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The Public Spaces Master Plan is scheduled to be adopted by the Arlington County Board in December 2005. After its adoption, this plan shall take the place of the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*, which will no longer have any force or effect.

Arlington Public Spaces Master Plan

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Executive Summary

Arlington, Virginia is a world-class residential, business and tourist location that was originally part of the 10 miles square parcel of land surveyed in 1791 to be the nation's Capital. It is the geographically smallest self-governing county in the United States, occupying slightly less than 26 square miles. Arlington maintains a rich variety of stable neighborhoods, quality schools and enlightened land use policies, and received the Environmental Protection Agency's highest award for "Smart Growth" in 2002. Home to some of the most influential organizations in the world – including the Pentagon – Arlington stands out as one of America's preeminent places to live, visit and do business. The community is committed to smart growth, sustainability and inclusion. Plans for community growth involve not only mixed use transit-oriented development, but also neighborhood conservation and one of the country's premier programs in affordable housing.

Arlington is nationally recognized for the quality and diversity of its park and recreation and arts offerings. Arlington was recently selected by Sports Illustrated and the National Recreation and Park Association as the Sportstown for the State of Virginia. The County was selected as one of four communities (the others being Houston, Minneapolis and San Diego) to participate in a grant study awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to investigate the relationship between health and local park and recreation uses in adults age 50 and older. In the past, Arlington was selected by the National Institutes of Health (through the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute) and NRPA to be one of two pilot programs for the Hearts in Parks initiative. The County also received Innovations Awards for its Arts Incubator and Bilingual Outreach programs.

The quantity of public spaces is a perennial issue in a community as small and densely developed as Arlington. However, the primary challenge in the coming decades will be to address the qualitative issues of our public space system, such as strengthening the connection between people and parks, optimizing the sustainable use of resources in the county, ensuring the involvement of all residents, and supporting a healthy natural and cultural environment. This focus will be necessary in order to sustain the County's traditional high level of service while adjusting to changing socioeconomic factors and an increased demand for both programming and natural spaces.

The **2005 *Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP)*** is a replacement for the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*. The PSMP is primarily a planning document that identifies the major public space needs of the community. It is one of eight critical components of the county's comprehensive plan. As a planning document, the themes and recommendations provide the framework to guide the stewardship of Arlington's precious public spaces for future generations to enjoy. This master plan makes recommendations echoing the values and priorities that the community

places on diverse leisure opportunities, while recognizing economic and resource constraints. Implementation of the recommendations is subject to the County's future funding and resource allocations and priorities.

Vision

Arlington's vision for public spaces builds upon the central concepts of the County's vision statement that is highlighted below. Public spaces sustain a community and strengthen its identity by providing the common ground where diverse people can interact and come together to build the meaningful connections that are important to healthy community and civic life. Attractive, well conceived public spaces and the programs and activities that they support are key catalysts for community education, energy and growth. In a densely urban community, public spaces also protect natural areas and provide the environmental balance and relief so vital to long-term sustainability.

Arlington County Vision

Arlington County will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important.

The three aspects of the County's vision most relevant to public spaces are:

Community Health and Quality of Life: Public spaces are the unifying element in the community and critical to ensuring a healthful environment and a high quality of life. They provide relief from the stresses of urban density, protect the natural ecosystem, enhance air and water quality, preserve habitat that supports a rich diversity of plants and animals, and protect and restore waterways essential to the environmental health of the community and region.

Connecting Community: Arlington's public spaces connect people to people and provide a "common ground" where people of diverse backgrounds and interests can reinforce a shared identity as Arlingtonians. Public spaces also connect residents and visitors with natural resources and link habitats through wildlife corridors. Trails and stream valleys have the added benefits of linking Arlington with nearby jurisdictions.

Accessibility and Inclusion for Everyone: Physical access to public spaces is, of course, basic. The ability of all persons to enjoy public spaces should be a focal

point of design, going beyond the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. No less important is access for low income Arlingtonians and for those living in high density areas. These elements of the population use public spaces as a necessary extension of their living space. The County's assurance of well distributed public spaces will respond to those needs.

Recommendations

The County has a strong established system of public spaces. The real challenge over the next ten to twenty years will be to balance existing resources and programs with new and changing needs, striking the right balance among a broad range of competing interests. To achieve that, this plan recommends that the County focus on six specific objectives summarized below that will drive future decision making. There are also five key recommendations that should receive special focus as the County's highest public space priorities:

1. Fully implement the North Tract Master Plan. The County is creating a major legacy through development of this new 30-acre gateway park with spectacular views and signature recreational facilities. The first phase is funded and currently in design. The County should pursue a full range of municipal marketing and joint development opportunities to complete the second phase of the park.
2. Develop a land acquisition policy that establishes criteria for evaluating acquisition opportunities and strategies for acquiring critical parcels of public space.
3. Focus on public space as a key aspect of the current planning efforts for the Four Mile Run restoration planning with the City of Alexandria and the Shirlington Village and Nauck areas, with a particular focus on acquisition and major enhancement of public spaces along the stretch of the Four Mile Run corridor from Barcroft Park to the Potomac River. The long-term plan should emphasize the development of public spaces as important recreational, cultural and environmental connectors.
4. Inventory the County's natural resources and create a natural resource policy and management plan. The County lacks a county-wide data base of natural resources, including flora, fauna, and habitat evaluations. These resources need to be evaluated, their significance rated, and a plan developed to manage and protect them.
5. Maximize the partnership with Arlington Public Schools. While the County and Schools already have an established cooperative relationship at many indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, a significant opportunity exists to enhance community use of these assets when they are not being used for their primary mission of education.

Objective One: Balance Acquisition and Development of Public Spaces

The County has a strong system of parks and recreation facilities, but the community has expressed a clear, documented need for additional aquatics facilities, fitness space, teen centers, athletic facilities, and arts and multi-purpose spaces, along with more trails and natural areas. High-priority actions to attain this objective include implementing the North Tract Master Plan, planning and developing public spaces along Four Mile Run and in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, and developing strategies for land acquisition and the location of facilities.

