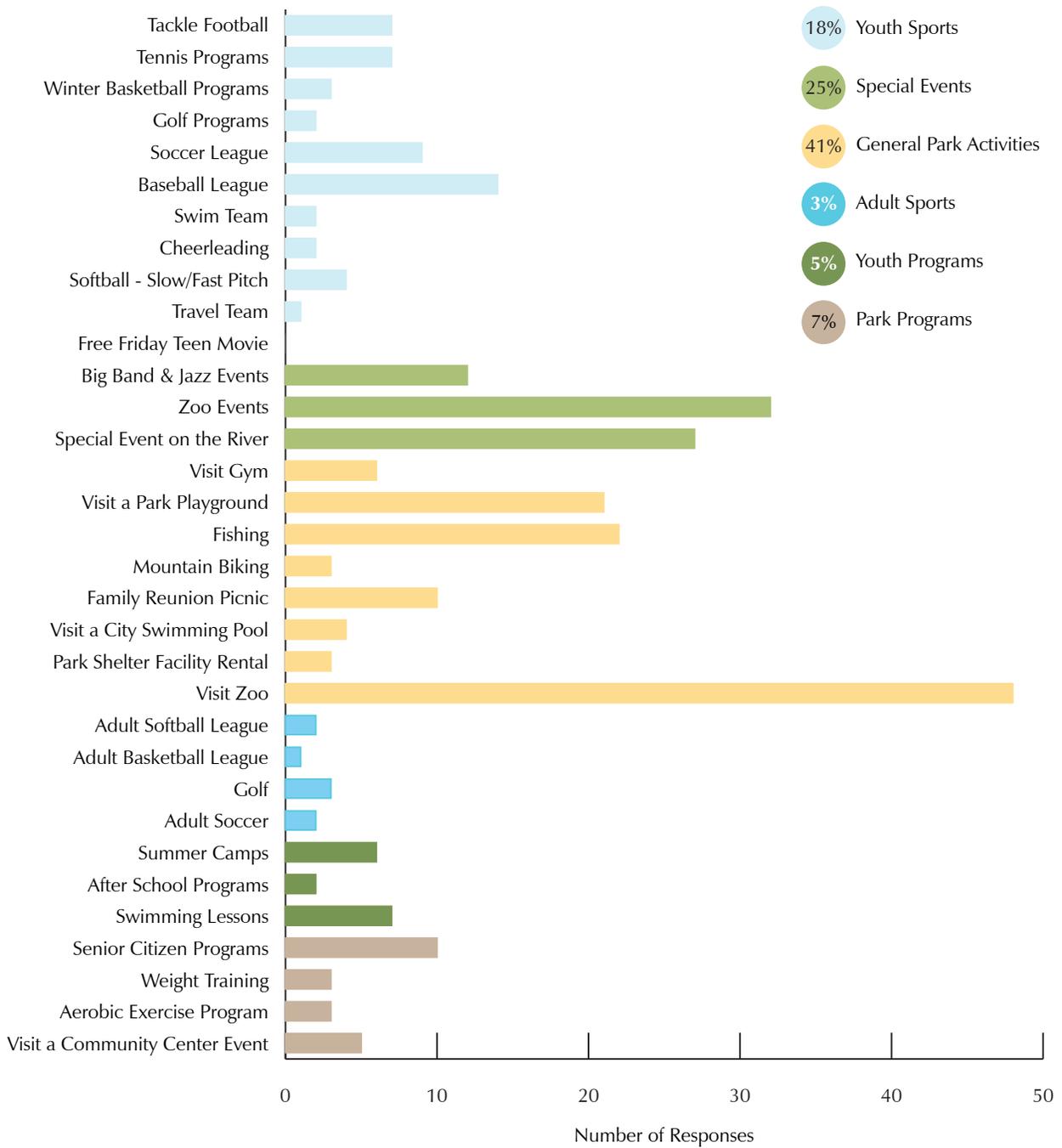
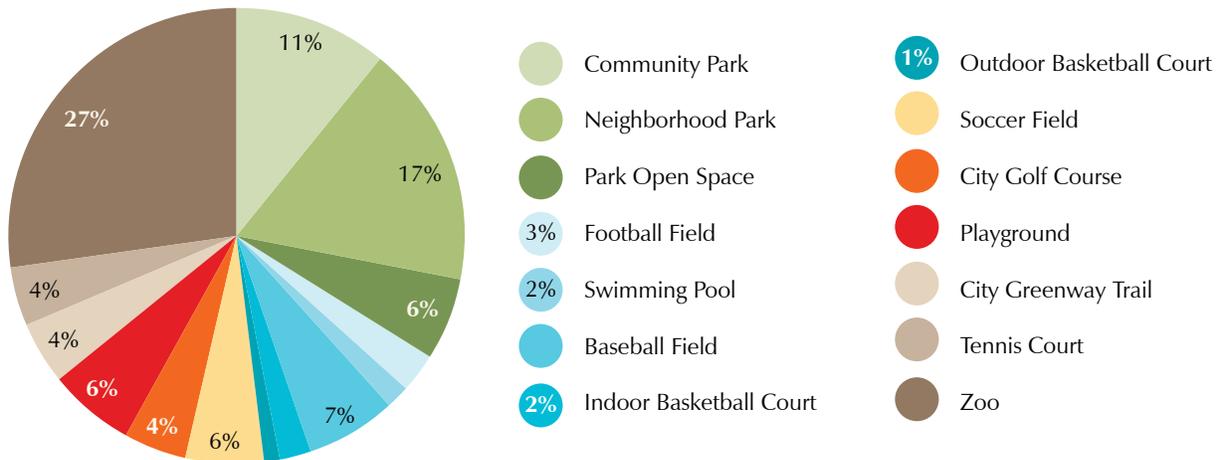


Figure 3.3: Park Usage

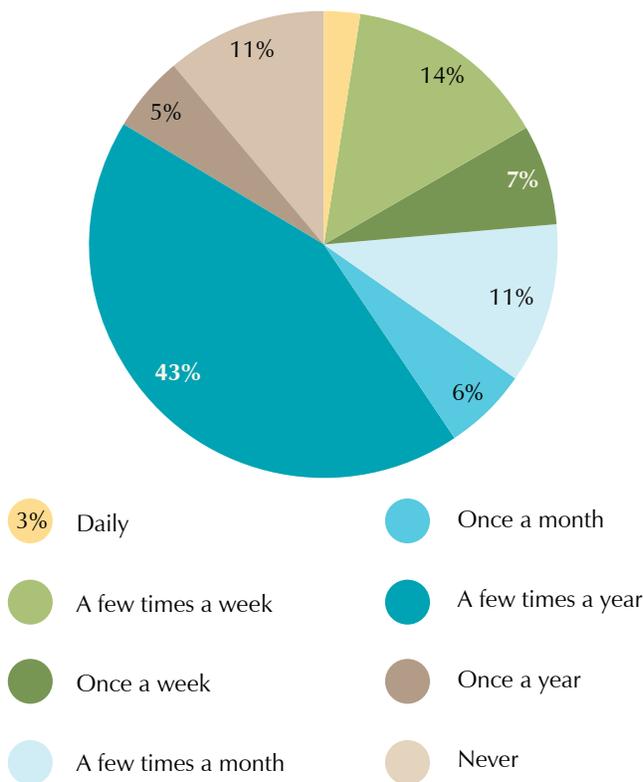
Please indicate the Alexandria Parks and Recreation facility that you or your family uses the most often:



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

Figure 3.4: Frequency of Park Visits

How often do you normally visit any park in Alexandria?



the planning team has studied over the last five years, reflecting a preference for activities that do not require a special skill or athletic ability, are available to people of all ages and are family-oriented. Organized team sports and athletics generally rank lower, where as general or passive park activities rank higher because they appeal to a broader audience.

Park and Program Usage

Survey respondents were asked to describe how they use the programs and parks, if at all, and what parks facilities they use most often. When asked which facilities they and/or their families use most often (Figure 3.3), the zoo topped the list again. Of all the Alexandria parks and facilities, the zoo was the most popular, while all others received a much lower response. Neighborhood and community parks trailed behind the zoo, but all other park facilities received approximately 10 responses or less. These results are not surprising considering many of the facilities that had a lower response rate included specialized facilities (i.e., baseball field, golf course, tennis court) that would only be used by individuals participating in a particular program or sport.

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Evaluation of how often respondents visited city parks revealed that very few (3%) use a park daily, but 14% use a park a few times per week and 7% use a park once a week (Figure 3.4). These figures represent the more active park users or those who may be involved in an athletic league. Those who visit parks once a month (6%) or a few times a month (11%) represent more casual park users or those who may be attending league games as a spectator. The largest response was among those who use parks a few times a year (43%), which typically represents individuals who only visit the parks during special events. These results are consistent with the responses to previous questions, but the overall usage of parks is somewhat lower than what we have seen in other communities. For example, in Lexington, Kentucky, less than 1% of respondents indicated that they never use parks or park programs, while 24% of respondents use parks once a week.

This question was followed up by another that asked whether respondents traveled to communities outside of Alexandria to use park facilities or programs. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated “Yes.” Those who answered “Yes” indicated that they use facilities such as campgrounds, state parks, zoos and aquariums in other cities, and recreation facilities in nearby central Louisiana communities. Use of state park facilities was measured on the survey. Respondents were asked how often they use nearby state facilities. Less than 1% of respondents indicated “daily” but 55% of respondents indicated that they use state park facilities a few times a year (Figure 3.5).

When asked how often they participate in passive park usage, a special event, an individual activity, an organized group activity or a cultural arts event, responses were mixed though many indicated “not at all.” As illustrated in Figure 3.6, passive park usage and individual activities yielded the highest participation (“very often”) at 33% and 25%, respectively. Cultural arts events and organized group activities appear to have the lowest participation. The responses to this question support the findings in the first question, which asked respondents what programs they have participated in over the past five years. Again, respondents are showing higher participation and involvement in general/passive park activities and special events. This is not entirely surprising as these types of activities are typically free, do not require a special skill or knowledge of a sport and appeal to a broader audience.

Figure 3.5: Use of State Park Facilities

How often do you use nearby state park facilities?

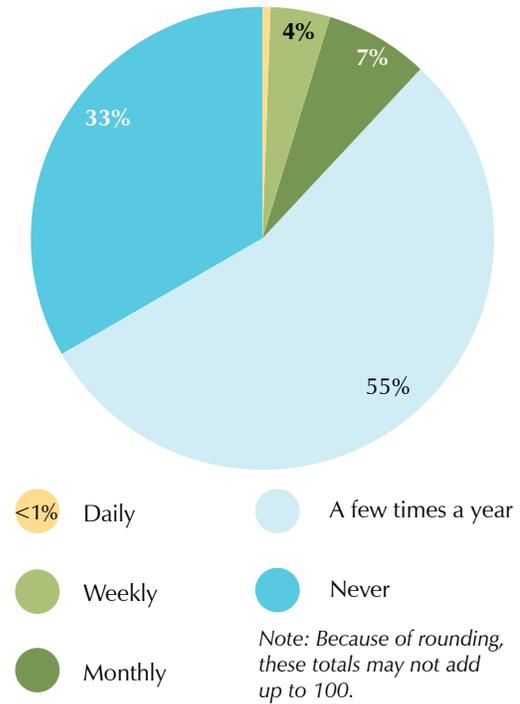
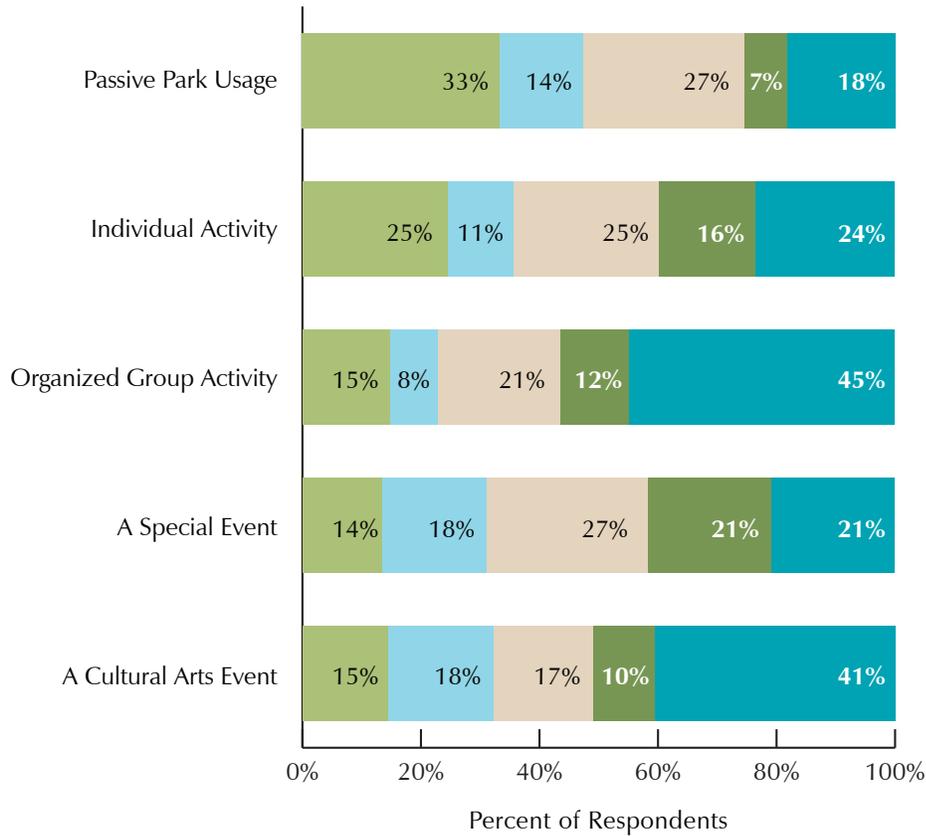


Figure 3.6: Program Participation

Using the list below, rank how often you take part in the following park programs:

- Very Often
- Sometimes
- Not at All
- Often
- Almost Never



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

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Program Adequacy

To determine program adequacy, survey respondents were about youth and adult recreation programs. In regard to adequacy of youth programs (Figure 3.7), the majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they felt that additional programs were needed for both girls and boys, while only 37% felt that youth programming is adequate. With regard to adult programming, a large number of respondents (43%) indicated that they did not participate at all in adult programs (Figure 3.8). Of those who did, only 19% felt that the program offerings were adequate while more (35%) felt that more programs were needed for both men and women. The fact that many of the respondents participated in neither adult nor youth programs but took the time and effort to send back the survey form indicated an interest in having a voice about the future of Alexandria's recreational offerings even though they were currently non-users of the parks.

Figure 3.7: Youth Program Adequacy

Do you believe there are adequate youth recreation programs for both boys and girls in Alexandria?

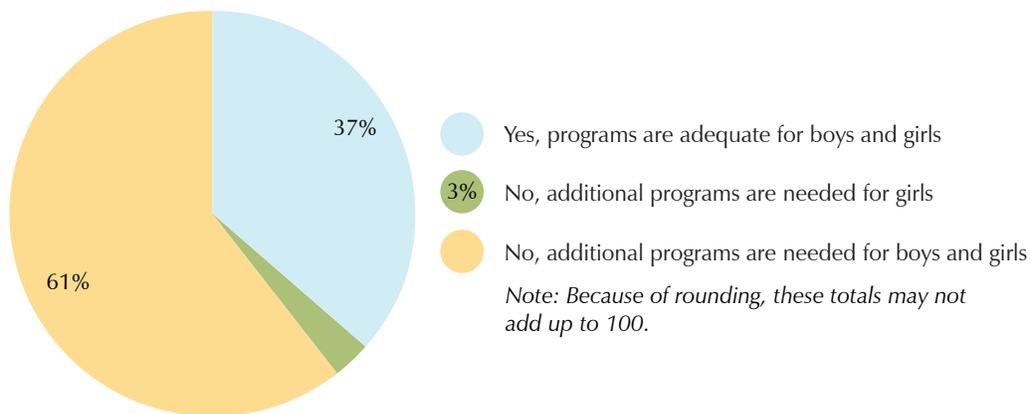
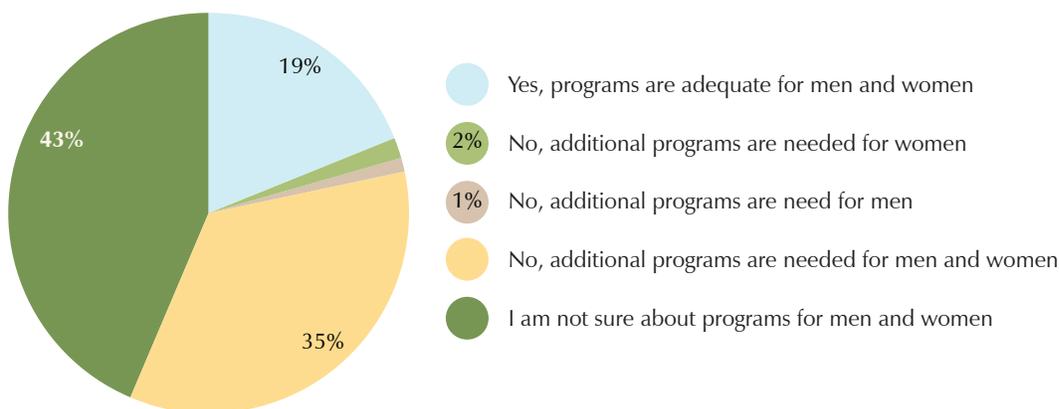


Figure 3.8: Adult Program Adequacy

Do you believe there are adequate adult recreation programs for both men and women in Alexandria?



Access to the Parks and Safety

Respondents were asked about their mode of travel to and from the parks (Figure 3.9). Currently, 82% travel by car, 11% walk to the parks, 5% cycle and 2% use public transportation. These responses are similar to what the planning team has seen in other communities; however, we have found that communities with more sidewalks, trails and/or greenways have a much higher response for walking and cycling to parks.

Survey respondents were also asked how far they would be willing to walk, drive or bike to parks and recreation facilities (Figure 3.10). Forty-four percent of respondents indicated they would not walk, but 50% indicated they would walk up to two miles. The high response rate of those who would not walk may be influenced by the lack of sidewalks, trails and greenways within the city. As previously noted, it has been our experience that respondents in communities with trail and greenway systems respond in higher favor of walking. Biking yielded similar results and likely for the same reason. Thirty-six percent of respondents would not bike, while 39% would up to two miles. This kind of response to walking and biking demonstrates the need for the development of greenways and trails throughout the city.

Figure 3.9: Travel to/from Parks

How do you currently travel to the park facility you use most often?

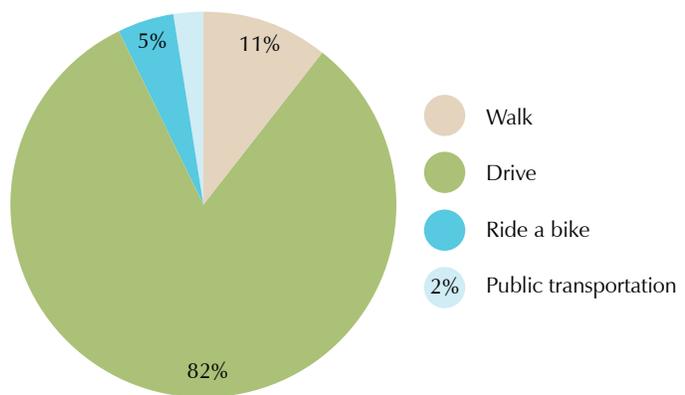
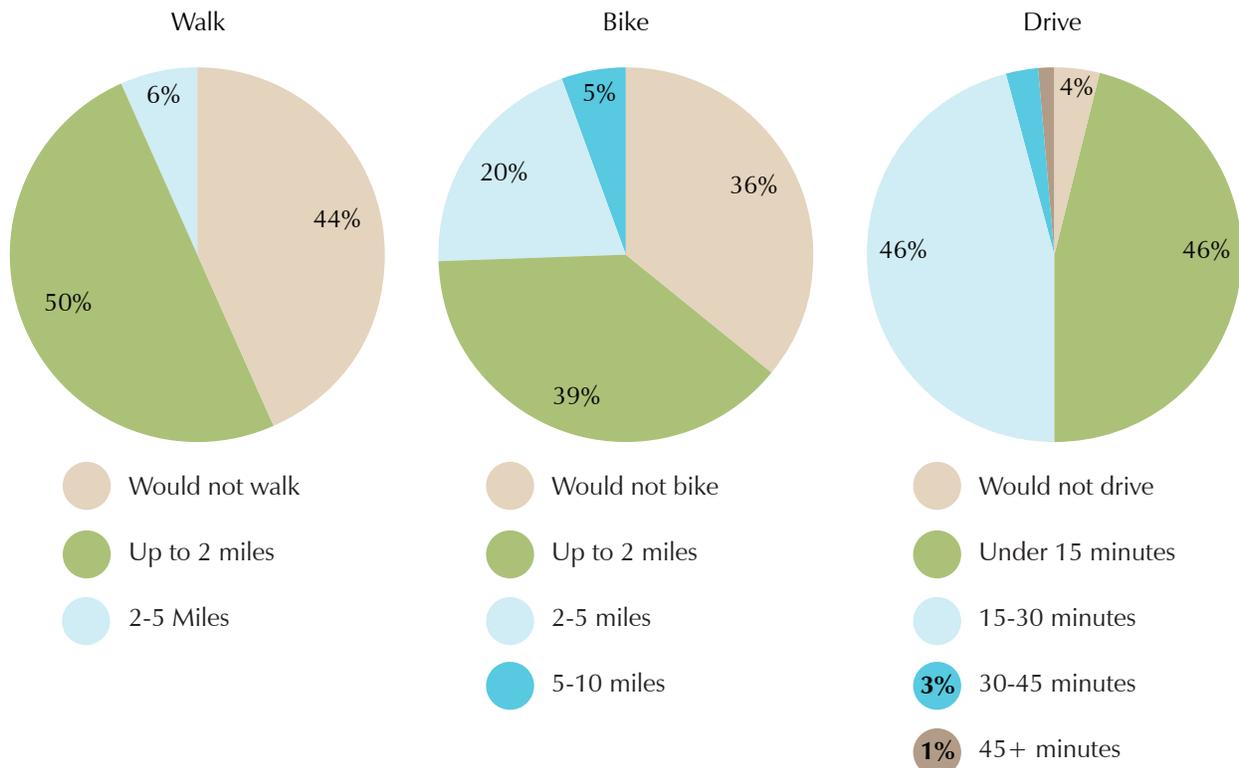


Figure 3.10: Travel Time Preferences

How far would you be willing to walk, drive or ride a bike to park and recreation facilities?



SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

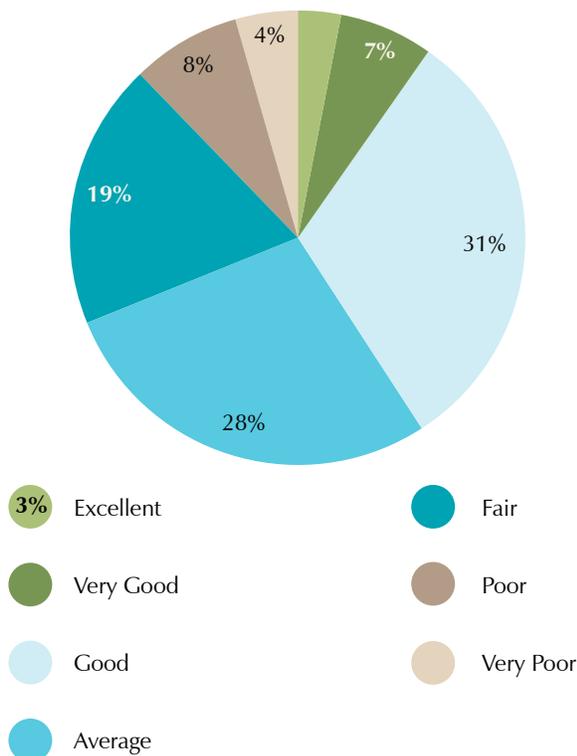
When asked about drive times, an equal percentage of respondents indicated a drive under 15 minutes (46%) or 15 to 30 minutes (46%). The city's current park distribution permits a 15 to 30 minute drive, but some may have to travel farther for specific facilities. Travel time willingness may also be dependent upon the type of activity at a particular park.

To gain an understanding of how safe individuals felt in the parks, the survey asked respondents to rate their perceived safety. Only 23% of respondents felt "safe" in parks, followed by 43% who felt "somewhat safe." Nineteen percent indicated they felt 'somewhat unsafe,' while 15% said "unsafe." Compared to responses on other community surveys we have conducted, the park users in Alexandria have a much lower perception of safety.

Safety in parks and on trails was addressed in the public meetings as well, though it was not identified as being a major issue. Some meeting public attendees indicated that they avoid certain parks because they do not feel safe there, but others noted that the parks are much safer than some believe. This issue could be addressed with regular police patrols through the city's parks.

Figure 3.11: Overall Grade for Park Programs

Alexandria Parks and Recreation provides a wide range of programs, events, activities and services. Using the scale below, please give the division an overall grade as to whether or not park programs meet your needs.



Overall Performance

Respondents were asked to give Alexandria Parks and Recreation an overall grade as to whether park programs meet their needs (Figure 3.11). Forty-one percent gave a grade of 'good' or better, but 59% gave a grade of 'average' or lower.

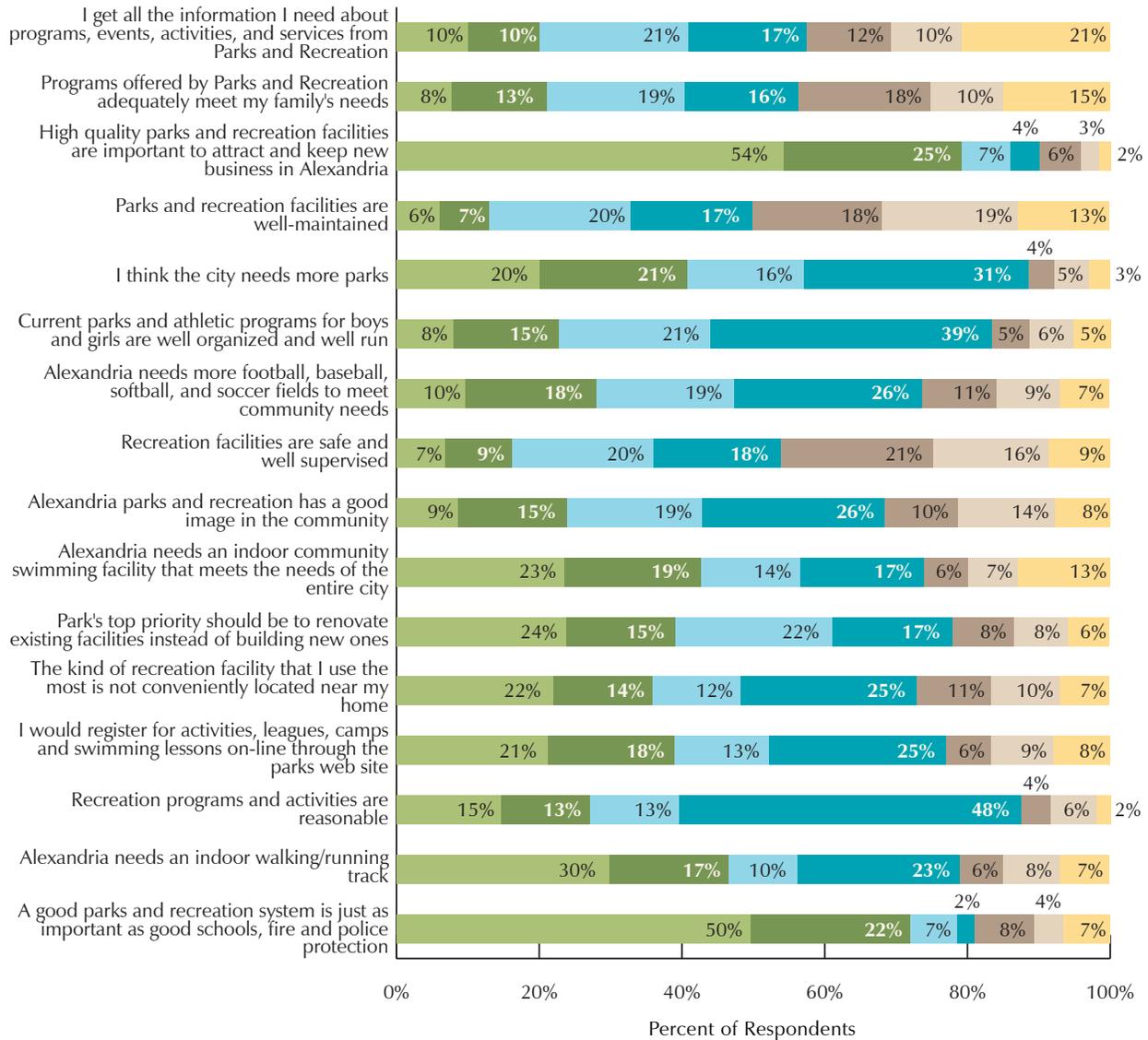
The overall grade is lower than what we have seen in many communities, but it is consistent with the responses to other programming questions and what we heard in public meetings, which is that Alexandria Parks and Recreation is not reaching the people who want more program variety nor are they getting their message out to the public. That said, the Department should be proud of the fact that 41% give them a grade of 'good' or higher, but should work on adding more variety to the parks system in terms of both programs and facilities.

Questions directed at evaluating the overall performance and quality of the parks and recreation are shown in Figure 3.12. Perhaps the most significant tally in this figure is the strong belief that high quality parks and recreation facilities are important to attracting and maintaining new business in Alexandria (79% when "strongly agree" and "agree" are combined). This is further supported by the score of 72% who feel that a good parks and recreation system is just as important as schools, fire and police protection. Compared to other communities we have worked in, these are relatively high scores.

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Figure 3.12: Overall Performance

Using the scale below, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or neither agree nor disagree with the following statements:



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

Other higher ranking responses (combining “strongly agree” and “agree”) include 47% of respondents who feel Alexandria needs an indoor walking/running track, 42% who believe Alexandria needs an indoor swimming facility that meets the needs of the entire community, and 41% who think the city needs more parks. When you add in the “somewhat agree” category all of these surpass a 50% response.

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The most negative response and the one receiving the largest number of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” votes concerns parks maintenance (32%), advertising of events and programs (31%), program adequacy (25%), and supervision and safety of parks and recreation facilities (25%). In all the communities we have worked, these three items typically receive the most “disagree” responses. It should be noted that throughout the public input process, citizens said they want more information and communication from the City about Alexandria Parks and Recreation.

The neutral responses to some of the statements that were program-related likely represent respondents who do not participate in any programs or know about them. This often indicates individuals who are not being reached by a parks and recreation department due to lack of program diversity and/or communication from the department to the public. Based on the public input process and our observations, both of these issues exist in Alexandria.

Facility Priorities

Survey respondents were given a list of 25 new park facilities, programs and activities, and were asked to rank whether each item should be started and completed in one year, started in completed in two years, started in three to five years, put into a long-term plan (five to 10 years) or not started at all. A new indoor pool and aquatic center was ranked highest (48%) followed closely by renovation of existing park facilities (47%), modern playgrounds (44%), a new senior citizen center (42%) and a gym/weightlifting facility (39%). Figure 3.13 illustrates these survey responses.

In order to determine what the top priority projects should be over the first five years after the adoption of this master plan, we combined the responses for projects that should be started and completed in one, two and three to five years. The resulting ten “high priority” items were echoed in other forms of public input and our team’s assessment of the current parks system, indicating a strong support for the prioritized action steps:

1. Modern playgrounds	89%
2. Expand the zoo	86%
3. Renovate existing park facilities	83%
4. New indoor pool and aquatic center	79%
5. Large gym/community center complex	78%
6. Indoor basketball/volleyball facility	76%
7. New senior citizen center	73%
8. New skate park	67% (tie)
8. Gym/weightlifting facility	67% (tie)
8. More walking trails in existing parks	67% (tie)

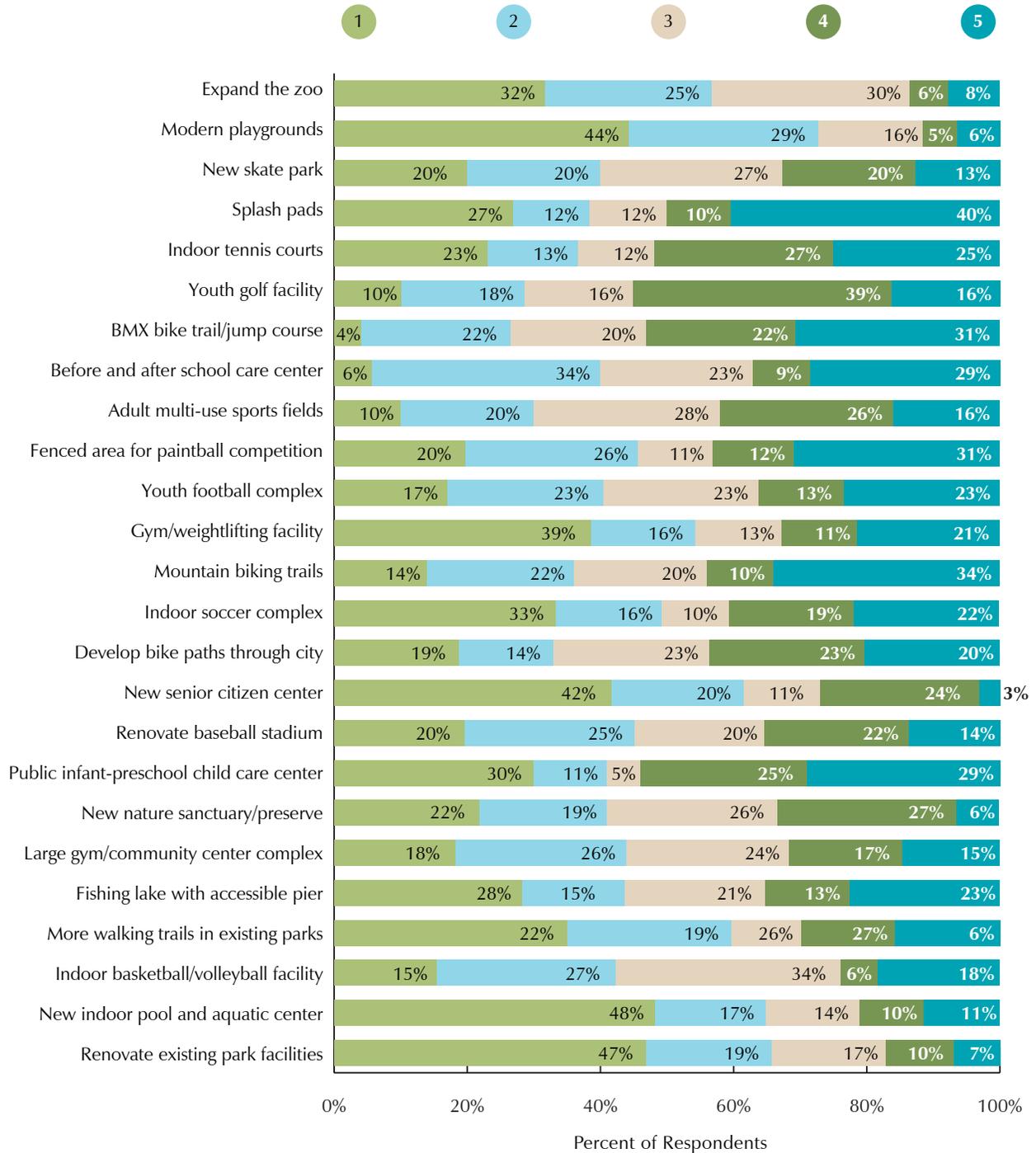
Renovation of existing park facilities has been consistently ranked high in all communities we have studied in recent years. Aquatic facilities and community centers are also typically ranked higher in communities that do not currently have those facilities. The only surprising result is that walking trails did not rank higher. Trails and greenways have been among the top three options in the majority of the community surveys we have conducted over the past five years.

The items receiving the least support (“not started at all”) included splash pads (40%), mountain biking trails (34%), BMX bike trail/jump course (31%), fenced area for paintball competition (31%), and both options related to child care centers. The response to splash pads was likely swayed by the City’s recent addition of splash pads to three parks; respondents may have felt that it was no longer a demonstrated need.

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Figure 3.13: Development Priorities

Indicate if you think the following new facilities, programs and activities for Alexandria Parks and Recreation should be (1) started and completed in one year, (2) started and completed in two years, (3) started and completed in 3-5 years, (4) put in a long-term (5-10 year) plan or (5) not started at all.



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

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Marketing

In an attempt to determine how individuals find out about upcoming activities, the survey asked respondents to indicate the most common method for obtaining information about Alexandria Parks and Recreation events and programs. The most common information dissemination methods were through local newspapers (97 responses) and television advertising on local stations (94 responses). Word of mouth, which typically receives high ranking, received 59 responses, followed by commercials on FM radio stations with 42 responses. Only 18 respondents indicated that they use the City's website to access information. Since response to the mail survey indicated that a many citizens felt that marketing was not meeting their needs, a review of potential new and/or expanded avenues of marketing the parks' activities and programs may be in order. The City currently publishes a quarterly community calendar in a brochure format, but some of the public meeting attendees recommended a larger annual or biannual brochure or booklet that details parks and recreation programs, events and facilities.

Figure 3.14: Funding Method Preferences

In order to maintain and improve Parks and Recreation programs, events, activities and services, more funding will be needed. There are six (6) funding options available below. Rank the funding options below using the numbers 1-6 with '1' being most favorable and '6' being least favorable.



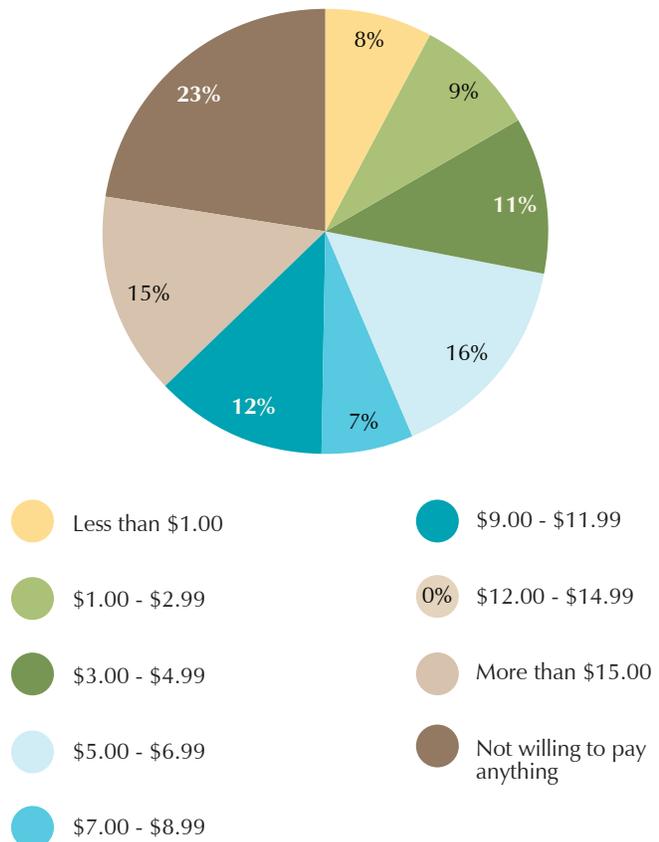
Funding and Willingness to Contribute

Survey respondents were asked to share their views on funding for parks and recreation improvements. Responses indicated that funding projects through state and financial grants (62%) was the preferred source of funding (Figure 3.14). A significant number of responses were in favor of lobbying the mayor and city council to approve increased funding for park projects from the existing city budget (29%). Close behind that were supporters of funding through bond issues for specific projects (25%) and charging developers an impact fee to help fund new park projects (24%). Increasing taxes was the least supported method, which is consistent among all communities we have studied.

Figure 3.15 illustrates how much citizens would be willing to spend *per month per household* to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities. The highest response (23%) was from those who were not willing to pay anything; however, 16% would be willing to contribute \$5.00 - \$6.99 and 15% would be willing to contribute more than \$15.00. While 23% is a high response to “not willing to pay anything” compared to communities we have surveyed in the past, it is similar to responses on more recent surveys and likely a reflection of the country’s current economic state. Regardless, 77% of respondents are willing to contribute something, which indicates that response to a creative program to entice monetary contributions could mean a significant increase in operating funds for Alexandria Parks and recreation. Based on the response to this question, there is support for dedicated funding of up to \$5.00 per month for parks and recreation. With 16,932 households in the City of Alexandria (2008 estimate), that could equate to approximately \$1 million in funding a year.

Figure 3.15: Willingness to Contribute

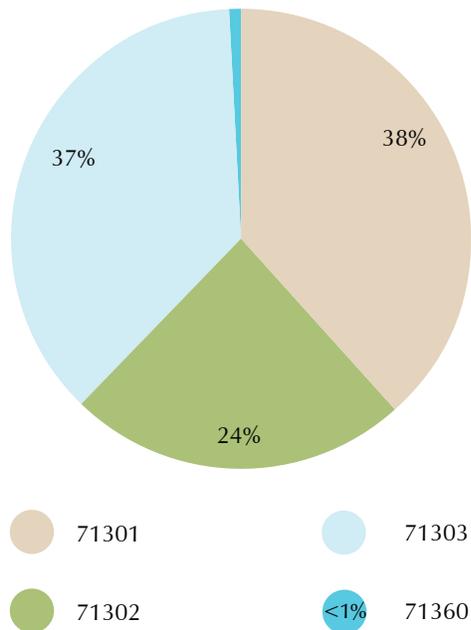
How much would you be willing to spend per month to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities?



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

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Figure 3.16: Respondent Zip Codes

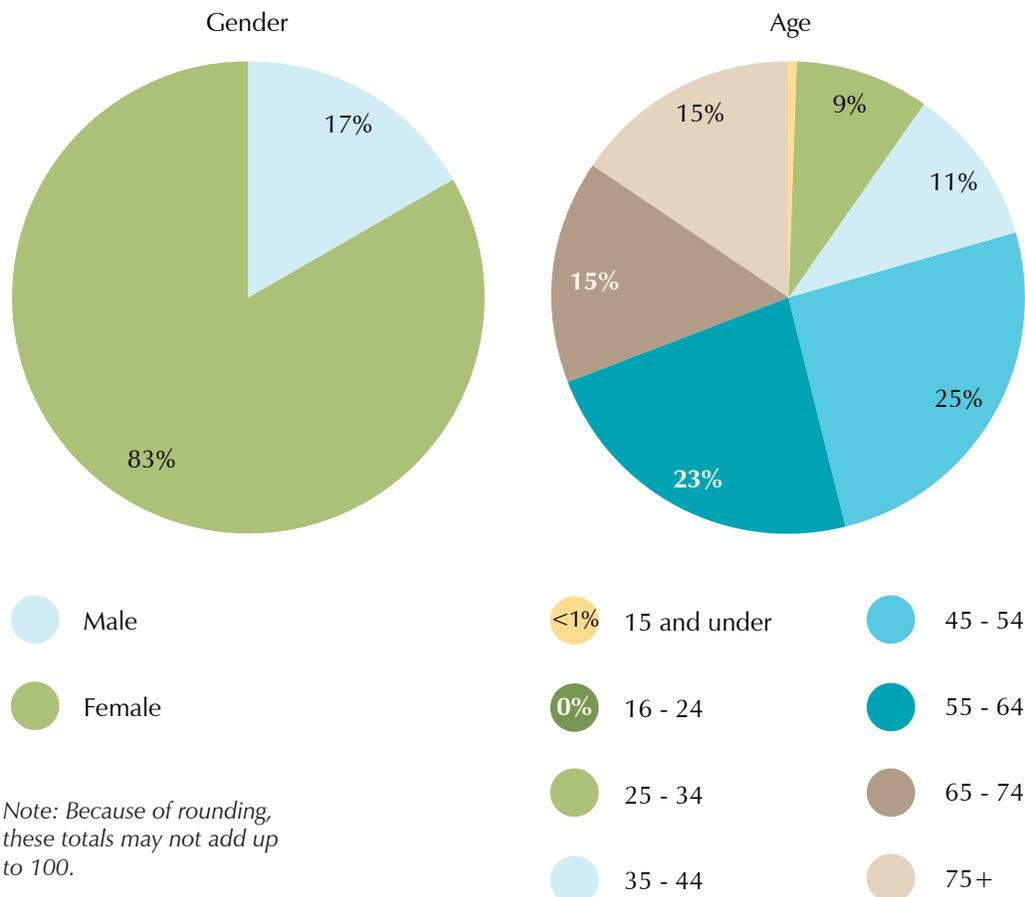


Respondent Demographics

Respondents lived in three zip codes within the city, with only one response coming from outside the city (Figure 3.16). The responses were relatively even as percentage representations of the populations in each zip code. Zip codes 71301 and 71303 are the most heavily populated areas and represented 38% and 37% of the returned surveys, respectively; 71302 had 24% of the surveys. The single response from outside the city was from Pineville (71360).