Objective Two: Preserve and Enhance the Environment

Creating and preserving natural spaces is a top priority for the community, to be emphasized in designing a new park, developing facilities or acquiring land. This objective focuses on developing policy and management plans to protect and manage natural resources and enhance the County's commitment to "Green" practices.

Objective Three: Improve Access and Usability

The community must be able to get to public spaces to use them. This objective encompasses ensuring access that meets the spirit as well as the letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act; ensuring that facilities can be reached by multiple means of transportation; creating more linkages through the trail system; and reducing economic barriers to enjoyment of these county spaces and resources.

Objective Four: Enhance Arts, Culture and History

Arlington has established itself throughout the region and nation as a community that offers unique, dynamic arts activities and one that provides focused attention to historic preservation. This objective focuses on developing a major arts and cultural center at Courthouse Plaza, and on promoting the integration of cultural and historic components in a broad range of spaces and programs.

Objective Five: Develop and Enhance Partnerships

Over the years, Arlington has developed a number of partnerships that enhance the amount of available public space and program offerings. The County needs to continue to create and expand partnerships with Arlington Public Schools and other government, private and non-profit organizations. This objective is to be met by developing a partnership policy to guide future decisions, by maximizing existing partnerships, and by reviewing and updating all agreements.

Objective Six: Manage Assets Effectively

The County has established a full complement of facilities and program offerings. This objective involves enhancing how the assets are designed, funded, maintained and managed. Recommended actions include improving program operations, including pricing and cost recovery, and developing a technology plan.

Key to Recommendations

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* One of the top five priority recommendations

What is in the *Public Spaces Master Plan*?

Chapter I Past and Present – The Planning Context

This chapter briefly describes the *Public Spaces Master Plan*. This chapter provides a history of Arlington's public spaces, outlines the purpose of the plan and its relationship to other comprehensive plan elements and related planning tools, and recognizes the many significant objectives that have been realized since the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*.

Chapter 2 Community Profile and Trends

Arlington's neighborhoods and demographics are continuing to evolve as the community becomes more urban. This chapter discusses the demographic profile of the community; national leisure trends that influence the field of parks, recreation and public space management; and important findings developed through facilitated community involvement throughout the process.

Chapter 3 Overview of Existing and Planned Public Spaces

This chapter provides an overview of current public spaces, including County, regional, federal and private spaces and facilities.

Chapter 4 Administration and Planning

This chapter provides a brief description of the administration, financing, land acquisition, and planning considerations for public spaces and a benchmarking analysis.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

Six objectives, each with a set of recommendations and actions, are proposed to guide Arlington County toward implementing the plan. Five key priority recommendations are highlighted to receive the highest public space priorities.

Appendices

The appendices include specific information that supports the plan.

Chapter 1. Past and Present – The Planning Context

A. Vision

Arlington's vision for public spaces builds upon the central concepts of the County's vision statement that is highlighted below. Public spaces sustain a community and strengthen its identity by providing the common ground where diverse people can interact and come together to build the meaningful connections that are important to healthy community and civic life. Attractive, well conceived public spaces and the programs and activities that they support are key catalysts for community education, energy and growth. In a densely urban community, public spaces also protect natural areas and provide the environmental balance and relief so vital to long-term sustainability.

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Accessibility and Inclusion for Everyone: Physical access to public spaces is, of course, basic. The ability of all persons to enjoy public spaces should be a focal point of design, going beyond the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

No less important is access for low income Arlingtonians and for those living in high density areas. These elements of the population use public spaces as a necessary extension of their living space. The County's assurance of well distributed public spaces will respond to those needs.

These themes were set forth in the vision statement in Arlington County's *1994 Open Space Master Plan*. Much of that vision is still relevant today. It has been modified to reflect the broader scope of this *Public Spaces Master Plan*.

Public Spaces Master Plan Vision

Open space benefits Arlington County through the conservation of natural and heritage resources, the protection of environmental quality, the provision of public facilities, the enhancement of neighborhoods, and the provision of visual and aesthetic relief in high density urban areas. An array of public spaces – parks, natural areas, attractive streetscapes and scenic views, pedestrian passageways, landscaped buffers, historical sites, community centers, cultural spaces and athletic fields, amongst others -- helps to make Arlington County an attractive and hospitable community for families, individuals, workers and visitors from all social and economic circumstances. The wise management of public space provides a vital framework for the unique features, character and history of Arlington.

Public space is a unifying element in the community, the "common ground" where the community comes together. -

To fulfill this vision, this plan delineates six objectives as the framework for county initiatives and investment in public spaces during the next decade. Each objective is to be achieved through specific actions which are summarized below and described in more detail in Chapter 5.

Objective One: Balance Acquisition and Development of Public Spaces

The County has a strong system of parks and recreation facilities, but the community has expressed a clear, documented need for additional aquatics facilities, fitness space, teen centers, athletic facilities, and arts and multi-purpose spaces, along with more trails and natural areas. High-priority actions to attain this objective include implementing the North Tract Master Plan, planning and developing public spaces along Four Mile Run and in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, and developing strategies for land acquisition and the location of facilities.

Objective Two: Preserve and Enhance the Environment

Creating and preserving natural spaces is a top priority for the community, to be emphasized in designing a new park, developing facilities or acquiring land. This objective focuses on developing policy and management plans to protect and manage natural resources and enhance the County's commitment to "Green" practices.

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The community must be able to get to public spaces to use them. This objective encompasses ensuring access that meets the spirit as well as the letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act; ensuring that facilities can be reached by multiple means of transportation; creating more linkages through the trail system, and reducing economic barriers to enjoyment of these county spaces and resources.

Objective Four: Enhance Arts, Culture and History

Arlington has established itself throughout the region and nation as a community that offers unique, dynamic arts activities and one that provides focused attention to historic preservation. This objective focuses on developing a major arts and cultural center at Courthouse Plaza, and on promoting the integration of cultural and historic components in a broad range of spaces and programs.