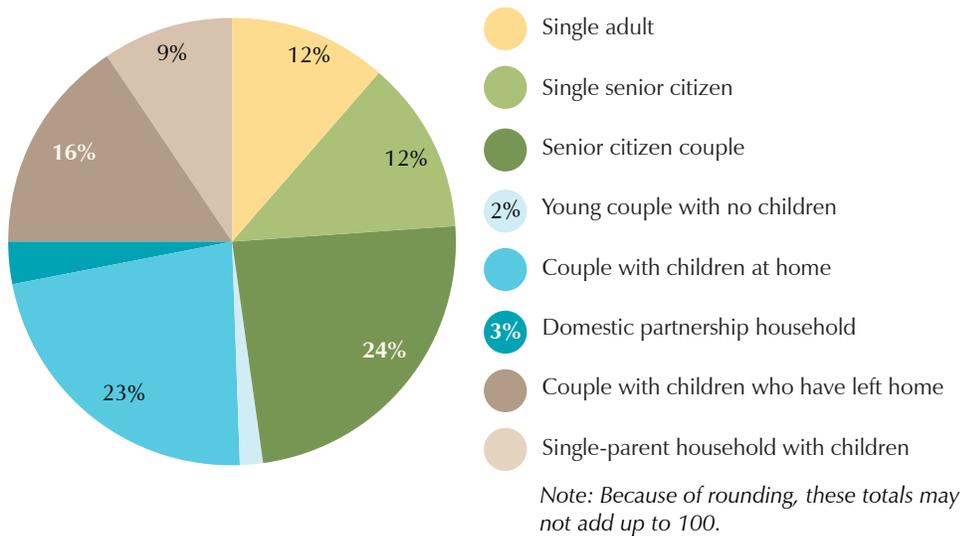
Figure 3.17 illustrates the gender and age groups of respondents. The majority of respondents were females (83%), which is typically the case in the surveys we have conducted though by a narrower margin. Ages showing the greatest representation were among the 45-54 (25%), 55-64 (23%), 65-74 (15%) and 75+ (15%) age groups. In the past, we have seen a much more even distribution of responses from the age groups in the 25-54 age groups. In this survey, the majority of respondents (60%) fall into the "senior" citizen category. This may explain some of the survey responses that indicate the desire for senior facilities and certain types of programs and activities.

Figure 3.17: Respondent Gender and Age



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

Figure 3.18: Type of Household



Review of the make-up of the types of households that the majority of respondents did not have children in the home (Figure 3.19). Sixty-six percent of respondents were single adults, couples with no children or empty-nesters. A look at the age of children in the homes of survey respondents indicated that most had children ages 7 or older, with the 11-15 year old age group being the largest.

Figure 3.19: Annual Household Income

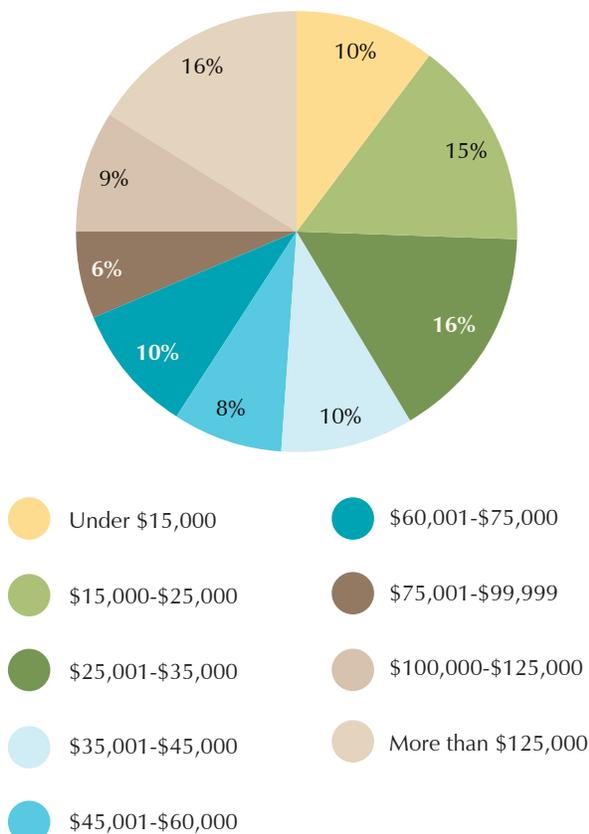


Figure 3.20 illustrates the total annual household incomes of the survey respondents. Income levels were varied with 10% reporting an income under \$15,000, 15% reporting an income of \$15,000 to \$25,000, 16% reporting an income between \$25,001 and \$35,000, 10% with an income \$35,001 to \$45,000, and 49% with annual incomes in excess of \$45,000. This distribution is lower than what we have seen in other communities; however, it is consistent with the income level distribution of Alexandria’s citizens. The city’s median income is \$32,895 (2008 estimate), which is just behind the Rapides Parish median income (\$37,472). The Louisiana median income is somewhat higher at \$41,578 (2008 estimate). This type of information is particularly important when considering fees for programs and services and may indicate the need for a tiered fee system or scholarship program.

Summary of Public Input Findings

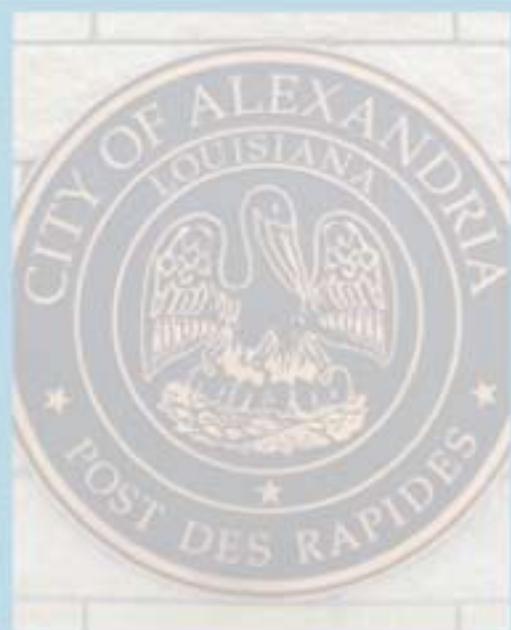
The completion of public input brought about consistent themes throughout the various stages of the process. While some input forums had stronger desires for specific facilities over others, the overall direction for future improvements was relatively parallel among all the groups. The priorities were also consistent with the deficiencies noted during the planning team's analysis of the current parks and recreation system. The most consistent evaluation throughout the entire process was that it was time for the City to focus on renovating existing facilities, providing indoor recreation facilities, and providing a greater variety of programs and facilities.

The surveys were intended to further gauge the community's desire for recreation facilities and programs. As with the public meetings, the top priorities were similar. A few priorities that had been highly desired in the public meetings did, however, receive a lower priority by survey respondents and vice versa. The public meetings are generally representative of current park users. The mail survey also includes non-users, which is why it is such an important component of the overall response.

Various funding solutions were discussed throughout the public input process. The response by survey participants was a desire to fund park projects through state and federal grants, but citizens may also support a bond program. The survey also points to support for dedicating funding to parks.

In conclusion, the people of Alexandria want programs that meet their needs and the needs of their families; they want indoor facilities; they want facilities that will provide a broader range of recreation opportunities; and they want more communication and information about Alexandria Parks and Recreation.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS



SECTION 4

DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

The City of Alexandria's parks and recreation functions are divided between two separate City agencies: the Community Services Division and the Parks and Recreation Department, which is housed in the Public Works Division. The Parks and Recreation Department is overseen by a superintendent who reports to the Public Works Director. The Department is responsible for maintenance of park facilities, field rentals and tournament facilitation. The Community Services Division, which has a director who oversees daily operations, is responsible for recreation and community programming. The Alexandria Zoo, which is a major destination and recreation resource, is also housed in the Public Works Division. It is overseen by a Zoo Director, who reports to the Public Works Director.

This set-up is different from what we have seen in most communities, but is not entirely unusual. In some communities, it is standard practice for parks maintenance to be found in the public works department; however, it is not usually under the title of "parks and recreation department." Instead, it is typically a sub-group of the public works department with a title of "parks and streets," "city/county properties" or similar. In these cases, there are dedicated public works crews who maintain multiple city or county-owned properties including parks, but they are not involved in rentals or tournaments beyond providing staff support. In this same set-up, the community also has an independent "parks and recreation department" that provides all programming, rental management, tournament facilitation and overall park management.

The more common organization that we see in communities is a parks and recreation department with all parks and recreation-related functions, including parks maintenance and recreation programming, facility operations, planning and community special event programming, combined in one department. The department has a senior manager, most often called the director of parks and recreation, and has a group of senior managers who report to the director. This type of organization has many advantages: it provides more streamlined communication; it provides a unified approach to the delivery of varied recreation programs and activities; it creates a single point of contact for the citizens of the community; and it allows for improved training for young parks and recreation professionals who grow through the various steps of the organization. It creates an environment where staff are focused on the delivery of recreation services on a daily basis and can create standards of care and planning that promote year-round recreation programs for a community.

Current Organization

Community Services Division

The Community Services Division provides daily management of operations and scheduling for a variety of programs throughout the City. The director of the division is a mayoral appointee who reports to the Mayor. Currently, the Community Services Division Director position is vacant; however, the former Community Services Director, who is now the City's Chief of Policy and Planning, is acting as the interim Director until that position is filled.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

The Community Services Division is comprised of seven full-time positions, three of which are vacant. In addition to the Director (vacant with an interim director), there is an Assistant Director (vacant), two administrative support positions and three program coordinators. The administrative support positions include a full-time Administrative Assistant (vacant) and a Clerical Specialist. Currently, the Clerical Specialist works between the Community Services Division and the Building Services Department in Public Works and is responsible for some of the rental reservations. The programming positions include a Youth Programs Coordinator, Special Events Coordinator and Community Outreach Coordinator. See Figure 4.1 for the current organization of staff.

A review of the duties of the existing staff indicates that they are performing some programming duties that we would normally find within a parks and recreation agency and some that are often found in other agencies. The Community Outreach Coordinator is primarily providing programs that are personal enrichment and directed at helping people with job and health related activities. These programs, while common in a Community Services Division of government, are not common to a parks and recreation agency. The special events and youth programs provided by the other staff are very common to parks and recreation and provide a foundation for developing a true parks and recreation agency for the City. The zoo programs, sports tournaments and the golf programs, while not currently housed in a parks and recreation department, are also typical of parks and recreation programs and will provide a good foundation for a new department if they are brought together under the common leadership of the Community Services Division and a City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation Department.

The City has had a strong presence in field-based athletics for several years. The City also hosts larger special events, like the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) Tennis Championships. More opportunities will occur as the Johnny Downs Sports Complex plays host to baseball, soccer and other field sport tournaments.

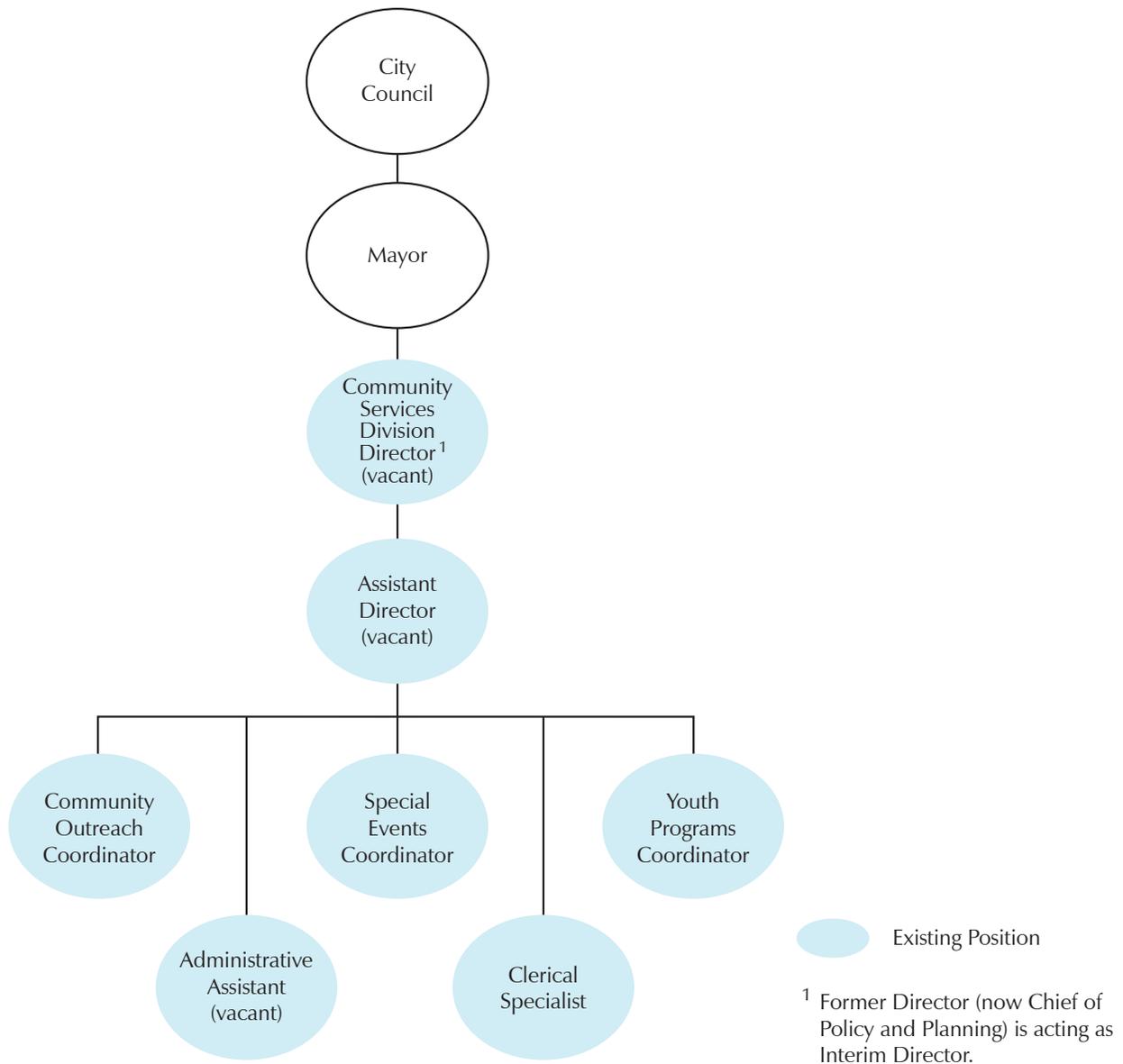
Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the daily maintenance of park facilities, field rentals and tournament facilitation. The Parks and Recreation Superintendent oversees the day-to-day operations of this department and reports to the Public Works Division Director. The Superintendent is supported by an Administrative Secretary. Staff interviews indicate that there are 14 full-time employees and 11 part-time/seasonal employees who perform grounds maintenance for all parks, except Johnny Downs Sports Complex, Links on the Bayou and Bringhurst Golf Course.

Each maintenance crew is supervised by a Parks Maintenance Crew Leader. Below the Crew Leader is a mix of permanent and seasonal Equipment Operators and Maintenance Workers. Seasonal employees are hired in two cycles on a six month basis. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the crews are divided into three groups: Ball Parks, Park Building Maintenance and Mowing. The Ball Park Crew is responsible for all ball park maintenance, lining of fields, mowing of fields, trash collection, and other field preparation needed for league play and tournaments. The Park Building Maintenance Crew provides general maintenance (e.g., painting, trash collection, etc.) of park buildings such as restrooms and shelters. The Mowing Crew handles the mowing of all park properties except for the ball fields and the City's golf courses.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 4.1: Existing Community Services Division Organization



Current Organization Analysis

The structure of the City's parks and recreation services is different from most that the team has analyzed. The separation of parks maintenance from the recreation programming component, the sports tournament recruiting function (performed by Convention and Visitors Bureau staff), the golf course and zoo does not create an environment for coordinated programming efforts, and can sometimes create issues regarding priority of maintenance, need for specialized care at certain facilities and response to specific needs with respect recreation programs and City goals. This type of organization structure creates an environment where each group operates independently and does not promote cross training or maximize utilization of staff. Overall, this arrangement is very unique when gauged against other agencies analyzed nationally and a more unified approach to the delivery of recreation services is needed.

Proposed Organization and Recommendations

It is recommended that all of the parks and recreation functions, including maintenance, programming functions, special events, golf operations and the zoo, be combined under the Community Services Division. Within the Division will be two major groups: Alexandria Zoo and Parks and Recreation Department. The organization of the Zoo will remain largely the same, with the only change being the realignment from Public Works to Community Services. Both the Zoo Director and the superintendents of the proposed Parks and Recreation Department, which combines parks maintenance and all recreation programming functions, will be overseen by a new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director, who reports to the Community Services Division Director. This new alignment should provide for better communication between agencies and improve internal and external customer service. It should provide for better relationships between sports leagues and the golf operations. Merging parks maintenance with recreation programming will bring a change to the City structure and an opportunity to align tasks and roles within the agency. The proposed organization is shown in Figure 4.3.

In the proposed structure the Community Services Division Director's second-in-command will be the Assistant Director. It is good to have a second-in-command that understands the big picture of the operations and in most public park agencies this person has the title of "Assistant Director" or "Deputy Director." It is recommended that an Assistant Community Services/Parks Director position be established so there is a clear understanding of who the second-in-command is when the Director is out of the office. In addition to the new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director position, a new Grants Coordinator position is recommended for the Community Services Division. This position is needed to provide contract management, seek alternative funding and partners in the community, and to write and coordinate all grant activities. This position would also assist the Division with "Friends of the Parks" groups and the proposed Parks Advisory Board on special activities for fundraising. This position would be overseen by the Community Services Division Director.

As previously noted, the organization of Zoo staff will remain the same, but there will be many changes in the proposed Parks and Recreation Department, as illustrated in Figure 4.4. The Assistant Community Services/Parks Director will have one support staff position: an Administrative Assistant. This position will be created by realigning the current Parks and Recreation Department's Administrative Secretary position under the new Parks and Recreation Department.

Below the Assistant Community Services/Parks Director will be three work groups overseen by superintendents: Recreation and Athletic Programs, Community Programs, and Parks. The roles and responsibilities of these superintendents, as well as the organization of staff below them, are discussed in the following pages.

Recreation Programs

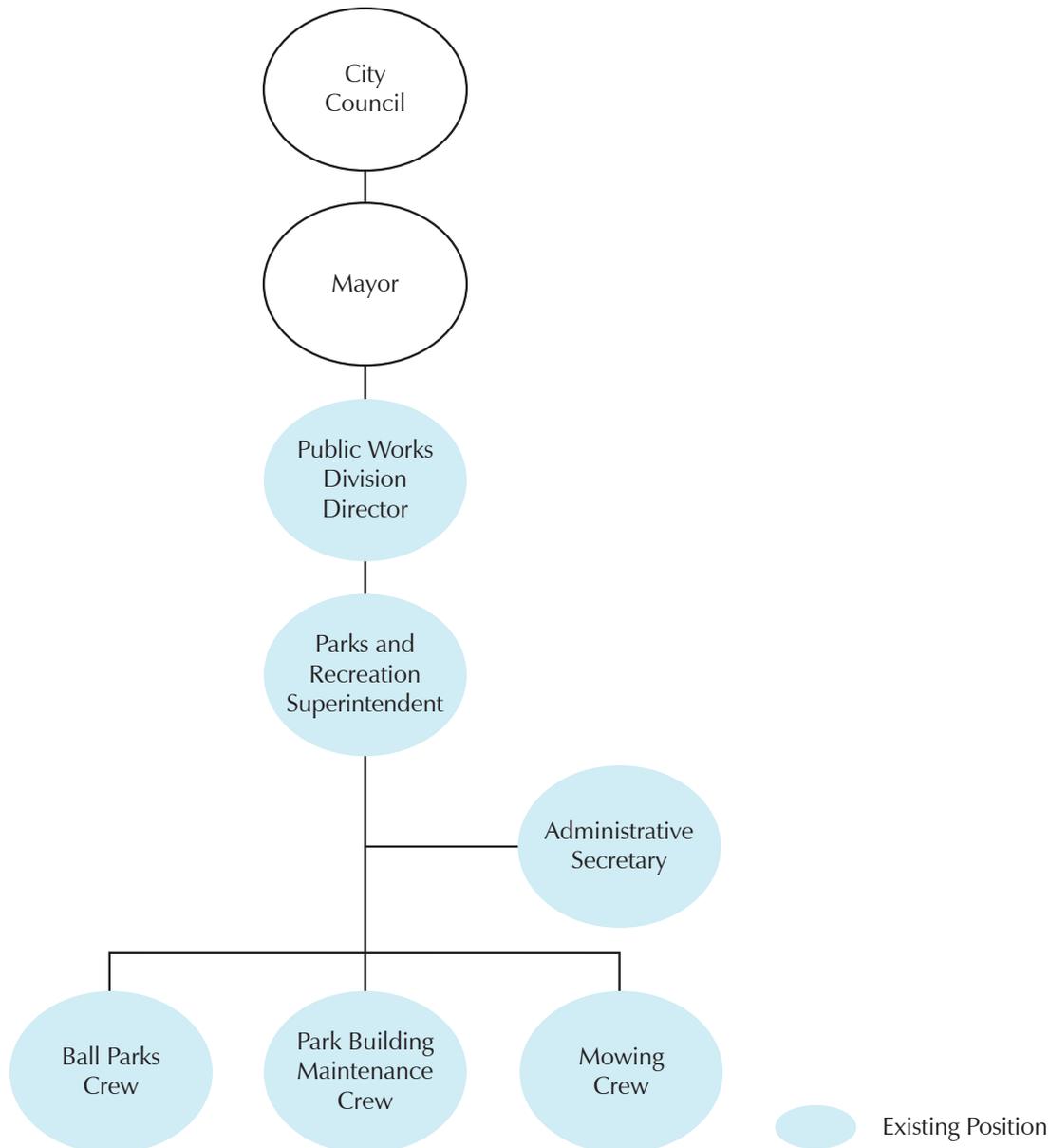
Recreation and athletics are very popular in Alexandria. These areas need better management and programming in order to provide equity in the types of programs offered, as well as where programs should occur. The planning team recommends that a Recreation Programs work group, as illustrated in Figure 4.5, be established to provide this management.

Athletics Supervisor

The proposed Athletics Supervisor position will provide overall management of sports programs within the City. This management will include revision of all of the City's agreements with affiliated sports leagues to ensure a true partnership. The current subsidy that the City is providing to the youth

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 4.2: Existing Parks and Recreation Department Organization



sports organizations needs to be discontinued and these funds need to be used by the City to fund staff positions and the operations of youth sports programs recommended by this plan. The Athletics Supervisor will work with the leagues to ensure that the City's level of play goals are met and that proper coaches certifications and background checks are provided on an annual basis. This is necessary to protect the City against potential legal claims in the event of misconduct by volunteers who operate the programs.

In addition, the Athletics Supervisor will develop and maintain schedules for leagues to provide activities. A similar duty will be to work with the proposed Sports and Marketing Manager to schedule special athletic events that occur in City parks and fields. Finally, this new Athletics Supervisor will act as the City's liaison with the local school athletic departments with respect to joint use of school and park facilities and special tournament events operated on park facilities by the school system.

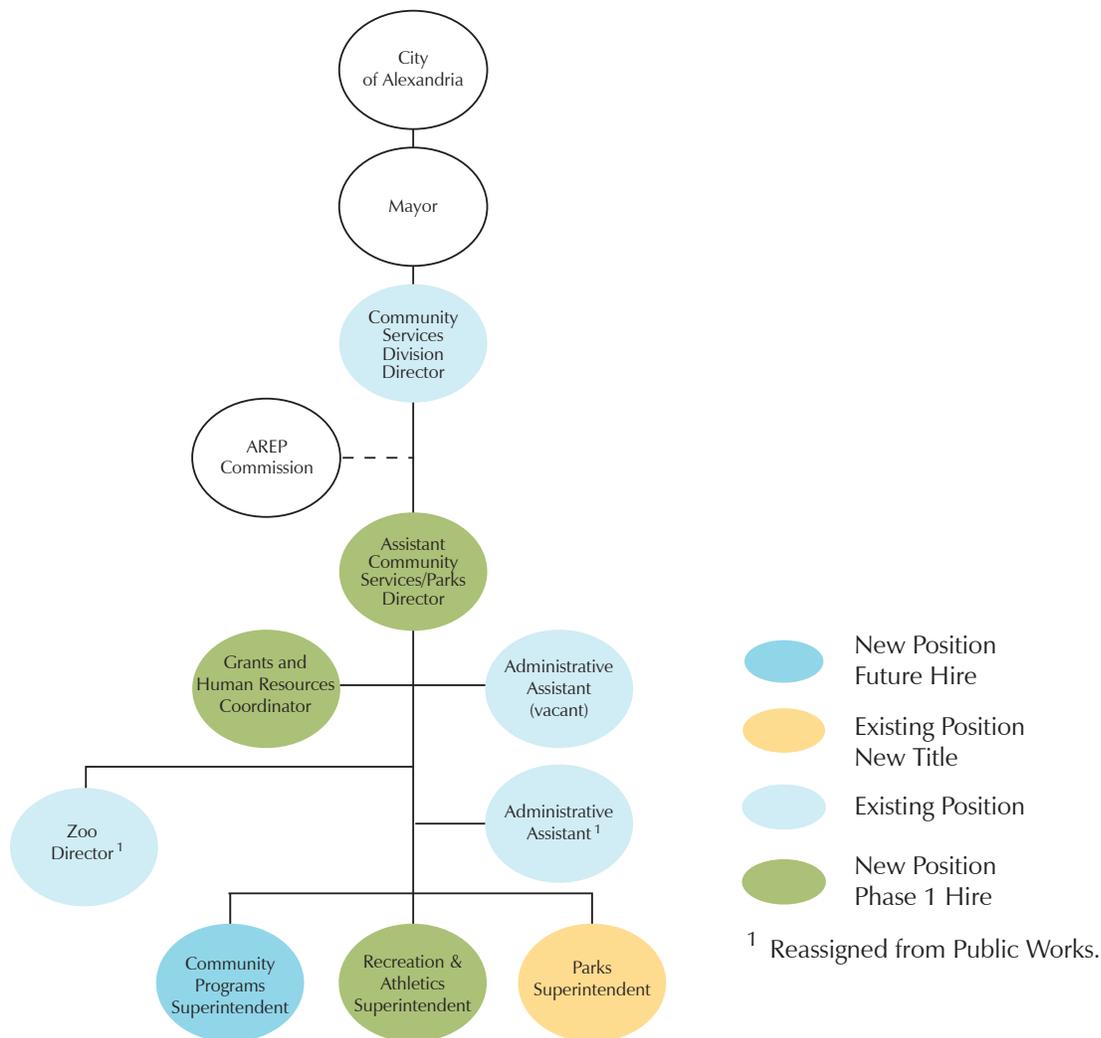
SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

The City has made major financial investments in park infrastructure and the responsibility for oversight and management of these resources should not be delegated to volunteer youth associations. In order to maximize the revenue that is generated at these facilities, the City should have the primary oversight role in scheduling and managing all tournaments held at City park facilities.

Centers Program Supervisor

Community centers throughout the city are not operated in an efficient manner. Their hours are not consistent, the level of trained staff is not consistent with other communities we have studied and the amount of activities provided could be enhanced. A Centers Program Supervisor position is proposed in order to better align what programs are being provided, how staff is structured in the centers and what roles the centers should provide in the community. For example, the City may want to have one center focus on seniors and adult fitness opportunities and have another center promote arts and crafts. It allows for centers to not compete against each other and it provides exposure to all the community centers that Alexandria offers.

Figure 4.3: Proposed Community Services Division Organization



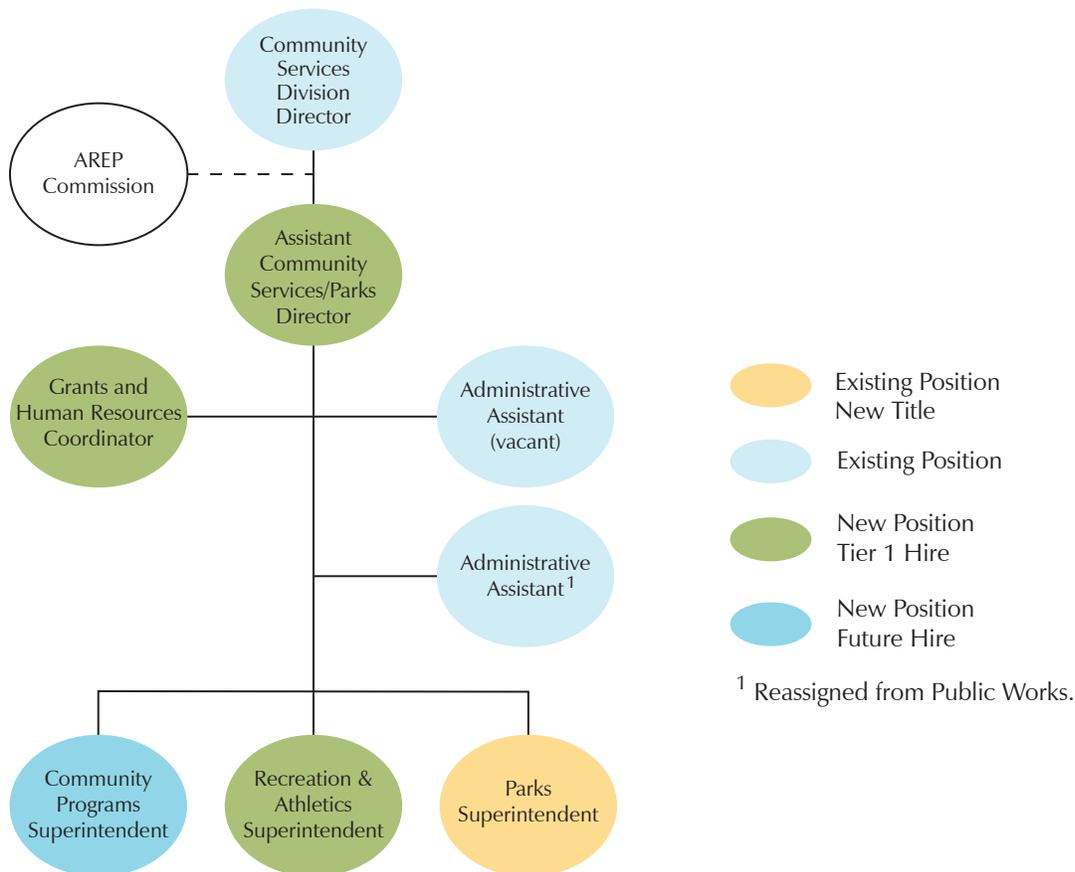
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Coordinators and Attendants

Below the supervisors there would be a level of staff referred to as “coordinators” and “attendants” who are the front line staff overseeing the operations of programs in the field. As the City expands athletic programs beyond the basic youth sport offerings that are currently provided by volunteer groups, an Athletics Coordinator would be needed under the Athletics Supervisor to ensure that programs are being implemented. The Athletics Coordinator would be responsible for visiting programs, making sure officials and other contract staff are fulfilling their duties, seeing that programs are running smoothly and reporting back to the Athletics Supervisor when there are program or maintenance issues that are impacting the delivery of programs. They will also work with the Athletics Supervisor during coaches’ clinics, program registration and in overseeing special tournament events sponsored by City. The Athletics Supervisor may also assign the coordinators other duties as he/she feels the need.

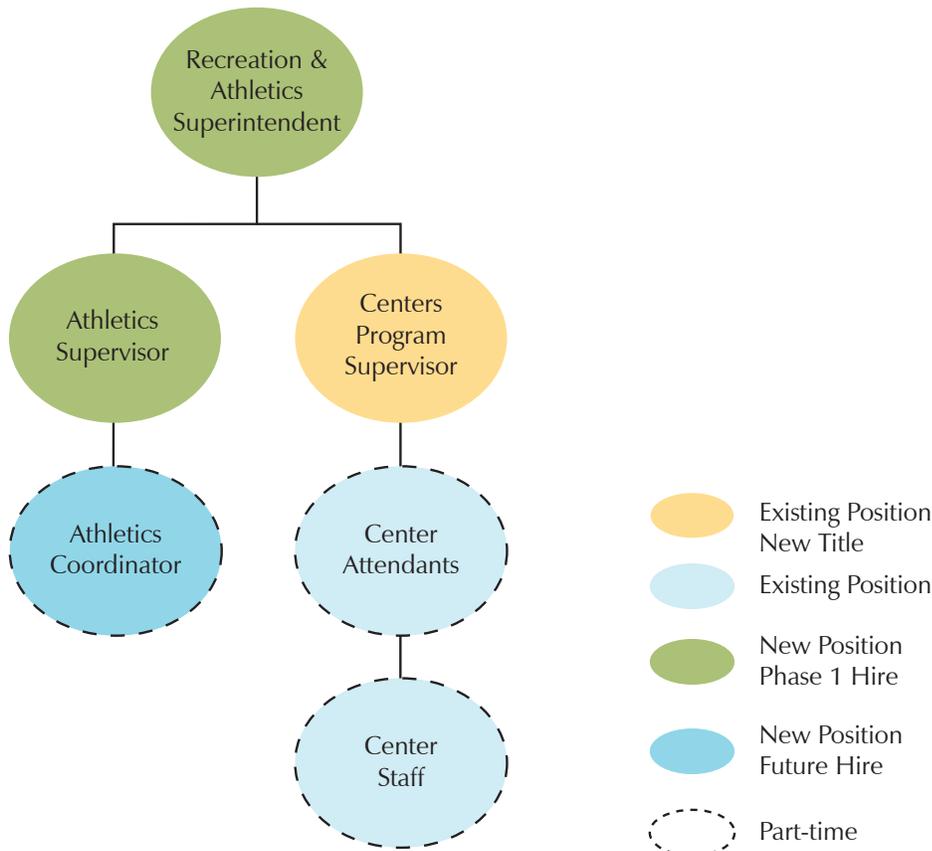
The Centers Program Supervisor will hire recreation center support staff that will be located in each center. The Center Attendants will be full- or part-time staff who oversee the centers where they work. They will take up funds, open and close the centers and provide managerial control of the center when they are open. It is the Center Attendants’ job to see that the rules of the center are followed and provide disciplinary action when the rules of the center are violated. They will also report back to the recreation programming staff of the department concerning requests for new or expanded programs at their center. They will be supported with part-time staff as the hours of operations at each mandate.

Figure 4.4: Proposed Parks and Recreation Department Organization



SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 4.5: Proposed Recreation Programs Organization



A major staffing change will be required if the proposed community center and aquatics complex recommended in Section 7 is implemented. This will require the addition of full-time staff to operate the center. Figure 4.6 illustrates the typical level of staffing that is required for a major community recreation center with an aquatics component.

Revenue Centers

The need to generate revenue as an agency has not been a primary focus of the City. Recent economic impacts to property and sales tax collections have made it necessary to look at how agencies are subsidized and whether there are areas that could allow for increased revenues.

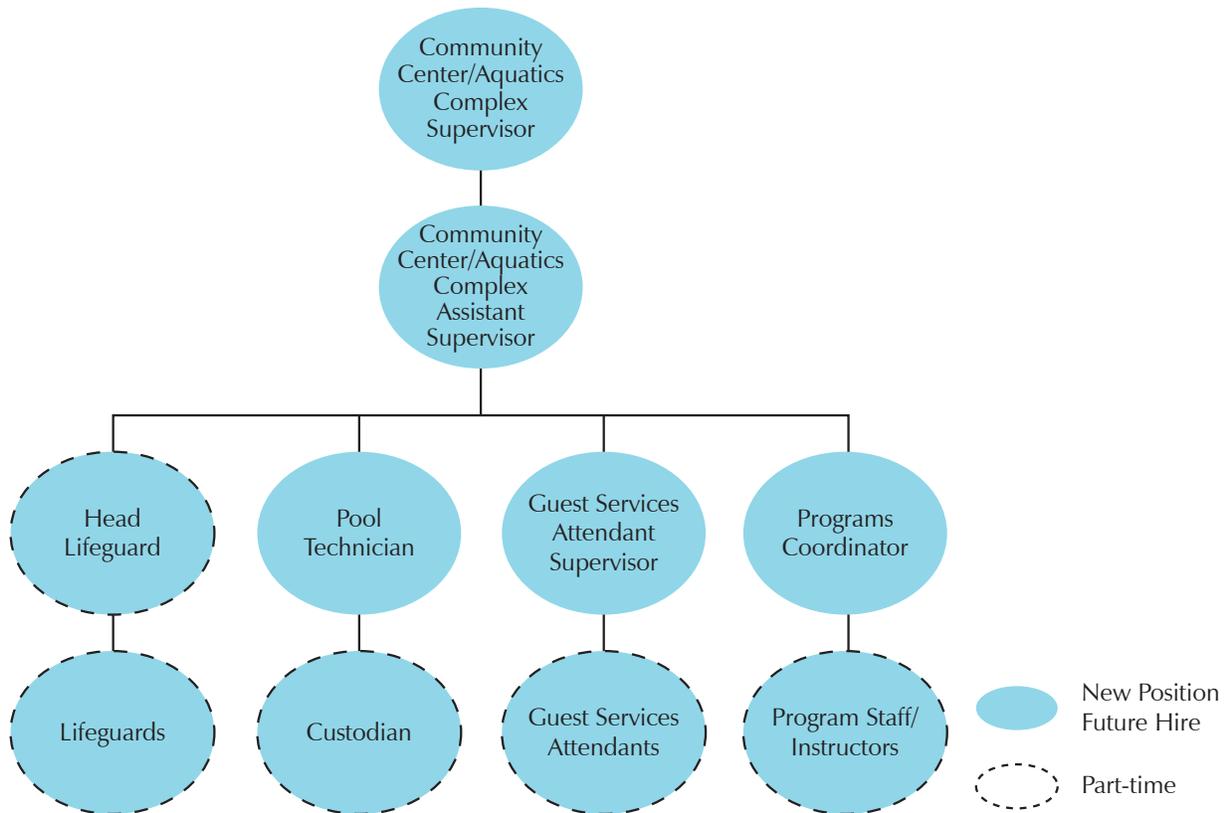
In addition to special events and tournaments, the proposed Parks and Recreation Department should look at three areas as major opportunities to generate revenue: program fees, golf operations and facility rentals. A new Revenue Centers Manager position is recommended to focus on generating funds to offset these two operations areas and to review existing agreements to ensure that the City is capturing sufficient revenues and managing expenses.

Parks Maintenance

Parks maintenance staff, currently located in the Public Works Division, will transfer over to the new Parks and Recreation Department in the Community Services Division. Meetings with staff and City leaders identified that this new alignment is necessary for the City to move forward and provide better services specifically geared toward parks, recreation facilities, fields, trails and waterways.

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Figure 4.6: Proposed Community Recreation/ Aquatics Center Staffing



The Parks Maintenance work group will be supervised by a Parks Superintendent. This individual should have extensive experience in managing and maintaining parks, recreation areas and sports fields. He/she will be responsible for scheduling fields for both games and maintenance. This individual will work closely with the other superintendents to ensure that adequate communication is occurring between groups.

Larger facilities, like Johnny Downs Sports Complex, should have dedicated site-based personnel to maintain the facility. The current practice of having the golf course maintenance staff maintain the turf is working well and should be continued. However, a site-based crew during the peak use period to maintain the infields, provide trash collection, restroom cleaning, and general maintenance and upkeep of the facility is recommended. Less developed community parks and smaller parks should be maintained by roving crews or contracted out as needed.

The Parks Superintendent should consider creating parks maintenance districts within the City. For example, there may be a "Downtown Crew" that maintains grounds in the urban core and there may be a "North Loop Crew" that maintains parks north of Highway 28 (Coliseum Boulevard) and outside of MacArthur Drive. Each crew, site-based and roving, will be made up of a Crew Leader who oversees Equipment Operators and Maintenance Workers.

After reviewing the recommendations of this plan, the Parks Superintendent should evaluate how he/she feels it will be most efficient to utilize the current staff resources to provide balanced maintenance throughout the system. The goal should be to maximize maintenance through proper planning, staff allocations and equipment purchases, and through contracting out special needs to minimize the number of full-time maintenance staff that is required to do the job properly and efficiently.

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Figure 4.7: Proposed Parks Maintenance Organization

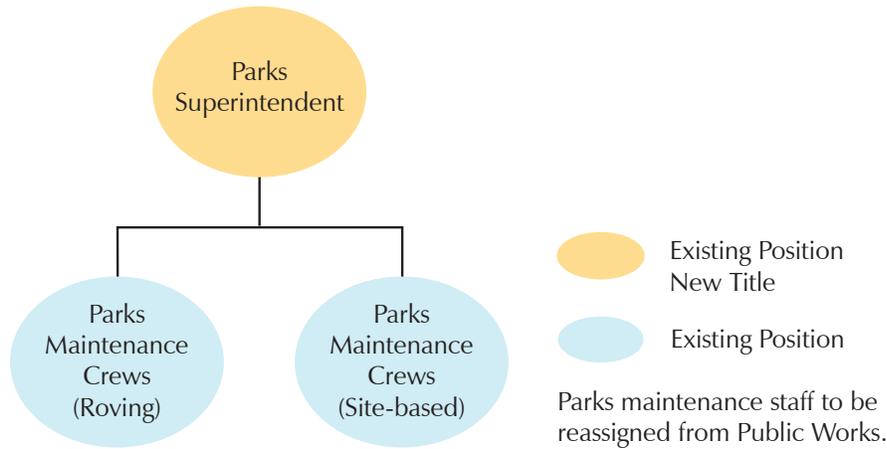


Figure 4.7 illustrates the proposed organizational structure of the Parks Maintenance work group.

Links on the Bayou

A current area that needs review is operation of the Links on the Bayou golf course. The course is currently managed by an outside concessionaire. This group is responsible for course operations, maintenance of the Johnny Downs Sports Complex, and managing food and beverage and the pro shop. A review of financial records and the agreement with the concessionaire shows that the course appears to be underperforming. The concessionaire is receiving \$130,000 annually to manage both the golf course and the Johnny Downs Sports Complex. The pro shop collects and keeps driving range revenue as well as merchandise sales. In addition, it appears that the City is also paying for maintenance of these facilities including all utilities, staff cost and equipment purchases.

As with many of the City's Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs) and service agreements with contractors, this contract tends to heavily favor the concessionaire. The proposed Revenue Centers Manager should work to amend this agreement with the current concessionaire and create a balance that gives the City more of a benefit. Another option the City should consider is self-management of the course. We recently completed a master plan for the Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky, Division of Parks and Recreation, which operates five municipal golf courses. Their golf operations manager, who is a full-time staff member, oversees all of these courses and his salary is less than half of the current golf management contract. The Division staffs and maintains all the courses in-house; this is equivalent to the current arrangement in Alexandria because the City is paying all the operations costs and equipment costs. The City could take over management of the course, keep the current staff and transition into full course management without most citizens even knowing there was a change. This could result in a savings of \$50,000 to \$75,000 annually for the City, depending on the salary established for a golf course manager position.

Bringhurst Golf Course

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the management of Bringhurst Golf Course. The course, located in City Park along Masonic Drive, recently went through a renovation. City staff informed the planning team that the course is free to use. We are not aware of this type of arrangement in any other parks and recreation department. While the course is small, it does offer a similar golf experience to that found at other par 3 executive courses. The City should institute a pay-to-play policy at this course and have the proposed golf manager (as described in previous paragraph) oversee operations of this

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course. The location of this course makes it an ideal site for youth golf training programs and senior golf outings. All fees generated at the course can then be used to offset the maintenance needs, or reinvested in additional improvements at the course.