Objective Five: Develop and Enhance Partnerships

Over the years, Arlington has developed a number of partnerships that enhance the amount of available public space and program offerings. The County needs to continue to create and expand partnerships with Arlington Public Schools and other government, private and non-profit organizations. This objective is to be met by developing a partnership policy to guide future decisions, by maximizing existing partnerships, and by reviewing and updating all agreements.

Objective Six: Manage Assets Effectively

The County has established a full complement of facilities and program offerings. This objective involves enhancing how the assets are designed, funded, maintained and managed. Recommended actions include improving program operations, including pricing and cost recovery, and developing a technology plan.

B. Purpose of this Plan

The 2005 *Public Spaces Master Plan* (PSMP), which is scheduled to be adopted by the Arlington County Board in December 2005, updates and replaces the 1994 *Open*

Space Master Plan (OSMP). [NOTE the previous sentence will have to be changed upon adoption] The OSMP was the County's first comprehensive plan to address Arlington's open space needs in a ten to twenty year time frame. It provided an inventory of the County's open space system and a general framework for policy direction and decision making. Although the 1994 OSMP was a good initial step, it lacked the detail and substance necessary for full utilization as a decision making tool.

The 2005 *Public Spaces Master Plan* is primarily a planning document that identifies the major public space needs of the community and builds upon the goals and objectives identified in the 1994 plan. It also incorporates new tools, ideas and information unknown ten years ago. It is intended to be a dynamic, living document – one that gets used and will allow for consideration of changing conditions and ongoing public involvement. Its themes and objectives provide the framework for wise stewardship of Arlington's public spaces for future generations to enjoy. The general and specific action recommendations will guide decision-making -- including administration, funding, operations, maintenance, and capital investments -- for the next ten to twenty years. Implementation of the recommendations is subject to the county's future funding and resource allocations and priorities.

It is important to note that, while similar in intent to the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*, this plan is named the ***Public Spaces Master Plan***. The change reflects the broader scope of this plan. The term "open space" typically refers to outdoor lands and natural resources. While "open space" is still used throughout this document, primarily in reference to previous documents or work, "public spaces" more accurately encompasses the full extent of Arlington County's parks, natural resources, recreation, arts, cultural and historic facilities in addition to the urban streetscapes.

For purposes of this plan, **public spaces** are defined as:

- **Passive park lands and natural areas** – These lands include non-developed natural resource areas and semi-developed and managed parklands. Typically these areas are open for public use, but designed for low-impact recreational activities such as walking, jogging (individually or in small groups), picnicking, wildlife viewing, reading, non-motorized boating, fishing, and/or minimal human use. They often function as wildlife corridors, view sheds, conservation areas, tree canopies, urban buffers, storm and natural water management areas, and non-major arterial trails within parks. Nature centers, while categorized as "indoor" centers as described below, are often grouped with these spaces because their primary function is the interpretation of the surrounding natural areas and local and regional environmental education.

- **Active outdoor parks and facilities** – These spaces include the more developed park lands and athletic fields designed for higher impact and/or group recreational activities. They include managed turf and synthetic turf athletic areas, athletic courts, playgrounds, major arterial trails and pathways, community canine areas, large picnic areas, picnic shelters, skate parks and outdoor group gathering areas.
- **Indoor recreational, nature, arts, cultural and historic facilities and programs** – These include community centers, nature centers, art and cultural facilities, theatres, and historic facilities. These are typically designed for intensive public use and programming.
- **Urban streetscapes, and related facilities and services** – This category includes the plazas, sidewalks, walkways, broad medians, and related urban spaces that provide gathering places in urbanized areas, help define and connect major development corridors, and serve as links between commercial and residential areas.

Arlington has other public spaces within the County that are not addressed in this plan, including libraries, County administrative buildings, and county and state educational facilities.

C. Progress over the Last 10 Years

Much has been accomplished since the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*. One of the most important objectives realized in the last ten years has been a strategic acquisition of open space. Since 1994 the County has added over 65 acres throughout the County, primarily through fee simple acquisition and site plan negotiation. The acquisition program has been supported through a substantial voter-approved bond program. The table below highlights some of the more significant acquisitions. Appendix A gives a full listing of parcels that have been added over the last ten years.

Park	Acres	Year Acquired
Fort C.F. Smith Park	4.3	1995
Arlington Mill Community Center	1.9	1996
Fort Bennett Park	10.6	1996
Mosaic Park	1.2	1996 & 1998
Chestnut Hills Park	1.3	1996 & 1999
Powhatan Springs Park	5.3	1997
Bluemont Park (Reeves Tract)	2.4	2001
North Tract (Phase I)	21.5	2002
Jennie Dean Park	3.05	2002
Other Park Acquisitions	12.17	1995-2004
TOTAL	63.72	1995 – 2004

A second important achievement is the development and adoption of nine major park master plans and the adoption of the Urban Forest and Public Art Master Plans. The North Tract area is foremost among the adopted master plans. Four more park master plans are currently being developed. These park master plans are developed through a community planning process and illustrate at a conceptual level the types of facilities and the general location for amenities within a park. Appendix B identifies adopted park master plans and those currently underway.

Finally, significant park bond funding through the Capital Improvement Program has supported the construction of major facilities (Appendix C). Arlington residents have approved \$165.465 million for park improvements over the last ten years, including the most recent bond (2004) for \$75.250 million. These capital investments include the renovation or replacement of community centers, major renovation or construction of parks, and the introduction of a new program to replace select grass athletic fields with synthetic turf, as well as funds to acquire park land.

Numeric and Qualitative Comparisons

Since 1994, the County has adopted Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to help inventory and manage its public land and facilities holdings. The creation of the current GIS inventories has enabled the County to maintain more accurate counts of acreages and facility locations. However, the new system uses classifications and categories of lands that differ from those used in the 1994 plan, leading to an inability to directly compare holdings in 2004 versus 1994.

Public Spaces as of January 2005:

Arlington County Parks	919 acres
Arlington Public Schools	377 acres
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (Arlington only)	150 acres
Federal lands with recreation amenities (Arlington only)	78 acres
Other federal lands with cultural and historic amenities (Arl)	974 acres
Private Open Space w/Public Access Easements	7 acres

These lands total 2,505 acres, including both active and natural areas. In addition to the areas included above, the County has established a public-private partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT). Eleven acres have been permanently protected through conservation easements or fee simple acquisition by the NVCT. The lands preserved through NVCT are critical to protecting the County's natural resources but typically are not available to the general public.

D. History of Public Spaces

"When there are fields to run in, brooks in which to wade and trees to swing on, the need for public parks and organized 'recreation' is little felt", say Alice Letzler and William Hughes in *History of the Park System in Arlington County*. That is a picture of Arlington County in the early 20th century when much of the County was still undeveloped, but the picture has changed dramatically. Today the County is almost fully developed and the thirteenth most densely populated county in the United States.

Back in the mid-1900's, the County Board began considering proposals for acquisition of property before development drove up prices, preserving "green fingers" along stream valleys and the Potomac River, developing a comprehensive plan for parks and playgrounds and hiring a recreation expert to study the County's needs. During the 1940's, a number of major steps preserved open space and provided recreation in the County. First, in 1940, the Trustees of Glencarlyn deeded to the County 95 acres of park land which form an important element of the Four Mile Run, Long Branch and Lubber Run open space system. Next, in 1943, Arlington voters approved a bond issue to acquire open space and flood control land. Subsequently, the County Board established a Recreation Advisory Board. In 1944, a recreation planning expert was hired to develop a master plan for open space and facilities for recreation.

Until 1948, organized park and recreation programs were still considered a responsibility of the schools. The maintenance of Public Spaces was a function of the County's Engineering Department. In 1948, the School Board eliminated recreation funds from its budget. The County Board agreed to conduct park and recreation programs and maintain open space, and on July 1, 1948, the County's Department of Recreation was created.

In its early years, the County managed 140 acres of open space, a few athletic fields and playgrounds, and offered basic programs such as softball, baseball and basketball. The amount of open space grew steadily during the 1950's to 374 acres by 1959. In March 1959, staff completed the *Report of Open Space in Arlington*, which detailed the need for additional open space and park land. Following County Board adoption of the report, the County almost doubled its open space inventory to 606 acres by 1969. Several major parks were acquired, including Barcroft, East Falls Church, Gulf Branch, Lacey Woods, Madison Manor and Windy Run. The County also made the decision to link divergent open spaces owned by the County and public schools through a system of greenways.

In the 1970's, 80's and 90's, Arlington County continued to grow and add resources and programs. Trail networks were developed in conjunction with ongoing transportation planning. Voters approved bond referenda that allowed for continued acquisition, development and preservation of public lands. Acts of foresight took the opportunity to gain major resources such as Fort Ethan Allen and Fort C.F. Smith and enact major policy initiatives such as the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance. One of the last potential large areas for development, the North Tract property, was acquired for park development through innovative agreements with private interests.

Today, the County manages, 1,296 acres of public spaces and facilities including parks, community and nature centers, swimming pools, athletic fields and courts, playgrounds, cultural facilities and public art, community canine areas, picnic areas, school grounds and more. A wide variety of programs are provided including conservation and interpretation, recreation classes, camps, arts programming and sports leagues. The County is known for its innovative approach to planning and developing unique parks and facilities such as Powhatan Springs Park that features a skate park, youth-sized rectangular field and children's rain garden. Other creative concepts are being realized in areas such as playgrounds with water spray elements and facilities that incorporate public art. The County has been a leader in its progressive adoption of the use of synthetic turf athletic fields. The high quality of the County's cultural programming has been recognized for its excellence on a regional and national level.

E. Related Planning Efforts and Integration

The county has a number of planning programs, listed below, that support Arlington's development goals and land use policy. This *Public Spaces Master Plan* is one of eight individual elements that comprise the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Elements:

- General Land Use Plan
- Master Transportation Plan (includes Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Master Plans)
- Storm Water Master Plan
- Water Distribution System Master Plan
- Sanitary Sewer System Master Plan
- Recycling Program Implementation Plan
- Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance
- Public Spaces Master Plan*

*Two other elements are combined under the umbrella of this *Public Spaces Master Plan* in the Comprehensive Plan. They are:

- *Urban Forest Master Plan* (adopted July 10, 2004)
Arlington's Urban Forest Master Plan is a tool to facilitate the County's ongoing commitment to enhance and preserve Arlington's tree canopy. The Master Plan has the following components: a Geographic Information System (GIS) street tree inventory, tree canopy satellite analysis, long-range goals and recommendations and a final Urban Forest Master Plan report including GIS based planting plans. The plan will ultimately contribute to the attractiveness and sustainability of Arlington through enhancements to the tree canopy.

Public Art Master Plan (adopted December 11, 2004)

Public Art • Public Places, Arlington's Public Art Master Plan, is a tool for implementing the Public Art Policy that the County Board adopted in September, 2000. The public art policy reflects Arlington County's general commitment to encourage excellence in the design of public facilities, and recognizes that public art—along with architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and historic preservation—is one of several important tools the County can use. The policy calls for the preparation of the master plan, operational guidelines for commissioning projects, and an annual work plan. This master plan, which guides public art projects initiated by County agencies, private developers and community organizations, is organized into four main components:

- A long-term vision for public art in Arlington,
- Strategies for integrating public art into Arlington's architecture, gathering places and natural landscapes, including federal, global and historic projects
- Priorities for selecting public art projects, locations and proposals,
- A list of art projects to undertake over the next five years.