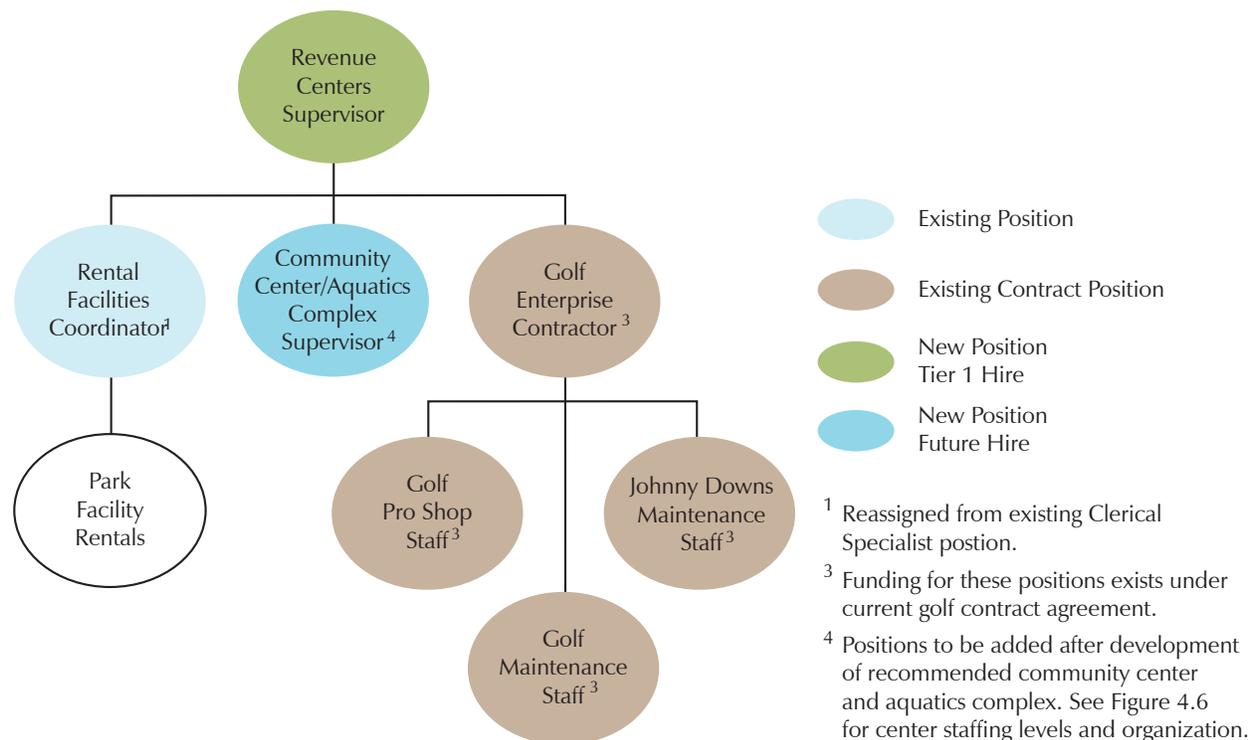
Rentals

The parks system has an abundance of picnic areas, meetings spaces and shelters. The current provision of reserving facilities within the City is confusing for both internal and external customers. Currently, rental facilities are booked through the City Council office, Public Works Division, Community Services Division, and in some cases through the staff located at a particular facility. There is not a single contact through which to reserve and rent facilities, and most outdoor spaces are on a first-come/first-serve basis. While it is common that a center with full-time staff will oversee rentals of their facility, having so many different people oversee rentals of pavilions, the amphitheater and community buildings is not conducive to customer service or an efficient use of staff time.

The need to have a system that is more customer-friendly is apparent and, through this move, the City could collect fees from renting facilities that are currently going uncollected due to the confusion over who rents and oversees the various facilities. We propose a new Rental Facilities Supervisor position that would oversee reserving shelters, community centers without full-time staff and other grounds in City parks. The sports field rentals would not fall under this staff person, but would instead be the responsibility of the proposed Sports and Marketing Manager. This individual would work with the Parks Maintenance work group to ensure that facilities are cleaned and ready for use when reserved. The planning team recommends to reassign the current Clerical Specialist position, which currently handles some of the rentals, as the new Rental Facilities Supervisor.

The proposed Revenue Centers work group organization is shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Proposed Revenue Centers Organization



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Community Programs

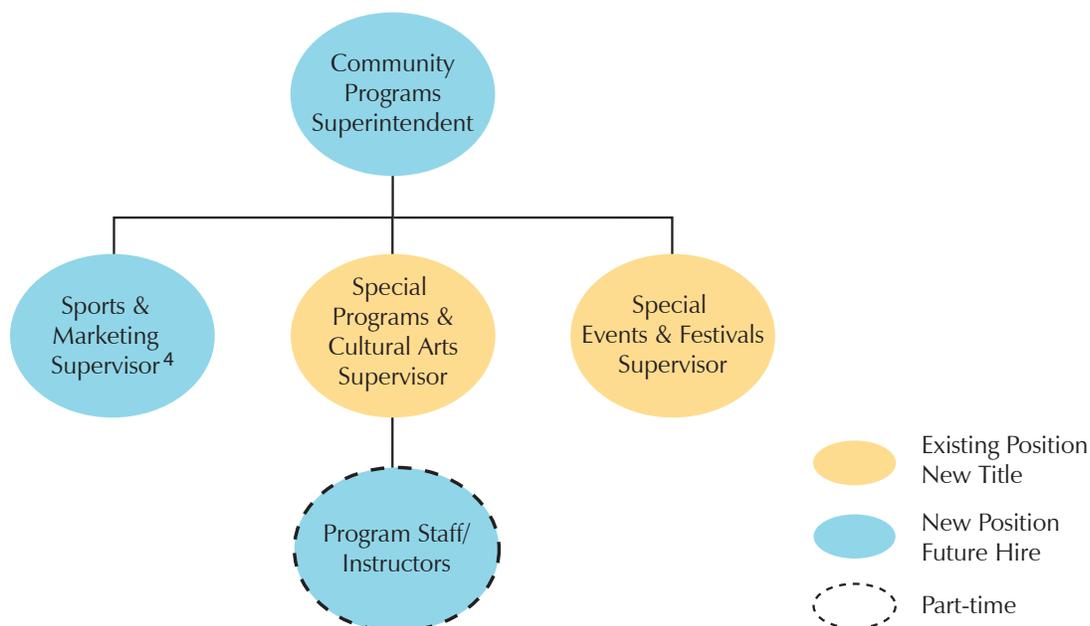
In conjunction with the numerous sporting events that occur throughout the year, the city also hosts many festivals and special events. Quein' on the Red and the Mardi Gras parades, for example, draw tens of thousands to the city annually. Most of these events are promoted by the City, CVB and other local groups. Supporting these events takes a tremendous effort from City staff, from helping with promotion to facilitating events on City grounds. Furthermore, the Community Services Division often struggles to find volunteers to assist with events. With the development of a true parks and recreation department there will be more support staff to work with the current staff to develop and institute special events.

The Division also provides special programs that are not necessarily recreation-related activities. From tax assistance to senior programs, the Community Services Division provides many options to help residents through unique programs.

In addition to special events, the City is fortunate to have an abundance of cultural arts providers within the city and its satellite areas. Some of these providers receive support from the City through Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs). The City currently gives \$50,000 to the Arts Council of Louisiana, but overall partnering with the cultural arts community appears to be limited at best. The arts provide a great benefit to the community and its exposure should be enhanced. In addition, special programs could be advanced through better outreach and partnerships.

It is recommended that the City create a Community Programs Superintendent position as one of the three superintendent positions in the new Parks and Recreation Department. This individual would concentrate efforts on non-athletic recreation services such as community events, special recreation programs and growing the cultural arts program. Two supervisor positions are recommended beneath the Superintendent: a Special Programs and Cultural Arts Supervisor, and a Special Events and Festivals Supervisor. These individuals will be charged with coordinating all cultural arts events and special programs, events and festivals within the City, working with the proposed Grants Coordinator to write and secure grants that sustain arts in the community, and integrate cultural arts, technical programs and

Figure 4.9: Proposed Community Programs Organization



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special activities into programming opportunities within parks and recreation. Figure 4.9 illustrates the proposed organization of this section.

Sports and Marketing

The prominence of sports and athletics in Alexandria cannot be understated. The City has played host to a variety of youth and intercollegiate events. Currently, the Community Services Division plays an ancillary role in seeking, promoting and staging these revenue-generating activities.

The reorganization recommendations include creating a new Sports and Marketing work group within the proposed Parks and Recreation Department. This group would be overseen by a new Sports and Marketing Supervisor who will work to promote the City as a sports venue for tournaments and events. In addition, this group would coordinate with the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority (GAEDA) and the Alexandria-Pineville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to attract high caliber events to Alexandria. The CVB works closely with the City to attract events and a portion of the CVB's budget comes from the City and other sources. A position within the CVB is responsible for public relations and marketing the area for events. This individual is also charged with attracting events not only to Alexandria, but to neighboring Pineville as well.

It is recommended that the City create a position for the marketing of its own sports programs. The new Sports and Marketing Supervisor will work to promote four venues for the City:

- Johnny Downs Sports Complex
- City Park Tennis Center
- Links on the Bayou
- Future Competition Pool

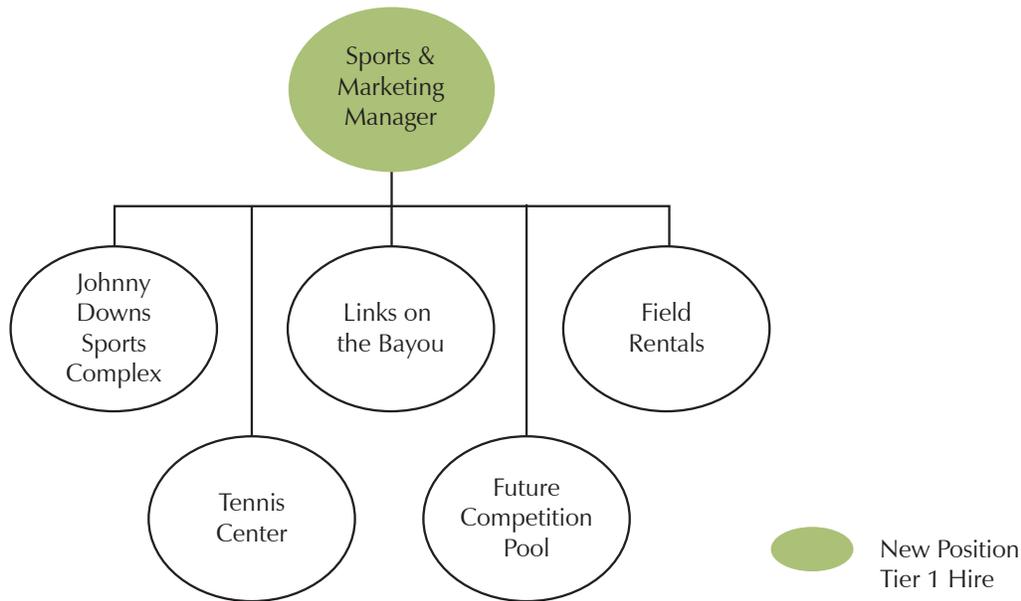
It will be necessary for the Sports and Marketing Supervisor to work with the Athletics Supervisor, Parks Maintenance Superintendent and the Golf Enterprise Contractor to ensure that local program schedules do not conflict with special tournaments and events and that maintenance is provided. The Sports and Marketing Supervisor must also create a marketing package that "bundles" events and facilities. For example, instead of having one company sponsor an event like the SWAC Tennis Tournament, bundling an annual sponsorship package of four events at a higher rate and having a banner sponsor for the year would provide this company more exposure and alleviate approaching the same company constantly through the year.

The City is fortunate to have tournament facilities of this type along with a good hotel room base and regional airport. Leveraging these assets and working with partners should secure high-visitor events that would utilize retail shops and restaurants; boosting tax revenues for the area. Figure 4.10 illustrates the organization for this section.

One potential opportunity of the City to consider is an expanded role with SWAC. The City has the facilities to be the host of the conference's annual golf championship, men's baseball tournament and women's softball, to mention only a few of the championships. Exploring a long-term commitment from the conference to let Alexandria serve as the host site for these championships could impact future facility development such as 50 meter indoor pool, gymnasium space to host volleyball or other championships, renovation of the old civic auditorium and the creation of a basketball venue. Long-range commitments such as these have the potential to be a major economic stimulus and provide year-round recreation opportunities for the City.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 4.10: Proposed Sports and Marketing Organization



Alexandria Zoo

In addition to the formation of a new Parks and Recreation Department within the Community Services Division, other activities and cost centers will need to be adjusted to better serve Alexandria residents and guests. The Alexandria Zoo is currently operating under the Public Works Division. The Zoo Director reports to the Public Works Director. The Zoo also has a board that provides support to the Zoo Director and staff in fundraising, staffing and construction.

The reporting structure of the Zoo should realign with the Director reporting to the Assistant Community Services/Parks Director. In addition, greater emphasis should be placed on generating revenue from sources other than City subsidy.

A review of the existing budget reveals that the Zoo is currently subsidized approximately 84% through City funds. Only 9% of the funds come from gate revenues and other fees collected. The Community Services Division needs to review whether fees should be increased in order to lessen the subsidy. The Division should also work with the Friends of the Alexandria Zoo (FOTAZ), who have raised major funds in the past, to increase funds generated outside of admission fees to increase the Zoo's endowment and other funds to provide greater support for operations and capital.

Division Leadership

As stated earlier, the director position for the Community Services Division is a Mayoral appointee, as is the case with other divisions. This structure allows the Mayor to select leadership that he or she chooses. This is sometimes a benefit when the division head is aligned with the Mayor's vision and goals.

Sometimes issues arise with a lack of continuity when administrations change. It normally takes time for a division head to "learn" what the agency provides in services, programs and operations. If Mayors change, the division administration can change and staff can become discouraged when goals, objectives and visions differ between administrations.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

The future leader of the combined parks and recreation agency should not be an appointee. While there are benefits to a Mayor selecting his/her division leader, the need to have consistent leadership in such a visible agency is recommended. This would also allow staff to have a director that can learn the system and provide the management needed for all staff.

The Assistant Community Services/Parks Director should be the visionary leader for the agency. This person needs to be out in front “telling the story” of the benefits of parks and recreation, not only in the areas of quality of life, but in the areas of economic benefit as well. Sports, cultural arts and special events draw people from around the region to Alexandria, creating lodging stays and other revenue generation (restaurants, sporting goods, etc.). For example, From July 9 through 14, 2007, Park City, Utah, hosted the Premier Resorts Triple Crown Fast Pitch World Series. An estimated 95 teams from across the West participated in this single event. Using an economic impact model created by the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and adjusted down to fifty teams due to elimination as the tournament proceeds, it is estimated that approximately \$780,000 of direct economic impact was generated during this five-day tournament.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

An area of note is a parks and recreation advisory board. Interviews indicate that there is currently an advisory group called the Alexandria Recreation and Education Programming (AREP) Commission. This group is made of 13 members who act as an advisory committee, with no financial input. The Mayor submits names to participate in the AREP Commission and Council ratifies the selection. Interviews also indicate that the AREP Commission has a hard time with participation and getting a quorum. It is recommended that the City abolish this current board and create new criteria for selection to the AREP Commission. This group should also be active as advocates of the agency, telling people of the benefits of parks, recreation and open space. It is recommended that each City Councilman have one appointee to the new advisory board and that the Mayor appoint one member. New board bylaws and policies should be drafted including a provision that if board members have two consecutive absences they be replaced. Attendance and participation in board activities is critical if the board is to be a strong support group for staff.

Selection Criteria for Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members

An advisory board needs to be supportive of a department’s goals and objectives and reflect the citizenry of the district it serves. Committee members should be active in local visioning and participate in larger regional parks, recreation and open space objectives. For example, if a regional trail system was proposed to link Alexandria with neighboring communities, advisory board members should provide resolutions of support for this venture, if deemed feasible, and promote legislation that would be needed at the State Capitol.

SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Job Descriptions for New Positions

The following recommendations provide education and experience requirements for the new positions recommended throughout this section.

Assistant Community Services/Parks Director

Bachelor's degree in recreation administration or a closely related field, and minimum of 10 years of experience in professional parks and recreation work, including experience in a supervisory capacity over personnel, finances and facility planning for a minimum of three years, or any equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required skills, knowledge and abilities. Must be a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) and must maintain certification throughout their employment by the county.

Grants and Human Resources Coordinator

Bachelor's degree in finance, public administration or related field required. Two to three years of experience in grant writing is required, preferably in parks and recreation or other government agency; or any equivalent combination of training and experience, which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities. Certification in grants management through a nationally recognized agency is also recommended.

Parks and Recreation Superintendents

All superintendents in the newly formed Parks and Recreation Department, except the Parks Maintenance Superintendent, will have the same education requirements as follows: bachelor's degree in recreation, therapeutics, physical education or a related field, and five years of experience in recreation work, or any equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required skills, knowledge and abilities. Possession of a "Certified Parks and Recreation Professional" certification is preferred. In addition to the aforementioned requirements, the managers being hired should have a focus area in the activities that they will manage.

Parks Maintenance Superintendent

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a concentration in parks and recreation management, landscape architecture, horticulture, golf course management or related field. Requires seven to ten years of progressive experience in professional parks and recreation maintenance work, including experience in a supervisory capacity, finances and facility planning, or any equivalent combination of training and experience that provides the required skills, knowledge and abilities.

Either possesses -- or obtains within one year of employment -- a Certified Playground Safety Instructor (CPSI) and Public Operator Pesticide Applicator's License certification.

Athletics Supervisor Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a concentration in parks and recreation management, physical education or related field. Requires three to five years of progressive experience in professional parks and recreation programming, including experience in a supervisory capacity, finances and athletic programming planning, or any equivalent combination of training and experience that provides the required skills, knowledge and abilities.

Revenue Centers Supervisor

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a concentration in parks and recreation management, physical education or related field. Requires three to five years of progressive experience in professional parks and recreation programming, including experience in a supervisory capacity, finances and recreation programming and planning, or any equivalent combination of training and experience that provides the required skills, knowledge and abilities.

Recommendations Summary

The following implementation priorities are recommended in the area of staff organization and operations of the proposed Parks and Recreation Department within the Community Services Division.

Tier One Organizational Priorities (to be completed in the first 24 months)

- Create a new Parks and Recreation Department under the Community Services Division by merging parks maintenance and recreation programming into one group (see Figure 4.11)
- Realign the Alexandria Zoo under the Community Services Division
- Develop a selection committee to hire a new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director
- Institute the staff realignments recommended by this master plan after the new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director is in place
- Allow the new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director to hire the new Athletics Supervisor and Revenue Centers Supervisors in the 2010-11 budget year
- Allow the new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director to hire the Grants and Human Resources Coordinator and Athletics Supervisor in 2011-12 budget year
- Reassign the current Clerical Specialist position, which works between the Community Services and Public Works Divisions, as the new Rental Facilities Coordinator position
- Develop new AREP Commission (parks and recreation advisory board) policies and bylaws and appoint new board members
- Complete the transition in golf operations management
- Review community center staff and implement new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director recommendations
- Institute recommended changes for park maintenance activities to respond to new parks and park renovation projects

Tier Two Organizational Priorities (to be completed in months 25-60)

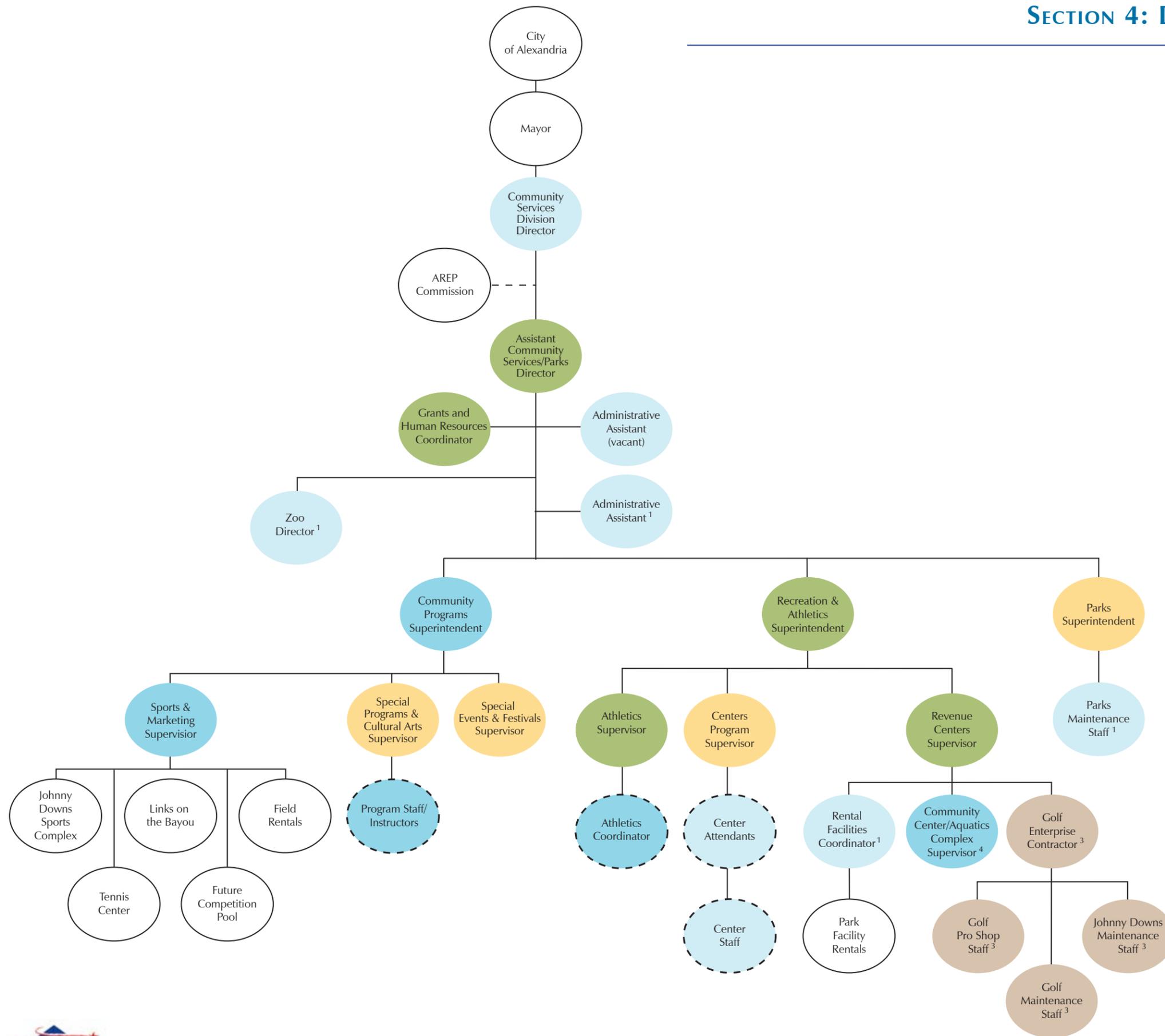
- Continue to expand staff based on new facility development
- Continue to add programming and maintenance staff at the direction of the new Assistant Community Services/Parks Director
- Expand tournament and special events programming as an economic stimulus for the city

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SECTION 4: DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

Figure 4.11: Proposed Community Services Division Organization



- Existing Position
New Title
- Existing Position
- Existing Contract Position
- New Position
Tier 1 Hire
- New Position
Future Hire
- Part-time

¹ Reassigned from Public Works.
² Reassigned from existing Clerical Specialist position.
³ Funding for these positions exists under current golf contract agreement.
⁴ Positions to be added after development of recommended community center and aquatics complex. See Figure 4.6 for center staffing levels and organization.

SECTION 5: PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT



SECTION 5

PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT

To truly function as a modern parks and recreation agency, there has to be a commitment to the recreation side. With a good balance of both athletic and non-athletic offerings, programming greatly benefits the people of the community by enhancing their quality of life. Likewise, a diversified program offering creates the opportunity to include citizens who may never have participated in recreation programs before. Unlike most other government departments, parks and recreation staff engage and interact with the public on a daily basis at a more personal level. Programming gets citizens to interact with each other and, depending on the type of program, it can also promote teamwork and self-improvement.

In Alexandria, the Community Services Division is the primary City agency responsible for providing recreation programs, activities and events to citizens. Currently, their program mix includes youth, enrichment and education programs, several special events and concerts, and other programs through partnerships and agreements. Having reviewed the program opportunities, constraints faced by the Division, community concerns and desires, and staff opinions on programs, we have identified several issues and opportunities and provided recommendations on future programming efforts.

Community Programming Benefits

A well-rounded and diverse parks and recreation department provides many benefits to the community it serves. As discussed in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association publication, "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines," the four categories of benefits are personal, economic, social and environmental. Each benefit is consequential to the community and has specific rewards.

- **Personal benefits** of a comprehensive delivery system include: a full and meaningful life, good health, stress management, self-esteem, positive self-image, a balanced life, achieving full potential, gaining life satisfaction, human development, positive lifestyle choices and improved quality of life.
- **Economic benefits** include: preventive health care, a productive work force, big economic returns on small investments, business relocation and expansion, reduction in high-cost vandalism and criminal activity, tourism growth and environmental investments that pay for themselves.
- **Social benefits** include: building strong communities; reducing alienation, loneliness and anti-social behavior; promoting ethnic and cultural harmony; building strong families; increasing opportunity for community involvement, shared management and ownership of resources; and providing a foundation for community pride.
- **Environmental benefits** include: environmental health, environmental protection and rehabilitation, environmental education, environmental investment, increasing property values and insurance for a continuing healthy environmental future.

Community Services Division Programs

The Community Services Division offers programs in three basic categories: special events, community outreach and youth programs. These programs are offered in parks and facilities throughout the city and cover all age groups. In addition to the Division's programs that are self-directed, numerous community groups are offering fee-based programs through government funding (e.g. grants), volunteer raised funds and through funding they receive from the City through Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs). Some of these programs include youth baseball and softball programs, soccer programs, basketball programs and cultural arts activities. These are recreation programs that most communities with a traditional parks and recreation department would consider core programs. Other cooperative programs include partial funding of special events, special swimming programs for low income residents and some senior activities.

The self directed programs tend to be based out of the numerous small community centers that are located throughout the city. These programs are primarily after-school and summer activity programs, and providing staff at the Frank O. Hunter gym for open play in the gym. There are some programs offered that are outside the normal recreation field in the area of self help and life skills that are provided under the heading of community programs. The Zoo, while not officially a parks and recreation agency at this time, offers a wide variety of regular and seasonal programs that have a recreation component, as does Links on the Bayou.

Special events are where the Division is most visible in the area of programming. The Division works closely with arts and dance groups to facilitate many special events and promotes these activities, and many others, through the publishing of a quarterly community calendar. The calendar highlights arts and cultural events, community music programs, recreation activities, information about athletic leagues, all Division programming and other events. The City publishes the calendar free of charge and includes all activities that are self-reported to it for inclusion in the calendar. The calendar is also posted on the City website. This is an excellent example of how the City reaches out to the citizens of the community to help inform them of events and activities.

The Division also either facilitates or is an active partner in many of the large special events in the city, including Que'in on the Red, the Mardi Gras parades and a variety of smaller music events such as the Brown Bag Outdoor Concert Series, which are spring time concerts provided downtown during lunch. A similar outdoor concert series is offered in the summer on Friday evenings. These are excellent community programs that the City should continue to develop and expand

Program Analysis

Outside the delivery of youth sports through the CEAs, it is clear there is a need to expand recreation programs and opportunities in Alexandria. In the community survey, 59% of the respondents said park programming is average or below average. This was consistent with the comments from the public input meetings that indicated needs for aquatics programs, senior programs, more adult programs and more diversity of programs throughout the city. This, coupled with the survey response that indicated by a 79% score that "Quality parks and recreation facilities are important to attracting and maintaining new business in Alexandria," implies that there is tremendous opportunity for growth and improvement in park programming and facility development within the city.

The strongest single programming unit of the City is the Alexandria Zoo. The zoo offers a variety of recreation programs on a year-round basis. The youth sports leagues appear to be meeting most of the community needs for team sports but there is room for a more inclusive management style within

SECTION 5: PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT

these programs. There is almost a total absence of adult team sports activities, which is an area with great potential for growth. The few senior programs offered are limited by space availability and access by citizens.

All of these factors are indicative of the lack of adequate staff to operate a modern recreation department. The only way that the City will be able to begin to meet the expectations of residents is to form a full-time parks and recreation department that is not just a maintenance group, but a department that is headed by a parks and recreation professional who is trained in the delivery of community recreation services.

In Louisiana, one does not have to travel far to find a great example of an exemplary parks and recreation agency. B.R.E.C., located in Baton Rouge, is an award-winning parks and recreation provider. They have a full-time staff that directs a full range of recreation services at a very high level. They have received the Gold Medal from the National Parks and Recreation Association, which indicates that within the population category served, the recipient is the best department in the country for that year. In the department's program guide one will find parks and recreation programs for all ages that meet the wide array of program interests of the citizens served.

The current offerings of the Division are executed well, but lack the variety that is needed. There needs to be more instruction programs for adults and more year-round programs that teach special recreation skills both in team and individual settings. There also needs to be more senior activities that reflect the growing mobility of seniors and are not just adult day care programs. For the City's younger citizens there need to be more community activities that are built around holidays and/or special local history themes and more after-school and summer camp programs that teach sports skills as well as other life skills.

One method to begin to better understand what modern public parks and recreation departments provide is to solicit recreation program guides from other departments. This is an easy way to review the type of programs that other departments provide and to see what programs might be appropriate in Alexandria. It also is a good way to determine what facilities will be needed to expand programs and what facilities the City currently has that can be better utilized.

The addition of experienced professional parks and recreation staff will make a tremendous difference during the transition period for the department. The expertise they can bring in developing and implementing programs should allow the City to quickly begin to implement new programs that respond to the public input received during this master planning effort.

Partnerships

The Division's programming is supplemented by partnerships between the Division and other agencies and organizations, and also by other recreation programming providers within the community. The following narrative discusses these partnerships and summarizes their role in providing recreation programs to the community.

Partnership Analysis

The Division currently has agreements with community organizations and agencies, though the formality of these agreements varies. Those existing partnerships include the youth sports providers, civic clubs, arts groups, and other quasi-governmental agencies such as the Convention and Visitor Bureau and SAGE. While the partnerships are good, there is little institutional control that goes along with the agreements to fund these agencies and there is little accountability for how the funds are expended as part of the partnerships. Below are programs and locations of the programs provided through these agreements.

Athletic Associations/Sports Program

- Johnny Downs Complex, Soccer (ages 5-14)
- Johnny Downs Complex, Baseball/Softball (ages 5-14)
- Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex, Baseball/Softball (ages 5-14)
- Big Island, Youth Football, (ages 8-12)
- Frank O. Hunter Gym, Youth Basketball, (ages 8-12)

Cultural Arts Programs

- Alexandria Museum of Art, Sponsor of community arts activities
- River Oaks Arts Center, Art classes and programs for all ages
- T.R.E.E House Children's Museum, Interactive classes and activities for children

Convention and Visitors Bureau

- Johnny Downs Complex, Sports Tournaments
- City Park, SWAC Tennis Championship

Alexandria School System

The Division uses some of the schools' gymnasiums for their winter basketball league, and uses the swimming pool at Peabody Magnet High School during the summer for a special swimming program.

Partnership Recommendations

The purpose of developing CEAs, partnerships, volunteers and collaborations is to promote community involvement in Division activities, increase services offered to the public, reduce the expense of providing services, increase the visibility of the Division, develop a sense of community, create leadership and encourage new resources in the community. For example, to provide for the growing and changing demands of the community, seeking out and utilizing official partnerships, as well as increased volunteer efforts, may help to provide for the community's desires for increased recreation programming.

Athletic Associations

The Division should become more of a facilitating and coordinating partner and less of a financial partner. The Division should be directly responsible for scheduling and use of all City owned and maintained facilities and should receive a percentage of all revenue collected at public facilities. The

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Division should also make sure that all CEAs include a level of background checking and training for coaches that is consistent with the best practices of parks and recreation departments across the country and mandate nationally certified coaches clinics (as opposed to clinics offered by the local leagues). A sample facility use agreement for use between a parks and recreation department and athletic association is provided in the Appendix.

Field Rental Agreements

First and foremost, a standard athletic facility rental agreement form should be developed. At a minimum, there should be provisions within the agreement for the City to recoup their direct expenses for items like lighting/electric bills and any other utilities; maintenance costs for work performed by parks and recreation staff; administrative fees (cost for processing agreements, enforcement, etc.); and impacts on infrastructure (parking, field lighting, fencing, park roads, etc.). At a minimum, the City should charge fees in the following range for use of their ballfields:

- \$125 per field per day for tournaments
- \$200 per field per month for non-affiliated groups renting a field on an ongoing basis
- \$25 per hour per field for lighting
- 20% of all gross concessions sales collected each day of the tournament paid to the City within one business day following the conclusion of the event. Documentation of sales must also be provided or a charge of \$1,000.00 will be added to the required 20% payment
- \$20.00 per hour for each city staff member required to be at the facility during the tournament. Minimum of one city attendant must be present at all times.
- 50% of a gate fees collected and duplicated tickets must be used to provide documentation of gate receipts.
- Any field maintenance equipment, tools or supplies are the responsibility of the renter

All renters who do not have a CEA with the City must pay a \$1,000.00 non-refundable deposit.

Alexandria School System

Of all the areas for potential improved partnerships, this is the area with the greatest potential. The Parks and Recreation Department (in Public Works Division) is in the business of maintaining sports fields and the schools are not. The schools, however, have sports fields that could meet many community needs. With a new Parks and Recreation Director in place (as recommended in Section 4), this is one area where a dialog should be initiated to start new programs, such as a Hershey Track Club that uses school tracks for programming or programming for indoor adult volley ball leagues in school gyms.

Cultural Arts

The current partnerships with the arts providers seem to be working well. The City should continue to expand community art programs both with partners and through self-directed programs at community centers and in the parks.

Alternative Providers

In addition to the Division's partnerships, there are a number of alternative recreation providers in the area, including private instructional facilities (e.g., martial arts, dance, gymnastics, etc.), youth nonprofits, municipal recreation agencies and the local school district. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Boys and Girls Club
- Alexandria YMCA
- Alexandria YWCA
- Private Fitness Clubs
- Local Churches
- Neighborhood/Homeowners Associations
- Golf Courses and Country Clubs (public and private)

All of these providers are fee-based providers and are meeting needs within the community. It is the planning team's feeling that these groups will continue to meet the needs of select clientele who desire the type of programs and facilities they offer and that the facility recommendations of this plan should take these providers into account.

Recreation Trends

Recreation programming must remain flexible to respond to the changing needs of a community. Many factors impact the type of recreation programs desired in a community, including both individual factors and collective community and national factors. These issues are discussed in the following pages.

Population-Based Programming

Youth

Participation in out-of-school activities and programs offers support for youth and working families and benefits the youth socially, emotionally and academically. After-school programs have been proven to decrease juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use, cut smoking and alcohol abuse, and decrease teen pregnancy. Many children prefer team sports such as basketball, soccer and baseball while others prefer individual activities provided in a group setting such as painting, crafts and computer training. Organized, after-school activities, extreme sports, club sports and programs targeted to school-age children could fill the fitness void that is growing wider in schools around the country.

The lack of physical education in schools and the increased sedentary lifestyle of children are leading to a growing number of children on medication for Type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and attention deficit disorder. Several publications have reported this frightening trend; "USA Today" ran a feature article on this topic in November 2008. There is growing concern from medical groups and others across the country that we must teach children to make better lifestyle choices. NRPA is working on several initiatives including "No Child Left Inside" legislation to fund more programs that get children outside and active. Additionally, as education funding for the arts is being cut, parents and youth are looking to park and recreation agencies to fill this gap with enrichment programs that teach skills for life.

Older Adults

Older Americans' leisure time is increasingly being spent doing physical activities, in educational classes, partaking in adventure travel and attending sporting events. These trends may be the result of the fact that for many, retirement is starting earlier than it has in the past. Approximately 70% of the current retired population entered retirement before the age of 65. These new retirees are younger, healthier, and have more wealth to spend for the services they want. These trends may explain the changing demands, nationally, from traditional low-cost social services to more active programming for which older residents are willing to pay. Active seniors are looking for programs that allow them to interact with others from their generation, but at the same time, they do not want programs that are not challenging or fun. Many senior centers now have competitive programs that are age-specific to meet the interest of today's active seniors.

Universal Recreation

Programs, as well as both indoor and outdoor facilities, should strive to be "universally" accessible. The physically and/or mentally challenged population is growing rapidly. Communities should reach out to increase awareness and opportunities for physical activity for individuals who may otherwise be overlooked.

Parks agencies across the country play a major role in providing opportunities for our country's adult special needs population since, once the school age population is passed, there are fewer opportunities for recreation and interaction with the general populous. Investing in park and recreation renovation and updates that make facilities more user-friendly and allow for programming for individuals of all abilities will increase the recreation opportunities for the special needs segment of the community.

Activity-Based Programming

Less Time for Recreation

Americans have less leisure time now than ever before, which has led to changes in recreation patterns. People have less unstructured time after taking care of their daily responsibilities, which means activities are moving toward unstructured, individual and drop-in programs. Participation in structured programmed activities has decreased while boot camps with both indoor and outdoor exercise continue to increase in popularity.

Drop-in Programs

Several parks departments offer many programs on a drop-in basis. The term "drop-in sports" means that no registration is required and no additional fees are applied to the participant. This type of programming allows people to participate in recreation activities without a consistent attendance and monetary commitment.

Extreme Sports and Activities

Participation in recreation has shifted over the past several years, and the demand for "extreme" sports and activities has been on the increase. Sports such as in-line skating, snowboarding and skateboarding are favorites because at least one or more of these activities is possible year-round. Demand for alternative amenities such as climbing walls, BMX tracks and indoor soccer are also on the increase. Many want riskier outdoor recreation opportunities like trail boarding, mountain biking, BMX courses and off-roading with vehicles. One activity in particular that is increasing in popularity nationally is geocaching. Geocaching, a high-tech adventure game that uses GPS technology and clues to locate hidden objects, is merely one of many such innovative mergers of the internet and outdoor recreation.

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Environmental, Outdoor and Nature-based Recreation

In recent years there has been a heightened awareness of environmental issues in the United States and worldwide. Terms like “green” and “sustainable” are being used to describe maintenance and construction practices, development policies, household products and ways of living. These same terms and concepts are being applied to recreation as well, with a focus on environmental and outdoor recreation. The purpose of these programs is to educate the public, foster a sense of environmental stewardship, and get people outdoors and in touch with nature.

Fitness and Obesity

Since Americans are spending less time exercising and participating in outdoor recreation, the number of overweight and obese citizens has increased drastically. In 1990, there were only ten states where less than 10% of the population was obese, and the remaining states had 10-14%. In 2007, not a single state has less than 10% obesity rate. In fact only Colorado has less than 20%. Of the remaining states, 30 have an obesity rate of 25% or greater (“U.S. Obesity Trends 1985–2007,” Center for Disease Control). In Louisiana, 29.8% of the population is considered to be obese. These scary statistics show the need for parks and recreation providers to reevaluate their programs and consider providing programs that teach and show our youth and young adults how to better integrate active and healthy recreation into their daily lives. With more than 50% of U.S. adults not getting enough physical activity to provide health benefits and 25% not doing any activities at all in their leisure time, the expenses of obesity-related health problems continue to grow.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. Adults should do 150 minutes each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., brisk walking) or 75 minutes each week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., jogging or running) or an equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. The number of people who meet these guidelines continues to decrease. In addition, the number of people not meeting the recommended levels of activity, the number who are inactive and the number of people who do not participate in any leisure-time physical activity continues to increase with age.

In 2005, the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA) published an article in their quarterly newsletter titled “Active Living Behaviors: A Fact Sheet on Physical Activity, Obesity and the Role of Parks and Recreation.” The article included results of a survey conducted in municipalities to find out what role parks and recreation has in addressing obesity. The following highlights the survey results:

- Nearly 67% said that physical activity opportunities, such as walking to work or playing in the park, were an important issue to residents in their community.
- Nearly 65% said it is very important for the local government to encourage and provide physical activity opportunities.
- Overall, respondents agreed that local parks and recreation departments should take the leading role in developing a community conducive to active living.
- Many of the departments are already supporting recreational programs that encourage active living in their community.
- 67% of respondents said that the primary barrier facing communities in promoting active living behaviors is lack of funding, staff or resources.

The article also defines “active living” as a way of life that integrates 30 minutes of physical activity into daily routines. This can be accomplished in many ways, such as walking or bicycling to work or school, playing in the park, utilizing greenways or working in the yard. The development of a greenway system, adding trails in existing parks, and providing more health fitness programs for all ages are critical to addressing this health crisis.

Program Ideas from Other Communities

Across the country, parks and recreation departments are offering programs that meet the needs of the diverse populations they serve. These populations include singles and families, children, teens, adults, and those with special interests, needs and abilities. A look at what other departments are doing across the country reveals that many are addressing the trends discussed above and maximizing the recreation opportunities for their communities.

Some of these recreation programming trends may be similar to what is currently offered in Alexandria, but they may also offer some ideas for the development of new programs. In developing a diverse recreation program, the Community Services Division must be aware of the changing interests, needs and demands of the community. Providing a wide range of opportunities will engage more of the community in recreation.

Special Events

Every community has different reasons to celebrate, but some events are universal and can be shared by all communities. In the City of Roswell, Georgia, there is a Kids' Dog Show, where children ages 5 to 15 can show off their dogs for a variety of awards (e.g., most obedient, best trick, best costumed dog, etc.). Fishing Rodeos, which are offered by departments across the country, are also successful examples, and take advantage of natural resources in the area. In Denver, Colorado, they base celebrations around holidays like Halloween with a community party and offer seniors a Thanksgiving luncheon. In Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, there is a Sports Challenge Day for children ages 10 and older. The event, held during a school break, allows participants to compete in passing, punting, kicking and other skills.

Across the country, parks and recreation departments have used the popularity of reality television competitions like *American Idol*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *The Amazing Race*, *Top Chef* and *America's Got Talent*, to name a few, to create their own local competitions. Several communities have held competitions modeled after *American Idol*, only using their community's name instead. This format has been followed in Nashville, Tennessee, where competitions were held at several community centers, and semi-finalists were selected to perform at a final show where a winner was selected. In Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, they have an event modeled after *The Amazing Race* in which teams of two must use communication skills and teamwork to race through a series of mental and physical challenges.

Youth Programs

In Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, youth can participate in boxing fundamentals, cross country, hip hop dance and self defense classes. Both Atlanta, Georgia, and Denver, Colorado, have a comprehensive selection of arts and culture programs such as pottery, ceramics, painting, figure drawing, photography, music lessons and dance. Denver also offers courses for youth wellness, including cooking and nutrition classes.

Programming for teenagers can be difficult and they are often an age group that gets left out of park programs. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, has several programs geared specifically toward teens, including MeckTeens Chefs (cooking class), teen dance aerobics, teen talk sessions, college planning courses, dance competitions, fencing and a cooking competition. At their skate parks, the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department offers skate tournaments (ages 10 to 21), a Skate with Santa event (ages 6 to 18), and skate and bike lessons (ages 6+ including adults). The Department also organizes trips to visit other skate parks throughout the state.

SECTION 5: PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT

Some departments are using youth's interest and skills in videogames to host tournaments. In Mecklenburg County, they host monthly Nintendo Wii tournaments.

Adult Programs

Many departments are offering adults a variety of leisure and fitness programming. Trends include a wide variety of martial arts, fitness classes, and other unique recreation opportunities like wine tasting, sign language and international cooking. In Nashville, Tennessee, the cultural arts program has several music programs including guitar and piano lessons, songwriting workshops and community band performances. Dance programs include tap, belly dancing and ballroom dance. Denver offers a wide variety of adult programs from yoga to quilting to boot camp programs.

Senior programs are another area where options can be quite expansive. Denver offers computer classes, defensive driving, a "Geritol Gang" exercise group, drop-in Scrabble game day, a visiting nurse program and dancercise. In Mecklenburg County, the senior population can participate in regular day or overnight trips to shopping centers, museums, zoos and other attractions. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department also offers senior basketball, cheerleading and chair aerobics.