Comprehensive Plan Support Documents:

- Capital Improvement Program
- 7-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Consolidated Plan
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Zoning Ordinance and Map

Sector Plans:

- Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum
- Courthouse Sector Plan
- Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum
- Clarendon Sector Plan
- Clarendon Sector Plan Addendum
- Virginia Square Sector Plan
- Ballston Sector Plan

Small Area Plans:

- East Clarendon: Special Coordinated Mixed-Use District Plan
- North Quincy Street Plan
- Rosslyn to Courthouse Urban Design Study
- North Tract Plan Area Study

Revitalization Plans:

- Columbia Pike Initiative: A Revitalization Plan
- Lee Highway/Cherrydale Revitalization Plan

Park Master Plans

Neighborhood Conservation Plans

Two additional planning efforts are important to the Public Spaces Master Plan:

Historic Preservation Master Plan (currently underway)

The Historic Preservation Master Plan will be comprised of three key elements. The first is the development of a policy framework to serve as a preamble to the final Historic Preservation Master Plan document; the second is developing a procedure and policy by which to categorize the over 8,000 identified historic resources recorded in the Countywide Historic Resources Survey; and the third element is the development of an implementation framework. The formation of this plan will include review of and integration of ideas from numerous other historical and current plans, policy documents and processes. A list of existing historic resources is included in Appendix D.

Walk Arlington

Transportation planning for the County places a strong emphasis on creating “walkability” and connectivity for transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle trails and access. The Walk Arlington plan is an initiative to provide people many options for moving about the community.

Chapter 2. Community Profile and Trends

Arlington's neighborhoods and demographics continue to evolve as the community becomes more urban. This chapter discusses the demographic profile of the community; national leisure trends that are influencing the field of parks, recreation and public space management; and important findings developed through facilitated community involvement throughout the planning process.

Community Profile

Arlington is an urban county of about 26 square miles located directly across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Originally part of the ten-mile square surveyed for the nation's capital, the portion on the west bank of the Potomac River was returned to the Commonwealth of Virginia by the U.S. Congress in 1846. This area was known as Alexandria City and Alexandria County until 1920, when the county portion was renamed Arlington County.

Although perhaps best known to visitors as the home of the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington boasts high quality residential neighborhoods and award winning managed growth policies. Residents are actively involved in the community; there are over 50 civic associations, dozens of citizen boards and commissions, and over 100 community service organizations in Arlington.

Arlington's central location in the Washington metropolitan area, its ease of access by car and public transportation, and its highly skilled labor force have attracted an increasingly varied residential and employment mix. Arlington has focused high-density commercial and residential development around Metrorail stations in the Rosslyn-Ballston and Jefferson Davis corridors (which includes Pentagon City, Crystal City and Potomac Yards) and transit corridors along Columbia Pike and Shirlington Village, while maintaining lower density development in the remainder of the County.

Arlington is nationally recognized for the quality and diversity of its public space system. In 2003, the County was selected by *Sports Illustrated* and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as the Sportstown for the state of Virginia. The County was recently chosen as one of four communities (the others being Houston, Minneapolis and San Diego) to participate in a grant study awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to investigate the relationship between health and local park and recreation uses in adults ages 50 and older. In addition, Arlington was also selected by the National Institute of Health (through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) and NRPA to be one of two pilot programs for the Hearts N' Parks initiatives. The County also received an "Innovations Award" for its Arts Incubator and Bilingual Outreach Programs.

A. Demographics

Arlington County has a population of almost 200,000, and is expected to continue with slow and steady growth, roughly 1% per year, for a total increase in population of approximately 28,000 by the year 2030. Compared to the rest of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation, Arlington County has significantly higher populations in the age groups of 25- 54 and significantly lower populations in the older youth and young adult populations ages 5-24 (Appendix E). Arlington County's population densities vary with some census tracts in Metro corridors indicating 30,000 people per square mile, making it one of the more densely populated communities in the nation. The high population density and the high land costs reflecting the County's attractiveness create challenges for improving environmental health, securing public spaces and meeting recreational needs.

Arlington is a highly educated community, with 60% of the population having at least a Bachelor's degree or higher, and over 30% having a Graduate degree. Income is also significantly higher than for the rest of the state and nation, with almost 30% of residents making \$100,000 per year or more. Arlington's population is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse. About 40% of residents are Hispanic, African-American, Asian, or multi-racial. More than one in four residents was born outside the United States and one in three speaks a language other than English at home.

Arlington County's daytime population exceeds the residential population due to the influx of employees into the County from other areas. This daytime population is expected to reach 322,500 by the year 2010. This differential is important to consider because a significant number of these non-residents make use of Arlington County facilities and services. The public spaces and recreation needs of the daytime population are very different from those of residents in that the demand is highly concentrated during the lunch time period and after work hours. Arlington workers are also more likely to favor spaces and amenities conveniently located near their jobs due to time constraints.

B. Community and Stakeholder Input

Substantial community effort has contributed to the development of this plan. Formal public input was obtained through four community-wide forums, 15 citizen task force meetings, and over 25 focused working group meetings that met to discuss six topical areas. Three additional community-wide forums were held at the end of the planning process to get input on the draft plan. In addition, the County administered its first Parks and Recreation Resident Survey and a Youth Survey of middle and high school students. Two additional surveys were also conducted, one

related to the building of the new North Tract park, and a Community-Wide Survey of all County services.

Major Findings from Community-Wide Forums

- Arlington residents want natural resources protected and expanded.
- Residents desire a multi-use sports facility that includes both an indoor facility and outdoor athletic fields.
- Arlington residents support a state-of-the-art, world-class aquatic center with diving well, leisure pool, Olympic sized competition pool and therapeutic programming.
- Land acquisition and maintaining the open space we have are high priorities for Arlington residents.
- Residents' focus on policy issues emphasized maintenance, park uses, park planning, open space and development and education.
- Other important ideas included improving access to trails and the Potomac River, protecting urban open space, and adding more community canine areas.

Major Survey Findings

- Three-fourths (75%) of household respondents indicated they had visited a park in Arlington County during the past year.
- Over 85% of respondents rated the physical condition of parks they had visited most often in Arlington County as either excellent (30%) or good (55%).
- 90% of respondents rated the parks, recreation and arts programs as either excellent (37%) or good (53%).
- Biking and walking trails were, by a wide margin (71%), the facilities most widely used.
- When asked how respondents would allocate \$100 among seven various public spaces facilities goals, "Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities" got top priority with an average allocation of \$31.
- The top 5 activities (out of 54) that residents participate most often in are walking/jogging (61%), biking (42%), fitness/aerobics (41%), outdoor concerts/music (39%) and attending performance arts/theater (38%).
- 90% of respondents indicated it was either very important (52%) or somewhat important (38%) to fund improvements to parks and recreation facilities compared to other priorities.
- 89% of those surveyed reported that convenience of location was the most important reason for determining participation in recreation, sports, or fitness activities.
- 67% of residents indicated that walking is one of the ways they travel to County parks. 85% of youth respondents indicated that they walk to the park nearest their home.
- 57% of the youths say that "hang-out with friends" is what they do at the park nearest their home.