Therapeutic Recreation

Inclusion of people with or without disabilities is a priority in many departments across the country. In Denver there are options for special needs individuals ages six months to adults. Programs include hip hop dance off (ages 13+), ceramics (ages 16+), rock climbing (ages 8+), tumbling (ages 1 to 7), sports conditioning (ages 13+) and circuit training (ages 18+).

Environmental and Outdoor Programs

Interest in environmental and outdoor programs is growing, and Alexandria is fortunate to have a wide variety of natural resources on their parkland and throughout the region. Atlanta, Georgia, has several outdoor programs, including introduction to canoeing and kayaking, introduction to camping, rock climbing, bouldering, hiking, orienteering, introduction to tree climbing and geocaching. Denver, a community known for its outdoor recreation, offers day trips to state parks, full moon hikes, an outdoor cooking and meal planning class, and a camping gear essentials class. Mecklenburg County has several large nature preserves in their system where programs like basic birding, outdoor living skills, nature photography and tree identification are offered. Their Eco Trekkers program covers a variety of nature topics for children ages 6 to 10.

Mecklenburg County has several special events that center around environmental and outdoor activities. Their Great Outdoors Festival includes fishing, canoeing and kayaking events along with local music and vendors. The Department also hosts family-oriented outdoor events, including Family Health and Fitness Day and a Family Scavenger Hunt, as well as an event called the Big Sweep. This is a national-based program that cleans up lakes, rivers and streams and increases awareness about the protection of these resources. Volunteers help clean up the parks and waterways for a cooperative litter sweep.

In Nashville, individuals can fill out a permit to hide caches in parks as part of their geocaching program. The Metro Nashville Parks Department allows 50 caches to be placed in their parks system with limitations on what can be placed in the cache.

Trends Overview and Recommendations

American society and the Alexandria community are changing in many ways that are impacting parks and recreation. For example, the population is growing older, with the baby boomer generation turning 60, and is also becoming more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. This provides both opportunities and challenges for park and recreation providers, in terms of programming and participation.

Americans' busy lifestyles and competition for leisure choices is changing how public recreation providers are meeting their clients' needs. The long-held practice of offering the same programs year after year in a highly structured environment is falling out of favor, while programs that offer different types of exercise and relaxation, specialized wellness and fitness training, and cultural and enrichment programs are growing for all ages.

Therefore, a "one-size-fits-all" approach to programming, facilities and organization will most likely not be successful. The park and recreation industry must remain flexible, participate in the planning process, and think both creatively and strategically, so that each agency can make a positive influence on the community and its resident's lives.

It is recommended that the Division review the community data generated during the master planning process as a starting point for developing new programs. Targeted programs should be developed and planned to meet specific programs that are currently underdeveloped or absent from the current program roster. It should be noted that a combination of full-time staff, paid/contract instructors and volunteers will be required for each new program, and overall full-time staffing loads may require increases in certain programming positions.

Based on national trends and the city's demographics, the Division may want to focus on providing the following services:

- More activities that provide alternatives to traditional sports programming, such as extreme sports, arts and culture, outdoor activities and environmental education. Extreme sports and outdoors programs are typically popular among the hard-to-reach teen population. The city's close proximity to the Kisatchie National Forest, the Red River and other ample natural resources provide many opportunities for both extreme sports and outdoor programs.
- Developing a teen-focused recreation programming site with outdoor features such as a skate park, sand volleyball courts, basketball courts and a disc golf course or other similar activities that are geared towards teens and younger adults.
- More activities and facilities for the aging baby boomers, such as increased fitness offerings, arts and crafts classes and dance programs; youth and special needs mentoring programs; and more outdoor activities and active social programs from competitive sports to cards or game-type tournaments. Many agencies are working with seniors to participate in the Senior Olympics and other event-based activities that require year-round training.
- More programs, community activities and special events for families and individuals of all ages. Community and special events bring citizens of all backgrounds and interests together and tend to enforce a sense of community pride.
- Develop and sponsor more walking and running events on the city's trail facilities to promote health lifestyles and acquaint people with the greenway park concept.

Recommendations Summary

Citizens voiced their preference for more broad-based programs throughout the public input process. Many of these programs are dependant upon facility renovations and new facility development. Although facility recommendations are discussed in Section 7, it is important to note that the development of new facilities such as recreation centers, outdoor aquatic facilities and new neighborhood parks will increase the potential programs that can be offered and without these new facilities some of the desired programs will not be possible.

Staffing levels are another key issue to expanding existing programs and providing new programs in the future. As discussed further in Section 4, the lack of a true parks and recreation department and associated staff limits the ability to the Division to expand programs. This will all change rapidly if the staffing recommendations of this plan are implemented.

The following items, ranked as high or medium priority, should be addressed to expand the Division's program opportunities and improve its delivery of recreation programs. The items that are "High Priority" should be implemented within the first 36 months of this master plan. The programs identified as "High Priority" are what we consider the most critical, can be implemented quickly and do not require new facility development; however, some will require additional staff. The administrative and organizational actions identified as "High Priority" should be implemented as soon as possible to improve operations within the Division as a whole. The items identified as "Medium Priority" should be implemented once additional programming staff is hired and new facilities are constructed to accommodate the activities.

Development of New Programs

- Provide new programs in nature-based and outdoor recreation (day trips for kayaking, hiking, environmental education and wildlife viewing). Find instructors that are skilled in these areas and take advantage of the river and bayous for these programs. **(High Priority)**
- Expand senior fitness training at existing community centers. Make senior programming a higher priority than facility rentals so that seniors are not pushed out of the buildings for rentals. **(High Priority)**
- Expand and develop adult programs such as volleyball, flag football, ultimate Frisbee, adult soccer, dodgeball and other field sports at Johnny Downs Complex. **(High Priority)**
- Increase the number and variety of non-athletic/non-traditional programs for all age groups, including extreme sports (i.e. skateboarding programs, mountain biking, BMX, dodgeball, ropes course) and health and wellness programs. Use existing facilities, like abandoned tennis courts, to start some programming with the purchase of modular jumps and equipment. Schedule and facilitate outings to nearby Kisatchie National Forest properties for organized trail rides and nature outings for teens and young adults. **(High Priority)**
- Develop adult master swimming programs and expanded therapeutic and aerobic swimming programs when facilities become available **(High Priority)**
- Develop Special Olympics and Paralympics programs as new parks and facilities are developed. **(Medium Priority)**
- Expand individual-based walking and running programs by developing greenway trails. **(Medium Priority)**
- Provide new indoor fitness programs. Future indoor facilities will provide opportunities for more indoor programming. **(Medium Priority)**
- Implement new programs and events as new parks and facilities are developed. **(Medium Priority)**

Administrative

In order to provide more effective delivery of programs and services:

- Increase partnerships with the schools and allied providers to provide additional and a wider variety of programming to the community. As an example, start a Hershey's Track and Field Games program at one of the school tracks. Another opportunity is to work with the schools to teach all children to learn to swim before leaving elementary school. The schools have pools; they just need a partner to run the lessons program **(High Priority)**
- Create a new, legally binding rental agreement form to be used between the Division and the groups/associations and individuals who rent City facilities. The agreement form should ensure an equitable revenue position for the city. **(High Priority)**

Organizational

- Follow the staffing recommendations and realignments found in Section 4. Hiring additional staff, both full-time and part-time, is the key issue to expanding program offerings. **(High Priority)**

SECTION 5: PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT

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SECTION 6: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



SECTION 6

BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Services Division provides recreation opportunities, special events and programs for both residents and guests to the City. The parks maintenance services are provided by the Parks and Recreation Department located within the Public Works Division. Both agencies receive annual appropriations from City Council and the Mayor. Additional funding is provided through fees charged for specific programs and services and through grant funds.

Budget Overview

The combined annual fund summary for 2008-2009 reveals that over 42% of budget allocation dollars are derived from charges for services. Table 6.1 details the origin of funds and the percent each fund represents in the annual budget.

The top five uses of the City's funds are detailed in Table 6.2

Table 6.1: FY 2008-2009 Sources of Funds

Source of Funds	Total Budget ¹	% of Budget
Charges for Services	\$101,779,437	42.3%
Internal Services and Interfunds	47,673,184	19.9%
Taxes	44,674,855	18.6%
Use of Fund Balance/Retained Earnings	21,279,364	8.9%
Intergovernmental	19,549,953	8.2%
Licenses and Permits	2,598,200	1.1%
Investment Income	905,800	0.4%
Fines and Forfeits	715,200	0.3%
Other	468,805	0.2%
TOTAL	\$239,644,798	

¹Combined total of all fund types (governmental and proprietary)

Source: 2008-2009 Adopted Budget

Table 6.2: Top Five Uses of Funds

Uses of Funds	% of Budget
Enterprise	34.7%
Other-Interfund	22.7%
Public Safety	12.2%
Public Works	11.3%
Finance	5.4%

Source: 2008-2009 Adopted Budget

SECTION 6: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Parks and Recreation Department, which handles park maintenance, is a group within the Public Works Division. The Public Works Division collects 11.3% of the annual budget. The Community Services Division, which is the programming provider for the City recreation programs, receives .5% of the annual budget.

Budget Analysis

Community Services Division

The FY 2008-2009 adopted budget for the Community Services Division is \$1,143,433, which is a marginal decrease of 3.5% from the 2007-2008 budget (\$1,185,303). Of the \$1,143,433 allocated, \$709,230 is targeted towards program and partner expenses. Of this amount, over 65% is put toward Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs). These agreements allow for partner agencies to receive funds to run cultural and other types of recurring activities, special events such as Quein' on the Red, and activities in partnership with the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority (GAEDA) and the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).

Table 6.3: Cooperative Endeavor Agreements

CEA Type	Dollars Allocated from City
Community Partnership Request	\$175,000
Arts Council of Central Louisiana	\$50,000
Mardi Gras	\$50,000
Quein' on the Red	\$100,000
SAGE	\$65,000

Source: Cooperative Endeavor Agreement contracts provided by City

In addition to the community partnerships listed in Table 6.3, the City provides funds to support franchise youth sports leagues and other community organizations. For example, the City provides support for the Alexandria Dixie Youth Baseball Association and Alexandria Little League in the amount of \$12,500 each; this fee is in addition to the Parks and Recreation Department in Public Works providing upkeep and maintenance at the City's fields. Further, funding in the amount of \$34,000 is budgeted for a recreational swim program that targets families with income levels, as established by the HUD. Combining these three activities and the senior programs provided by SAGE (Seniors Aging with Grace and Energy), the City spends approximately \$124,000 on grants to community organizations.

Parks and Recreation Department (Park Maintenance)

The Parks and Recreation Department budget allocation for FY 2008-2009 is \$1,804,511, down from a FY 2007-2008 figure of \$2,029,890. The Parks and Recreation Department not only provides maintenance to recreation areas in the city, but also provides support to Bringhurst Field, home of the Alexandria Aces.

The Parks and Recreation Department has its own equipment, from weed eaters to front-end loaders. Roving crews are the norm within the City, with crews visiting parks daily to pick up trash, mitigate vandalism and mow areas as needed.

SECTION 6: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department is the overall scheduler for the use of parks and recreation fields and outdoor facilities. Staff interviews indicated that many of the facilities are booked solid and free time for open play is limited. Fees, which are approved by City Council, are graduated throughout the system, based upon the facility. Fee waivers are available, but vary based upon the type of request. To use the facilities, one must provide a check or money order. Staff interviews indicated that there is a willingness to pay by credit card. This, in most cases, is customer-friendly and allows one to register via online or phone.

Enterprise Funding

In addition to traditional parks and recreation services, the City provides additional leisure amenities for all to enjoy. The Links on the Bayou, an 18-hole championship golf course located in western Alexandria, and the Alexandria Zoo are major recreation attractions. These facilities are funded through an enterprise allocation from the City of Alexandria.

The Links on the Bayou is operated under a concessionaire's agreement. This contract is for the operations and maintenance of not only the golf course but also includes turf maintenance for the adjacent Johnny Downs Sports Complex. The current budget expenditure for this service is \$883,700 and does not include an additional appropriation of \$130,000 annually to the concessionaire for management services.

The Alexandria Zoological Park is not a true enterprise. The Zoo requires an allocation from other funds to sustain it during the budget year. Of the \$2,844,139 allocation in 2008-2009, \$249,000 is covered through user fees and admission -- a cost recovery of 8.6%.

Benchmark Comparison

In comparison to communities benchmarked against the combined budgets for Alexandria's Community Services Division and Parks and Recreation Department budgets, the City falls into the middle of the group for per capita spending. Combined, both agencies spend approximately \$64.28 dollars per resident for parks and recreation facilities, programs and services, which in ranking is 4th highest out of the eight benchmark communities. The range of per capita spending for the comparison agencies was from \$41.03 (Roswell, GA) to \$166.57 (Parks and Recreation Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge), as illustrated in Table 6.4.

Comparisons with the two instate benchmark communities reveal that Alexandria spends on a per capita basis \$8.83 less than Shreveport and \$102.29 less than East Baton Rouge (BREC).

Table 6.4: Per Capita Budget - Benchmarking Comparison

Jurisdiction	Parks and Recreation Budget	Census Population	Per Capita Spending
Gainesville, GA	\$4,497,000	29,560	\$152.13
Hanford, CA	\$3,076,550	51,965	\$59.20
Forsyth County, GA	\$9,556,000	158,914	\$60.13
Alexandria	\$2,947,944	45,857	\$64.28
Shreveport, LA (SPARC)	\$14,590,300	199,569	\$73.11
Alpharetta, GA	\$6,982,875	44,127	\$158.24
Roswell, GA	\$3,866,243	94,228	\$41.03
East Baton Rouge (BREC)	\$37,822,362	227,071	\$166.57

Source: www.census.gov and local government web sites

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While it is difficult to draw direct comparisons with other communities because of the mix of facilities that can cause operating costs to vary greatly, it is possible to determine a general level of comparison that can be used to gauge a community's commitment to service delivery. As the chart indicates, Alexandria falls in the middle of the comparison, a good bit ahead of the lowest comparison city and a good bit behind the communities that invest highly in their parks and recreation programs. This would indicate there is room for increased funding for parks and recreation services in order to expand recreation opportunities in the Alexandria.

As the community continues to grow and age, it will be increasingly important to focus on and fund quality of life amenities that provide for the health, well-being, and contribute to the economic development of the community.

Cost Recovery

Currently, the Community Services Division has an average cost recovery level of .0025%, based on community services programming revenues. The planning team has performed cost recovery analysis nationally as part of comprehensive planning efforts for other communities and this figure, by far, is the lowest cost recovery figure encountered. Examples across the country show a wide range of subsidy levels or tax investment, from 15% to 80% and higher, depending upon the mission of the organization, construction funding payback, operation funding availability, the community's philosophy regarding subsidy levels and user fees and the structure of agency budgets.

Table 6.5: Community Services Division Cost Recovery

	FY 2006-2007 Actual	FY 2007-2008 Final	FY 2008-2009 Adopted
Community Services Budget	\$1,105,105	\$1,185,303	\$1,143,433
Community Services Revenue	\$1,825	\$2,400	\$2,875
Cost Recovery	.0017%	.0020%	.0025%

Source: City of Alexandria Budget Office and Community Services Division staff

Dr. John Crompton from Texas A & M, a leading educator and researcher on the benefits and economic impact of leisure services, indicates that the national average is around 34% cost recovery. The Division's cost recovery is significantly below the national average. It is in the Division's best interest to evaluate the existing pricing strategies and develop a cost recovery philosophy and goals for each work group that truly reflects the values placed on parks and recreation services by the community, as well as provide for the sustainability of the Division.

The Division currently does not have strong policies in place establishing a structure for pricing and subsidy levels. Despite funding cuts, in the future it will be important to the long-term sustainability of the agency to ensure that pricing allows for sufficient funding of the operations and maintenance of existing and future facilities.

It is important to recognize that the Division has placed an emphasis on providing for those that cannot provide for themselves, such as youth and seniors. Therefore, most programs are free; fees for the programs that do charge participants have been set to not exclude any income levels from being able to participate. However, alternative strategies, such as a strongly publicized scholarship program, should

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be developed that can provide for those with low income levels, but also support the sustainability of the Division.

A large amount of revenue is being lost through the existing, inequitable relationships and agreements with the community's many athletic associations and community groups who utilize City athletic facilities, community centers and other venues without paying fees to the Division. Upon review of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreements and other contracts, it appears the City could provide many of the services that are currently being outsourced and funded at a premium through these CEAs. With proper staff in place, the City could move from providing subsidies to capturing revenue from many of the youth sports endeavors without reducing access to programs for the general public.

Budget Recommendations

The City of Alexandria Community Services Division provides an array of programs and services for all to enjoy. From youth programs to Quein' on the Red, the Community Services Division supports and programs recreation services for both residents and guests of the area. Likewise, the Parks and Recreation Department supports the City's events, maintains parks and recreation properties and handles rentals for athletic facilities.

Funding for the Division and the Parks and Recreation Department has been level for the past few years. A good portion of the operating budget for Community Services is contributions to service organizations and non-profits that provide programs in the City. The City needs to heavily scrutinize these agreements to determine if the City, through reallocating dollars from the CEAs toward hiring staff to facilitate programs, would be more cost effective and create greater accountability in the financial system. It is the belief of the planning team that the City would receive a greater benefit by discontinuing these agreements and self-managing more of the programs utilizing these existing funding sources.

Enterprise Centers

Operations at both enterprise centers, the Alexandria Zoo and Links on the Bayou, need to be reviewed. For the Zoo, the Friends of Alexandria Zoo (FOTAZ) needs to be a more prominent fundraiser within the community. FOTAZ should work with a marketing group to devise a plan to promote the Zoo to the business community as an economic driver. Research shows that the Zoo attracted over 163,000 people in 2006. If an estimated 20% were from outside the region and stay for lodging, these hotel/motel room rentals create an estimated \$4 million annually in direct economic impact. The FOTAZ should develop a long-term fundraising plan that is less dependent on the City for all capital projects and should seek local, as well as outside, funding through donations and grants to help grow the Zoo endowment. It may be worth investing in an outside fundraising professional with Zoo fundraising experience to come in and assist FOTAZ in the development of the long range plan.

The City has shown a strong historic commitment to the Zoo, which is justified by the annual economic return and name recognition the Zoo brings to the city. The City should continue to fund operations annually and capital projects as they can afford them.

The Links on the Bayou is a tournament caliber golf course that is managed by an outside group. An analysis of the existing agreement and annual subsidy reveals the City may be in an unbalanced position with regard to how the course is managed and how the City is receiving benefits from this agreement. The City may wish to consider one or all of the following amendments:

- Keep the management allotment in place and remove other subsidy amounts. These costs are traditionally paid through generated green fees, cart rentals, etc., or;

SECTION 6: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Operate the golf course as a true enterprise operation, managed and operated by the City. Move Johnny Downs Sports Complex operations under park maintenance and fund the operations of the facilities through fees currently paid to the current concessionaire. Snack bar or concessions may be outsourced if deemed more cost effective, or;
- Terminate current agreement and re-advertise for a concessionaire agreement that is a true partnership in which the City will receive a fixed percentage of revenue but the cost of operating and staffing the golf course will be the responsibility of the operator, not the City.

The Bringhurst Golf Course is currently a free 9-hole executive scale facility located in the heart of Alexandria. As a way to keep the course accessible and an enjoyable experience, the City should consider a nominal green fee for the facility (ex: \$5 for adults, \$2 for children). The funds generated through this fee would be returned to a special revenue account dedicated to maintenance and upkeep of the course.

Per Capita Spending

Current per capita spending, when combining both the Community Services Division and the Parks and Recreation Department, falls within the middle range of agencies benchmarked. Traditionally, municipal park and recreation providers tend to have a higher per capita spending figure, due to the prevalence of providing both parks maintenance services and active recreation programming. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) in 2008 indicated a national average of \$79 per capita spending for parks and recreation services. The City should consider boosting this figure to nearly \$80.00 per capita by 2011 and \$90.00 by 2015 in order to expand the programs and services offered.

Cost Recovery

The City provided the planning team with revenue figures for recreation program fees collected by the Community Services Division. As stated, this cost recovery figure (.0025%) is the lowest encountered by the planning team. National averages indicate a 34% cost recovery. While it is unclear if this figure includes all revenues generated in both the Community Services Division and the Parks and Recreation Department, managers should work to increase this figure.

While we recognize that the demographics reflect that Alexandria's estimated 2008 median household income (\$32,895) is less than the state average (\$41,578), there needs to be a value placed on the many recreation programs and events sponsored and facilitated by the City. The team recommends the City perform a fees and charges study that reflects the values of the residents of Alexandria. This study would be directly tied to the findings of the survey performed for this master plan and focused on raising the cost recovery and reducing the large subsidy that is placed on all City residents.

The planning team recommends the fees and charges study should occur in the 2009-2010 budget year. The fee for such a study should be in the area of \$25,000. Once completed, the City should adopt the study as a guiding document when pricing current and future programs. It should reflect a 15% cost recovery by 2012 with 20% cost recovery by 2015. The increased cost recovery would allow the City to expand the per capita spending of the agency through increased fee collection and reduce the amount of tax dollars that would have to be invested to meet recommended per capita spending limits recommended in this master plan.

SECTION 6: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Summary

- Cooperative Endeavor Agreements need to be reviewed to determine whether the return on investment is adequate or if City staff could better facilitate and/or operate these activities internally.
- The Zoo needs stronger advocacy from FOTAZ. This group, or another focused with a major emphasis on fund raising and economic enhancement, needs to promote the benefits of the Zoo both locally and within its market area.
- The Zoo and Links on the Bayou should be operated as true enterprise cost centers.
- Bringhurst Golf Course should adopt a nominal fee for play. Revenues generated from this fee should be deposited in a special revenue account and funds used to enhance play at Bringhurst.
- Per capita spending should be increased to \$80.00 per by 2011 and \$90.00 per by 2015.
- A fees and charges study should be initiated in 2009-2010 budget year. Findings from the survey in this master plan and other public engagements should provide the basis for the recommendations in the study. Cost recovery needs to be enhanced to 20% by 2015
- Traditional funding, grants and other types of funding mechanisms should be engaged in order to meet new facility, program and organizational recommendations. See Section 9 for detailed discussion of funding recommendations.

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SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



SECTION 7

PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to plan for the future of the Alexandria Park and Recreation system, a thorough understanding of its current condition had to be obtained on the part of the master planning team. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of existing city-owned facilities was performed to assess criteria such as maintenance practices, age, condition and accessibility of existing amenities found across the city. Upon the completion of those site visits, recommendations were made according to National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guidelines, staff responses, public input and national trends around the country. These guidelines and community trend comparisons were then used to identify deficiencies within the system, whether by acreage or facility.

NRPA Guidelines

In 1995, the NRPA published “Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines” by James D. Mertes, Ph.D, CLP, and James R. Hall, CLP. The book laid out a template of typical park classifications the number of acres a system should have and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book did not take into account the unique character of each community throughout the country. Local trends and the popularity of some activities often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, coupled with input received from the community, analysis of participation numbers for various activities and comparisons to similar communities, were used to develop level of service standards for the City of Alexandria.

For a public park provider the guidelines suggest, “A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a ‘core’ system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population” (Mertes, 1995). The types of parks that can be included to meet open space standards can be a combination of the following classifications as determined by the NRPA:

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Special-Use Park
- Natural Resource Area/Preserve
- Greenways
- School Park
- Private Parks and Recreation Facilities

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini, neighborhood, community and regional. Beyond these four basic park types are special-use parks, natural resource areas/preserves, greenways, school parks and private parks and recreation facilities. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area and how access is gained to the facility. The following gives a description of the different types of parks and facilities common to a system.

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Mini Park

The smallest type of park, a mini park, is typically a site less than five acres. Another term, “pocket park,” has been used in some instances to identify a mini park. The park is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for vehicles are normally found. Mini parks’ service levels are .25 to .5 acres per thousand residents.

Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, limited-activity park facilities. Common elements include benches, playgrounds and tables in an attractively landscaped setting. The parks are sometimes themed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Designs sometimes match the existing homes, fencing, sidewalk pavers, etc. A park of this size is not developed with fields for league play or community-wide events.

Mini Park Prototype, Proposed Play Facilities and Land Requirements

Average Size:	.25 to 5 acres
General Concept:	Playgrounds for children; benches, tables for adults
General Purpose:	Passive use, serves immediate neighborhood, no parking
Programs:	Unorganized activities
Children’s Play Area:	1.75 acres
Apparatus Area:	1.75 acres
Shelter:	Approx. 1,000 sq. ft.
Game/Tennis Area:	1-2 acres (if needed)
Walking Trails:	Varies
Landscaping and Fencing:	Varies
Utilities:	Varies

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are found in most county and city systems. The park normally has 5 to 20 acres and typically serves a population living within a half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks conceptually concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space. Facilities typical to this park include:

- Playing Fields
- Playgrounds
- Shelters
- Walking Paths
- Swimming Pool
- Parking Facilities
- Restrooms/Concessions

Parking is necessary for this type of facility due to its scope of activities and size. The standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres and one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the activities and program appeal. If team sport facilities or a special feature such as a swimming pool are included, parking spaces in the range of 40 per field, or greater, will be needed.

Although the park is classified as a neighborhood park, the scope of people served can vary based upon densities and the number of other parks available. Typically, one neighborhood park should serve between 10,000 to 20,000 residents, or one to two acres per 1,000 people.

Neighborhood Park Prototype, Proposed Play Facilities and Land Requirements

Average Size:	5 to 20 acres
General Concept:	Active and passive recreation amenities
General Purpose:	Intense active recreation for daytime use within ½ mile radius
Programs:	League practice and play; open space play; not recommended for festivals or large-scale events on a regular basis
Soccer Fields:	2 acres per field
Sports Fields:	2 to 5 acres per field
Football Fields:	2 acres per field
Running Track:	5 acres
Pool:	Varies
Trail System:	Varies
Shelters:	Approx. 2,000 SF
Basketball Courts:	10,000 SF
Skate Park:	Varies
Walking Paths:	1 mile

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Community Park

Community parks are needed within a system to ensure that all users' recreation needs and interests are addressed and included. This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and may sometimes include several neighborhoods. The concept behind community parks is to include essentially a one-stop shop for all recreation users. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. From sports fields to a community center, the park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope commonly has from 20 to 75 acres; approximately 60 acres is considered a good size for such expansive activities.

Community parks have both day and night activities. Large facilities, such as a large indoor fitness/recreation center or multi-field sports complex, can be placed in such a park because of the amount of space available and the ability to buffer park activities from the surrounding community.

The service area for such a facility can vary based upon the size and scope of activities offered. However, a facility of this type may serve anywhere from 50,000 to 80,000 people, or 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. User analyses are often based upon a service radius, while others in more urban areas may be based upon drive times.

Community Park Prototype, Proposed Play Facilities and Land Requirements

Average Size:	20 to 75 acres (target 60 acres)
General Concept:	Combine passive and active activities into one locale and retain passive areas for non-organized recreation
General Purpose:	Provide a full range of recreational activities for the entire population
Programs:	Active sports and multi-generational activities and passive areas with nature viewing, lake activities and walking
Lighted Adult Softball Complex:	15 acres (depending on the number of fields)
Lighted Youth Baseball Complex:	8 to 10 acres (depending on the number of fields)
Football Fields:	2 acres per field
Community/Recreation Center:	50,000-80,000 SF
Picnic Shelters:	Approx. 2,000 SF
Basketball Courts:	1 to 2 acres
Volleyball:	2 to 4 acres
Picnic Areas:	10 acres
Lighted Tennis Complex:	2 acres
Skate Park:	Varies
Lake:	1 to 4 acres
Maintenance/Support Facility:	1 acre
Walking Paths:	1 mile
Parking:	Varies

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Regional Park

The largest park typically found within a system is the regional park. These parks are normally found in large park systems. The size of a regional park varies from 50 to 250 acres, depending on the type of activities and the amount of use.

The service radius for this type of facility is based upon drive time and is typically within an hour's drive of most residents. Conceptually, the regional park provides large natural areas that can be accessed through a variety of means, from roadways to hiking and biking. Also, based upon the locale, it can have unique recreation areas, such as a water park or equestrian facility coupled with natural areas.

Regional parks are unique to the general area. Prototypical or preferred amenities vary.

Special-Use Park

Special-use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group. An example of a special-use park would be a golf course, zoo or a museum. A typical feature of these parks is that they are normally good revenue generators. If maintained and properly staffed, these parks can provide a substantial cash flow for the designated entity.

These facilities can vary in size according to the demand and type of layout. For example, a regulation size, par 72 golf course would need at least 140 acres, while an executive style (par 60) layout may only require 100 to 120 acres, based upon amenities such as driving range and practice facilities.

Natural Resource Area/Preserve

According to the NRPA, natural resource areas are defined as "lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering." These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources
- Lands unsuitable for development but offering natural resource potential (examples: parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainage ways and ravines, surface water management areas and utility easements)
- Protected land, such as wetlands, lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes and ponds

Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serves to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities.

Greenways

Greenways have become one of the most popular family recreation activities across the country. The value of greenways in terms of recreation, education and resource protection is invaluable. Greenways serve as linkages between cities, parks, schools, commercial areas and neighborhoods. They provide a safe mode of transportation that preserves the environment.

Typically, greenways can be anywhere from 10 to 12 feet wide and can be paved or natural surface. When developing a greenway system, corridors should be identified where people will access the area easily and connect elements within the community and incorporate all the characteristics of the natural resource areas. Greenway corridors should be no less than 50 feet in width except in neighborhoods, where 25 feet may be acceptable. In his article published in 1995, Julius Fabos, a former professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, divides greenways into three categories: ecological, recreational and cultural.

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Greenways can be located in a variety of settings and can be utilized for active and passive recreation activities. Ecologically speaking, they are typically located along natural environments such as rivers, ridgelines and coastal areas. These trails provide connections to nature, protect and maintain biodiversity, minimize development, and provide for wildlife migration across natural and manmade boundaries.

Recreational greenways commonly link elements that have diverse and significant landscapes. Many link rural areas to more urban locales and range from local trails to larger systems. Most are paved trails that accommodate pedestrians, skaters and bicycles.

Another type of greenway is the cultural trail, which connects areas of significant historic value and culture. Economic benefits from these types of trails may be significant if linkages can be directed toward areas of commerce to provide an infrastructure for commuting.

School Park

School park sites are an excellent way to combine resources and provide accessible recreation amenities to the community. Depending on the school type (i.e. elementary, middle or high school) the size of the park will be dictated by the land available adjacent to the school. Typically, middle and high schools are constructed with youth athletic fields to support team sports. These facilities provide the basis for developing a community park or, at the very least, youth athletic fields for recreation programs. The selection of school sites is determined by the school district and according to the countywide or citywide distribution of students. The school site selection criteria may or may not meet the needs for parkland distribution. When development of school parks is possible, guidelines for neighborhood/community parks should be followed to meet the needs of residents. When joint developments occur, features common to other parks in the community (e.g. signs, site furnishings) should be used to identify the property as a public facility.

Private Parks and Recreation Facilities

The private parks and recreation facilities, as described by the NRPA, meets one of the two following characteristics:

- “Private Parks, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and party houses, are generally within a residential area developed for the exclusive use of residents and are maintained through a neighborhood association. They are not, however, a complete substitute for public recreation space, and
- Private Recreation Facilities that are for-profit enterprises, such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, water parks, amusement parks and sports facilities.”

These facility types can be entirely private or, in many cases, be a joint venture between a public entity and a private organization. Partnerships of this kind allow for the provision of facilities and programs at a reduced cost to the public sector.

Alexandria Park Providers

The largest provider of parks and recreation services in Alexandria is the City. These services are provided and directed by the Community Services Division in association with the Public Works Division's Parks and Recreation Department. Figure 7.1 shows the locations of all existing city-owned and maintained parks and facilities. Figure 7.2 illustrates the locations of some of the City's fields, trails and community centers. A detailed listing of facilities found in each park site is provided in the Appendix.

In addition to the City of Alexandria, there are other recreation providers within the city limits and throughout Rapides Parish. There are numerous park facilities at the former England Air Base. Most of these facilities appeared to be unused at this time but as the property is redeveloped some or all may be brought back on line. The Boys and Girls Club, YWCA and YMCA also provide recreation programs. Private clubs, including country clubs and fitness centers, and several small private providers of instructional programs (e.g., dance, martial arts) are also found throughout the city. The City provides many cultural arts programs through partnerships and provides a good mix of cultural arts programs.

As for park facilities in the city and parish, there are several other providers. They are listed below along with a brief description of the facilities they provide.

City of Pineville

The City of Pineville is located on the north side of the Red River directly across from Alexandria. Pineville's Parks and Recreation Department offers ballfields (baseball and softball), playgrounds, an outdoor covered basketball court, soccer fields, walking trails and a lake. Each year, the Department hosts concerts, car shows, boat races and other events. Pineville's Public Works Department also oversees recreation facilities, including two community centers and a pavilion with restrooms. The City plans to open a third community center in the near future.

Civitan Ball Park/CENLA Fields at Masonic Drive

This site includes six ballfields ranging in size from 160' to 315' and is used for both baseball and softball. Until recently, the site was maintained by the City through an agreement with the youth association that formerly utilized the site. The site is now operated by the CENLA Youth Baseball Association (CYBA). It is used by CYBA and leased for tournaments, travel ball or individuals/teams who want to use the fields.

Cotile Lake

Cotile Lake, located 15 miles northwest of Alexandria, is operated by the Rapides Parish Police Jury's Public Works Department. The manmade lake is approximately 1,775 acres and is stocked with game fish. In addition to fishing, there is a swimming beach, bath house facilities, water skiing areas, picnic areas, and campgrounds for both tents and campers. Its close proximity to the city provides passive recreation opportunities that should not be duplicated by the City.

Kisatchie National Forest

The Kisatchie National Forest comprises several hundred thousands of acres throughout central Louisiana. The Calcasieu Ranger District's Evangeline Unit makes up approximately 97,000 acres of the Kisatchie National Forest and is located a few miles outside the city within Rapides Parish. The Evangeline Unit offers thousands of acres of woodland and a variety of passive park activities, trails, campgrounds and many other facilities that are found at similar national forest sites. Like Cotile Lake, its close proximity to the city provides passive recreation opportunities that should not be duplicated by the City.

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Pineville Ward 9 Sportsplex

This sports complex is owned and operated by the Ward 9 Recreation District. The site is comprised of several ballfields (baseball and softball), soccer fields, concession/restroom buildings, press boxes and batting cages. Future plans include expansion of all facilities, including a challenger ballfield. Like the CENLA Fields in Alexandria, the site is leased for tournaments, travel ball or individuals/teams who want to use the fields.

Red River Waterway Commission

The Red River Waterway Commission operates several recreation properties within Rapides Parish, with Levee Park being the only facility within the Alexandria city limits. These properties are primarily passive recreation facilities and provide supplemental recreation opportunities.

Alexandria Levee Park

This park stretches along the Red River through downtown Alexandria. The park offers several amenities, including a three lane boat launch, floating wharf, a picnic shelter, covered picnic tables, a playground, scenic overlook, comfort stations, trails, and an outdoor amphitheater and plaza area. The park can be accessed from downtown (near City Hall), but another access point with a large parking lot is available near the City's animal shelter and farmer's market off of North 3rd Street. The City's Quein' on the Red festival is held here each year.

The City and Red River Water Way Commission have entered into a memorandum of understanding for the operation of Levee Park's outdoor amphitheater, which is located in the heart of downtown Alexandria. The City is responsible for programming the amphitheater and overseeing activities conducted there. They also provide trash collection and set-up and take-down of events held at the park.

Fort Buhlow

Fort Buhlow is found in Pineville just across the Red River from Alexandria. The park includes a three lane boat launch, boat dock, picnic shelters and tables, trails, a cross country course, playground, play field, comfort stations, and a lighted ballfield with a concession stand and press box.

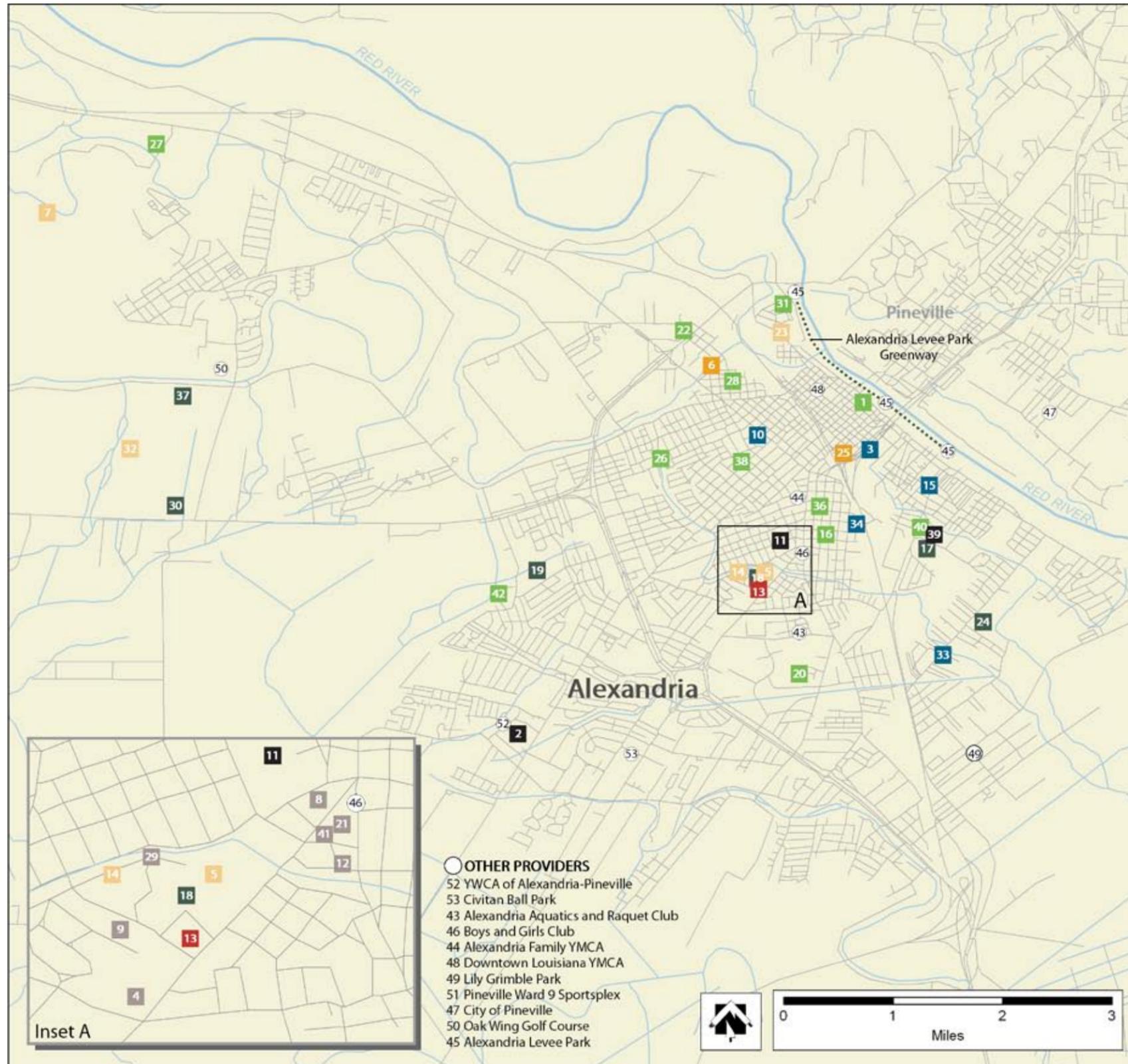
Boyce

Boyce is primarily a boat launching area with a two lane boat launch, a picnic shelter and picnic tables, and trails. There are also areas available for bank fishing.

John H. Overton Lock and Dam #2

The John H. Overton Lock and Dam #2 offers amenities similar to Boyce. There are areas available for bank fishing and a comfort station with an overlook.

Figure 7.1: Existing Park Locations



Alexandria, Louisiana CITY PARK LOCATIONS

MINI PARKS

- 1 Alexander Fulton Mini Park
- 16 Charles Smith Park
- 20 Deborah Bowman Park
- 22 Enterprise Park
- 26 Harmon Park
- 27 Harold Miles Park
- 28 Helen Black Park
- 31 Lincoln Park
- 36 Mason Street Park
- 38 Old Menard School Park
- 40 Peabody Playground
- 42 Wycliffe Way Park

COMMUNITY PARKS

- 17 Cheatham Park
- 18 City Park
- 4 Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex
- 5 Alexandria Zoo
- 8 Ben Bradford Field
- 9 Big Island Field
- 12 Boys and Girls Club Picnic Area
- 13 Bringhurst Ballfield
- 14 Bringhurst Golf Club
- 18 City Park Playground
- 21 Diamond #1 Masonic at Lee
- 29 Hynson Bayou Trail
- 41 Tennis Complex
- 19 Compton Park
- 24 Frank O. Hunter Park
- 30 Johnny Downs Recreational Complex
- 37 O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields

SPECIAL USE PARKS

- 5 Alexandria Zoo
- 7 Beagle Club
- 14 Bringhurst Golf Course
- 23 Farmer's Market
- 32 Links on the Bayou Golf Course

SPORTS COMPLEX

- 13 Bringhurst Ballfield
- 30 Johnny Downs Sports Complex *

GREENWAY

- 6 Bayou Rapides Trail
- 25 Greenbelt

COMMUNITY CENTERS

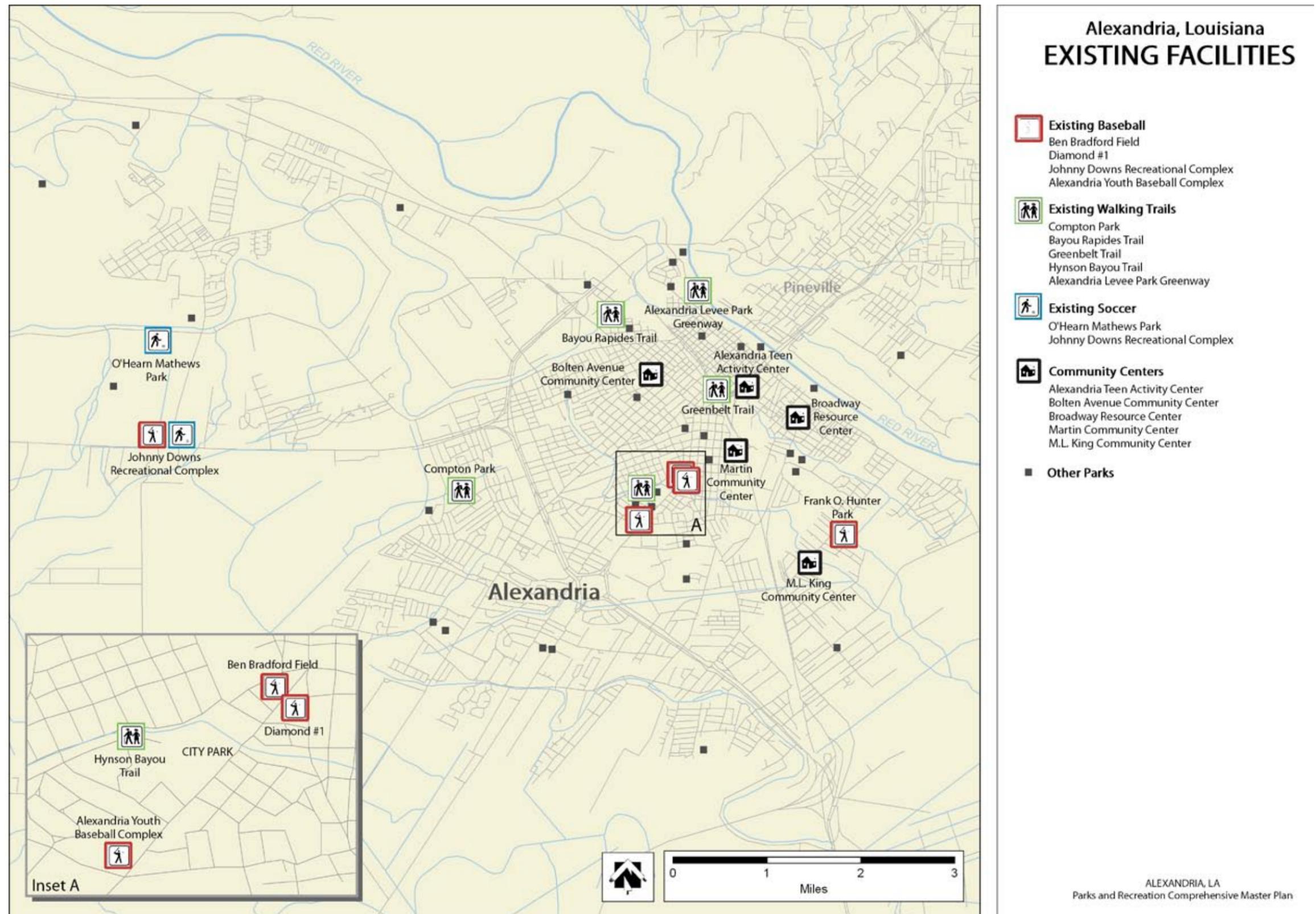
- 3 Alexandria Teen Activity Center
- 10 Bolton Avenue Community Center
- 15 Broadway Resource Center
- 33 ML King Community Center
- 34 Martin Community Center

SCHOOLS

- 2 Alexandria Senior High School
- 11 Bolton High School
- 39 Peabody Magnet High School



Figure 7.2: Existing Park Facility Locations



Facility Standards and Distribution

One of the primary tasks of the parks assessment was to determine the level of service that is provided under the current system, as well as to make recommendations for future levels of service. An inventory was completed for all existing city-owned parks. This inventory was evaluated based on existing NRPA community baseline standards, which were provided in the 1995 publication, "Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines."