- 92% percent of youth respondents indicated that a teen complex should be developed in Arlington County.

C. Current Trends

In order to plan and manage effectively, it is essential to stay current with trends affecting the field of parks and recreation. Some of the national trends most pertinent to Arlington County are:

- The biggest trend is demographic: the large number of “Baby Boomers” is now reaching and passing the age of 50. In becoming “seniors”, this cohort is once again affecting how leisure activities are redefined for the “senior market”.
- Baby Boomers continue to increase their focus on exercise, fitness and leisure lifestyle activities that provide better quality of life, including an emphasis on natural and passive outdoor activities.
- The top three sports nationwide are exercise walking, swimming and aerobic exercise.
- America is dealing with an unprecedented level of obesity and it has become a national health crisis.
- For youth, participation in most of the “tried and true” activities such as basketball, baseball and softball is declining, while there is an increased focus on individual sports and activities such as skateboarding, in-line skating, and golf. The hot team sports are soccer and ice-hockey.
- With Arlington’s large population of “Generation Xers”, young adults born between 1965 and 1975, there needs to be a larger emphasis on drop-in activities, a wide variety of active adult sports, nature and productive volunteer opportunities, fitness and outdoor activities.
- Higher income levels allow for a wider variety of interests. Arlington County can capitalize on this by increasing programming for “extreme sports” and ways to explore new trends in activities.
- Programs need to be available at lunchtime, nights and weekends when the largest portion of Arlington’s population is not working and when daytime Arlingtonians can take time from their jobs.
- Programs need to be less structured, with shorter length sessions and more drop-in activities.
- The current trend in facilities is toward a “one-stop” facility to serve all ages. Larger multi-purpose centers help increase cost-recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use by multi-generational families and those interested in a variety of offerings.
- Partnerships for new facilities, programs, and maintenance are becoming more popular and expected by taxpayers nationwide. With Arlington County’s highly educated population, the community is expecting efficient use of tax

dollars and innovative funding methods to create the facilities they need and want.

- There is a strong trend towards “green practices”, with stakeholders expecting an emphasis on recycling, conservation, best building practices, control of invasive species, energy efficiency, increased green space, green roofs, more tree canopy, and other natural improvements.

Chapter 3. Overview of Existing and Planned Public Spaces

Public spaces have long been considered a critical element in the development of Arlington County's character. Throughout the past seventy years, the County has established a diverse public spaces system which is currently comprised of 1,296 acres of park land, indoor recreation facilities, outdoor active and sports facilities, urban public spaces and streetscapes, and cultural and historic resources. In addition to County-owned land, the public spaces system includes more than 1,200 regional and federal lands and privately held facilities with public access.

The public spaces system provides facilities including playgrounds, athletic courts, fields, and small open areas within walking distance of most neighborhoods. Larger public spaces provide more active facilities within a short drive including lighted athletic fields, community centers, multi-purpose trails, large lighted court facilities, and large picnic areas. Natural areas throughout the County provide opportunities to escape the hectic urban pace and enjoy the native flora and fauna. Cultural and historic spaces serve as a reminder of the history and cultural heritage of the community and a vibrant offering of performing and visual arts. Urban public spaces offer opportunities for picnicking, street theatre, concerts, water features, landscaping and quiet areas to sit and contemplate.

Arlington County owns a number of cultural and historic resources. In addition, a rich variety of other cultural and historic resources are on federal property or under private ownership. These resources – architectural, historic and archaeological – link the community to its past, providing a feeling of ordered continuity and a sense of history and place.

The County offers a broad spectrum of programs and services, including general education, fitness, aquatics, art studios, and events for the community, along with special programs for seniors, people with disabilities, teens, youth, and programs offered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension such as environmental forestry, family and consumer education, and 4-H.

Other public space areas of the County fall under the ownership of federal, state and regional agencies. There are approximately 1,052 acres of federal open space, state open space primarily along I-66 and Arlington Boulevard, and 150 acres of regional open space within Arlington's borders. The federal public spaces include the George Washington Memorial Parkway (which includes Spout Run Parkway, Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, the Mount Vernon Trail and Gravelly Point), Arlington National Cemetery and the grounds of federal buildings and monuments. State public space consists of roadways and their rights of way, including buffer areas and trails. The Northern Virginia Regional Parks include Potomac Overlook, Upton Hill and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad multi-use trail.

Private open spaces and facilities such as pools and fitness centers are also an essential part of the overall system, typically provided as part of commercial and residential developments or as a private club. The largest private spaces are the Army-Navy Country Club and the Washington Golf and Country Club.

Outside the County, a wealth of federal open space is across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and other local units of government in the Northern Virginia area provide high quality public spaces and facilities to meet demands. Public spaces in these surrounding areas provide additional opportunities for Arlington residents.

A. Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities

County-wide and Neighborhood Recreation Centers

Arlington County currently has two county-wide facilities, the Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Community Center and the Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center. Arlington built TJ in 1972 and operates it under a "joint use agreement" with Arlington Public Schools. In 2000, Arlington County built the Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center, which includes a gymnasium, gymnastic center, wellness room, fitness room and boxing area. At TJ and Barcroft the County offers cutting edge fitness and wellness programs, including Pilates, yoga, spinning and strength training in classes and with personal trainers.

Arlington County has twelve other community center facilities throughout the County. The table of *Arlington's Public Recreation Centers* on the following page lists the amenities of current centers. Over the last six years, there has been a focus on renovating the community centers. Centers at Drew, Carver, Gunston, Lee and TJ have recently been renovated. Langston Brown was demolished and a new facility was constructed and opened in 2003. Walter Reed was demolished and the new facility is under construction. Two other community centers, Fairlington and Arlington Mill, are currently being designed. Fairlington will be modernized and Arlington Mill will be demolished and replaced with a new facility.