The planning team also developed community-based standards and reviewed the service areas of the parks based on their classification, size, amenities offered, and on how the parks are actually used. Examining these services areas, as illustrated in Figure 7.3, gives us insight into overlaps and gaps in parks and recreation services. Recommendations for existing park renovations and new parks were based, to a large degree, on these factors and were designed to offer a more balanced delivery system throughout the city and to diversify the current offerings.

Community Standards

The planning team developed community standards based on community trends, public input from the steering committee workshop, and our experience in the parks and recreation industry. These new community-based standards, as shown in Table 7.1, are unique to the City of Alexandria.

Facility Surplus/Deficit

Table 7.1 uses the City of Alexandria's 2008 estimated population to determine deficiencies and surpluses in the park system. Facility totals were derived from inventories of all existing City parks. The facility surplus/deficit calculations were based on the desired level of service as defined by the community-based standards.

The deficiencies shown in the table do not take into account those facilities found on school properties or private recreation providers. If totals were included for the amenities found at these facilities, inadequacies throughout the city would be statistically less than shown; however, the actual availability of facilities to residents on a full time basis would remain the same. Facilities found in residential developments such as swimming pools and tennis courts, private country clubs and private membership facilities provide some additional recreational opportunities, but due to limitations and restricted access they do not provide the same opportunities for the community as public park facilities.

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 7.1: City of Alexandria Park Facility Standards and Surpluses/Deficits

NRPA Standards for Park Facilities	NRPA Recommended Level of Service	Community-based Desired Level of Service	Existing Number of Alexandria Park Facilities	Current Facility Need Based on Alexandria Estimated 2008 Population of 45,323	Current Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Future Facility Need Based on Alexandria Estimated 2013 Population of 43,762	2013 Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)
Acreage	10.5/1,000	15 to 18/1,000	513	680	-167	656	-143
Outdoor Basketball	1/5,000	1/2,500	10	18	-8	18	-8
Tennis	1/2,000	1/2,000	13	23	-10	22	-9
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/5,000	0	9	-9	9	-9
Baseball/Softball	1/2,500	1/1,500	19	30	-11	29	-10
Football	1/20,000	1/15,000	1	3	-2	3	-2
Soccer	1/10,000	1/1,500	25	30	-5	29	-4
Swimming Pool/Aquatics ¹	1/20,000	1/50,000	3	1	2	1	2
Running Track	1/20,000	1/50,000	0	1	-1	1	-1
Developed Standards for Park Facilities	NRPA Recommended Level of Service	Community-based Desired Level of Service	Existing Number of Alexandria Park Facilities	Current Facility Need Based on Alexandria Estimated 2008 Population of 45,323	Current Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)	Future Facility Need Based on Alexandria Estimated 2013 Population of 43,762	2013 Facility Deficit/ Surplus (using Desired Level of Service)
Trail System	1mile/3,000	1mile/3,000	5	15	-10	15	-10
Playground	1/1,000	1/2,000	17	23	-6	22	-5
Community Center	1/50,000	1/50,000	5	1	4	1	4
Picnic Pavilion	1/2,000	1/2,000	10	23	-13	22	-12
Skate Park	1/100,000	1/100,000	0	0	-0	0	-0

¹Includes spraygrounds

Population Data Source: *DemographicsNow*, 2008 Estimate

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Park Acreage

Based on the combined total of park facilities offered by the city there are approximately 513 acres of parkland in Alexandria that are operated and controlled by the City. According to the community-based standards of 15 to 18 acres per 1,000 people, this puts the City at a deficit ranging from 167 to 303 acres. The acreage along the river that is controlled by the Red River Waterway Commission and the open space at the former England Air Base would greatly reduce this deficit. However, it does indicate that the City needs to start acquiring more parkland in the near future to offer the level of service desired by residents. This deficit will also be reduced when the City begins to develop greenways, as approximately six acres of property is acquired for every one mile of greenway that has a 50' right-of-way. The type of land that is needed includes land to construct more neighborhood parks (which are deficient in the newer areas of the city), land to expand City Park and land to ensure that all the existing parks have a good balance of facilities. The Johnny Downs Sports Complex, for example, lacks passive park facilities such as picnic areas, walking trails and open play areas. Additional property at that site would provide complementary facilities that could be used during tournaments and league play.

While acquiring additional land should occur over the next 10 years -- with the exception of a few critical parcels needed for new parks or expansion of existing parks as recommended later in this section -- land acquisition is not the highest need for improved parks and recreation service delivery.

Sports Fields

Sports field deficiencies, when compared to the desired level of service, are present in most all categories. However, during the public input phase of the project, we did not hear an outcry for more sports fields with the exception of a need for a youth football complex. Furthermore, there are baseball fields going unused at Frank O. Hunter Park. Therefore, the planning team is not recommending new baseball or softball fields at this time. Football fields, however, are needed and are discussed later in this section.

Other Park Facilities

Deficiencies also exist for trails, playgrounds, skate parks and picnic pavilions, which were all facilities the community rated as important. In the area of community centers and swimming pools, the chart is showing a surplus but it is misleading due to what are currently considered to be community centers and aquatic facilities. The majority of the community centers listed in the inventory are small buildings and do not come close to being modern community centers (or recreation centers) that offer diverse recreation opportunities.

The three aquatic facilities shown in Table 7.1 represent the new spraygrounds built by the City. The City has no public swimming pools, but uses the indoor pool and Peabody Magnet High School through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. These two items -- a community/recreation center with a major aquatics complex -- were overwhelmingly the number one desired facility at all community meetings and in public input gathered by the planning team. While there are private swim clubs and the YMCA's pools, a public facility to meet overall community need is a void that should be provided by the City.

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Park Classifications and Service Areas

After a review of existing City parks and their facility inventories, the parks were given classifications based on the NRPA-recommended guidelines (see Table 7.2) and our interpretation of how the parks are being used. We have also consolidated facilities at City Park and other parks to accurately differentiate parks and park facilities. This consolidation results in a total of 30 parks and recreation facilities being overseen by the City. Based on our reclassification of the parks, the breakdown of parks is as follows: 12 mini parks, zero neighborhood parks and seven community parks. There are also four special use facilities, two greenways and five community centers. The individual park assessments found later in this section provide a detailed description of the recreation facilities present at each park and the necessary improvements required to meet the classification provided.

Table 7.2: Recommended Park Classifications

Parks and Recreation Facilities	Classification	Parks and Recreation Facilities	Classification
Alexander Fulton Mini Park	M	Harold Miles Park	M
Bayou Rapides Trail	G	Helen Black Park	M
Beagle Club	SU	Johnny Downs Sports Complex	C/SC
Charles Smith Park	M	Lincoln Park	M
Cheatham Park	C	Links on the Bayou Golf Course	SU
City Park	C	Martin Park	C
Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex		Mason Street Park	M
Alexandria Zoo	SU	O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields	C
Ben Bradford Field		Old Menard School Park	M
Big Island Field		Peabody Playground	M
Boys & Girls Club Picnic Area		Wycliffe Way Park (undeveloped)	M
Bringhurst Ball Field	SC		
Bringhurst Golf Course	SU	Community Centers	
City Park Playground		Alexandria Teen Activity Center	
Diamond #1 (Masonic Field)		Bolton Avenue Community Center	
Hynson Bayou Trail		Broadway Resource Center	
Tennis Complex		M.L. King Community Center	
Compton Park	C	Martin Community Center	
Deborah Bowman Park	M		
Enterprise Park	M	M = Mini Park	
Frank O. Hunter Park	C	C = Community Park	
Greenbelt	G	G = Greenway	
Harmon Park	M	SU = Special-Use	
		SC = Sports Complex	

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gap Analysis

The park service area map, Figure 7.3, is a better representation of the parkland supply and demand ratio. This map illustrates the parks' service areas, determined by their classification, and the city's population density. By superimposing the services areas on the population density, one can see where there are service gaps and population densities within the service boundaries

Figure 7.3 shows the service areas of all City-owned and maintained mini and community parks. The mini parks have a ¼-mile service area, and the community parks are shown with a 3-mile service area. These parks provide good coverage to the eastern most sections of the city, but service gaps are present as one moves west from downtown.

Service Area Limitations

When examining service areas, it is also important to consider features that limit access to parks. These barriers can be natural features, like water bodies, or manmade features, like roads. Pedestrians are most affected by these barriers, especially if safe crossings are not provided. During the public meetings, several residents indicated that MacArthur Drive is a major pedestrian barrier and crossing road is not safe. They indicated that a separated crossing would be needed to connect the two side of the city. Other than this major roadway impediment that impacts several services, the bulk of the city streets do not greatly limit pedestrian access to the parks if sidewalks or greenways are in place.

Park Distribution

After reviewing the surpluses/deficits of specific park amenities and the service areas of the parks, the planning team combined these two types of analysis to determine distribution. The surplus/deficit analysis tells us "what," and the service area analysis tells us "where." Looking at park distribution helps us determine the diversity of parks throughout the city, whether the amenities are well distributed and whether certain recreation facilities are needed in specific areas of the city to provide more equitable recreation opportunities.

The distribution of parks throughout city is primarily concentrated around the historic core, with the exception of the recently added facilities in the western section of the city, including Compton Park, Johnny Downs Sports Complex, Links On the Bayou and O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields. This pattern of park development is tied to the pattern of population development with the bulk of the park properties having been developed years ago as the core of the city developed. The new parks in the west represent an acknowledgement that as the city has grown to the west/southwest, parks were needed to serve these new residential developments. The gap analysis indicates that even with the addition of these new facilities, the western section of the city is underserved by parks. In addition the other providers of parks, including the Red River Waterway Commission facilities, are also primarily on the eastern side of the city and do not provide pedestrian or vehicular access to the parks for residents on the western side of the city.

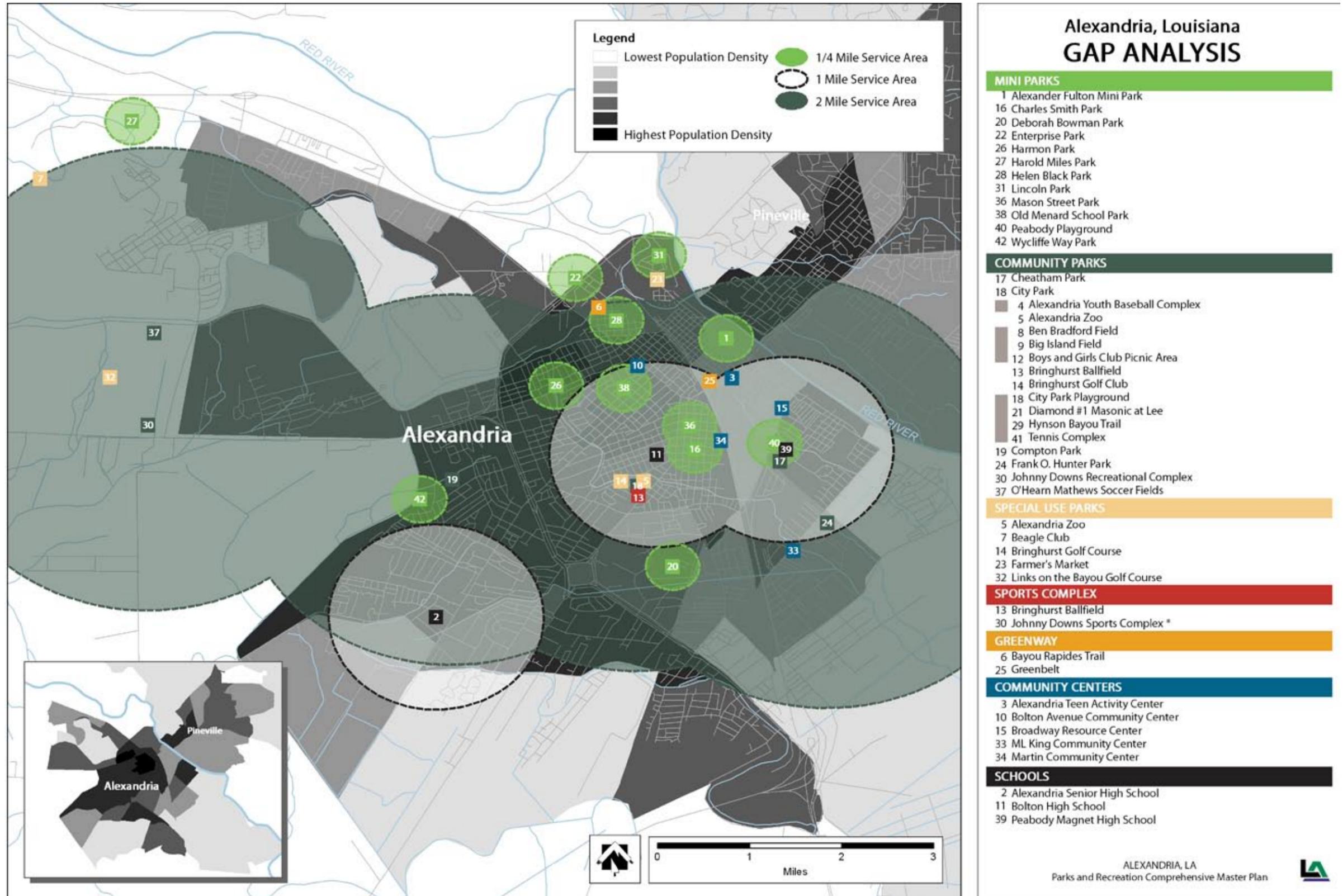
With respect to facilities, the distribution is better than the parks themselves. The newer parks in the west have a good balance of sports fields and some open space to meet the needs of nearby residents. The same balance and mix of facilities with respect to sports fields can be found in the eastern section of the city, with the exception of soccer fields -- all of the City's soccer fields are on the western side. Comments about the difficulty of reaching Johnny Downs Sports Complex were noted during the public input phase of the project. This should be addressed as new parks are developed and as the greenway system grows. Connectivity by the greenway system can open up access for kids to ride their bikes when parks are more than a mile or two from their neighborhoods.

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The current development pattern of parks appears to have a balanced drive time for all residents with respect to access to community parks. It is also important to note that with proposed improvements to Masonic Drive, access to City Park will improve and make this area an ideal location for one-of-a-kind park facilities like a major community center or aquatics complex.

Another area of service that is not balanced is walking facilities. Currently all the greenways are in the historic core of the city and the only walking path in the western section of the city is in Compton Park. There is a need for more balance in trails and greenway development in the future.

Figure 7.3: Existing Park Service Areas



General Park Evaluations, Observations and Recommendations

Although specific needs vary between parks, issues found to be consistent throughout Alexandria's system were revealed following the completion of evaluations on each of the City's park sites. The majority of the parks in the system are aged and require various levels of maintenance and upgrades. Items in good shape are new, nearly new, or have recently been renovated, upgraded, etc. In such cases, minor ongoing maintenance concerns may be present. Items in fair shape are older but are still serviceable and usually have a few more maintenance issues requiring attention such as replacement of parts, repainting, etc. Items in poor shape are unsafe and/or rapidly deteriorating and require significant replacement of major components, not just maintenance of a few items. It should be noted that many of the issues below are commonly found in most parks around the country. Some issues common to all parks include:

- Many parks lack adequate and consistent signage. Park identification signs are scarce, and facility rules signs are placed randomly, if at all. Uniform signage for park identification, rules, hours, etc., would reduce the City's liability and add a branded look and provide the necessary information to patrons.
- Most playgrounds lack both sufficient and proper safety surfacing to meet the requirements for ADA accessibility, as well as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the International Play Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA) safety requirements. In addition, the fall zones provided in most playgrounds do not meet the requirements of the equipment located within them. Both of these issues are cause for safety concerns.
- Although a new city standard for site furnishings has been developed, few parks contain these standardized benches, tables, waste receptacles, etc. Outdated drinking fountains are present in many parks, though few are in working condition. In both cases, ADA standards for access and use are neglected. Updating site furnishing to the current city standard would aid in conveying a regional identity within the park system and beyond.
- In many parks, features such as shelters, tables, courts, playgrounds, etc. are scattered across lawn areas and lack accessible routes to them. Those parks that do provide accessible routes generally lack enough of them to reach the proper number of facilities. In all cases, sufficient access should be provided to all park features and adhere to current ADA standards.
- Parking areas, where provided, are often in fair condition and generally do not address ADA parking standards. Both new and refurbished parking should be provided, as determined by individual park needs, to ensure safe and adequate parking opportunities for all patrons.
- Lighting standards vary throughout the park system. While newer parks contain more modern lighting standards, older parks generally provide only security lighting. In some cases, lighting is provided in parks that close at dark. Consideration must be given to determine that required lighting levels, if any, are provided at parks that close after dark.
- The planning team recommends analyzing the effectiveness of current lighting levels used on greenways. Many traditional greenways manage trail security through operating hours, such as dawn to dusk. Recent research has determined that supplementary lighting provides users with an unreal sense of security, rendering them vulnerable during at-risk hours. This analysis should also extend to other portions of the greenway, both existing and planned.
- Due to the topographic nature of the region, surface drainage is the primary method of site drainage. In general, this approach is successful; however, buildings should include downspouts to ensure that sheeted water from roofs does not encourage erosion around building perimeters or near pedestrian areas.
- Although irrigation is not provided at most parks, park turf appears to survive in fair condition, except in high-use areas such as sports fields. Due to the requirements of sports field turf, irrigation should be provided at all of these areas.

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- Lighting at most facilities is currently set on wooden poles. This is adequate for general purposes, but modern concrete or metal pole systems should be used for sports fields to ensure proper lighting levels are attained.
- Nearly all parks have some measure of fencing around the perimeters, all of which are galvanized chain link. Generally, these fences are in fair shape with some rusting or damage at older facilities. Minor repairs are recommended at most facilities with only a few requiring full replacement. In highly visible locations, an alternative to chain link fencing should be considered to provide a more pleasing aesthetic appearance.
- Condition notes: Items noted in good shape are new, nearly new, or have recently been renovated, upgraded, etc. Minor ongoing maintenance concerns may be present. Items noted in fair shape are older but are still serviceable and usually have a few more maintenance issues requiring attention such as replacement of parts, repainting, etc. Items noted in poor shape are unsafe and/or rapidly deteriorating and require significant replacement of major components, not just maintenance of a few items.
- Field observations and interviews revealed numerous older sports facilities that were no longer in use. As is often the case as new sports fields are developed, older facilities are left in place but not fully utilized. These older facilities have deteriorated and are no longer safe. In the park-by-park evaluations we have identified older facilities that should be removed to make room for more open play space in parks or have recommended a new use for the space.
- Greenway paths in the park system are in good condition for the most part. The trail found in Levee Park along the Red River is paved in some locations in the downtown area and compacted gravel in others. The most attractive sections of trail are those found in the downtown area's Greenbelt.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Since its inception in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act has sought to provide equal opportunity for all disabled citizens, including their ability to participate in various recreation opportunities. As a result, both private and public recreation providers were required, amongst other criteria, to provide equal and enhanced access for disabled patrons. Though they are civil bodies, parks and recreation departments are not exempt from this requirement because the legislation provides that primary park amenities be barrier-free.

Primary access routes, as described in the "Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas," by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), are defined in the following manner:

"Outdoor recreation access routes are the paths that connect the primary developed spaces and elements that are basic to the recreation experience being offered at the site. For example, the outdoor recreation access routes at a picnic ground are the paths linking the parking area, restrooms, picnic units, and water hydrants. While many of these elements- parking area, restroom, and water hydrant- are not the primary reason for a person to visit the site, they are basic developed elements that serve all visitors.

Designers and managers, in consultation with users, must determine which of the developed activities and elements at a recreation site are basic to the recreation experience being offered. Further, they must secure that there is a comprehensive system of outdoor recreation access routes that connect all primary elements and spaces with each other and with accessible parking spaces and facility entrances. This determination should be based upon visitor expectations as well as the level of development at the site."

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In 2008, updates to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) were formally accepted. These updates included revised requirements for access to various recreation opportunities including: sports facilities, amusement rides, boating facilities, fishing piers and platforms, golf courses, exercise equipment, bowling lanes, shooting ranges, swimming pools, wading pools and spas, as well as more strict regulations on playgrounds. As a result, the newly formed Parks and Recreation Department should seek the counsel of the City's legal department prior to the renovation of old facilities or the construction of new ones to interpret the laws and develop a standard by which they will begin to create a system that is sensitive to the needs of all users.

Playground Safety Standards

Another prominent issue within some park systems is the non-compliance of playground equipment to safety standards by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the International Play Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA). The standards proposed by these organizations are meant to serve as a guideline to help create atmospheres that are safe and pose a minimal threat of injury. Studies show that the majority of injuries sustained on public playgrounds are to the head as a result of falls from the play structures to the ground. For this reason, consideration has been given as to what the critical fall height would be in which a fatal head injury might occur.

Guidelines have been established measuring the impact performance of various materials. As with ADA issues, alternatives should be studied and a standard established for implementation of safe play environments throughout the parks system.

Security and Vandalism

Individual park assessments and evaluations, as well as interviews with city staff and citizens, revealed some issues with vandalism and the perception by visitors that some parks are not safe. Recommendations to improve site-based problems that create atmospheres for criminal activity have been made to reduce the threat of vandalism and other illicit behavior. The addition of lighting in parks and the practice of clearing thick vegetative growth to improve visibility into and around the park are two methods that should be employed to improve safety. Whenever possible, parks should be oriented toward the road to allow maximum visibility into the park and to eliminate areas where vandals can hide or congregate. Providing materials that are resistant to destruction reduces the frequency of repairs or replacement. Facilities that offer something for everyone, such as a multi-generational center, increase the number of visitors to a park, thus reducing the potential actions of a criminal.

Many parks departments have taken advantage in recent years of new technology to help control vandalism. New remote solar camera and video systems allow departments to monitor high security areas as a means to reduce vandalism in parks. Many departments have added electronic locks and gate system to control access to parks without adding to the burden of staff to lock and unlock facilities. These are systems that, with proper applications, could reduce problems in the City's parks.

Individual Park Facility Assessments

The following are individual park assessments and recommendations. Information has been provided according to size, location, and amenities provided within each park. Facilities were analyzed for their age, functionality and condition. Recommendations were made accordingly. The parks that make up City Park along Masonic Drive are reviewed at the end of these assessments under the heading of “City Park Master Plan Development.”



Alexander Fulton Mini Park

Location: 1001 3rd Street

Acreage: 0.5

Classification: Mini

Overview

Situated in the heart of downtown adjacent to a public parking area for City Hall, Alexander Fulton Mini Park serves primarily as an urban gathering space. It is an ideal location for outdoor lunches and contains raised turf panels in one corner plaza for small concerts and other outdoor gatherings. Many of the park's features are tied to the history of Alexandria, including the cornerstone of the old City Hall building. Several other historic and dedication monuments have been added over the years.

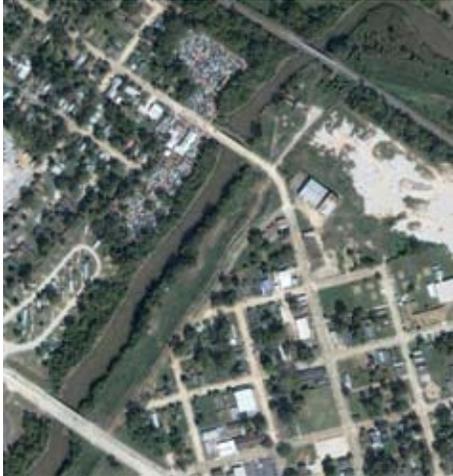
Review

In general, the park is well maintained with landscaping, turf and trees. Lighting is present on the site to add an element of security. Other power connections are present throughout the site for use in outdoor events. The incorporation of artwork and historical significance to the site makes this park a valuable amenity for the city.

Recommendations:

- Continue with current levels of maintenance as they appear to be sufficient.
- Replace existing trees with shade-producing species along seating areas to make outdoor use of this park more comfortable for lunch hours and temperate season enjoyment.

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Bayou Rapides Trail

Location: Along Bayou Rapides between North Bolton Ave and the Kansas City Railroad

Acreage: 8

Classification: Greenway

Overview

At nearly a half mile in length, this greenway straddles the levee that runs along Bayou Rapides. Its asphalt trail is ten feet wide in most places and contains trash cans, benches and lighting along its route. A small gravel lot is provided for parking at the trailhead, as well as some picnic tables and a wooden fishing pier.

Review

Current plans are now in place to extend the trail to connect it into the downtown Greenbelt. While a 3 to five-foot shoulder is provided along most of the trail atop the levee, the shoulder narrows in some areas due to the existing condition of the levee. The lighting along the trail is provided at a high level for security through the use of modern low sky-glow poles and fixtures. However, some poles have been damaged and require replacement. Although they are available for use, the concrete picnic tables at the trailhead are not ADA accessible, nor are they connected to the trail by an accessible sidewalk. The wooden pier is in good shape, but it needs 25% of its guardrail length lowered to the ADA standard for accessible fishing opportunities. Also, the sidewalk to the fishing pier has been designed for ADA slopes and landings; however, they require handrails meeting ADA requirements for access to buildings since this is the main access route to a unique feature in the park. There are no existing restrooms on site, but one may be required in order to make the area a fully functioning trailhead.

Recommendations:

- Due to current development plans, this site is ideally suited to accommodate trailhead development. In doing so, formal parking should be developed as well as restroom facilities, vandal resistant drinking fountain, site furnishings, wayfinding signage, trail signage and regulatory signage as required for trail users.
- All development should meet current ADA standards for accessibility.
- The trail itself should be developed to conform to AASHTO standards for width, shoulder, etc., where possible.
- Revitalize pier for visual updates and ADA compliance.

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Beagle Club

Location: 100 Beagle Club Road

Acreage: 1 acre

Classification: Special Use

Overview

Located just outside of the Alexandria International Airport, the Beagle Club offers a rental facility that is used for barbecue gatherings. Gravel parking is provided at this picnic table-style dining hall, which features several large grills and a covered pig-roast pit. It also contains a warming kitchen and restrooms.

Review

The building is 1950s vintage and has not been updated in many years. It is similar in nature to the dining hall at nearby Harold Miles Park, but it is smaller and falling into disrepair. Age-related issues in the building have been compounded by damage incurred from Hurricane Katrina; it has not been maintained since the storm and since been closed. The surrounding site is wooded and shaded, with grass and weeds growing only in isolated clumps. Most of the site is covered with leaf and pine needle litter.

Recommendations:

- Temporarily close this facility for public use until demand exceeds capabilities of Harold Miles Park or until alternative programming is desired.
- Demolish existing structure and remove all debris, if it is determined that this facility is to be permanently closed.
- Create grassed area for ease of maintenance during facility closing.
- Install security gate at entrance to deter security issues.

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Bolton Avenue Community Center Playground

Location: 301 Bolton Ave.

Acreage: 0.1

Classification: Mini

Overview

This small playground serves its adjacent community center. It contains a single play structure with rubber surfacing surrounded by steel picket fencing. Benches are also provided for parents.

Review

While the play structure remains in fair shape, the rubber surfacing beneath it has begun to deteriorate and pull away from the adjacent concrete. However, the steel picket fencing is in good shape and provides an additional level of safety for children playing next to the busy street.

Recommendations:

- Although the playground is in fair shape, it will likely need replacement at some point during the life of this master plan.
- Playground safety surfacing should be replaced.
- Additional parent seating is also recommended with supplemental shade tree planting, as necessary.
- Playground structure must be ADA accessible from building and parking lot.

Note: The amenities at this park have been included in the Bolton Avenue Community Center inventory.

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Charles Smith Park

Location: 2800 block of Harris Street

Acreage: 0.75

Classification: Mini

Overview

Nestled between surrounding houses, this park provides a blend of activities for users of various ages. Two playground structures are available for use on the site, as well as a full-sized basketball court. Security is provided through several light fixtures, as well as perimeter fencing. On site parking is not available here, so off street parking is used.

Review

The overall play lawn is in good condition with few weeds present and thin or bare grassing only in shaded areas. Though largely in good condition, the perimeter chain link fencing along the front edge requires replacement. Playgrounds in this park are surfaced with a mixture of sand and gravel (see general playground surface note) and require replacement. Both the wood and the plastic/metal playground structures are in good shape, though recent repair to the wooden sections may not meet code. Concrete benches are scattered over the site, but remain in good condition. The basketball facility, including the goal posts, looks new and is in good shape. While many features of this park are joined by sidewalks, not all are accessible. There is no shelter present on site; however, there are some trees on site to provide good shade. No restroom facilities exist on this site.

Recommendations:

- Consolidate play structures to allow for additional open space for play lawn or other programming.
- All playgrounds should have safety surfacing that meets current standards.
- ADA accessibility should be provided to all site features.
- Realign basketball access pavement to provide entry from the side of the court and provide bench seating for players.
- Provide restroom facilities and vandal-resistant drinking fountain.

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Cheatham Park

Location: 3000 block of Jones Avenue

Acreage: 15

Classification: Community

Overview

Located across the street from Peabody Magnet High School, this large park is broken into several smaller areas by surrounding roads, driveways, and parking lots associated with the ballfield and the school. Several parking areas are available, as well as some passive recreation areas. The park also boasts a small picnic shelter, a large community shelter and a stand-alone restroom. Five full-sized basketball courts are available for play, including three built on a previously filled swimming pool. An old baseball stadium -- a steel structure with wooden seats -- lies at one end of the park and is used by the high school. This stadium has a small concession/restroom building and separate field houses for each team, as well as a press box. The park also has an asphalt walking trail loop that has a fitness station along its course.

Review

Parking areas vary between gravel and asphalt and are often broken into several small sections that do not flow together. From the parking lot there are few, if any, accessible routes to the older facilities. The small picnic shelter is isolated and in need of a new roof and electrical work; however, it is sturdy and in fair shape. Accessibility is available to the new, large picnic shelter whose overhangs provide open use for picnicking and a secured central area for larger shelter rentals. Another building in fair shape is the stand-alone restroom. In terms of basketball courts, the first set, which contains two courts, are in fair shape, but the fencing and lighting need to be replaced. The courts located on the old pool are in fair shape as well, as is their fencing. No lighting is provided here and the old bathhouse, which remains closed, requires maintenance. At the baseball field, the outfield fence is not uniformly shaped, measuring over 300' down the line and nearly 400' in center field. Though the turf is not irrigated, it remains in fair condition. Both batting cages are in fair condition, but some sections of the outfield fencing need replacement. The stadium itself is very old and has recently received a new metal roof. Due to its age, accessibility and compliance with current codes and safety guidelines are limited, yet overall the stadium has been regularly maintained and continues to provide good service. An evaluation of its structural integrity and updates for accessibility and safety compliance could continue its life span. Also, the trail surrounding the park is well used but requires resurfacing, as well as more opportunities for resting.

Recommendations:

- Redesign layout and repave all parking areas to maximize efficiency. ADA access required from parking areas to all site amenities.
- Provide overall connectivity between site elements with ADA access.
- Revitalize small picnic shelter and provide new site furnishings as well as ADA access.
- Revitalize front basketball courts with new fencing, lighting, site furnishings and court surfacing. Provide vandal resistant drinking fountain in this area.
- Relocate tennis courts from Frank O. Hunter Park to Cheatham Park (perhaps at old pool location currently housing auxiliary basketball courts). Provide ADA access to all courts and provide new fencing, lighting, site furnishings and court surfacing.
- Revitalize old pool house to accommodate pro shop and concessions for relocated tennis.
- Realign and replace outfield fencing at baseball field.

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- Improve landscape maintenance of grassed areas around pavement.
- Perform analysis of structural integrity of stadium. If it is sound, proceed with updates to meet current safety and ADA code requirements.
- Provide pavement under grandstand seating for improved maintenance and appearance.
- Repave and widen walking trail and provide additional resting opportunities with benches. Consider connecting to greenway master plan.
- Proceed with current spray pad installation plans.

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Compton Park

Location: 4200 block of Wakefield Boulevard

Acreage: 10

Classification: Community

Overview

Located in a residential area in western Alexandria, this park serves as one of the crown jewels of the City's park system. Compton Park features large walking trail loops with interpretive signage as well as low, decorative masonry walls that protect internal turf areas from vehicles. These lawn areas are occupied by playground structures, benches and trash cans. Attached to one of the trails is an observation deck that allows park visitors to experience the native wetlands in the area. A small asphalt parking lot serves that site as well as the adjacent J.B. Newman School.

Review

In general, all landscape and grassed areas are well maintained. The open play lawn, which has irrigation present but is not operated, is in good condition with minimal weed cover. Smaller landscaped areas contain large plantings of native materials along the fence, many of which are overgrown and difficult to maintain. In all, many trees have been planted but have not reached enough size to provide good shade. Some of these trees have been planted as memorials with the associated dedication plaques. The walking trails on the site are heavily used and in need of widening and resurfacing. Likewise, the interpretive signage placed at key locations is beginning to show wear. The wall caps for the decorative masonry walls need replacement in some places. While the observation deck is in fair shape, portions of the guardrail do not meet code for size of opening between members. Furthermore, some portions of the guardrail also need renovation. The playground structure is in good to fair shape with only minor maintenance issues. It is surfaced with resilient surfacing that is beginning to deteriorate.

Recommendations:

- Landscape materials along the park's edge with the detention basin must be allowed to naturalize to reduce maintenance requirements.
- Railing on overlook needs replacement to meet current safety and ADA guidelines.
- Safety surface at playground will require replacement at some point during the life of this master plan.
- Faded/worn interpretive signage will require replacement, as necessary.
- Replace caps for decorative walls, as necessary.
- Trail needs resurfacing and widening to accommodate two-way traffic.
- Update site furnishings to meet new design standard.
- Provide vandal-resistant drinking fountain

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Deborah Bowman Park

Location: 3300 block of Redwood Drive

Acreage: 2

Classification: Mini

Overview

Located at the rear of a small residential area, this park likely serves only its surrounding neighbors. A small asphalt parking lot is provided for others visiting the facility. The park consists of an open play lawn with a small shelter and a playground area, as well as a full basketball court.

Review

Perimeter fencing is composed primarily of chain link fencing, which is largely in good condition. Wooden fencing along the residences, likely provided by the developer, needs some maintenance. Additional security is provided by cobra style lights on wooden poles. Overall, the open play lawn is in good condition, with few weeds present and thin or base grassing occurring only in shaded areas. The small shelter is in fair shape despite its cracked slab, and contains two tables and two grills. Playground structures are scattered over the site and generally do not meet current playground safety requirements (see general playground surface note). The new metal/plastic playground is in good shape, while the wooden playground is in fair shape. Recent repairs to the wooden sections may not meet code. The basketball court is in good condition. There are no accessible routes present on the site, nor are there any permanent restrooms, only portable restrooms. Due to the lack of trees on the site, there is little shade to provide relief from the sun.

Recommendations:

- Replace broken or missing wooden fence boards.
- Consolidate playground equipment into one area to provide additional greenspace for play lawn or additional programming. Playgrounds to be ADA accessible and meet current safety surface standards.
- Replace small shelter and provide ADA access.
- Provide permanent restroom and vandal resistant drinking fountain.
- Provide additional shade trees, bench seating, and ADA access to basketball area.

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Enterprise Park

Location: 1100 block of Stracener Street

Acreage: 3

Classification: Mini

Overview

Enterprise Park is located at the base of the Hwy 71/I-49 interchange amidst some multi-family properties. This small park primarily serves the residents of the adjacent apartment complex; an opening in the fence is provided near the apartments. A small concrete parking lot connects to an open play lawn containing various playground equipment and site furnishings.

Review

Accessibility is an issue here because the parking lot lacks handicapped parking, and none of the park elements are connected through accessible routes. Chain link fencing around the perimeter is in fair condition, though some sections need replacement. There is no gate at the entrance to the parking lot. Additional security is provided through the use of cobra style lights on wooden poles. In general, the open play lawn is in good condition. Though many weeds are present, overall maintenance is good and grass is only thin or bare in shaded areas. Mismatched site furnishings are scattered over the site, as is older playground equipment whose surfacing is a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note). There is no picnic shelter, and the lack of trees on site combines to offer very little shade for park visitors. There are no permanent restrooms, only portable ones.

Recommendations:

- Provide handicapped parking with ADA compliant accessibility to site features.
- Replace perimeter fencing and install entry gate to close park after hours of operation.
- Update and consolidate playground elements into one facility, which will provide additional greenspace for a play lawn or other programming. Install new playground surfacing to meet current safety standards.
- Replace site furnishings with new City standard.
- Provide shelter for picnic opportunities, permanent restroom, and vandal resistant drinking fountain.
- Plan some additional landscaping to provide shade to park users.

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Frank O. Hunter Park

Location: 2401 Willow Glen River Road

Acreage: 22

Classification: Community

Overview

Tucked away amid the residences of the lower third ward is Frank O. Hunter Park. This large park offers various amenities including a large baseball field, asphalt walking trail loop, open play lawn, restroom/picnic shelter, large and small play structures, two full-sized basketball courts, five tennis courts, a large gym with indoor basketball courts, and a small backstop near the back of the property.

Review

The parking lot is in good condition, though it often does not provide enough spaces to meet the needs of weekend activities. Access from the parking lot to the various amenities is limited particularly with older facilities. At the large baseball field, the outfield fence, with its 280' radius, is in fair shape. However, the dugouts and backstop will need replacement, as will the bleachers, which are old and unsafe. The press box/restroom in this area is also old and does not meet code. In general, the open play lawn is in fair condition. Weeds are more commonly found along the perimeter and grass is only thin or bare in shaded areas. Within the open play lawn, various site furnishings are mismatched and scattered over the site. Several picnic tables, many of which have grills, are found in various locations on concrete pads and have no accessible routes to them. Both play structures on the site are in fair shape and both lack the proper surfacing materials (see general playground surfacing note). The walking loop which surrounds many of the park features is well used but requires resurfacing and more opportunities for resting. Throughout this area, trees provide good shade; however, none are provided in the parking lot planting areas. The small restroom/picnic shelter is in fair shape but needs updating and maintenance due to vandalism.

Due to the warm climate through the majority of the year, the recently air conditioned gym is frequently used for its indoor basketball courts. This building is in fair condition but lacks a wood or resilient surface on the concrete surfaced court. There is very little programming opportunity in the gym at present, as there are no breakout rooms or methods to subdivide the space. Hours of operation are also limited due to lack of staffing.

Both outdoor basketball courts are in good shape, though they lack the necessary fencing. Lights on wooden poles in this area are in fair shape, but may not provide adequate lighting. The five court tennis are in poor shape. All the fencing related to this facility needs to be replaced and the courts are cracked. Additionally, the nets are missing from the courts and the bleacher cover is rotting. Finally, the small backstop at the back of the property is in fair shape.

Vandalism in this park is an issue with all the security lighting on the gym being broken out at the time of the first site visit. Staff comments indicate that many of the security lights throughout the park are not working and this adds to problems in the park. Other safety issues are caused by traffic patterns in the park, with major problems with traffic on weekends.

Weekend traffic flows in the park are a problem. Many people like to cruise in this park and because it has only one entry/exit point, traffic becomes congested. As part of the study to redevelop the existing

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

baseball fields into a football complex, traffic flows in the park should be studied. One option may be to move more of the park adjacent to the main roadway and create two entry/exit points from the main road into the parking lot to keep cruisers on the edge of the park rather than penetrating deep into the park.

Recommendations:

- Consider redevelopment of the portions of park containing existing baseball, basketball and tennis courts. This area is ideally suited for a multi-field football complex with associated parking and a restroom/concessions facility.
- Relocate tennis courts to Cheatham Park (see Cheatham Park recommendations).
- Expand and renovate existing gymnasium to include auxiliary meeting/classrooms, staff office, and indoor courts with proper sport surfacing.
- Outdoor basketball courts should be relocated adjacent to gymnasium so park staff can monitor play.
- Replace cracked/missing pavement as necessary.
- Playground equipment will require replacement during the lifespan of this master plan. Provide safety surfacing meeting current standards.
- Additional landscaping required for visual appeal and shade, particularly in parking lot and gathering areas.
- Update site furnishings with new City standard and provide vandal-resistant drinking fountains.
- Walking trail requires resurfacing along with additional resting opportunities provided by bench seating.
- Renovate restroom/picnic shelter.
- Additional security lighting required.
- Small site drainage issues have arisen due to a lack of maintenance and need to be resolved.

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Greenbelt

Location: Around the perimeter of downtown

Acreage: 50

Classification: Greenway

Overview

This trail encircles downtown Alexandria, connecting various features of the city together. Paving along the trail varies, depending on the location, but it is generally a 10' wide asphalt trail. Lighting has been provided along the trail at a high level through the use of modern low sky-glow poles and fixtures. Trash cans and benches are also included in some areas on the trail.

Review

As the trail runs along the Red River levee, the paving sometimes switches to brick or concrete from larger riverfront developments. In some places, where the trail is routed along existing city street sidewalks, the pavement varies greatly in condition, making that section unsafe for some trail uses. Also, in areas where the trail uses existing sidewalks, it is not always clear in which direction the trail continues. Some parts of the trail run along city streets that are wide enough to accommodate an adjacent bike/pedestrian lane that could join sections of the trail currently located on sidewalks. There are some light poles along the trail that are damaged and need replacement. A connection across 3rd Street to the levee in the northwest corner of the Greenbelt is needed. The new 3rd Street traffic project involving a new Bayou Rapides bridge could include a way for the Greenbelt to cross the bayou and join the levee beyond the new flood control gates.

The trail lacks a consistent sign theme, wayfinding mapping at trail access points, mile markers and other trail amenities that are basic components of a modern trail system. Comments from citizens at the public meetings varied with respect to safety and use patterns. Many runners said they use the trail frequently without concerns for safety.

Recommendations:

- The planning team recommends analyzing the effectiveness of current lighting levels used on greenways. Many traditional greenways manage trail security through operating hours, such as dawn to dusk. Recent research has determined that supplementary lighting provides users with a false sense of security, rendering them vulnerable during at-risk hours. This analysis should also extend to other portions of the greenway, both existing and planned.
- Replace broken pavement along trail.
- Establish a consistent sign theme to include wayfinding mapping, mile markers and regulatory signage for pedestrians.
- Connect the Greenbelt to Bayou Rapides Trail.

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Harmon Park

Location: 2500 block of Monroe Street

Acreage: 3

Classification: Mini

Overview

Harmon Park is surrounded on all sides by residential development and likely serves the adjacent neighborhoods only. Playgrounds, picnic tables and a small octagon pavilion are the featured amenities for this park. On-street parking is used by visitors because there is no parking lot on site.

Review

The park is surrounded by chain link fencing that is in fair condition; only some sections need replacement. While some weeds are present on the open play lawn and maintenance there is good. Grass is only present in shaded areas and is thin or bare. The small playground in the park is in fair condition and is surfaced with a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note). New paint will be needed to cover the graffiti on the small octagon pavilion. Picnic tables set on concrete pads are scattered throughout the park and lack accessible routes to them, as do many of the other park amenities. Additional security is provided through the use of cobra style lights on wooden poles. The park does not have permanent restrooms, only portable ones. Plans are in place to have older playground equipment removed and a new sprayground and pre-fabricated restrooms installed in the near future.

Recommendations:

- Replace worn sections of fencing as needed.
- Playground equipment will require replacement during the life span of this master plan. New playground surfacing to meet current safety standards.
- New and existing site features will require ADA access throughout the site.
- Revitalize existing pavilion as needed to increase visual appeal.
- Provide restroom and vandal-resistant drinking fountain.
- Proceed with plans for sprayground installation.

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Harold Miles Park

Location: 100 block of Harold Miles Park Road

Acreage: 4.5

Classification: Mini

Overview

Harold Miles Park is accessed by a gravel parking area and features a large rental facility geared toward barbeque gatherings. The building is a large picnic-style dining hall with a rustic screened-in porch type setting, as well as a full service kitchen and a separate bar serving area. Immediately outside of the building are several large grills and a covered pig-roast pit. The park also includes a restroom building, a half basketball court and a new playground structure.

Review

Several security lights on wood poles are present on the site, as well as chain link perimeter fencing. The separate restroom building on the site is connected to the main building by an ADA accessible sidewalk. However, the new playground structure is isolated from other park features and also lacks a required sidewalk access route. Furthermore, there are no benches at the playground for parent seating. The playground safety surface does not comply with current standards (see general playground surface note). The separate half basketball court is in fair shape but is not connected to other facilities by sidewalks. In general, the site is woody and well shaded. Most of the site is covered with leaf and pine needle litter, with grass and weeds growing only in isolated clumps.

Recommendations:

- Consider providing greenway connection to Harold Miles Park with trailhead.
- Relocate playground so that it is closer to the shelter to improve parental supervision. New playground surface to meet current safety standards. Provide additional seating for parental supervision.
- All site elements should be connected by ADA accessible sidewalks.
- New large grills are required, as well as an overall update of the covered pig roasting area.
- Resurface basketball court and provide ADA access as well as seating for players.
- Increase maintenance to clean up tree litter.

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Helen Black Park

Location: 1500 block of Ashley Avenue

Acreage: 0.5

Classification: Mini

Overview

Nestled between the surrounding neighborhood areas, Helen Black Park sits in two sections, separated by North 15th Street. One side of the park contains a small playground structure partially surrounded by a seatwall and a basketball court. The other side features an open lawn area, walking trail and a metal roofed picnic shelter. Picnic tables and grills are provided

throughout the site, as well. Neither portion of the park is served by a paved parking area, therefore, pedestrian traffic and on-street parking is used to access the site.

Review

Park security is provided solely through perimeter chain link fencing, as the park has no lighting. Overall, the fencing is in good condition with only a few sections needing replacement. The fence is also gated and secured after hours. The walking trail on site is well used and is considered to be in good shape in most places. Within the walking trail, the open play lawn is in fair condition; however, more bare areas are present than at other parks due to shade and wear. A portion of the open play lawn contains the picnic shelter, which is in good shape, but needs a sidewalk connection to the trail. Along the length of the trail are plenty of trees to provide adequate shade for park users. The picnic tables and grills provided on the site are scattered and only a few are accessible with paved routes. At the other half of the park, the small playground structure is in fair condition, but it is surfaced with a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note). Surrounding the playground area is a seatwall, which was provided for observing parents, but it lacks shade. At the basketball court, the goalposts are rusting and need replacement. In general, many facilities at the park are joined by accessible routes, but not all of them. Also, there are no permanent restrooms provided, only portable ones. During review, it was noted that there are several adjacent lots which are vacant and could be joined to expand the park.

Recommendations:

- Replace perimeter fencing as needed.
- Replace broken trail pavement as needed.
- Consider installing raised crosswalk between both sides of park for pedestrian safety and traffic calming.
- Consider replacing open play lawn with shade tolerant grasses.
- Consolidate picnic tables and grills and provide accessible pavement to each.
- Playground equipment will require replacement during the life of this master plan. New playground should have safety surfacing meeting current standards.
- Provide permanent restroom.
- Provide new site furnishings conforming to new City standards and provide vandal-resistant drinking fountain near basketball courts.
- Replace existing basketball goals and resurface the courts. Provide additional seating in this area for players.
- Shade tree plantings required on basketball side of park, particularly where seating areas are planned.
- Investigate possible park expansion onto surrounding vacant lots.

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Johnny Downs Sports Complex

Location: 271 Vandenburg Drive

Acreage: 80

Classification: Community Park/Sports Complex

Overview

Located near the western reaches of the city, Johnny Downs is the premier sports complex for Alexandria. This large park offers five full-sized soccer fields, 10 to 13 smaller soccer fields, two baseball facilities and a “wall-of-fame,” all with asphalt parking provided. The soccer complex features a central restroom/concession area with three buildings set on a concrete plaza. Both baseball facilities feature four fields with 200’ outfield fences surrounding a central complex containing four press box/restroom/concessions buildings. Eight batting cages and an additional 400’ field have been added in recent years.

Review

Although a large number of paved parking areas have been provided, overflow parking along the loop gravel drive occurs frequently during tournament events. Due to the lack of curb and gutter in parking areas, areas of wear and erosion are showing within parking islands and surrounding turf areas. Handicapped parking areas have been provided but do not fully comply with ADA standards. At the soccer complex, the turf is in good shape, though it is not irrigated. These fields are reserved for game use, forcing practice to occur at the O’Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields. New sports lighting is mounted on concrete poles, but soccer nets and backstop nets are in poor shape and need replacement. Bleachers at these soccer fields have a small shade pavilion and are set in grass, which is causing maintenance issues due to the wear beneath the bleachers. Also, ADA access is not provided to many of the bleacher areas. The buildings comprising the restroom/concession area of the soccer fields are beginning to show signs of wear and need minor maintenance. This central plaza does not have shade. Sports turf provided at the baseball fields is in good shape, although it is not irrigated. New sports lighting has also been mounted here on concrete poles. In all, the fencing at these complexes is in good shape, but backstops are beginning to see some wear issues. While the central plazas at these facilities provide good shade, ADA scoring is not possible, nor are the drain grates in the pavement ADA compliant. Park patrons within these central plazas would have a difficult time orienting to the fields from the center of the complex. Wayfinding signage would help resolve this issue. Due to their location between the outfield fences, ADA access to the batting cages is not provided. This area is also experiencing some drainage issues.

Recommendations:

- Redesign handicapped parking areas to attain full ADA compliance.
- Replace soccer nets and backstop nets.
- Consider setting soccer field bleachers on accessible concrete pads to reduce maintenance and increase visual appeal.
- Minor renovations are required on the soccer restroom/concession buildings.
- Provide shade trees around sitting areas in soccer plaza.
- Renovate backstops as necessary.
- Consider developing ADA scoring options at baseball complex. Replace or address drain grates in baseball plaza for ADA compliance.
- Provide wayfinding signage throughout complex.

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- Relocate batting cages to avoid drainage issues in current location and provide ADA access.
- Increase the use of all fields. Current operations require maintenance of two soccer complexes for the same number of users, thereby splitting maintenance staff and budgets.

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Lincoln Park

Location: 600 block of Fairfield Avenue

Acreage: 2

Classification: Mini

Overview

Running along the base of the Red River levee, Lincoln Park features an open play lawn, two basketball goals and a playground. Some site furnishings are also present at these amenities.

Review

On-street parking and pedestrian traffic is used at this park due to its size constraints. Surrounding its perimeter is chain link fencing, which is largely in good condition, but requires replacement at some sections. Additional security is provided through the use of cobra style lights on wooden poles. The

open play lawn is in good condition, having many weeds present, but overall maintenance is good. Grass is only thin or bare in shaded areas. Older playgrounds and mismatched site furnishings are scattered across the site. Such playgrounds are surfaced with a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note) and have shade provided by tree cover. Both basketball goals on site are provided on grass and dirt without a paved court. There are no accessible routes joining the various facilities together. To date, there are no permanent restrooms available for use, only portable ones.

Recommendations:

- Replace chain link fencing sections as needed.
- Replace and consolidate playground elements into one area to provide additional greenspace for play lawn or alternative programming. New playground to have safety surfacing meeting current standards.
- Replace site furnishings with current City standards.
- Provide basketball courts with proper surfacing, seating, and shade opportunities.
- All site features should be connected by accessible sidewalks.
- Provide permanent restroom and vandal-resistant drinking fountain.

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Links on the Bayou Golf Course

Location: 271 Vandenburg Drive

Acreage: 160

Classification: Special Use

Overview

This regulation golf course, located behind Johnny Downs Sports Complex, offers 18 holes of play and a new clubhouse.

Review

The overall condition of the golf course, clubhouse and driving range is good. The interior maintenance and appearance of the clubhouse was not appealing upon entry. The current operator of the golf course should do more to present a professional presentation of golf and food merchandise in the clubhouse. Food service attendants were poorly trained and it seemed there is a relationship with regular golfers that gives the impression of excluding first time users.

We were not able to obtain a history of the number of rounds being played at the course, which is another sign of less than adequate management and supervision. Golf is a highly competitive business and the manager of the course should be expected to present a professional management approach to all aspects of the course operations.

Recommendations:

- Review the current management contract and change the approach of payment from guaranteed revenue to a payment plan that has incentive-based performance for the golf manager.

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Martin Park

Location: 400 block of Ellis Street

Acreage: 20

Classification: Community

Overview

This abandoned park once contained several baseball amenities, but now contains only a small asphalt parking lot and a dilapidated press box. Currently, the City continues to maintain a D.A.R.E. office and a new 911 Command Center near the park's entry drive.

Review

The abandoned press box is poorly maintained and the target of frequent vandalism. What remains of the ballfield is now an overgrown open area filled with brush and weeds.

Recommendations:

- Temporarily close this facility for public use until programming has been determined based on service level analysis.
- Demolish existing structure and remove all debris.
- Create grassed area for ease of maintenance during facility closing

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Mason Street Park

Location: 2055 Mason Street

Acreage: 0.25

Classification: Mini

Overview

Mason Street Park features an open play lawn containing a small swing set and several concrete benches.

Review

Due to size constraints, pedestrian traffic and on-street parking is used to access the park from surrounding areas. Some chain link fencing is used around the perimeter of the site, though it does not wholly enclose it. This fencing is in fair condition; however, some sections need replacement. Additional site security is provided by cobra style lights set on wooden poles. The park's open play lawn is in fair condition, containing thin or bare grassing in shaded areas and weeds present at the perimeter. Furthermore, this lawn has poor drainage issues, often retaining water after a rainfall. Within the open lawn area, remnants of a previous playground application are present in the form of play area curbing that is present in turf areas. Today, a portion of this curbing contains an old swing set in poor condition that is surfaced with a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note). Concrete benches are scattered over the site, particularly near paved areas. While some sidewalks provide accessible routes to many facilities, they do not join all of them. Although there are no restrooms or shelters, the many trees present on the site provide good shade to park patrons. Adjacent to the park are many abandoned or vacant properties, as well as a school. If a future greenbelt extension from downtown to City Park is developed, this park has the potential to be utilized or expanded to be included along its route.

Recommendations:

- Replace sections of chain link fencing, as necessary.
- Consolidate play structures to allow for additional open space for play lawn or other programming.
- All playgrounds should have safety surfacing that meets current standards.
- ADA accessibility should be provided to all site features.
- Address site drainage issues.
- Provide restroom facilities and vandal-resistant drinking fountain
- Remove debris from previous playground installation.
- Investigate possible park expansion through adjacent properties that are abandoned or vacant.

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O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields

Location: 6200 block of Bayou Rapides Rd.

Acreage: 30

Classification: Community

Overview

Prior to the opening of the Johnny Downs Sports Complex, this large facility originally served as the City's main soccer complex. Today it is used primarily for practice, as it currently holds space for 8-10 soccer fields. Some sports lighting is provided at the complex as well as parking on a gravel lot. Trees are scarce on the site, but some structures have been provided for shaded areas, including press box scoring buildings. Additional amenities include picnic tables and other various site furnishings.

Review

Since its transition from a primary play area to a practice facility, the complex has fallen into disrepair, but still takes the wear of a full-service facility. While the space for 8-10 fields is apparent, distinct fields are difficult to determine. Currently, the turf is not irrigated and is comprised of mowed weeds. Only a few older light fixtures on wooden poles remain in scattered places, resulting in insufficient lighting levels for night play. The old gravel lot serving as a parking area is rapidly being overtaken by weeds. The shade structures and press box scoring buildings are also falling into disrepair. Although scattered picnic tables and other site furnishings still exist, most are in bad shape and require replacement. In general, no ADA access routes are provided to any facility.

Recommendation:

- Due to close proximity with soccer complex at Johnny Downs, the planning team recommends redeveloping site with additional programming as determined in service area evaluations.

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Old Menard School Park

Location: 1900 block of Elliott Street

Acreage: 2.5

Classification: Mini

Overview

This open lawn area was once the site of Menard School. Today, the site serves as an informal green space with a practice-level baseball backstop and a small landscaped area that is planted and maintained by the Garden District Association.

Review

Pedestrian traffic and on-street parking are used to access the site from surrounding areas. The open play lawn is in good condition. Though weeds are present, overall maintenance is good, with grass thin or bare in shaded areas. The existing backstop, which opens to the grass lawn, is in fair shape, but rusting. The site does not contain any permanent restrooms.

Recommendations:

- Maintain open lawn area until alternative programming is determined by service area evaluations.

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Peabody Playground

Location: 1300 block of Broadway Avenue

Acreage: 2

Classification: Mini

Overview

Across the street from Cheatham Park, this small site lies on the front lawn of Peabody Magnet High School. The park consists primarily of some play structures and an open play lawn encircled by a walking trail. Some parking is also provided on the site.

Review

Several larger, more recent play structures on the site have fallen into disrepair due to extensive use and vandalism. Furthermore, these structures are set over a sand and pea gravel mixture for the safety surface (see general playground surface note). In

general, all structures need a detailed evaluation for safety and need replacement components. While some fencing has been provided around the playground area, the large passive areas of the park are not fenced. However, additional site security has been implemented through the use of traffic control bollards and cobra style security lighting. Other playground equipment and mismatched site furnishings are scattered over the site, which has limited accessibility to all features. The looping asphalt walking trail that surrounds the site is well used, but needs resurfacing and more opportunities for resting. In general, the open play lawn is in fair condition, with thin or bare grassing in shaded areas. While there are no shelters, the trees on site, many of which are memorial trees that have been installed over the years, provide good shade to park patrons.

Recommendations:

- Parking demands for this area can be easily met through the adjacent parking lot at the school building. Consider removing the internal parking lot and drive to make room for additional greenspace to be used for additional programming. Deletion of the parking lot will also permit the removal of traffic control bollards which currently “litter” the site.
- Consolidate and replace existing playground equipment to create more space for additional programming. New playground equipment should be installed on a safety surface that meets current safety guidelines.
- Provide additional fencing around the perimeter of the park to enhance facility security.
- Replace existing site furnishings with new ones meeting the current city standards.
- Resurface and widen walking trail and provide more resting opportunities through the use of additional benches meeting the current city standard.
- Provide standardized park regulatory signage.
- Consider expanding open play lawn following the removal of internal parking lot and provide open air shelters for picnicking and outdoor classrooms.
- Provide vandal resistant drinking fountain.

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Wycliffe Way Park

Location: Between Wycliffe Way Blvd and the diversion canal

Acreage: 4 acres

Classification: Mini

Overview

This undeveloped site serves primarily as a greenspace used for viewing by neighbors across the street.

Review

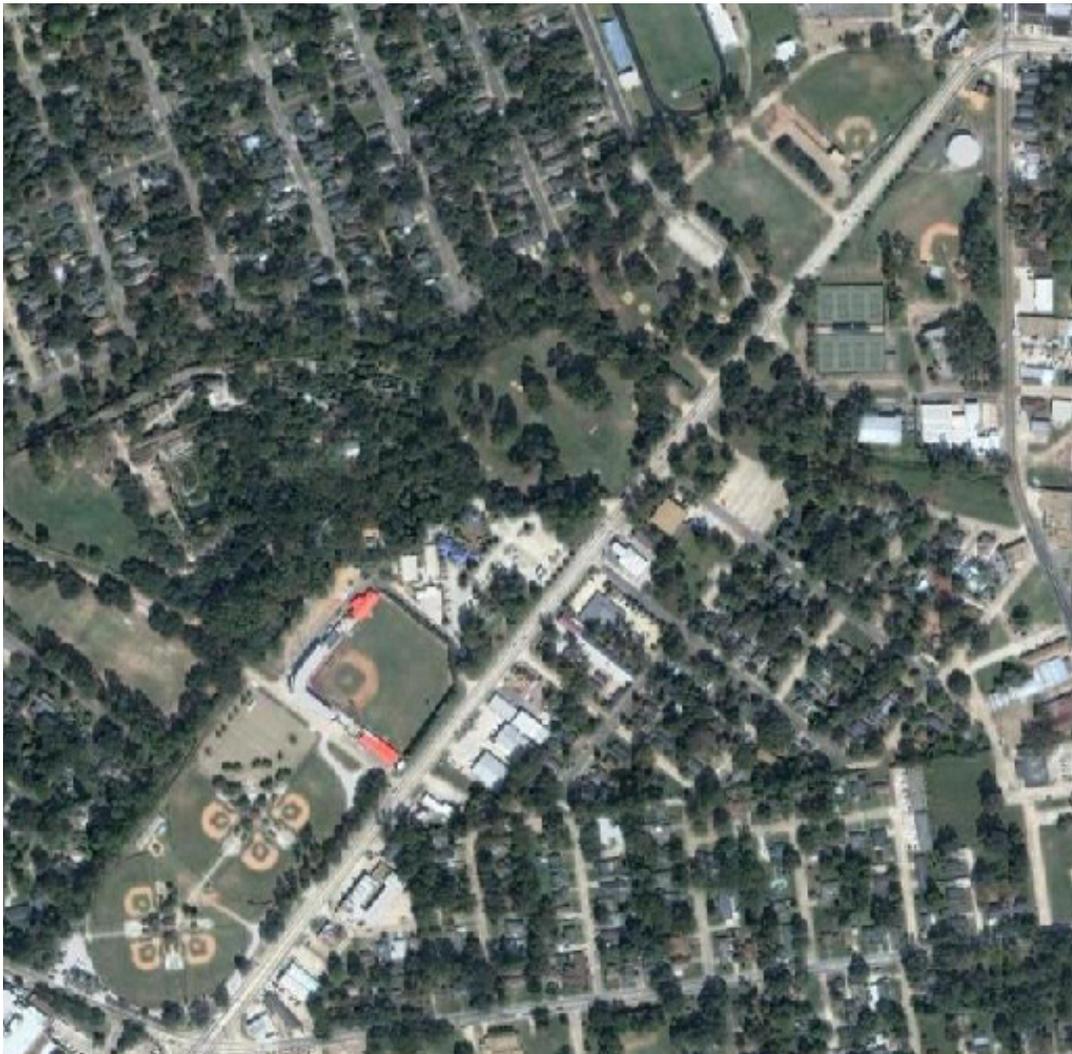
Although it is currently undeveloped, this site has potential to be integrated into a future greenway corridor along the adjacent diversion canal. It currently contains nice shade trees and an occasionally maintained turf area with weeds at its perimeter.

Recommendations:

- Consider plan for future development as possible greenway connection. If such development were to occur, this site would make ideal location for trailhead. Auxiliary site features to be provided with trailhead include on site parking, restroom, wayfinding and trail signage as well as site furnishings, including a vandal resistant drinking fountain.
- All future development to meet current ADA guidelines for accessibility.

City Park Master Plan Development

Throughout the facility evaluation period, the planning team noted that Alexandria's City Park is perceived by many to be the heart of the City's park system, a place in which all citizens take deep pride. Currently, this 90+ acre facility, which we have classified as a community park, exists as a combination of facilities operating independently with little, if any, connectivity. While recent efforts have been made to revitalize these facilities through spotted renovations, no attempts have been made to unify these areas into a cohesive facility. Therefore, the planning team recommends that a master plan be developed to reorganize, connect and revitalize City Park and all of its associated facilities to create a cohesive park experience that is capable of achieving the regional recognition that Alexandria desires and deserves. The following is a list of facilities to be considered within the scope of this master plan, along with their current evaluations. Recommendations made for each facility are to be considered as integral components required for the successful development of this master plan. Coordination and cooperation with several different land owners (school board, private groups, etc.) providing nearly the same services will also be crucial to the plan's success. Additional land in the form of vacant or underutilized residential properties may need to be acquired at the edges of the existing City Park parcels to allow the City Park Master Plan to fully examine the potential for redevelopment.



SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex

Location: 3100 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 14

Overview

Located on the edge of City Park, the Youth Baseball Complex offers six baseball fields with sports lighting broken into two “clover” arrangements. Four of the fields have 200’ outfield fences while the remaining two have 175’ outfield fences. Each set of fields contains a central plaza with a central control building. The complex also contains four batting cages as well as a small playground. On-site parking is also provided.

Review

The asphalt parking provided at the complex is not sufficient to provide the required number of spaces. In addition, parking lot trees that have died have not been replaced. While the parking lot and surrounding sidewalks probably met accessibility guidelines for the time it was built, both will require updating to comply with current ADA standards. Supplemental parking is provided through gravel parking lots along the outfield fence. Many of these areas are heavily rutted and poorly drained. Currently, a project is underway to remove some of this gravel parking and return it to open greenspace. Ballfield turf is in fair shape despite the lack of irrigation, but not up to the same level as new fields in the park system. Field drainage is also a problem that impacts playability. The fixtures situated on the metal sports lighting poles are aging and may not provide adequate light levels for league play. Many communities are moving to 50 foot candles on the infield and 30 in the outfield for improved safety. Lighting levels need to be checked to make sure there are at least 30 foot candles on the infields and 20 in the outfield, which is the minimum standard. Dugouts, backstops, and outfield fences are in good to fair condition with only minor repairs required. However, drinking fountains and phone jacks located in the dugouts are broken. A random arrangement of netting is present along each backstop, but may not be adequately designed to protect spectators, as planned. Due to the existence of these nets, shade trees that once provided much needed protection from the sun have been removed. Within the central plazas, paved areas appear well drained, though some cracking is occurring. The control building within each plaza is in fair condition, though both are now beginning to show age, such as rotting wood trim. Furthermore, the buildings will require updating for compliance with current ADA standards. The playground placed between outfield fences is in a dangerous area, as no protective netting is provided.

Recommendations:

- The City Park Master Plan should evaluate current parking plan and recommend location and layout for auxiliary parking that may be shared by multiple facilities. Landscaping within and surrounding parking areas should be provided and replaced as necessary throughout the facility. Parking should meet current ADA standards for full accessibility compliance.
- The City Park Master Plan should also discuss the potential coordination with the school board for the conversion of the Ben Bradford Field to other uses and the consolidation of the Bolton Women’s Softball activities to the City Park Baseball complex.
- Proceed with removal of perimeter gravel parking and return to greenspace. These areas are ideal for tailgate activities during tournaments and Alexandria Aces home games.
- All fields should be regraded to provide adequate drainage. Consider providing irrigation for new field turf to maintain high field quality.
- Master plan should also consider the replacement of sports lighting to meet current standards, as

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

well as the replacement of all dugouts, backstops, fencing and safety netting.

- Master plan should also consider the development of a large central plaza, located in the currently unused space between the field complexes. Recommended plaza components include state-of-the-art concession building, wall of fame, seating opportunities with abundant shade, supplemental landscaping to enhance visual appeal, and the necessary protective playground netting.
- Provide updated site furnishings meeting current city standards, as well as vandal-resistant drinking fountains.
- Existing playground should be upgraded and relocated to proposed central plaza area with overhead safety netting, as needed for protection from stray balls. New playground equipment should be installed on play surface meeting current safety standards.
- Consider converting existing central buildings to storage, restroom and scoring only. Renovate as necessary to comply with current accessibility guidelines and provide an increase in overall visual appeal.
- Replace pavement in existing plazas as needed and provide landscaping for increased visual appeal and shade.

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Alexandria Zoo

Location: South City Park Boulevard

Acreage: 33

Classification: Special Use

Overview

The Alexandria Zoo is the number one tourist destination in the region. This is one of the most unique elements of the city and should continue to receive funding support from the city.

Review

The zoo falls into the category of the upper tier of recreation facilities in Alexandria. It is the most heavily visited tourist facility in the City. The zoo is in good condition overall, with a variety of large and small animal exhibits. Our team received a guided tour by the late zoo director and overall he seemed pleased with the zoo. He presented us with a copy of the zoo master plan and shared how some exhibits were being updated and expanded as funds permitted.

The long-term viability of the zoo appears to be very good. As stated in the general comments, expandability and lack of parking are key issues to be dealt with. Another issue is providing more meeting room space for programming and special events.

Zoo facilities are in good shape overall. The biggest issue facing the zoo seems to be the lack of space to expand. Bringhurst Baseball Field, Bringhurst Golf Course, Big Island Field and Babe Street all limit expansion at the zoo. The current welcome center is small and limits the ability of the zoo's retail operations and entry experience. Special event space is also limited. Zoo staff indicated a lack of parking during peak use periods.

Recommendations:

- Continue the implementation of the Zoo Master Plan. City Park Master Plan to examine ideal location for facility expansion. The planning team recommends the adjacent open space currently along Babe Ruth Street.
- The City Park Master Plan should evaluate current parking plans and recommend location and layout for auxiliary parking that may be shared by multiple facilities. Landscaping within and surrounding parking areas should be provided and replaced as necessary throughout the facility. Parking should meet current ADA standards for full accessibility compliance.
- In order to better integrate the zoo with other recreation programming activities it is suggested that the zoo be moved into back into the parks and recreation facilities group.

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Ben Bradford Field

Location: 2700 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 3.5

Overview

Ben Bradford Field is approximately a 260' ball field used primarily as the Girls' Softball Team facility for the nearby Bolton High School. No parking is provided specifically for this facility, as a result, parking occurs at nearby facilities such as the Bringham Park Playhouse or the Handicapped Training Center. Additional amenities at the field are two batting cages, large bleachers, new sports lighting fixtures, and a press box/restroom building.

Review

Although the field turf is not irrigated, it remains in fair condition. The outfield fence is not uniformly shaped, measuring 260' in the corners and about 280' in center field. Appearing to have been replaced recently, the chain link fencing throughout the facility is in good shape, though some remaining areas require replacement, such as the batting cages. Both the large bleachers and the press box/restroom building are in fair shape, though these and other amenities lack the accessible routes required by ADA standards.

Recommendations:

- The City Park Master Plan should consider the relocation of girls' softball to the Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex, allowing play in a higher-quality facility and the release of this area for alternative programming.
- The Master Plan should also consider developing this area into an expansion of the Tennis Complex. Options for this expansion may include additional parking, pro shop, additional courts and/or central plaza. See Tennis Complex comments for additional information.

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Big Island Field

Location: 1900 block of Babe Ruth Street

Acreage: 7

Overview

Centrally located in the heart of City Park, Big Island Field is primarily an open play lawn that has assumed the role of informal playfields for soccer and football. This quiet area is nearly wholly encircled by large live oaks providing shade along its perimeter. Some picnic tables have been provided in the area, as well as other site furnishings.

Review

Parking spaces are provided between the large live oaks that line the street. Depending on the intensity of the use on the field at a given time, parking may or may not be sufficient. The overall play lawn is in good condition with few weeds present; thin or bare grassing is existent only in shaded areas. Nearly all site amenities lack the required accessibility from the parking area.

Recommendations:

- Remove sports equipment and release the area for alternative programming to be determined during City Park Master Plan development. Accommodations for rectangular field play have been recommended at Frank O. Hunter Park and should not be considered for this area.
- Alternative site uses to be considered in Master Plan development include additional parking facilities, open play lawn with walking track, picnic area with shelters, dog park and trailhead location for greenbelt connection/expansion.

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Boys and Girls Club Picnic Area

Location: 2900 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 1

Overview

The Boys and Girls Club of Alexandria uses this open lawn area, adjacent to the building it rents from the City, for picnicking and other various outdoor activities. Picnic tables on concrete pads are scattered throughout that area beneath the many shade trees on the site.

Review

There is no consistency to the arrangement of the picnic tables, nor are there any accessible routes to them. The overall play lawn is in good condition with few weeds present; thin or bare grassing is existent only in shaded areas.

Recommendations:

- Updates are required on the building, itself to increase visual appeal and program suitability, as well as compliance with current ADA accessibility guidelines.
- Consolidate picnic area and provide full accessibility along with updated site furnishings conforming to current city standards.
- City Park Master Plan to evaluate parking requirements for this facility.
- Potential trailhead location for greenbelt connection/expansion.

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Bringhurst Golf Course

Location: 2900 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 7

Classification: Special Use

Overview

Bringhurst Golf Course is located in the heart of City Park next to the Zoo. It is a 9-hole par 3 historical course weaving through the surrounding oak trees. The course had fallen into disrepair and is presently being renovated.

Review

Although it is undergoing renovations, our interviews with citizens and staff did not indicate a clear direction for the course. It was mentioned that it is hoped this golf course will become a course for children and possibly for teaching. This is an example of moving forward with a project without fully developing a long range goal and master plan in context to surrounding park uses, i.e., the Zoo and City Park.

Recommendations:

- City Park Master Plan should evaluate the context of the golf course and its associated amenities in the context of a cohesive development with surrounding facilities. Opportunities to provide support to the zoo and surrounding park uses should also be addressed in the master plan. A fully developed master plan should also be created for the course itself to streamline renovations and address the historic nature of this facility.
- Master Plan to consider the development of formal pro shop, clubhouse, restrooms and parking amenities to increase the value and draw of this course.
- Consider the development of a First Tee program to be run out this course to serve inner-city youth. Develop a management plan that puts operating hours into place and coordinates other programs offered by the park.
- Opportunities to provide support to the zoo and surrounding park uses should also be addressed in the master plan.

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City Park Playground

Location: 2900 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 3.5

Overview

Another component of the City Park system, this large open play area contains several playground structures as well as various site furnishings. These play structures are located within an open play lawn that is enclosed by chain link fencing. A concrete parking lot provides access to the park as well as a large octagon pavilion in its center. A stand-alone restroom is also available for use by park patrons.

Review

Playground equipment scattered on the site is surfaced with a mixture of sand and pea gravel (see general playground surface note). No facilities on the site are joined by accessible routes. A chain link fence surrounds the site and is in fair condition, with only a few sections requiring replacement, particularly near the parking lot. Additional security is provided by cobra style lights on wooden poles. The open play lawn is in good condition, with few weeds and thin or bare grassing occurring only in shaded areas. The octagon pavilion needs fresh paint, a new roof, and minor structural repair, but is otherwise in fair shape. Older playground equipment, as well as the restroom, are scheduled to be replaced by a new spray pad and pre-fabricated restroom in the near future. Mature trees throughout the site ensure that there are many areas of good shade.

Recommendations:

- Proceed with current development plans including spray pad, consolidated playground with safety surfacing and modular restroom building.
- City Park Master Plan to consider the connectivity of this facility with adjacent facilities and evaluate current parking layout.
- All site amenities to be connected with accessible sidewalks.
- Consider renovation of historic pavilion on site to ensure its viability and conforming to current ADA standards.
- Upgrade all site furnishings to meet current city standard.
- Master Plan to evaluate the need for perimeter fencing in certain locations in order to form a more cohesive connection to surrounding park elements. Replace fencing as needed where Master Plan recommends that it remain.

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Diamond #1 (Masonic Field)

Location: 2700 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 3.5

Overview

At the northernmost point of City Park lies Diamond #1, a baseball field used primarily by Bolton High School. Aside from the actual field, this facility contains a press box/restroom building, bleachers and its own asphalt parking lot.

Review

Chain link fencing around the site is in poor condition and many sections need replacement. Also, the outfield fence is not uniformly shaped, as its corners are nearly 280' deep and it is over 300' in center field. Though it is not irrigated, the field turf is in fair condition. The bleachers need replacement because the steel structure has damage and the wood seats are rotting. Although new lights have been added to the older wooden poles, the outfield may not be adequately lighted for night play. The press box/restroom building is also need of maintenance as it is currently in poor shape. In general, there are no accessible routes provided to any of the amenities.

Recommendations:

- The City Park Master Plan should consider coordination with the school board for the relocation of boys' baseball to Bringhurst Ball Field, allowing play in a higher-quality facility and the release of this area for alternative programming.
- Additional coordination with the school board should be considered to include the practice field at Bolton H.S. into the redevelopment of the Diamond #1 area as part of the City Park Master Plan. This practice field can be relocated to nearby greenspace, etc.
- The Master Plan should investigate the feasibility of developing a regional recreation/aquatic facility at this location with associated parking.
- All proposed site features are to meet current ADA guidelines for accessibility and all site furnishings are to meet current city standards.

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Hynson Bayou Trail

Location: City Park Blvd, next to the Zoo and adjacent neighborhoods

Acreage: 16

Overview

Hynson Bayou meanders along the northern edge of City Park. Along this body of water is a narrow asphalt walking trail that stretches from portions of City Park out into historic neighborhoods before looping back again.

Review

Although this trail is heavily used, it remains in good condition. There are some benches and trash cans that are provided along its length. Currently, there is also potential for the trail to extend further along the Bayou, reaching deeper into the historic neighborhood.

Recommendations:

- City Park Master Plan should consider extending trail into park as well as the development of a formal trailhead with support facilities such as a restroom, parking, wayfinding and trail signage, and vandal-resistant drinking fountains.
- Consider extending trail along the waterway into surrounding neighborhoods to provide connectivity into an overall greenway system.
- Where possible, trail should conform to current AASHTO standards for pavement and shoulder width.
- Provide regular resting opportunities, as necessary, with site furnishings conforming to the current city standards.
- Resurface the trail, where necessary to maintain high level of quality along this scenic route.

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Tennis Complex

Location: 2800 block of Masonic Drive

Acreage: 3

Overview

Another facility in the City Park system, the Tennis Complex hosts various tournaments as well as collegiate competitions in the region. A small asphalt parking lot serves this 8-court facility that also contains a central observation building with restrooms.

Review

Paved parking areas at this facility have poor drainage and are generally insufficient during large events. At such time, overflow parking occurs on turf or gravel areas at other facilities nearby, such as the Bringhurst Park Playhouse or the handicapped training center. All 8 courts have recently been renovated with new surfacing, fencing, and nets. New lights have also been added to older wood poles. The center observation building has restrooms on the ground floor that likely met accessibility codes at the time of its construction but may need updates for current ADA guidelines. The upper deck is nearly all wood construction with large, bleacher-style seating under a shade pavilion. These wooden structures are in good to fair shape with only minor maintenance issues. However, ADA observation is not provided at the upper deck.

Recommendations:

- In light of its recent destruction, the Old Players Club Theatre should be demolished to allow for expansion of the Tennis Complex. Contract negotiations should take place to consolidate the old theater's programming into the new state-of-the-art theater located in downtown.
- The City Park Master Plan should consider the expansion of the Tennis Complex to produce a facility capable of regional draw. The development of additional courts is required along with a formal pro shop and state-of-the-art concession/restroom building. Sufficient support facilities should also be planned, including parking, a gathering plaza, plenty of shaded seating and landscaping.
- Existing courts are in good condition and should remain in place.
- While the center observation/concession/restroom building has unique and interesting features, it lacks the necessary ADA compliance and may need to be redeveloped to assume a more ideal location and function in response to the overall Master Plan development.

Other City Park Improvements

In addition to the aforementioned facilities, suggestions for the development of a skate park also arose out of interviews with city staff and public meetings. The planning team noted that the old tennis courts near the high school, currently being used as for the storage of maintenance equipment, could serve as the location for the proposed skate park development. As a result, the City Park Master Plan should consider feasibility of developing a skate park at this or another location in conjunction with the recommendations above. This skate park should also contain the necessary support facilities such as a restroom, shaded seating areas and parking, if required.

Taking these recommendations into consideration will allow planners to develop a cohesive City Park plan that meets the needs of citizens and provides the regional draw sought by the City.

Overall Facility Recommendations

Park Naming and Classification System

One of the unique findings we made in Alexandria is that many of the parks are given a name even though they are contiguous with another park that has a different name. A good example of this is the facilities located along Masonic Drive. Rather than refer to these parks collectively as City Park, they are referred to as several different facilities: City Park Playground, Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex, Big Island Field, Bringham Golf Course, Ben Bradford Field, Boys and Girls Club Picnic Area, Diamond #1 (Masonic Field), Tennis Complex. The Alexandria Zoo and Bringham Ball Field are also located along the drive and are contiguous to the balance of the City Park property. All of these facilities are given a park classification, such as neighborhood or community park, when in fact they are facilities located within the greater whole of what should be classified as one community park. These facilities function as one collective park and would be better inventoried and classified as one community park know as City Park. Throughout the assessments we classified parks based on our recommended classifications, as shown in Table 7.2.

Central Park in New York City is a good example of a large park that is divided into smaller parts by internal roads and trail systems but is collectively known as a single destination. While most of the roads internal to Central Park have grade separation that separates vehicles and pedestrian movements, there are numerous interactions that require users to obey traffic signals to get from one point to another. In fact, one road has been converted for pedestrian and bicycle use and has stoplights for pedestrians who must cross this road at grade.

There are many benefits to reclassifying the parks and facilities to fall within the standard park classification system. First, it will allow the city to more realistically evaluate the service areas of all the parks. It will allow for improved marketing of park facilities and it will provide a more unified appearance in the park by reducing the number of signs that identify facilities as separate parks. The current marketing materials of the Alexandria Zoo and Bringham Ball Field do not identify the fact that they are located within City Park. The same is true for the Tennis Complex and Bringham Golf Course. All of these items could be repackaged under the City Park name and, for example, could use a marketing theme such as the Alexandria Zoo at City Park or Alexandria Tennis Center at City Park. All of these facilities could include a new City Park logo, along with the facility logos to create a central theme when they are marketed collectively to tourists in the city. This would also work well with the current initiative to create a redevelopment district along Masonic Drive. All of the park space and proposed promenade improvements could become know as the Masonic Drive Promenade at City Park. In this day of product branding, it is important to maximize the branding of this premier park zone within the City.

The following is a listing of recommended park classification for existing parks.

Mini Parks (0 to 5 acres)

Alexander Fulton Mini Park

Charles Smith Park

Deborah Bowman Park

Enterprise Park

Harmon Park

Harold Miles Park

Helen Black Park

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Lincoln Park
Mason Street Park
Old Menard School Park
Peabody Park
Wycliffe Way Park (undeveloped)

Neighborhood Parks (5 to 20 acres)

There are no parks that are functioning solely as neighborhood parks in the city. The parks that fall within this acreage category, such as Compton Park and Cheatham Park, are all serving many neighborhoods and functioning as destination parks to which people drive -- a characteristic of community parks. While all parks large or small do serve neighborhood uses, if the parks are serving a much larger segment of a community then they should be categorized as a community park. For that reason we have classified many parks that fall in this acreage category as community parks.

Community Parks (20 acres and larger)

City Park (and all the facilities that collectively make up the park)
Cheatham Park
Compton Park
Frank O. Hunter Park
Johnny Downs Sports Complex*
Martin Park
O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields

Special Use Facilities (single purpose/focused activities)

Alexandria Zoo
Bringhurst Golf Course
Johnny Downs Sports Complex*
Links on the Bayou Golf Course

Sports Complexes (team sports facilities or highly developed sports facilities)

Johnny Downs Sports Complex*
Bringhurst Ball Field

Community Centers (indoor programming space)

Alexandria Teen Activity Center
Bolton Avenue Community Center
Broadway Resource Center
M. L. King Community Center
Martin Community Center

Greenways and Open Space (linear park space and open areas)

Bayou Rapides Trail
Alexandria Greenbelt

The Johnny Downs Sports Complex was listed as a community park, sports complex and special use facility. It functions as a community park meeting many of the sports league needs of the community but also functions as tournament site for sport tournaments that may not involve league teams. It also functions as open space that can be used when teams are not present and therefore has a role as public greenspace which is common to community parks.

New Park Recommendations and Economic Benefits

Upon completing a good classification system for the parks, it is critical for the City to understand the value of the park system and how the parks can be used as an economic engine for the City. The development of the Johnny Downs Sports Complex has already created increased tax collection through tournament play at the complex. The Alexandria Zoo, Links on the Bayou and the Tennis Complex at City Park also bring in non-residents for special and regular events scheduled at these facilities. Building on the success of these programs, the City needs to determine what complementary facilities are needed to expand the attractions in the city that also meet local recreation needs.

In assessing the public, elected officials and staff, it became clear that there is a need for expanded indoor programming space. The survey responses further documented this need when five of the top ten desired facilities were indoor facilities. While the first indoor facility listed was only fourth in the top ten, collectively they are clearly equal to the top three desired facilities, which were modern playgrounds, expanding the Zoo and renovating existing parks. Outlined below are the recommendations for major new facilities that are needed to expand recreation opportunities in the city and to expand the local revenue and tourist dollars that are spent in the city.

The new parks discussed in the following narrative, their services areas and the proposed recreation facilities are illustrated in Figures 7.4 and 7.5.

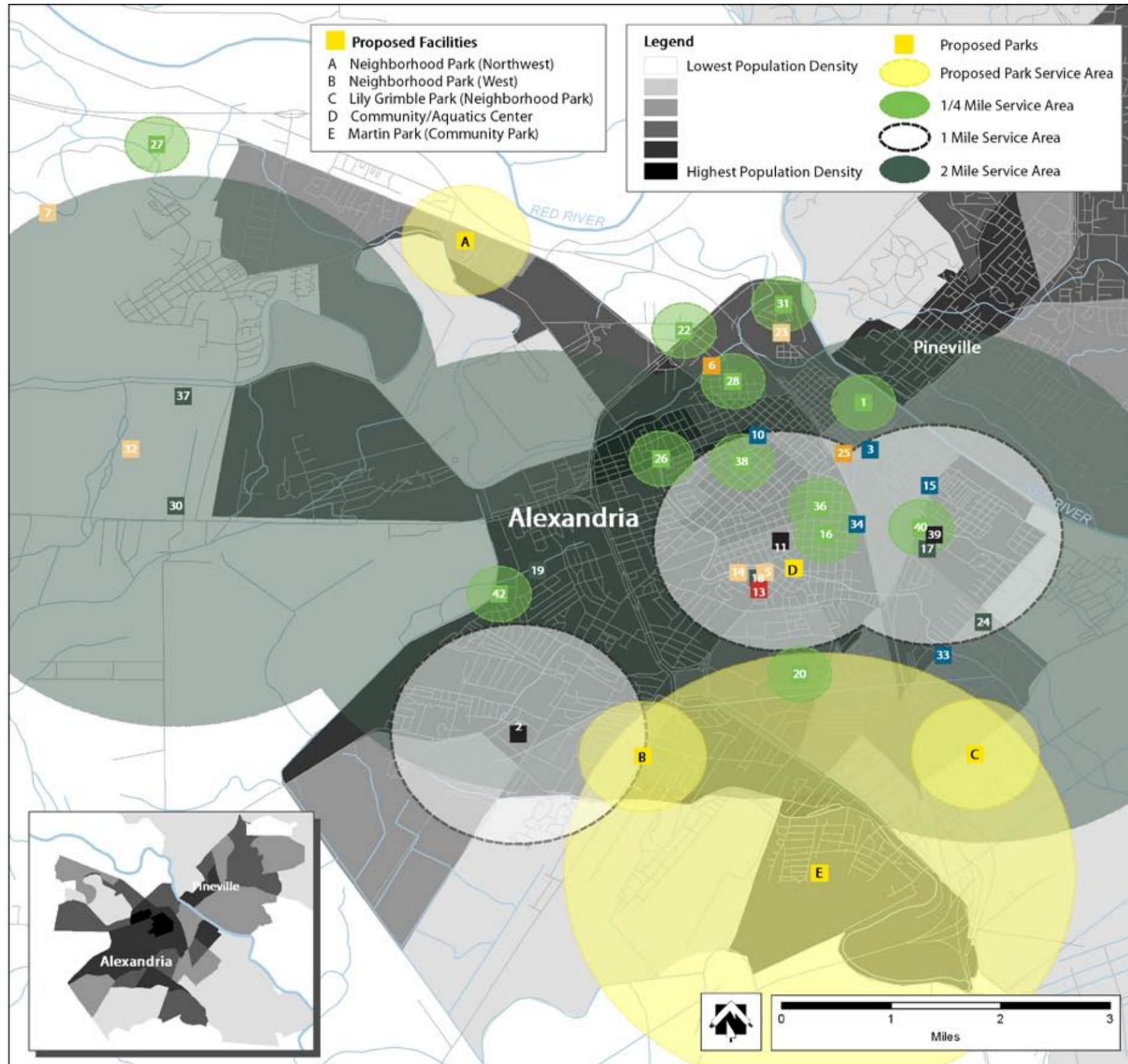
City Park Renovation and Expansion Priority Projects

Develop Master Plan and Acquire Property

As stated previously, the planned roadway and redevelopment plans along Masonic Drive will complement the renovation and expansion of City Park. While the current acreage is too small to support additional development, this is the best site in the city on which to develop a new community center and aquatic complex. In order to accommodate these facilities and to aid in the redevelopment of the area, additional property should be acquired south of Masonic Drive to expand the greenspace south of the road and to provide a site for the development of a major aquatics complex and community center. The planning team recommends a master plan be developed that looks at the entire park property and the property south of Masonic Drive from Beatrice Street to Lee Street and up to Sylvester Drive for acquisition. This should provide the necessary property to build a 60,000 to 70,000 square foot community center with indoor aquatic features and to construct an outdoor family aquatics facility and supporting parking elements.