There are three indoor swimming pools located at Yorktown, Wakefield and Washington, and Lee High Schools. These facilities are operated under a joint use agreement with Arlington Public Schools and are available to the public during non-school hours. All three pool facilities include a six-lane 25 yard pool, training tank and support facilities. The County's pools were all built in the early 1970's and are nearly 30 years old. The Washington Lee pool will be replaced as part of the upcoming high school renovation.

The Gunston Park air-inflated structure, commonly referred to as the "Bubble", provides a 7,200 square foot, multiple-use indoor space for soccer, softball and

baseball. The structure was recently replaced in 2003. The facility is heavily used but is limited to a capacity of 49 persons. Because it is heated but not air-conditioned, it operates seasonally.

The County has plans to build a once-in-a-lifetime park at the North Tract which will include a major aquatic, sports and fitness facility. The first phase of the development is currently under design. This center is expected to be considerably larger than existing centers and is slated to include an aquatics facility with a leisure pool, warm-water therapy pool, splash area, diving well, and 50 meter fitness pool; fitness zone with cardio, weights and climbing wall; Multi-Activity Centers (MACs); indoor track, and locker rooms and support spaces.

Arlington's Public Recreation Centers

Centers	Arlington Mill Center	Aurora Hills	Barcroft. Sports and Fitness	Carver Center	Dawson Terrace	Drew Center	Fairlington Center	Gunston Center	Langston-Brown	Lee Center	Lubber Run Center	Madison Center	Thomas Jefferson Center	Walter Reed Center
Hours Per Week	75	15	104	62	31	63	66	66	75	70	62	67	80	TBD
Construction Date	1965	1975	2000	1950's	1785 + 1970 addition	2001	1944	1960's	Fall 2003	1950's	1956	1948	1972	2005
Major Renovation	Converted from grocery store 1997	No	New facility	2001	Some	New facility	Some	2002	New facility	2001	No	No	Gym Floor 2002	New facility
Square Feet	25,479	13,871	25,000	17,000	13,871	15,000	36,688	15,000	25,000	18,000	19,302	34,250	88,917	N/A
ADA Accessibility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Some	Yes	Yes
Gym	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Small	Yes	Yes	Small	No	Small	Yes	Yes
Fitness Room	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dance/Aerobics Room	No	No	Yes	Multi-Purpose	No	Gym	Small Gym	Yes	Yes	Small Gym	No	Yes	Yes	No
Game Room	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meeting Rooms	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arts & Crafts Room	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Art Studio	Yes
Multi-Purpose Room	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Small Gym	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Small Gym	Yes	Yes
Senior Adult Programs	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teen Room	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Preschool Room	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Admin. Offices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Front Desk	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

School Facilities

Six of the community centers are co-located with school facilities: Arlington Mill, Carver/Hoffman Boston, Drew, Gunston, Langston Brown and Thomas Jefferson. The County currently uses 21 elementary schools, 5 middle schools and 3 high schools throughout the year. The County works collaboratively with Arlington Public Schools in scheduling indoor gymnasium space to support a wide variety of school activities and recreation programs.

Private Recreation Facilities

Arlington County has numerous private facilities that help satisfy the demand for indoor recreational activities, but only for those who qualify for membership and/or can afford the cost. Numerous residential complexes include fitness and aquatic facilities and some office buildings offer fitness facilities. A number of private buildings also use their rooftops for private open space or recreation.

Several private sport and health clubs operate in Arlington County and nearby areas. Among these are the Sport and Health Club, Gold's Gym and Aerobic Center, Olympus Gym, Bally Total Fitness, and The Center Club. Skyline Health and Fitness Center is nearby at Baileys Crossroads. Military installations at Henderson Hall, Fort Myer and the Pentagon also include fitness facilities. Typically, fitness centers offer cardiovascular equipment, racket sports, basketball, and aerobics classes.

There are five private outdoor pools located in the neighborhoods of Arlington Forest, Dominion Hills, Donaldson Run, Fairlington and Overlee. Other private pools are located at the Washington Golf and Country Club, Army Navy County Country Club, two YMCA's and the Knights of Columbus. Marymount University has an indoor pool and gymnasium. All but two of these pools are located in North Arlington.

B. Outdoor Active Facilities and Sports

Arlington County was honored as #1 Sportstown in Virginia as part of Sports Illustrated Magazine's 50th Anniversary Celebration in collaboration with the National Recreation and Parks Association in October 2003.

Active recreation and sports are vital activities that enable the community to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The County provides diamond and rectangular athletic fields, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, and other outdoor amenities including playground areas, community canine areas, running tracks, a skateboard facility,

petanque courts and a Frisbee golf course. Some of these facilities are lighted, typically until 11:00 p.m.

Arlington is on the leading edge of public agencies nationwide in implementing the use of synthetic turf fields and the creation of dog exercise areas, which the County calls community canine areas. In separate planning processes citizen/staff work groups examined these two areas to develop recommendations on increasing the number of synthetic fields and developing standards for community canine areas. More detailed information is included in Appendix F (Synthetic Field Program) and Appendix G (Community Canine Area Guidelines).

C. Parks and Natural Resources Facilities

The County's System

Many of the County's parks have been developed along free-flowing streams. These water resources contribute to the scenic enjoyment of public spaces, provide recreation for the community and maintain important urban habitat for wildlife. The backbone of the County's public spaces system follows the Four Mile Run watershed, which flows south from the Arlington/City of Falls Church boundary into the Potomac River south of Ronald Reagan National Airport on the Arlington/City of Alexandria boundary. Most of the other natural resources are concentrated in the Potomac Palisades along five stream valleys – Pimmit Run, Gulf Branch, Donaldson Run, Windy Run and Spout Run. Pimmit Run enters Arlington from Fairfax County north of Chain Bridge, while the other four streams begin in Arlington. All five cross the George Washington Memorial Parkway and enter the Potomac River above Key Bridge.