Figure 7.6 illustrates City Park and the surrounding area's current land use and the proposed expansion boundary.

Figure 7.4: Existing and Proposed Park Service Areas



Alexandria, Louisiana PROPOSED PARKS

MINI PARKS

- 1 Alexander Fulton Mini Park
- 16 Charles Smith Park
- 20 Deborah Bowman Park
- 22 Enterprise Park
- 26 Harmon Park
- 27 Harold Miles Park
- 28 Helen Black Park
- 31 Lincoln Park
- 36 Mason Street Park
- 38 Old Menard School Park
- 40 Peabody Playground
- 42 Wycliffe Way Park

COMMUNITY PARKS

- 17 Cheatham Park
- 18 City Park
- 4 Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex
- 5 Alexandria Zoo
- 8 Ben Bradford Field
- 9 Big Island Field
- 12 Boys and Girls Club Picnic Area
- 13 Bringhurst Ballfield
- 14 Bringhurst Golf Club
- 18 City Park Playground
- 21 Diamond #1 Masonic at Lee
- 29 Hynson Bayou Trail
- 41 Tennis Complex
- 19 Compton Park
- 24 Frank O. Hunter Park
- 30 Johnny Downs Recreational Complex
- 37 O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields

SPECIAL USE PARKS

- 5 Alexandria Zoo
- 7 Beagle Club
- 14 Bringhurst Golf Course
- 23 Farmer's Market
- 32 Links on the Bayou Golf Course

SPORTS COMPLEX

- 13 Bringhurst Ballfield
- 30 Johnny Downs Sports Complex *

GREENWAY

- 6 Bayou Rapides Trail
- 25 Greenbelt

COMMUNITY CENTERS

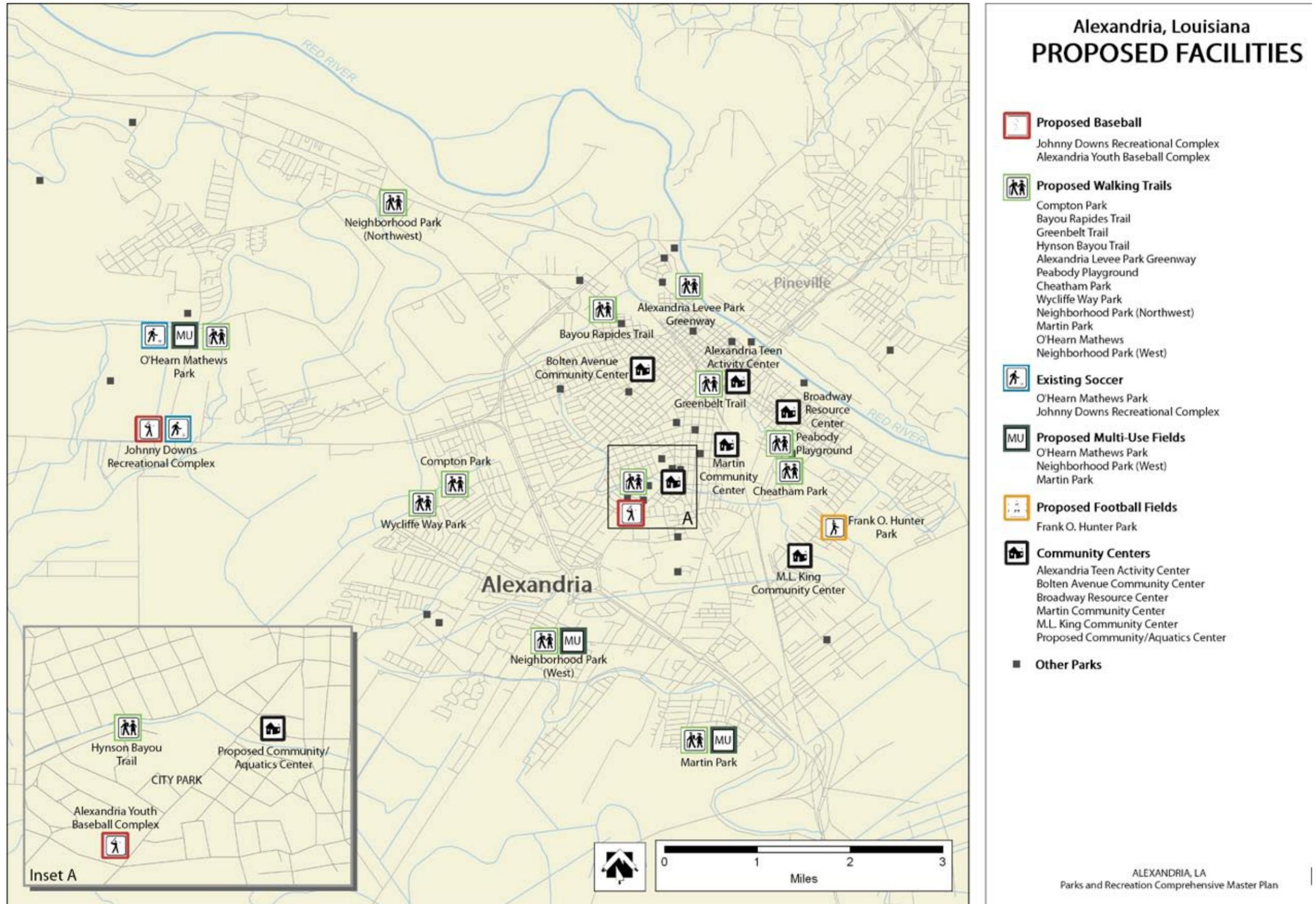
- 3 Alexandria Teen Activity Center
- 10 Bolton Avenue Community Center
- 15 Broadway Resource Center
- 33 ML King Community Center
- 34 Martin Community Center

SCHOOLS

- 2 Alexandria Senior High School
- 11 Bolton High School
- 39 Peabody Magnet High School



Figure 7.5: Existing and Proposed Park Facility Locations



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Figure 7.6: City Park Land Use Analysis and Expansion Boundary



Land Use Legend

- Park
- Institutional
- Retail/Commercial
- Residential
- Park Expansion Area
- Arterial Road
- Collector Street
- City Park District Gateway

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Community Center and Aquatics Complex

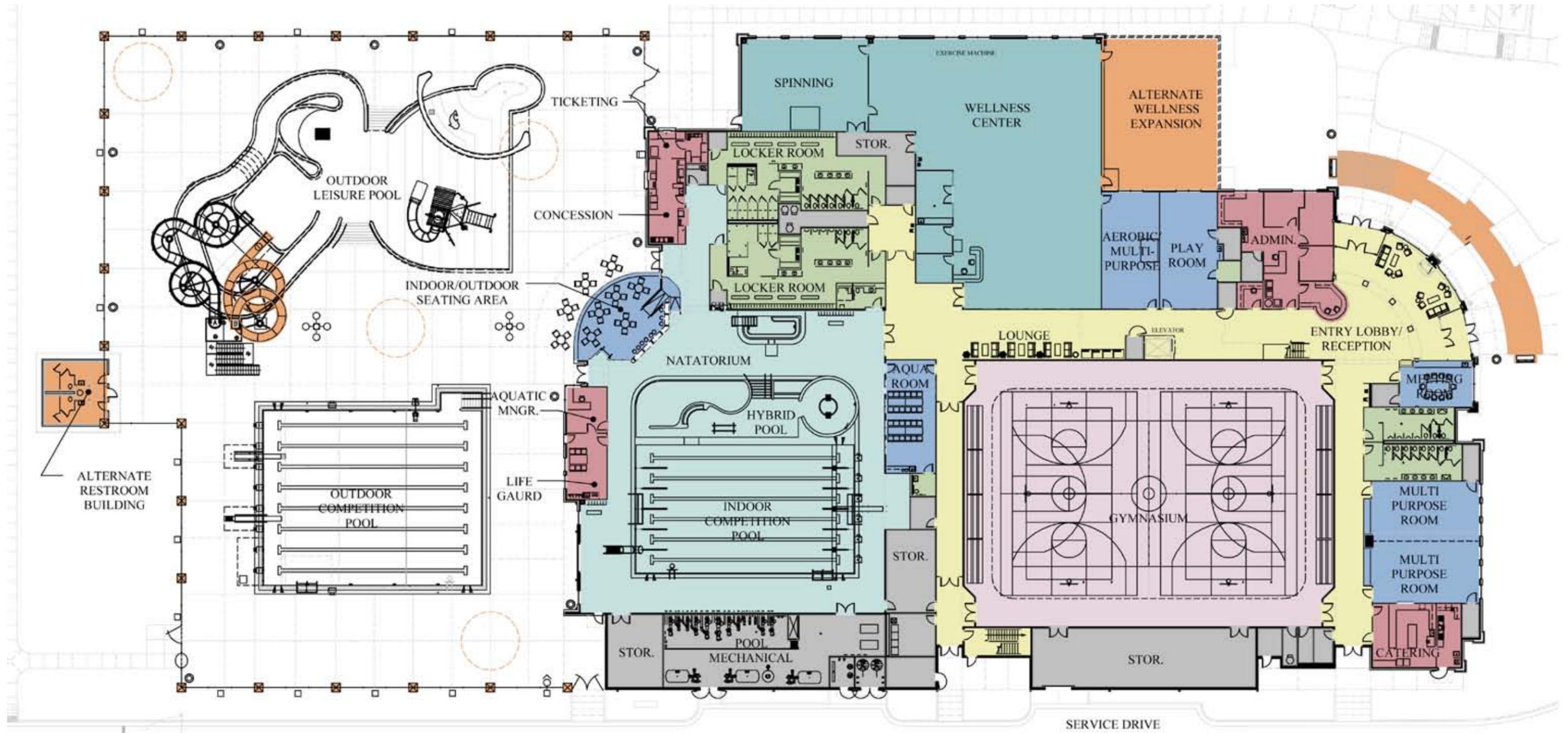
Figure 7.7 is an example of a modern recreation center that combines wellness, aquatics and recreation activities in a single location. Communities across the country are building these centers to aid their communities in the fight against health problems for youth and seniors alike. These facilities expand programming opportunities; this is a critical need as the City seeks to transition into a full-service recreation provider. This will be a facility that operates seven days a week and should become a gathering place for citizens from all across the community as its members seek to improve their health and reduce stress through recreation programs and activities.

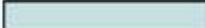
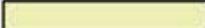
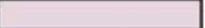
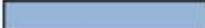
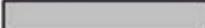
Both indoor and outdoor aquatic components will complement the community center activities. Furthermore, the development of a unique family leisure aquatic complex will boost tourism by serving as a complementary facility to the number one regional tourist attraction in the area, Alexandria Zoo. Families visiting for a weekend would be able to spend time at the zoo and the aquatic complex and catch a ballgame at Bringham Ball Field. In addition, residents can participate in water-based aerobic and therapeutic programs, swimming classes, master swimming programs, senior games and other activities in the indoor pools. Children can have swimming birthday parties year-round in the party rooms of the center and take swimming lessons. Olympic medalist and commentator Rodney Gaines is promoting that all children be taught to swim as part of their elementary education to reduce drowning, which is the number two killer of children under the age of twelve.



Images from modern recreation centers with aquatics and fitness components

Figure 7.7: Modern Recreation Center Floor Plan



- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | SWIMMING POOL AREA |  | CIRCULATION |  | WELLNESS CENTER |
|  | ADMINISTRATION / STAFF / FOOD PREP. |  | RESTROOMS / LOCKER ROOMS |  | GYMNASIUM |
|  | MULTI-PURPOSE / MEETING |  | MECHANICAL / STORAGE / JANITOR |  | ALTERNATE CONSTRUCTION |

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tennis Complex Expansion

The next major element that is needed in City Park is the expansion of the Tennis Complex. The facility has attracted college tournaments for several years and, with the addition of some covered courts, could be marketed as a tournament facility on a year-round basis. A minimum of four additional courts covered with an open air structure should be provided. This will not only allow play to continue during periods of rain, but will also provide shade during the hottest times of the year. A new pro-shop and restroom facility should be added to serve as a teaching center and a tournament control center. The exact placement of the four new covered courts should be examined as part of the overall City Park master plan. The master plan should also look at future expansion for four additional outdoor courts if there is adequate space.

Playground and General Park Improvements

The recent addition of a modern sprayground will increase use of the playground area of the park. Many of the facilities in this section of the park, as documented in the individual park assessments, are old and antiquated. This section of the park needs to be renovated to become a more cohesive space with designated play areas and open space. A new restroom facility that can also double as a pro-shop for the Bringham Golf Course is needed. In addition to updating the playground and support elements, site furnishings that will complement the Masonic Drive Promenade are needed throughout the park. This includes park benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks and light fixtures.

Bringham Ball Field

Historic Bringham Ball Field is a cherished community facility. If it is to continue to serve as the home of organized baseball play for either professional or recreation leagues, a study should be conducted on whether the facility can be renovated and brought into compliance with modern building codes and ADA requirements, or if it would cost prohibitive to do so. This should be done in the next 12 months to insure that the City is protected from liability or civil suits resulting from hazards or ADA issues in the ball park.

City Park Renovation and Expansion Long-Term Projects

It is understood that there are many needs in the city and all the resources cannot be spent in the near term in City Park. Longer term needs that should be addressed in the park include relocation of the single Ben Bradford and Diamond #1 ballfields out of the park. The games played on these fields can be shifted to Johnny Downs or Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex; this will provide much needed open greenspace in the park. The Bringham Golf Course is not a viable public golf facility and the land is more valuable for zoo expansion. When the time comes to expand the zoo, the golf course should be closed and land given to the zoo with the balance of the land converted to public greenspace. Big Island Field should continue to function as a community greenspace and organized sports should be shifted to other parks in the city. The Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex is getting older and will need to be renovated, as funds permit, to address the issues identified in the individual park assessments.

Frank O. Hunter Park

This is the largest park on the east side of the city. Public comments expressed concern about traffic on weekends and the need for improvements at the gym and expanded programming opportunities. Several suggestions for a second entry and access point from the rear of the park were made.

It is clear that this park needs to be totally renovated to reflect the changing use patterns since it was developed and to meet future needs. With the exception of the gymnasium, pavilion and playground area, the balance of the park should be replaced. Parking and vehicular circulation needs to be

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

redeveloped so that the majority of the parking is at the front of the park. This will allow for direct access from public streets into parking lots and will minimize the number of cars that have to drive deep into the park.

The baseball fields are no longer used and should be removed. This will provide adequate space to develop a centralized football area for the youth football program. There should be adequate space for a game field and one or two multi-use practice fields. This will allow for football activities to move out of City Park's Big Island Field, where there is inadequate parking for the games.

The other major change that is needed in this park is the expansion of the gym. The gym is in need of total renovation to become a modern recreation facility. It is recommended that the concrete floor be replaced with a proper gym floor and that the building be expanded to add programming space for instruction programs, summer camps, after-school programs and other community activities. Space should also be provided for some wellness equipment and exercise programs. There is a need for better control of the facility and a reception desk is needed for the staff who oversee the facility. Improved heating and air systems are needed, as is better lighting. A gym expansion study should be prepared as part of the master planning process.

Improved lighting is needed throughout the park. This park was one that had a higher level of vandalism and improved security lighting and security cameras are needed to protect the investments made by the city.

Harold Miles Park and Beagle Club

This is an underutilized facility that should have a new master plan developed. The Beagle Club building has been recommended for removal and will free up land for open space and other passive park activities. The site is over five acres in size and only a small portion of it is currently being used. This site has the potential to be an attractive park but needs to be cleaned up and modernized. There needs to be better signage directing people to the park and the fencing surrounding the complex needs to be removed. If some fencing is needed to secure the building, it should be a more attractive fence and not prevent citizens from access to the balance of the property.

Lilly Grimble Park

Like Martin Park, this is a property that once served as a neighborhood park but it is no longer maintained as a park property. The City does not own this five acre tract of land; in the past the City had an agreement with the property owner to operate it as a public open space. This area of the city is underserved when compared to other areas, and a master plan to develop this site as a neighborhood park should be developed. Because of its smaller size, it is recommended that a minimum initial development budget of \$750,000 be established for the first phase of the park.

Martin Park

The Martin Park property was once used as baseball complex but has not been used for many years. It was considered isolated and this prevented many citizens from using the park. In recent years the 911 Command Center was constructed at the site and now there is a full-time government presence on the site. There is a great need for a park in this section of the city. At a public meeting it was suggested that the development of a park with walking trails like Compton Park would be heavily used if developed at this site. It is recommended that a master plan be developed for this park and that the development of this park be a high priority. It is recommended that an initial development budget be set a minimum of \$1.5 million. Due to the size of the remaining property, this park should

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

be developed as a neighborhood park with a facility mix that would serve primarily residents from the surrounding neighborhoods.

O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields

This is another park that has tremendous potential to expand recreation opportunities within the city. Now used primarily as a practice facility, a master plan is needed to determine the highest and best use of the property. Field improvements would allow this park to be used for sports programming beyond practice and for expanded adult athletic programs. It has the potential to be another park with a perimeter walking trail and would serve residents of the nearby former England Air Base.

Zoo Expansion

The second highest priority in the public input was expanding the Zoo. The Zoo has a master plan for expansion and some funding is in place to implement the plan. We concur with the public input that this is the one of the most valuable City assets and continued funding for expansion and maintenance of the facility should continue. There is a need for additional parking and this should be studied as part of the overall City Park redevelopment master plan.

Park Renovations

Throughout the individual park assessments, it was noted that most of the older parks do not meet ADA access requirements or current playground safety requirements. Money should be programmed to address these issues over the next 24 months to bring the playgrounds into safety compliance and to begin constructing sidewalks and pathways in parks to meet access requirements. Many of these older parks need to have updated master plans prepared to evaluate the most cost effective way of meeting ADA requirements and to better utilize the existing space. In some cases many of the current features in the parks should be replaced with new facilities that better serve the current needs of the community. Existing parks in addition to City Park, which was previously discussed, needing major changes are discussed below.

New Neighborhood Parks

The City's growth pattern has been primarily in a west-by-southwestern direction. This has created a large section of the city with no parks between Compton Park and the Martin Park property. As a result, Compton Park functions as a community park rather than a neighborhood park. Even with the development of Martin Park, there will still be a large area between these two parks without a neighborhood park. Ideally the new neighborhood park in this area would be between 10 and 20 acres and would have a similar mix of facilities as those found at Compton Park. This would relieve overcrowding at Compton Park's walking paths and provide much needed greenspace to help in achieving the desired level of 18 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. A second neighborhood park is needed on the northwest side of the city between Harold Miles and Enterprise Parks to serve that section of the city.

Greenway Development

The last of the top ten citizen priorities was the development of more walking trails in existing parks. Providing more linkage and walking opportunities was brought up in all the public input meetings and in the survey, and is a need that should be addressed in the near future. While there is a good concentration of greenways in the downtown area and along the Red River levee, there are a limited number of trails in the western side of the city. Compton Park has trails that are heavily used. We have recommended trails in Martin Park and in a new neighborhood park in the western part of the city to relieve pressure on Compton Park. The next step is to develop an interconnected system of trails and

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

walking opportunities that link the trails in each park. Based on the population growth in the western sections of the city and the proposal to add walking trails in new parks in this area, the planning team recommends that greenways corridors be studied to connect Martin Park, Compton Park and the proposed new neighborhood park to Johnny Downs, O’Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields and continue to the neighborhoods at the old England Air Base. This would link the western community and provide opportunities for citizens to run, walk and bike on off-road pathways that link the neighborhoods and begin to promote community interactions beyond one’s individual neighborhood.

Design Standards

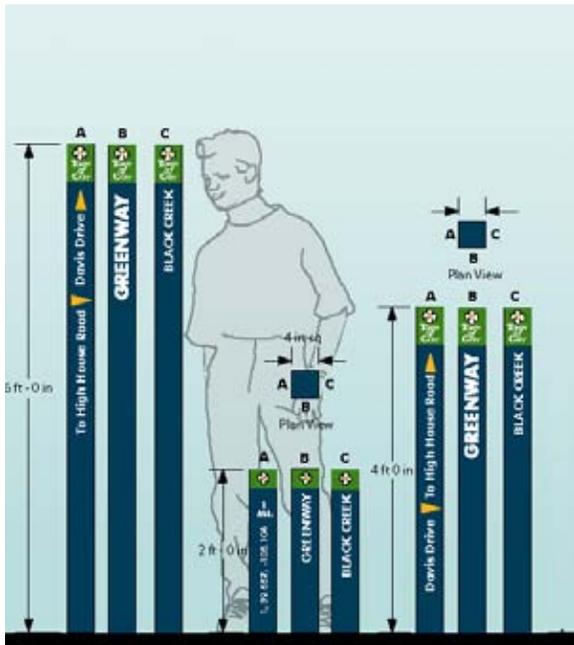
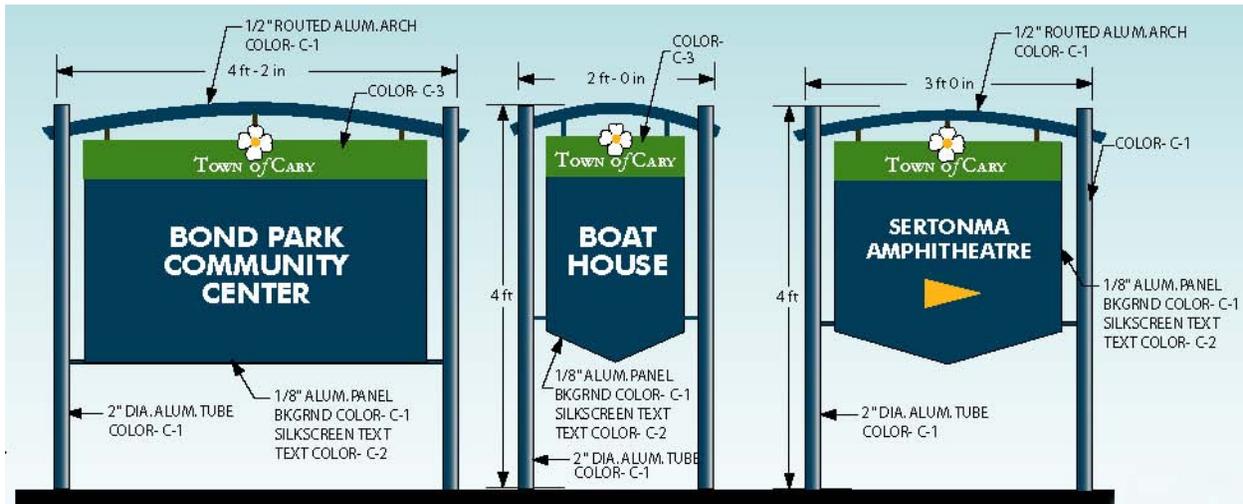
An overall system of design guidelines for development within the parks can define an overall aesthetic for the park system. By using a system of standard colors, architectural styles and materials, people can often identify a park as being a City resource. A comprehensive facility design standard manual is recommended that will create standards for future development and renovations of existing parks. These standards should define a variety of park building and site elements, including those listed below.

- Vinyl-coated chain link fence is recommended to improve the overall aesthetic quality of heavily used parks. Gates that secure parking lots should be replaced with uniform gates used throughout the system. Where fencing is installed to provide separation of activity areas, wooden three-rail fencing is an acceptable alternative to chain link fencing. It is less expensive and is more aesthetically pleasing than chain link.
- A unified site furnishings package including vinyl coated trash receptacles, tables and benches, standardized fencing materials, water fountains, street and security light fixtures, internal park signage and other common site equipment should be established.
- Standardized architecture, including pavilions, field houses, dugouts, scorer’s stands, etc., should be developed.
- A signage program is needed throughout the park system to identify different facilities within the parks and to provide rules. A standard entry/identification sign should be developed for all parks in the system to provide a unified look so that individuals throughout the city will recognize City of Alexandria parks. Park signage will help unify the parks and provide the users with directional information. Recommended standard signage types are park entry/identification signs (large and small), directional and informational signs, and interpretive and regulatory signs.

Figure 7.8 shows an example of the new park sign standards developed for Cary, North Carolina.

SECTION 7: PARK ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 7.8: Cary, North Carolina Park Signage



Facility Recommendation Implementation Strategy

Outlined below is the recommended implementation strategy for facility development for the next 10 years. Recommendations are divided into three tiers: Tier One projects to be completed in the next 24 months, Tier Two project to be completed in the next 60 months and Tier Three project to be completed after 60 months.

Tier One Priorities (to be completed in the next 24 months)

- Develop a community center and aquatics feasibility study
- Develop parks design standards manual
- Develop park redevelopment master plans for City Park, Frank O. Hunter Park, O’Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields and Harold Miles Park.
- Develop park master plans for Martin Park, Lilly Grimble Park and a new neighborhood park on the western side of the city.
- Complete construction of Phase 1 and open the following parks to the public:
 - Martin Park
 - New neighborhood park in western part of the city
 - Redevelopment of Frank O. Hunter Park
 - Initial redevelopment of City Park
- Begin implementation of playground safety surface improvements and ADA access walks throughout park system
- Upon completing City Park Master Plan and the new community center and aquatics feasibility plan, move forward with land acquisition and development of Phase 1 community center and aquatics complex construction plans
- Continue to implement Zoo master plan recommendations
- Do a renovations study for Bringhurst Ball Field
- Begin installing new signs at all parks

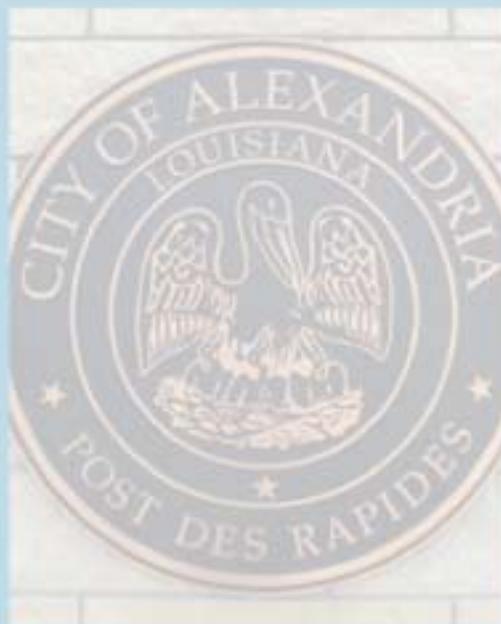
Tier Two Priorities (to be completed in months 25-60)

- Begin construction of City Park community center and aquatics complex
- Develop city-wide greenway master plan
- Continue renovations at existing parks
- Implement Bringhurst Ball Field renovation recommendations
- Develop Lilly Grimble Park
- Redevelop Harold Miles Park
- Redevelop O’Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields
- Continue playground safety and ADA improvements to existing parks
- Continue development of park master plans as listed in the park assessment section
- Continue renovation projects in individual parks
- Begin adding additional off-road greenways in western section of the city
- Continue sign replacement program in all parks
- Continue Zoo development

Tier Three Priorities (to be completed in months 61-120)

- Update Comprehensive Master Plan
- Continue development of greenways to link western section of city with downtown
- Continue playground safety and ADA improvements to existing parks
- Continue development of park master plans as listed in the park assessment section
- Continue renovation projects in individual parks
- Continue Zoo development

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PHASING PLAN



SECTION 8

OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

We have outlined over just over \$60 million in capital improvement needs for the next ten years. The phasing plan, found at the end of this section, provides a recommended ten-year spending plan that balances new park development with park renovations, updating outdated restrooms and playgrounds, and the addition of a few new major facilities that will expand programming opportunities. For recommendations on how to fund these improvements, refer to Section 9.

The totals shown for each facility in the phasing plan include a contingency fund as detailed plans have not been developed for each park. Architectural and engineering fees, such as design documents and surveys, will also be needed for most of the projects. The costs also include funding for testing agencies to conduct geotechnical test and materials testing during construction. The planning team has prioritized funding based on the needs discussed throughout the master plan and in response to the priorities established through the community input phases of the project. Priority was given to the following needs:

- Completing master plans for new and renovated parks
- Completing recommended new parks on the western side of the city
- Renovation and expansion of City Park
- Development of a community center and aquatics complex
- Continued development of the Zoo
- Bringing playgrounds and parks into compliance with codes and regulations

These primary facility recommendations were followed with the following:

- Developing greenways on the western side of the city
- Continued park renovations and redevelopment

Over the first five years of the spending program, newly master planned parks will be constructed along with redevelopment of City Park and Frank O. Hunter Park. City Park is the recommended site for a new community center and aquatics complex. A new football complex is recommended for Frank O. Hunter Park to move these activities out of City Park. The expansion of City Park, along with the proposed new neighborhood parks, will require land acquisition. Considering the current national economy, it may be a good time to acquire land for future park sites even if development does not occur for several years. With the completion of the at least one new neighborhood parks, the development of the Martin Park site, and the redevelopment of City Park and Frank O. Hunter Park in the first five years, the City will see a dramatic improvement in the recreation opportunities.

During the second five years of the program, the remaining park renovations will be completed and the new neighborhood parks and greenways will be developed. At the end of the ten-year plan, millions of dollars in new and renovated facilities will be available to the public.

The planning team feels that the approach of completing new and unique projects along with targeted park renovations in the first five years will create more programming opportunities for the Division and more individual, unorganized park activities in which the public can participate. A focus was also put on creating a new, modern look within the most popular existing parks and reducing overall maintenance

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

by replacing old park equipment. This path will show citizens that the City is serious about providing a high quality park system and will put the City and the administration in a strong position for votes on future funding programs.

The recommendations also will work to create additional revenue generating facilities for the City by placing the new community center and aquatics complex near the Zoo, so that the synergy of these projects will benefit tourism in Alexandria. The recommendations will also balance service to residents on the west side of the city, who are currently traveling farther for basic park services.

Individual park assessments detailing site observations and costs and new park facility recommendation costs are provided in the following pages. These estimates should be used as a guide for budgeting purposes and updated as individual park master plans are developed.

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

EXISTING PARK RENOVATIONS

Alexander Fulton Mini Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Replace existing trees with shade trees	1	ls	\$3,000	\$3,000	2010
Subtotal				\$3,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$600	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$360	
TOTAL				\$3,960	

Bayou Rapides Trail

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Paved parking (includes asphalt, striping, lighting, landscaping)	30	ea	\$1,400	\$42,000	2012-13
Utility connections	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2012-13
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2012-13
Trailhead (includes pavement, seatwalls, signage and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2012-13
Trail (includes demolition of old pavement)	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2012-13
Signage	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2009-11
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$14,000	\$14,000	2012-13
Replace lighting fixtures	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2012-13
Pier upgrades	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2012-13
Subtotal				\$416,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$83,200	
Design Fees/ Construction Testing (8%)				\$39,936	
TOTAL				\$539,136	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Beagle Club

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$35,000	\$35,000	2009-10
Security gates	1	ea	\$3,500	\$3,500	2009-10
Install new fencing	1	ls	\$40,000	\$40,000	2009-10
Add natural surface trail	1	ls	\$20,000	\$20,000	2009-10
General clean-up and new site furnishings	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2009-10
Subtotal				\$198,500	
Contingency (20%)				\$39,700	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$23,820	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$262,020	

Bolton Avenue Community Center Playground

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing playground structures	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2009-10
New play structure	1	ea	\$35,000	\$35,000	2009-10
New safety surfacing	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2009-10
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$4,000	\$4,000	2009-10
5' Concrete sidewalk (for ADA accessibility)	60	lf	\$25	\$1,500	2009-10
Subtotal				\$75,500	
Contingency (20%)				\$15,100	
Design Fees/ Construction Testing (10%)				\$9,060	
TOTAL				\$99,660	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Charles Smith Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2015-16
Utility connection	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2015-16
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2015-16
Drinking fountain	1	ea	\$5,000	\$5,000	2015-16
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$9,000	\$9,000	2015-16
New play structures (includes safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2009-10
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	350	lf	\$25	\$8,750	2009-10
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$9,000	\$9,000	2015-16
Landscaping (additional shade trees, play lawn)	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2015-16
Subtotal				\$326,750	
Contingency (20%)				\$65,350	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$39,210	
TOTAL				\$431,310	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Cheatham Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2015-16
Parking lot improvements	1	ls	\$300,000	\$300,000	2015-16
Small picnic shelter improvements (includes structural rehabilitation, site furnishings, paved access from parking area)	1	ls	\$27,000	\$27,000	2015-16
Basketball court improvements (includes new court surfacing, fencing, lighting and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$150,000	\$150,000	2015-16
Convert tennis complex (at old pool location, includes 4 courts, fencing, lighting and site furnishings) and add new restroom	1	ls	\$245,000	\$245,000	2015-16
Replace outfield fencing at baseball	1	ls	\$7,000	\$7,000	2015-16
Landscaping (additional shade trees, play lawn)	1	ls	\$7,000	\$7,000	2015-16
Stadium upgrades	1	ls	\$350,000	\$350,000	2015-16
Walking trail improvements (includes widening and resurfacing, site furnishings)	1	ls	\$175,000	\$175,000	2015-16
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5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	900	lf	\$25	\$22,500	2009-10
Spray pad (includes restroom and associated elements in plans)	1	ls	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	2015-16
Subtotal				\$2,313,500	
Contingency (20%)				\$462,700	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (8%)				\$222,096	
TOTAL				\$2,998,296	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Compton Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing pavement	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2012-13
Playground safety surface improvements	1	ls	\$35,000	\$35,000	2009-10
Overlook improvements (includes deck and railing)	1	ls	\$20,000	\$20,000	2012-13
Refurbished interpretive signage	4	ea	\$5,000	\$20,000	2009-10
Decorative wall improvements	1	ls	\$3,000	\$3,000	2012-13
Walking trail improvements (includes widening and resurfacing, site furnishings)	3700	lf	\$55	\$203,500	2012-13
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2012-13
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$6,000	\$6,000	2012-13
			Subtotal	\$302,500	
			Contingency (20%)	\$60,500	
			Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)	\$36,300	
			TOTAL	\$399,300	

Deborah Bowman Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2016-17
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2016-17
Playground improvements (includes relocation of salvaged structures, new structures and safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$40,000	\$40,000	2009-10
Small shelter	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2016-17
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2016-17
5' Concrete sidewalk (ADA access)	350	lf	\$25	\$8,750	2009-10
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2016-17
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$14,000	\$14,000	2016-17
Landscaping	1	ls	\$3,500	\$3,500	2016-17
			Subtotal	\$281,250	
			Contingency (20%)	\$56,250	
			Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)	\$33,750	
			TOTAL	\$371,250	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Enterprise Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Perimeter fencing replacement (includes entry gate)	1	ls	\$20,000	\$20,000	2015-16
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2015-16
Playground improvements (new, consolidated equipment with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$150,000	\$150,000	2009-10
Small shelter	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2015-16
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2015-16
5' Concrete sidewalk (ADA access)	400	lf	\$25	\$10,000	2009-10
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2015-16
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2015-16
Landscaping	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2015-16
			Subtotal	\$400,000	
			Contingency (20%)	\$80,000	
			Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)	\$48,000	
			TOTAL	\$528,000	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Frank O. Hunter Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures, courts, fields and pavement)	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2009-11
Football field (includes turf, goal posts, striping and lighting)	1	ls	\$200,000	\$200,000	2009-11
Multi-use fields (two fields, includes turf, goal posts, striping and lighting)	1	ea	\$400,000	\$400,000	2009-11
Football/Soccer complex concessions/restroom building	1	ls	\$475,000	\$475,000	2009-11
Press box building	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2009-11
Parking lot expansion (to accommodate Football/Soccer complex)	180	ea	\$1,400	\$252,000	2009-11
Playground improvements (new structures with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$60,000	\$60,000	2009-11
Picnic shelter/restroom improvements	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2009-11
Community center improvements/expansion	1	ls	\$750,000	\$750,000	2009-11
Relocate basketball courts (includes court surfacing, fencing, lighting and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$80,000	\$80,000	2009-11
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$150,000	\$150,000	2009-11
Drinking fountains	2	ea	\$5,000	\$10,000	2009-11
Walking trail improvements (includes widening and resurfacing, site furnishings)	1350	lf	\$55	\$74,250	2009-11
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	2500	lf	\$25	\$62,500	2009-11
Landscape enhancements	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2009-11
Subtotal				\$2,718,750	
Contingency (20%)				\$543,750	
Design Fees (8%)				\$261,000	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$3,558,500	

*NOTE: New Master Plan required. Costs to be determined from new Master Plan.

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Greenbelt

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Repairs to trail surface	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2015-16
Improve connections at western end of downtown	1	ls	\$80,000	\$80,000	2015-16
Enhanced signage	1	ls	\$35,000	\$35,000	2009-11
Subtotal				\$215,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$43,000	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$25,800	
TOTAL				\$283,800	

***NOTE: Costs do not include connections at northwest corner of downtown. To be determined in 4th Street road and bridge project.**

Harmon Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Perimeter fencing replacement	1	ls	\$15,000	\$15,000	2014-15
Playground improvements (new structures with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2009-10
Small shelter improvements	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2014-15
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2014-15
Drinking fountains	1	ea	\$5,000	\$5,000	2014-15
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	300	lf	\$25	\$7,500	2009-10
Spray pad (includes modular restroom and associated elements in plans)	1	ls	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	2014-15
Subtotal				\$1,182,500	
Contingency (20%)				\$236,500	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$141,900	
TOTAL				\$1,560,900	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Harold Miles Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Parking lot improvements (accessible parking spaces)	3	ea	\$1,400	\$4,200	2012-13
Trailhead (includes pavement, seatwalls, signage and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2012-13
Playground improvements (relocated structures with safety surface)	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2010-11
Basketball court improvements (includes court surfacing, fencing and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$40,000	\$40,000	2012-13
Grill area improvements	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2012-13
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$15,000	\$15,000	2012-13
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2010-11
Subtotal				\$219,200	
Contingency (20%)				\$43,840	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$26,304	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2010-11
TOTAL				\$324,344	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Helen Black Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing play structures and pavement	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2010-11
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2016-17
Perimeter fencing replacement	1	ls	\$16,000	\$16,000	2016-17
Raised crosswalk	1	ls	\$7,000	\$7,000	2016-17
Playground improvements (new structures with safety surface)	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2010-11
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2016-17
Basketball court improvements (includes surfacing, goals, and fencing)	1	ls	\$45,000	\$45,000	2016-17
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2016-17
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$15,000	\$15,000	2016-17
Walking trail repairs	1	ls	\$3,000	\$3,000	2016-17
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2010-11
Landscape improvements	1	ls	\$8,000	\$8,000	2016-17
			Subtotal	\$339,000	
			Contingency (20%)	\$67,800	
			Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)	\$40,680	
			TOTAL	\$447,480	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Johnny Downs Sports Complex

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Parking lot improvements (at handicapped spaces)	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2017-18
Soccer equipment improvements (goals and backstop nets)	1	ls	\$311,000	\$311,000	2017-18
Concrete pads for soccer bleachers	4	ea	\$5,000	\$20,000	2017-18
Concession/restroom building maintenance	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2017-18
Backstop maintenance at softball complex	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2017-18
Relocate batting cages	1	ls	\$18,000	\$18,000	2017-18
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	1425	lf	\$25	\$35,625	2010-11
Landscape enhancements (shade trees at soccer plaza)	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2017-18
Subtotal				\$499,625	
Contingency (20%)				\$99,925	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (8%)				\$47,964	
TOTAL				\$647,514	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Lincoln Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing play structures and basketball goals	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2010-11
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2017-18
Perimeter fencing replacement	1	ls	\$22,000	\$22,000	2017-18
Playground improvements (new, consolidated equipment with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2010-11
Basketball improvements (2 new half-courts, includes fencing and goals)	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2017-18
Small shelter	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2017-18
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2017-18
5' Concrete sidewalk (ADA access)	450	lf	\$25	\$11,250	2010-11
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2017-18
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2017-18
Landscaping	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2017-18
			Subtotal	\$368,250	
			Contingency (20%)	\$73,650	
			Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)	\$44,190	
			TOTAL	\$486,090	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Mason Street Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing play structures and pavement	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2010-11
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2015-16
Perimeter fencing replacement	1	ls	\$8,500	\$8,500	2015-16
Playground improvements (new, consolidated equipment with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2010-11
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2015-16
5' Concrete sidewalk (ADA access)	150	lf	\$25	\$3,750	2010-11
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2015-16
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$7,000	\$7,000	2015-16
Landscaping	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2015-16
Subtotal				\$259,250	
Contingency (20%)				\$51,850	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$31,110	
TOTAL				\$342,210	

O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields*

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$15,000	\$15,000	2013-15
Redevelop park with multi-use fields, walking trail, playground and concession/restroom building	1	ls	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	2013-15
Subtotal				\$3,515,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$703,000	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$421,800	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$4,674,800	

*NOTE: New Master Plan required. Costs to be determined from new Master Plan.

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Peabody Playground

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing parking lot, play structures, site furnishings and walking trail	1	ls	\$30,000	\$30,000	2009-10
Perimeter fencing replacement	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2018-19
Playground improvements (new, consolidated equipment with safety surfacing)	1	ls	\$150,000	\$150,000	2009-10
Large shelter	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2018-19
Walking trail improvements (includes widening and resurfacing, site furnishings)	1	ls	\$65,000	\$65,000	2018-19
5' Concrete sidewalk (ADA access)	1150	lf	\$25	\$28,750	2009-10
Drinking fountain	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2018-19
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$19,000	\$19,000	2018-19
Signage	1	ls	\$3,000	\$3,000	2009-11
Landscaping	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2018-19
Subtotal				\$430,750	
Contingency (20%)				\$86,150	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$51,690	
TOTAL				\$568,590	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Wycliffe Way Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Paved parking (includes asphalt, striping, lighting, landscaping)	30	ea	\$1,400	\$42,000	2018-19
Utilities	1	ls	\$25,000	\$25,000	2018-19
Restroom	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2018-19
Trailhead (includes pavement, seatwalls, signage and site furnishings)	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000	2018-19
Trail (includes demolition of old pavement)	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2018-19
Signage	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000	2009-11
Site furnishings	1	ls	\$7,000	\$7,000	2018-19
Subtotal				\$354,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$70,800	
Design Fees/Construction Testing (10%)				\$42,480	
TOTAL				\$467,280	

EXISTING PARK RENOVATIONS

\$18,994,440

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

CITY PARK IMPROVEMENTS

PHASE 1

Redevelopment Master Plan

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Redevelopment Master Plan	1	ls	\$45,000	\$45,000	2009
Subtotal				\$45,000	
TOTAL				\$45,000	

Community Center and Aquatics Complex

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Feasibility study	1	ls	\$45,000	\$45,000	2009
Design and construction	1	ls	\$16,000,000	\$16,000,000	2011-13
Subtotal				\$16,045,000	
Contingency (10%)				\$1,600,000	
Design Fees (10%)				\$1,600,000	
TOTAL				\$19,245,000	

*Cost does not include land acquisition.

PHASE 2

Tennis Complex

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Restroom/Pro-shop	1	ls	\$600,000	\$600,000	2009-11
4 Covered tennis courts	1	ls	\$2,072,000	\$2,072,000	2009-11
4 Outdoor tennis courts	1	ls	\$200,000	\$200,000	2009-11
Subtotal				\$2,872,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$574,400	
Design Fees (10%)				\$344,640	
TOTAL				\$3,791,040	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Playground and General Park Improvements

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Restroom/Pro-shop	1	ls	\$500,000	\$500,000	2009
Site furnishings and sidewalks	1	ls	\$125,000	\$125,000	2009
New playground and safety surfacing	1	ls	\$250,000	\$250,000	2009
Subtotal				\$875,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$175,000	
Design Fees (10%)				\$105,000	
TOTAL				\$1,050,000	

Bringhurst Ball Field

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Renovation Study	1	ls	\$75,000	\$75,000	2009-11
Subtotal				\$75,000	
TOTAL				\$75,000	

Long-Term Projects

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Renovate Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex	1	ls	\$750,000	\$750,000	2014-15
Subtotal				\$750,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$150,000	
Design Fees (10%)				\$90,000	
TOTAL				\$900,000	

*NOTE: New Master Plan required. Costs to be determined from new Master Plan.

CITY PARK IMPROVEMENTS \$25,106,040

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

NEW PARK, FACILITY AND GREENWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Design Standards

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Design Standards Manual	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2009
Subtotal				\$100,000	
TOTAL				\$100,000	

Martin Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Demolition and removal of existing structures	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000	2010-11
Phase 1: Development	1	ls	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	2010-11
Subtotal				\$1,510,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$302,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$144,960	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$1,991,960	

*NOTE: New Master Plan required. Costs to be determined from new Master Plan.

Lilly Grimble Park

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Phase 1: Development	1	ls	\$750,000	\$750,000	2013-14
Subtotal				\$750,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$150,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$72,000	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$1,007,000	

*NOTE: New Master Plan required. Costs to be determined from new Master Plan.

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Neighborhood Park (West Alexandria)

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Development	1	ls	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	2010-11
Subtotal				\$1,500,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$300,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$144,000	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$1,979,000	

Neighborhood Park (Northwest Alexandria)

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Development	1	ls	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	2011-12
Subtotal				\$1,500,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$300,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$144,000	
Park Master Plan				\$35,000	2009
TOTAL				\$1,979,000	

Zoo Expansion

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Implement zoo master plan recommendations	1	ls	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	2010-11
Subtotal				\$2,000,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$400,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$192,000	
TOTAL				\$2,592,000	

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

Greenway Development

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total	Year
Develop city-wide master plan	1	ls	\$100,000	\$100,000	2012
Implement greenways in western Alexandria	1	ls	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	2014-19
Subtotal				\$5,100,000	
Contingency (20%)				\$1,000,000	
Design Fees (8%)				\$480,000	
TOTAL				\$6,580,000	

NEW PARK AND FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL \$16,228,960

TOTAL COST BREAKDOWN

Existing Park Renovations	\$18,994,440
City Park Improvements	\$25,106,040
New Park and Facility Recommendations	\$16,228,960
GRAND TOTAL	\$60,329,440

Opinions of Probable Cost and Materials Estimate

Estimates of construction quantities and opinion of probable costs provided by us are made on the basis of our experience and the level of design. Costs include materials and installation. They represent our best judgment as design professionals. We cannot and do not, however, guarantee that the actual construction quantities or costs will not vary from our quantities and cost estimates. Lose & Associates makes no warranty, expressed or implied, for the accuracy of such opinions as compared to bid or actual costs.

Effective date of cost estimates: March 2009.

SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

EXISTING PARK RENOVATIONS	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL
Alexander Fulton Mini Park	\$3,960										\$3,960
Bayou Rapides Trail	6,480			532,656							539,136
Beagle Club	262,020										262,020
Bolton Avenue Community Center Playground	99,660										99,660
Charles Smith Park	176,550						254,760				431,310
Cheatham Park	29,160						2,969,136				2,998,296
Compton Park	72,600			326,700							399,300
Deborah Bowman Park	64,350							306,900			371,250
Enterprise Park	211,200						316,800				528,000
Frank O. Hunter Park	1,779,250	1,779,250									3,558,500
Greenbelt		46,200					237,600				283,800
Harmon Park		108,900				1,452,000					1,560,900
Harold Miles Park		147,200		177,144							324,344
Helen Black Park		118,800						328,680			447,480
Johnny Downs Sports Complex		46,170							601,344		647,514
Lincoln Park		127,050							359,040		486,090
Mason Street Park		103,950					238,260				342,210
O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields	35,000				2,319,900	2,319,900					4,674,800
Peabody Playground	279,510									289,080	568,590
Wycliffe Way Park	6,600									460,680	467,280
RENOVATIONS TOTAL	\$3,026,340	\$2,477,520		\$1,036,500	\$2,319,900	\$3,771,900	\$4,016,556	\$635,580	\$960,384	\$749,760	\$18,994,440
CITY PARK IMPROVEMENTS	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL
Redevelopment Master Plan	\$45,000										\$45,000
Community Center and Aquatics Complex	45,000		9,600,000	9,600,000							19,245,000
Tennis Complex	1,895,520	1,895,520									3,791,040
Playground and General Park Improvements	1,050,000										1,050,000
Bringhurst Ball Field	75,000										75,000
Long-Term Projects						900,000					900,000
CITY PARK TOTAL	\$3,110,520	\$1,895,520	\$9,600,000	\$9,600,000		\$900,000					\$25,106,040



SECTION 8: OPINION OF PROBABLE COST AND PROJECT PHASING

NEW PARK, FACILITY AND GREENWAY RECOMMENDATIONS	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TOTAL
Design Standards	\$100,000										\$100,000
Martin Park	35,000	1,956,960									1,991,960
Lilly Grimble Park	35,000				972,000						1,007,000
Neighborhood Parks (2)	70,000	1,944,000			1,944,000						3,958,000
Zoo Expansion		2,592,000									2,592,000
Greenway Development				100,000		1,296,000	1,296,000	1,296,000	1,296,000	1,296,000	6,580,000
RECOMMENDATIONS TOTAL	\$240,000	\$6,492,960		\$100,000	\$2,916,000	\$1,296,000	\$1,296,000	\$1,296,000	\$1,296,000	\$1,296,000	\$16,228,960
Yearly TOTAL	\$6,376,860	\$10,866,000	\$9,600,000	\$10,736,500	\$5,235,900	\$5,967,900	\$5,312,556	\$1,931,580	\$2,256,384	\$2,045,760	\$60,329,440

GRAND TOTAL (2009 - 2019) \$60,329,440.00

Existing SPARC Funding
 Zoo \$2,000,000.00
 Park Improvements \$5,000,000.00

TOTAL (minus existing funding) \$53,329,440.00

Ten Year Average Spending \$5,332,944.00

Per Capita Spending 2008 (based on 2008 estimate) \$117.67

Per Capita Spending 2013 (based on 2013 projected) \$121.86

Current State Per Capita \$64.41

Annual Spending Per Household (based on 2008 estimate) \$487.83

Monthly Spending Per Household \$40.65



SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS



SECTION 9

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding the improvements outlined in this master plan will be more of a challenge now than in past years due to the condition of the national economy. However, over the life of this master plan, economic conditions should improve and enable the City to aggressively fund renovation and new development projects that are needed to catch up with the needs in the park system. As the City seeks to improve recreation services over the next ten years, City officials will have to provide new facilities, maintain facilities and operate a growing Parks and Recreation Department. In this section, we have documented current funding practices and identified opportunities to gain additional funding and tools for continued development of the newly formed Parks and Recreation Department.

Current Funding Methods

SPARC Funds

Through the City's Capital Outlay Program and SPARC funding, the City has made up to \$5 million available for immediate park improvements, with an additional \$2 million in capital investment for the Alexandria Zoo. This funding should allow the City to quickly begin development of the recommended new parks discussed in Sections 7 and 8 and to move forward with redevelopment master plans for several parks. It should also fund the feasibility and master plan study for a new community center and aquatics complex that is recommended in City Park and provide funds needed to acquire more land to expand City Park.

Beyond these current funds, additional funding will be needed. Options for acquiring additional funding are provided in the following text.

Traditional Funding Methods

Bonds

Some of the City's facilities are in need of upgrade or redevelopment. Park equipment is outdated, sometimes hazardous, and designs do not reflect current preferences and desires in park and recreation activities.

A majority of City residents tend to favor some type of increased funding for capital projects in parks and recreation. The statistically valid survey indicated that 62% of the people would favor funding capital projects over a 15, 20 or 30-year period. Securing a bond, like a general obligation (G.O.) bond, would provide funds for larger capital projects more quickly than using a pay-as-you-build approach. The bond, and its debt service, is paid back over time thus allowing the public to use the project during the period when the bond is being retired. These bonds normally carry a low interest rate, which serves as a hedge against the cost of inflations if you wait until you can pay cash for the projects.

User Fees

User fees are charges to those who utilize park and recreation programs, facility admission, facility and equipment rental fees, athletic leagues, etc. The City is not currently charging for equipment, labor and maintenance for the support services it is providing for special events and for neighborhood center

SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

rentals. A tiered fee structure should be established for private companies/individuals, community organizations, non-profits and other City departments. This structure should reflect the philosophy that those who benefit should pay. The greater the community benefit, the more the subsidy.

Special Assessment Districts

Special Assessment Districts are separate units of government that manage specific resources within defined boundaries. Districts vary in size, encompassing single cities or several counties. They can be established by local governments or by voter initiative, depending on state laws and regulations. As self-financing legal entities they have the ability to raise a predictable stream of money, such as taxes, user fees or bonds, directly from the people who benefit from the services and are often created specifically for parks and recreation. The use of these special assessment districts to help pay for parks and recreation is becoming increasingly prominent throughout the country, including East Baton Rouge, and has a long history in the Western United States.

Dedicated Property Tax

Alexandria presently has no source of dedicated funding for major repairs, renovations, or improvements to park facilities and recreation amenities. The lack of adequate capital investment threatens the quality of these assets and the situation will likely worsen over time. A dedicated property tax would generate stable annual funding to support the ongoing capital needs of the park system.

Based on the statistically-valid survey, 61% of City residents, (10,932 households) would be willing to spend \$5.00 more per month per household, or \$60.00 per year, to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities. Using this figure, the City could dedicate nearly \$1 million annually towards capital development or payment of a G.O bond. With this level of funding the City could do a bond to cover the cost of the new community center and aquatics complex and pay it off over a 20-year period.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are charges assessed by local governments against new development projects. These fees attempt to recover the cost incurred by a government for providing the public facilities required to serve new development. Impact fees are only used to fund facilities, such as roads, schools and parks, that are directly associated with the new development. They may be used to pay the proportionate share of the cost of public facilities that benefit the new development; however, impact fees cannot be used to correct existing deficiencies in public facilities. For Alexandria, impact fees will help supplement long-term maintenance, but will not provide sufficient capital dollars for the development of new facilities.

Williamson County, Tennessee, is an example of a community that collects impact fees. This rapidly growing County of 172,252 residents (59,344 households) collects impact/development fees, termed "privilege tax," for residential and commercial construction. This fee is collected to account for new residential impact to services within the County. The fee for Williamson County is \$1 per square foot. Local municipalities may add additional percentages of set amounts for permits issued within the municipality, but the County collects its \$1 regardless of the construction location. This \$1 is set by, and can be adjusted by, the County Commission.

The collection of the one dollar per square foot privilege tax is allocated differently depending upon whether the residence is being built in the county or in a municipality.

SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey respondents see the importance of new growth supporting new park and recreation facilities. Impact fees were seen as a “favorable” to “most favorable” mechanism to maintain and improve the park system by 60% of respondents. Because this funding mechanism was so highly favored by the public and City officials, it is recommended that City institute impact fees that can be used for land purchase, capital projects or bond repayments for the purpose of parks and recreation.

Regulatory Funding or Development Sources

The employment of regulatory means to aid the development of parks and greenways is used by many city governments across the country. In the case of parks, land set aside or a fee in lieu of land set aside are common and would provide either needed parkland or funds for acquisition of parkland. A mandatory park land dedication or fee in lieu of dedication is recommended to be added to the Alexandria Zoning Code in order to gain more public parkland to offset the impacts of residential development in the City.

One example of how zoning can impact a park system is in greenway development. Some communities require a mandatory right-of-way dedication for multi-use greenway development that is outside of the roadway system. As new developments are planned, there should be a provision for a mandatory dedication of right-of-ways or a greenway easement for the multi-use greenways shown in this Master Plan. These non-road routes are equally important to the development of a comprehensive greenway system; therefore, the mandatory dedication of ROW or easements should be explored by the City’s planning staff.

Federal Funding

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Although the program funds housing, public facilities, economic development and community projects, recreation could be a minor component of the project. For example, a mini park could be constructed on land purchased through the housing project which services primarily low to moderate income individuals. The program is administered through the Louisiana Office of Community Development.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

For many years since the mid 1960s, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program provided funds for outdoor recreation acquisition and development. However, over the last few years the funding has been extremely limited. The program is administered through the Louisiana Department for Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

National Recreational Trails Program

This program was initiated through the TEA-21 legislation. Funds are awarded for the construction of trails and support facilities. Emphasis is on the construction of multi-use trails such as biking, hiking, equestrian, motorized, etc. The program is administered through the Louisiana State Parks.

Rehabilitation Service Programs

This program is available through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. The intent of the program is to provide individuals with disabilities with recreational activities and related experiences that can be expected to aid in their employment, mobility, socialization, independence and community integration. Specific project activities may include: swimming, wheelchair basketball, camping, hiking, water skiing, horseback riding, arts, and sports. Historically, applications are due in September of each year.

SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Enhancement Funds and Safe Routes to School Funds

These programs are related to transportation activities. The activities funded through enhancement program are property acquisition, development of trails (hiking and biking), landscaping, signage and restoration of historic structures.

The Safe Routes to Schools grant program funds walking and bicycle facilities that connect residents to schools. This grant program requires an educational outreach component as part of the grant funding; however, it is a 100% grant.

These two grant programs are administered through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

State Funding

Louisiana Assistance Resource Center (LARC)

www.larconline.com

The Louisiana Office of Community Development has established the Louisiana Assistance Resource Center (LARC). The LARC is an online searchable database that contains technical assistance and funding sources from federal and Louisiana state government, as well as foundations throughout the country.

Louisiana Information Infrastructure Center (LIINC)

<http://wwwprodapp.doa.state.la.us/infra/>

The Louisiana Office of Community Development developed and maintains the Louisiana Infrastructure Information Center (LIINC). The LIINC is a database that provides interested parties a means of sharing information relative to the public funding of local infrastructure projects to hundreds of local governments. All infrastructure applications submitted to the participating agencies are included in the database. These records include information regarding the applicant, amount of funding, source of funds, type of infrastructure and status of the application. This database is a consolidated effort of the Office of Community Development, the Office of Facility Planning and Control, the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Governor's Office of Rural Development, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The database also aids in the decision-making process for the participating agencies and provides users with a "one-stop shop" for infrastructure funds.

Louisiana Endowments for the Humanities (LEH)

www.leh.org

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) awards grants to organizations that mount programs either promoting or applying the humanities. During the past 30 years, the LEH supported over 1,000 projects with awards totaling over \$9 million. These grants went to a variety of nonprofit organizations, including museums, libraries, historical societies, professional groups, governmental bodies, and colleges and universities.

The LEH awards seven types of grants: Public Humanities Grants, Louisiana Publishing Initiative Grants, Documentary Film & Radio Grants, Outreach Grants, Planning Grants and Teacher Institutes for Advanced Study Grants. These grants employ a variety of formats including public forums (conferences,

SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

films and lecture series, panel discussions), teacher institutes & workshops, interpretive exhibits, media programs (i.e. radio, television, film, video) and books. Further information may be obtained from the website.

Louisiana Division of the Arts

www.crt.state.la.us/arts

The Division of the Arts is responsible for the development and promotion of the arts for the benefit of all people of Louisiana. This is accomplished through several grants programs that award funds to Louisiana artists and arts organizations to help provide arts activities statewide.

USDA Rural Development

www.rurdev.usda.gov/la/about_us.htm

Each year, USDA Rural Development programs create or preserve tens of thousands of rural jobs nationwide and create or improve more than 65,000 units of quality rural housing. To multiply the impact of its programs, USDA Rural Development is working with state, local and Indian tribal governments, as well as private and nonprofit organizations and user-owned cooperatives.

Alternative Funding Mechanisms

Fundraising

Local fundraising is a mechanism that has worked effectively for many jurisdictions across the country. Many facilities, from dog parks to playgrounds, have been developed through intense fundraising initiatives. Although a vast amount of local effort is involved, this mechanism typically generates a vast amount of support and publicity. Local businesses, organizations and private individuals can pledge funding over a specific period of time.

An active parks and recreation advisory board can play an active role in soliciting dollars and in-kind services for improvements. Board members play a vital role in providing guidance, expertise, advocacy, political support and fundraising efforts, and represent the agency's constituents. One of the primary responsibilities of the board is to assist in the development, acquisition and management of the agency's resources.

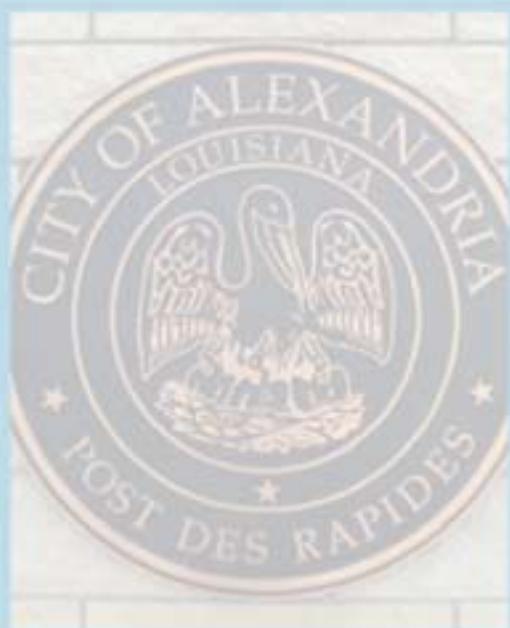
Board members can be a more proactive entity by initiating a variety of fundraising tasks, such as collaborating with the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority (GAEDA) to send direct mail letters, promoting sponsorship of programs and naming rights, seeking in-kind donations, hosting special events (i.e., golf tournaments, fundraiser dinners, events to honor volunteers, silent auctions and themed socials), and soliciting charitable donations of money and lands.

Utility Round-up Programs

Many communities are finding new ways to generate income through passive means. One mechanism that has been around for the past 15 years is a utility round-up program. The program is voluntary and works in this way. For example, the City owns a water utility and an individual receives a bill for \$28.25. Instead of writing the check for the invoice amount, the person has the option to write a check for \$29 or more and have the overage go into a capital fund for a specific project (a new ADA playground unit, for example). Sartell, Minnesota has incorporated the round-up program to finance three new park picnic shelters and Fort Smith, Arkansas's "Check Marks for Parks" program has created new playground and picnic areas citywide.

SECTION 9: FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

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APPENDIX

COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following survey was randomly distributed to 2,500 households in Alexandria. The results of this survey can be found in Section 3, Public Input.

APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



****IMPORTANT****
 Community Survey – *We need your help!*
 City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation

This survey is being conducted to measure your opinion of Parks and Recreation facilities, programs, events, activities and services. Survey responses will be used to shape the future direction of park programming and facility improvements. Widespread citizen input is very important for our planning process. If you would like a hand in shaping the City's parks and recreation, this is your opportunity. Your suggestions will help guide future decisions about our parks. Please take a moment to fill out this questionnaire and send it back to us in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by **February 28, 2009**.

Thank you in advance for helping to make the city parks and recreation programs better and more enjoyable.

1. Listed below are the programs and activities typically offered by parks and recreation agencies. Please place a check next to the programs, activities, events, or services that you or members of your family have participated in over the **past five (5) years**.

Youth Sports

- Tackle Football
- Tennis Programs
- Winter Basketball Programs
- Golf Programs
- Soccer League
- Baseball League
- Swim Team
- Cheerleading
- Softball-Slow/Fast Pitch
- Travel Teams

General Park Activities

- Visit Gym
- Visit a Park Playground
- Fishing
- Mountain Biking
- Family Reunion Picnic
- Visit a City Swimming Pool
- Park Shelter/Facility Rental
- Visit Zoo

Youth Programs

- Summer Camps
- After School Program
- Swimming Lessons

Park Programs

- Senior Citizen Programs
- Weight Training
- Aerobic Exercise Program
- Visit a Community Center Event

Special Events

- Free Friday Teen Movie
- Big Band & Jazz Events
- Zoo Events
- Special Event on the River

Adult Sports

- Adult Softball Leagues
- Adult Basketball Leagues
- Golf
- Adult Soccer

Other: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Go back to the list above and **CIRCLE UP TO FIVE** programs, events, activities and services that are your family's favorites.

3. Please check the Alexandria Parks and Recreation facility that your family uses the most often: **(CHECK ONE)**

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Community Park | <input type="checkbox"/> A Swimming Pool | <input type="checkbox"/> A Soccer Field | <input type="checkbox"/> A Tennis Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Neighborhood Park | <input type="checkbox"/> A Baseball Field | <input type="checkbox"/> A City Golf Course | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Park Open Spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> An Indoor Basketball Court | <input type="checkbox"/> A Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Football Field | <input type="checkbox"/> An Outdoor Basketball Court | <input type="checkbox"/> City Greenway Trail | |

4. Please indicate how often you normally visit any park in Alexandria:

- Daily
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year
- Never
- Other: _____

If you answered 'Once a month' or less, what would entice you to visit Alexandria city parks more often? _____

If you answered 'Never', is there a specific reason you do not use Alexandria city parks? _____

Do you travel to any communities outside of the City of Alexandria to use park facilities and/or programs?

- Yes
 - No
- If you answered 'Yes', please identify the facilities and/or program and why you go there. _____

APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

5. Using the list below, rank how often you take part in the following park programs. **(1= Very Often to 5= Not at all)**

- _____ Passive Park Usage – Walking, Picnics, Fishing, Walk Dog, Fly Kites, Sit and Relax.
- _____ Individual Activity – Golf, Tennis, Visit Zoo, Swim Lesson, Go to a Pool.
- _____ Organized Group Activity – Soccer, Baseball, Football, Basketball League.
- _____ A Special Event
- _____ A Cultural Arts Event
- _____ Other Favorite Program: _____.

6. Please indicate how safe you feel in Alexandria City park facilities.

- () Safe () Somewhat safe () Somewhat unsafe () Unsafe

7. How often do you use nearby state park facilities:

- () Daily () Monthly () Never () Weekly () Few times a year () Other: _____

8. Please read through the following list of possible new facilities, programs and activities for Alexandria Parks and Recreation and then write the corresponding number next to the item to indicate if you think the item should be (1) started and completed in one year, (2) started and completed in two years, (3) started and completed in 3-5 years, (4) put in a long-term (5-10 year) plan or (5) not started at all.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ Expand the zoo | _____ Youth Football Complex | _____ Large gym/community center complex |
| _____ Modern Playgrounds | _____ Gym/weightlifting facility | _____ Fishing lake with accessible pier |
| _____ New Skate park | _____ Mountain biking trails | _____ More walking trails in existing parks |
| _____ Splash Pads | _____ Indoor Soccer Complex | _____ Indoor basketball/volleyball facility |
| _____ Indoor tennis courts | _____ Develop bike paths through city | _____ New Indoor pool and aquatic center |
| _____ Youth Golf Facility | _____ New senior citizen center | _____ Renovate existing park facilities |
| _____ BMX bike trail/jump course | _____ Renovate baseball stadium | |
| _____ Before and after school care center | _____ Public infant-preschool child care center | |
| _____ Provide adult multi-use sports fields | _____ New nature sanctuary/preserve | |
| _____ Fenced area for paintball competition | | |

(Please write in a project you think was missed in the above list and should be given a priority)

Other: _____

9. Do you believe there are adequate **youth recreation programs** for both boys and girls in Alexandria?

- _____ Yes, programs are adequate for boys and girls _____ No, additional programs are needed for girls
 _____ No, additional programs are needed for boys and girls

Please write in the name of one or two programs that **stand out** for boys and/or girls. _____

Please suggest **new or improved** programs that you'd like to see for boys and/or girls. _____

10. Do you believe there are adequate **adult recreation programs** for both men and women in Alexandria?

- _____ Yes, programs are adequate for men and women _____ No, additional programs are needed for women
 _____ No, additional programs are needed for men and women _____ No, additional programs are need for men
 _____ I am not sure about programs for men and women

Please write in the name of one or two programs that **stand out** for men and/or women. _____

Please suggest **new or improved** programs that you'd like to see for men and/or women _____

APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

11. Please indicate which of the following ways you get information about Alexandria Parks and Recreation events and programs.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Web Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentioned on Talk Radio Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Advertising on Local Stations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercials on AM Radio Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters/Flyers or Handbills in Stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercials on FM Radio Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth from Friends/Neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From Information My Child Brings Home from School | |
- Other: (Please Describe) _____

12. Using the scale below, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or neither agree nor disagree with the following statements:

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree nor disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
- I get all of the information I need about programs, events, activities, and services from Parks and Recreation---> _____
 - Programs offered by Parks and Recreation adequately meet my family's needs-----> _____
 - High quality parks and recreation facilities are important to attract and keep new business in Alexandria-----> _____
 - Parks and Recreation facilities – like restrooms, playgrounds and shelters – are well maintained-----> _____
 - I think the city needs more parks-----> _____
 - Current parks athletic programs for boys and girls are well organized and well run-----> _____
 - Alexandria needs more football, baseball, softball and soccer fields to meet community needs-----> _____
 - Recreation facilities are safe and well supervised-----> _____
 - Alexandria Parks and Recreation has a good image in the community-----> _____
 - Alexandria needs an indoor community swimming facility that meets the needs of the entire city-----> _____
 - Park's top priority should be to renovate existing facilities instead of building new ones-----> _____
 - The kind of recreation facility that I use the most is not conveniently located near my home-----> _____
 - I would register for activities, leagues, camps and swimming lessons on-line through the Parks web site-----> _____
 - Recreation programs and activities are reasonably priced-----> _____
 - Alexandria needs an indoor walking/running track-----> _____
 - A good Parks and Recreation system is just as important as good schools, fire and police protection-----> _____

13. In order to maintain and improve current Park and Recreation programs, events, activities and services, more funding will be needed. There are 6 funding options below. Please rank the funding options below, using the numbers 1 through 6 – **1 being most favorable and 6 being least favorable.**

- Increase funding through bond issues that fund specific capital projects over a 15, 20 or 30-year period.
- Lobby the mayor and city council to approve increased funding for Park's Projects from the existing city budget.
- Increase efforts to fund additional projects through state and federal financial grants.
- Ask voters to approve a dedicated tax to maintain and improve the Parks system.
- Charge developers an impact fee to help fund parks improvements.
- Increase the sales tax or other current taxes to fund new park projects.
- Increase fees charged for programs.

Here's another idea: _____

14. Alexandria Parks and Recreation provides a wide range of programs, events, activities and services. Using the Scale below, please give the division an overall grade as to whether or not park programs meet your needs.

- () Excellent () Very Good () Good () Average () Fair () Poor () Very Poor

If average or below, please write down what would make it better: _____

15. How do you currently travel to the park facility you use most often? **(Check One)**

- Walk Drive Ride a bike

16. How far would you be willing to walk, drive or ride a bike to park and recreation facilities? **(Circle one per category)**

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Walk | A) Would not walk | B) Up to 2 miles | C) 2-5 Miles | D) 10-20 Miles |
| Ride a bike | A) Would not bike | B) Up to 2 miles | C) 2-5 miles | D) 5-10 miles |
| Drive | A) Would not drive | B) Under 15 minutes | C) 15-30 minutes | D) 30-45 minutes |
| | E) 45+ minutes | | | |

APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

17. Please write your zip code in the following space: _____
18. Please indicate your gender and age: _____ Male _____ Female
() 15 and under () 25-34 () 45-54 () 65-74 () 16-24 () 35-44 () 55-64
() 75+
19. Which of the following best describes your household?
() Single Adult () Young Couple with No Children () Couple with Children Who have Left Home
() Single Senior Citizen () Couple with Children at Home () Single-Parent Household with Children
() Senior Citizen Couple () Domestic Partnership Household () Other: _____
20. If you have children living at home, how many children are in the following age groups?
_____ Infant – 3 years old _____ 4-6 years old _____ 7-10 years old _____ 11-15 years old
_____ 15-17 years old _____ 18+ years old
21. What is your total annual household income?
() Under \$15,000 () \$15,000-\$25,000 () \$25,001-\$35,001 () \$35,001-\$45,000 () \$45,001-\$60,000
() \$60,001-\$75,000 () \$75,001-\$99,999 () \$100,000-\$125,000 () More than \$125,000
22. How much would you be willing to spend per month to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities?
() Less than \$1.00 () \$1.00 to \$2.99 () \$3.00 to \$4.99 () \$5.00 to \$6.99 () \$7.00 to \$8.99
() \$9.00 to \$11.99 () \$12.00 to \$14.99 () \$More than \$15.00 a month () Not willing to pay anything
23. Please write in below any comments/suggestions you have about improving Alexandria Parks and Recreation programs: _____

Please fold this questionnaire and put in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope. Please drop the envelope in a mailbox as soon as possible. Thank you for your help.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: February 28, 2009

Survey may be dropped off or mailed to:

Drop off: Alexandria City Hall, Division of Community Services, 915 3rd Street (Second Floor), Alexandria, LA

Mail to: City of Alexandria, Attn: Division of Community Services, PO Box 71, Alexandria, LA 71309

This is Your Community, Your City....YOUR INPUT COUNTS!!!

APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

FACILITY USAGE AGREEMENT

It is [COMMUNITY] Government Policy that Facility Agreements may be established with incorporated non-profit organizations for the express purpose of providing youth sports for the youth of our community. This agreement provides for use of governmental resources by the organization for the benefit of the youth in the community. Therefore all proceeds from the Youth Sports Program must be used to benefit the designated Youth Program.

This agreement made and entered into, between the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT], and the [LEAGUE NAME] hereinafter referred to as the League, for the express purpose of providing playing facilities for a youth program for the participants of the above mentioned League. This league must be a non-profit organization. Any proceeds above League expenses for the period of this agreement must be designated in one of the following manners; proceeds to be used for this program during the next facility agreement period, proceeds to be used for reduction of existing league debts, proceeds to be used for the improvements to Parks and Recreation facilities, or proceeds must be turned in to the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] and deposited in the General Fund.

In the event the program terminates and the organization has a fund balance after meeting league expenses, the fund balance must be used for approved Parks and Recreation improvements or returned to the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s General Fund. All required field improvements must be submitted to the [PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT] in writing for approval prior to implementation of any action.

For the purposes of this agreement "Government" shall be the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT], "Department" shall be the [PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT], and "Director" shall be the director of the [PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT].

GENERAL TERMS:

1. Each program shall conduct Criminal Records Checks on all volunteers before volunteers are assigned specific duties. All Leagues are required to enforce [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]'s minimum standards for prospective volunteers in positions dealing with children. Individuals found to have a history of any of the following are ineligible to participate in youth programs.
 - Any illegalities dealing with children/minors.
 - Any illegalities of a sexual nature.
 - Drug-related convictions within 2 years.
 - Drug Trafficking convictions within 5 years.
 - Any crimes of violence within 2 years.
 - Any pattern of alcohol-related convictions leading up to the present.

All leagues are required to keep accurate up to date records and will be subject to demonstrate record checks have been done on any volunteer specified by [LOCAL GOVERNMENT].

2. The facility agreement only provides usage of the park facility at the time and location designated herein.
3. No participant may be turned away or excluded from participation. If exceptions arise, permission is to be requested in writing from the Director of Parks and Recreation.
4. The League shall abide by all local, state, and federal laws regarding all activities, including but not limited to employment, labor, revenue, and construction.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

A. FACILITY:

1. Name of League:
Name of Park(s):
Name/location of Field # 1:
Name/location of Field # 2:
Name/location of Field # 3:
Name/location of Field # 4:
Name/location of Field # 5:
Name/location of Field # 6:
2. Length of Contract: From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 1

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 2

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 3

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 4

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 5

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

Times (Daily Schedule) Field # 6

Monday From _____ To _____
Tuesday From _____ To _____
Wednesday From _____ To _____
Thursday From _____ To _____
Friday From _____ To _____
Saturday From _____ To _____
Sunday From _____ To _____

NOTE: The [PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT] will have the right to schedule any additional leagues or games that it might deem necessary to its participants, should the need arise, (i.e., T-Ball, Small Fry, Pony Tail, Softball). If the field is not being used at the above specified times, it will become open to other individuals or groups.

B. MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF FIELDS AND STRUCTURES

1. The Department reserves the right to add to, repair or make any changes it deems necessary to the facility. Normal maintenance or the maintenance requested by the League will be provided **as the Department's budget would allow.**

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

2. Any request for pre-season maintenance repairs must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of Parks Maintenance by October 1 to allow for these projects to be reviewed and/or scheduled into the normal work periods, budget permitting.
 3. No coach, manager, player or league official shall use divisional equipment or supplies at any time unless specifically authorized in writing by the Department director or his designee.
 4. Any permanent improvement(s) the League desires to add, build, etc., must be presented to the Director of the Department in writing (to include plans & specifications, etc.) and must have prior written approval of the Director of Parks and Recreation. All proposed capital improvements exceeding \$10,000 in value must be bonded (letter of credit acceptable) for the total value of the improvement.
 5. The Department will no longer provide marking dust and diamond grit to leagues. The maintenance staff will mark and drag fields for games if fields are deemed playable. If more than 5 bags of diamond grit need to be used for a field, the field will be considered not playable and will not be marked. Additionally, if the league decides to add more infield mixture and play without authorization, the league will be responsible for repairing any damages to the field and hold harmless the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] for any player injuries due to wet conditions.
- C. GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION (If funds are appropriated, the Department will offer the opportunity for leagues to apply for grants).
1. The League must submit an application to the Department for consideration of any requested financial support. Application forms are available at the Department of Parks and Recreation's athletic section. Completed forms shall be returned to: Recreation Superintendent, Department of Parks and Recreation.
 2. The application must be accompanied by: a statement of how the funds (if allocated) will be used; a statement defining the number of males and females in the program; a statement defining the types of fields being used and who is using them; a statement at the end of the season explaining the impact the funds made on the particular program; a financial statement for the previous year of operation.
 3. Applications may be filed on an annual basis in accordance with the application timeline deadline attached hereto.
- D. MISCELLANEOUS
1. The League will be responsible for securing all umpires and scorekeepers to officiate their games.
 2. The League will be responsible for inspecting the field before each game and will assume responsibility for any safety problems.
 3. The League must submit a certificate of all insurances to the Department before the first use of the facility each season. The [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] must be included as an Additional Insured.
 4. All checks written by the League must require signatures of (2) two League Board members. Board members authorized to sign checks may not be related.
 5. The League must submit a schedule of regular season games (to include make up days for rain outs, etc.) to the Department no later than two weeks in advance of the first game. The League must notify the Department of any schedule changes 24 hours in advance.
 6. The League must submit a schedule of the teams practice times and field locations to the Department no later than two weeks in advance of the first practice. If a pattern of reserving but not using fields becomes apparent, the Department has the right to cancel this agreement in part or in total.
 7. The League President or his/her designee will be the only contact with the Department.
 8. Fields must remain open unless authorized in writing by the Director, or his/her designee. The Director will consider requests for locks for security purposes at field locations where vandalism, etc. are problems. When requests for locks are granted, locks may not be placed on fields prior to 9 PM and must be removed by 8 AM the following day. Under conditions

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

- where leagues have been given permission to lock fields, Parks and Recreation must be provided keys to such locks.
9. Leagues that operate a concession stand(s) on a specified park must enter into a concession agreement with the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] for this privilege and adhere to the Department's vendor agreements for such things as concession items and soft drink products.
 10. Leagues must have telephones at league sites. Phone service must be set up by the League and under the Leagues name, with the League assuming full responsibility for all costs relating to establishing and continuing service on site. Note: Availability of cell phones does not meet this requirement.
 11. All leagues are required to follow the Parks and Recreation Severe Weather Policy.
 12. No later than one month after the conclusion of League play, the League must furnish financial information (copy of forms enclosed) to the Department from the prior year to include, but not limited to, the following items: number of participants in all leagues, registration fee for each participant, booster club fee for all participants; cost for umpires; cost for scorekeepers; number of game balls for each game and unit cost; total cost per game; cost per child per game; yearly league budget amount; annual revenue and sources of revenue; annual itemized expenses for the league(s); annual concession income; annual concession expenses, a summary of current assets, and a copy of the League's completed IRS Form 990.
 13. No later than one month after the conclusion of League play, the League must furnish gender information (copy of form enclosed) to the Department from the prior year to include the following: types of programs that are run by the League; number of boys and number of girls that are participating in each league; the number of games provided for both boys and girls; the times that the boys play in comparison to the girls; what fields the boys play on in comparison to the girls; cost per player for boys and girls; cost per game for boys and girls; practice time afforded boys and girls.
 14. The League must furnish equity information to include, but not limited to, the following: scholarship information and participation by race.
 15. Because the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] is tracking program participation and facility usage county-wide, the League must submit a complete roster of all participants including gender, race, age, and address. Names of participants are not required.
 16. This facility agreement is made and entered into between the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] and the League. The League is not allowed to sub lease this agreement to any other organization without written prior approval by the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT].
 17. In the event the League plans to charge admission for tournament games, a written request of the anticipated charge, including method of collecting charges, must be submitted to the Department Director, or his/her Designee, 15 days in advance of the anticipated charge. The Director, or Designee, will provide a written response to the League request.
 18. The League must distribute copies of the Department of Parks and Recreation Physical/ Verbal Altercation Policy to all League participants. In the event your league experiences unsportsmanlike conduct from players, fans, spectators, coaches, etc. please report the incident on the next business day to the Athletic Director. The investigation will begin immediately and the procedures outlined in the Handbook will be followed. The League will be asked to fully cooperate by providing **written statements** from all individuals involved in the incident, as well of statements from spectators who witnessed the incident(s). During the investigation, the individual(s) accused will be suspended from all sporting activities and/or sports-related events.
 19. Sports lights must be turned off by 11:15pm. If exceptional situations arise, such as tournaments or excessive rainouts, the league must request permission in writing from the Director of Parks and Recreation. Repeated abuse of this policy may result in measures including but not limited to requiring the league to pay electric bills.
 20. Failure of the League to honor any or all of this agreement shall relieve the Government of any commitments herein agreed upon and shall make this agreement null and void.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

Any alterations to this agreement must be made in writing and must be agreed upon by the League and the Government before the alteration is implemented.
The [LOCAL GOVERNMENT] and its Department of Parks and Recreation prohibits discrimination on the basis of financial ability to pay, race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, or special needs in its programs and/or activities.

E. SIGNATURES

DIRECTOR, [PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT]

LEAGUE PRESIDENT (Print or Type Name)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

WORK PHONE HOME PHONE

E-MAIL ADDRESS

LEAGUE PRESIDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

HIGHEST ELECTED OFFICIAL, [LOCAL GOVERNMENT]

DATE

ATTEST

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APPENDIX: FACILITY INVENTORY

	Classification	Acreage	Activity/Meeting Room	Administrative Offices	Amphitheater	Baseball/Softball Field	Basketball Court (outdoor)	Batting Cage	Boat Launch	Community Center	Concession/Kitchen	Exercise/Fitness Room	Fishing Pier/Dock	Fitness Course	Football Field	Golf Course (holes)	Gymnasium	Lake/River/Creek	Multi-purpose Field	Pavilion/Shelter	Picnic Area	Picnic Grill	Playground	Pool (Indoor)	Pool (Outdoor)	Restroom Facility	Soccer Field	Spraygrounds	Stage	Tennis Court	Trails (miles)	Track	Volleyball (Sand)	
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA PARKS AND FACILITIES																																		
Alexander Fulton Mini Park	M	0.5			X																													
Bayou Rapides Trail	G	8											X				X				X											0.5		
Beagle Club	SU	1																		1	X	X				X								
Charles Smith Park	M	0.75					1															2												
Cheatham Park	C	15				1	5				X			X						2	X					X	X					0.25		
City Park	C																																	
Alexandria Youth Baseball Complex		14				6	4				X											1			X									
Alexandria Zoo	SU	33	X	X							X											1			X			X						
Ben Bradford Field		3.5				1	2				X														X									
Big Island Field		7									X				1				X															
Boys & Girls Club Picnic Area		1																			X													
Bringhurst Ball Field	SC					1	X				X															X								
Bringhurst Golf Course	SU	7													9																			
City Park Playground		3.5																	1	X		1			X	X								
Diamond #1 (Masonic Field)		3.5				1					X														X									
Hynson Bayou Trail		16															X															1		
Tennis Complex		3									X															X			8					
Compton Park	C	10																				1										0.75		
Deborah Bowman Park	M	2					1													1	X		1											
Enterprise Park	M	3																				1												
Frank O. Hunter Park	C	22				1	2				X					X			1	X	X	2			X				5	0.5				
Greenbelt	G	50																														2		
Harmon Park	M	3																		1	X		1				X							
Harold Miles Park	M	4.5					1~				X									1	X	X	1			X								
Helen Black Park	M	0.5					1													1	X		1									X		
Johnny Downs Sports Complex	C/SC	80				8	8				X									1						X	15							
Lincoln Park	M	2					2~															1												
Links on the Bayou Golf Course	SU	160									X				18		X									X								
Martin Park (undeveloped)	C	20				1					X															X								
Mason Street Park	M	0.25																				1												

~Half Court

M - Mini Park

C - Community Park

SC - Sports Complex

SU - Special Use Facility

G - Greenway



	Classification	Acreeage	Activity/Meeting Room	Administrative Offices	Amphitheater	Baseball/Softball Field	Basketball Court (outdoor)	Batting Cage	Boat Launch	Community Center	Concession/Kitchen	Exercise/Fitness Room	Fishing Pier/Dock	Fitness Course	Football Field	Golf Course (holes)	Gymnasium	Lake/River/Creek	Multi-purpose Field	Pavilion/Shelter	Picnic Area	Picnic Grill	Playground	Pool (Indoor)	Pool (Outdoor)	Restroom Facility	Soccer Field	Spraygrounds	Stage	Tennis Court	Trails (miles)	Track	Volleyball (Sand)	
O'Hearn Mathews Soccer Fields	C	30									X														X	10								
Old Menard School Park	M	2.5																																
Peabody Playground	M	2																					1								X			
Wycliffe Way Park (undeveloped)	M	4															X																	
Community Centers																																		
Alexandria Teen Activity Center			X							X																								
Bolton Avenue Community Center			X							X	X	X											1											
Broadway Resource Center			X							X	X																							
M.L. King Community Center			X							X	X																							
Martin Community Center			X							X	X																							
TOTAL		513				20	10	14							1	27				10			17			25				13	5			
OTHER PROVIDERS (CITIES, ETC.)																																		
Alexandria Aquatic and Racquet Club												X												1						8				
Alexandria Levee Park ¹					X				X				X						23	X	X	1			2						X			
Boyce									X										1												X			
Boys and Girls Club of Central Louisiana			X	X													X																	
City of Pineville						9	1			2							X						2			X					X			
Civitan Ball Park		12				6					X															X								
Cotile Lake									X				X				X				X					X					X			
Fort Buhlow						1			X		X								3	X	X	X				X						X		
John H. Overton Lock and Dam #2																										X								
Kisatchie National Forest ²		97,000							X			X				X		X	X	X						X					X			
Lilly Grimble Park		5																																
Pineville Ward 9 Sportsplex		120				10					X															X	8							
Oak Wing Golf Course		220														18																		
Alexandria Family YMCA			X	X								X											1											
YMCA Downtown Alexandria			X	X								X											1											
YWCA of Alexandria-Pineville			X	X								X													1									
TOTAL		97,357				26	1			2	0				18				27			3	2	2	2	8			8					

¹ Owned by Red River Waterway Commission. Number of pavilions/shelters includes 1 picnic shelter and 22 covered picnic tables.

² These figures represent the amenities in the Kisatchie National Forest's Calcasieu Ranger District – Evangeline Unit

~Half Court

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SCHOOL FACILITIES																																	
Alexandria Senior High School						2								1		1		1						1						4		1	
Bolton High School														1		1		1														1	
Peabody Magnet High School														1		1							1									1	
TOTAL³						2								3		3		2					2						4		3		

³These figures represent the high school athletic facilities only.

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