The Potomac River frames the northeast edge of the community. It is a distinctive natural feature and a valuable resource, but county residents are separated from it by the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The existing Parkway, under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, protects the green shore of the river but currently limits the opportunities for access and enjoyment of the river.

As one of the smallest and most densely populated counties in the United States, Arlington County suffers from a shortage of natural areas and other sites suitable for passive outdoor recreation. However, the County still contains a wealth of natural habitats that deserve preservation. Its mature woodlands, meadows, stream valleys and backyards host more than 200 species of birds, numerous amphibians and small mammals, and a variety of plant communities.

The entire southern portion of Barcroft Park is ecologically significant. The park contains a series of wetland plant communities which have been ranked G/1 (globally rare) and S/2 (state rare) by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Regional cooperation plays a key role in providing public space opportunities to Arlington residents. Arlington, along with the Counties of Fairfax and Loudoun and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church, is a member of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). The NVRPA owns and manages 19 parks and more than 10,000 acres of open space and recreation facilities which are available to members from all six local jurisdictions.

The NVRPA's parks and recreation facilities include three parks within Arlington County. Potomac Overlook Regional Park is a 100-acre park in a peaceful woodland setting on the Potomac Palisades which offers nature trails, nature center and programs. Upton Hill Regional Park is a 26-acre park that offers an outdoor swimming pool complex, miniature golf and batting cages. The Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park is a 42-mile regional trail that runs from Shirlington to Loudoun County and connects with other local and regional trails. Other regional facilities throughout Northern Virginia offer Arlington County residents access to boat launching, public golf courses, outdoor swimming complexes, batting cages, miniature golf, conference facilities, campgrounds, a shooting center, historical sites and special events.

Federal Lands

The Federal government also contributes significantly to the preservation of public spaces within Arlington County, primarily along the Potomac River. The two largest federal public spaces are the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and the Arlington National Cemetery. Several sites within George Washington Memorial Parkway which were acquired in the 1930's that are located within Arlington County include sections of the Mount Vernon Trail, the Marine Corps War Memorial, Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, and sections of the Potomac Heritage Trail. Federal agencies also provide a wealth of public spaces, recreation and cultural and historic resources across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C.

Northern Virginia Conservation Trust

Another resource to preserve natural areas is through participation in the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. In July 2001 the County joined the Northern Virginia

Conservation Trust (NVCT). The NVCT works with private landowners in Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Stafford Counties and the City of Alexandria to secure scenic and preservation easements. Although these easements are retained in private ownership, they are an invaluable way to preserve public spaces, particularly natural resource areas, and protect them from possible future development. Other activities of the NVCT include fundraising, education, advocacy and outreach.

D. Arts, Cultural and Historic Resources

The County has a thriving mix of cultural facilities, from performing and visual art spaces to nature centers and historic sites. Over the past 15 years Arlington has gained a national reputation for its approach in supporting the arts. Known as the "Arts Incubator", this approach offers arts groups access to the rarest of ingredients in a recipe for success: creative space and support services. The Incubator program has resulted in ongoing growth of the arts (an over 500% growth in the number of arts groups, number of activities and monies spent producing and presenting arts programs since 1990).

Public visual arts studios and exhibition spaces include Lee Arts Center, Ellipse Arts Center, and the newly renovated Arlington Arts Center. Private spaces are located at the Art & Space Studio and Columbia Pike Artists Studios. Theatres are located at Thomas Jefferson Theatre, Gunston Theatres One and Two, Theatre on the Run, National Rural Electric Cooperative and the Rosslyn Spectrum. Signature Theatre and Classika Theatre are privately operated. The County provides a prop and costume shop at Gunston that serves as a county-wide resource to the performing art groups. Federal and state theatre spaces include the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center on the Alexandria Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College.

With the County Board approval of a public art policy designating up to one-half percent of the capital budget for County projects for public art, Arlington County experienced a recent surge in interest in the development of public art integrated into County and private sector projects. Over two dozen projects are currently in development, including artist Mary Miss as part of the design team for the County's Water Pollution Control Plant, artist Jan Rosen-Queralt as part of the design team for the recently opened Powhatan Springs Park and artist Ned Kahn's "Liquid Pixels" funded by a private developer on a commercial building in Rosslyn.

Free summer performances in music, dance, film, theatre and visual arts are held at six outdoor venues as part of the annual Arts Al Fresco program. The events are held at Anna & David Plaza, Courthouse Plaza, Metro Park, Spice of Life Plaza, Welburn Square, Lubber Run Amphitheatre, and Music in the Streets. Four of these facilities are privately owned plazas with public access agreements.

Other cultural facilities include Fort C.F. Smith Park, Fort Ethan Allen Park, Maury School (Arlington Arts Center), Dawson Terrace, Fairlington and the Reeves property. Fort C.F. Smith and Fort Ethan Allen are former Civil War sites, two of 68 forts built around Washington, D.C. for the defense of the capital. Fort C.F. Smith includes a late 19th century building that was renovated in 2002 and is now open to the public for event rentals and education programs. Maury School was renovated in 2004 and is leased to the Arlington Arts Center. Dawson Terrace and Fairlington have both been adapted for use as community centers. The County recently acquired the remaining 2.5 acres of the Reeves property, the County's last dairy farm which ceased operation in 1955. Appendix H lists arts and cultural facilities.

A wealth of other cultural and historic resources within the County are privately owned or on federal property. These resources – cultural, architectural, historic and archeological – link the community to the past, providing a feeling of ordered continuity and a sense of history and place. Arlington has 29 locally designated historic districts and 51 sites that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Appendix D).

E. Urban Public Spaces and Streetscaping

Arlington has several primary areas of more dense urban development – the Rosslyn-Ballston (R-B) Corridor, which includes Rosslyn, Courthouse, Clarendon, Virginia Square and Ballston; the Jefferson Davis (J-D) Corridor, which includes Pentagon City, Crystal City and Potomac Yards; Shirlington Village; and Columbia Pike. The public spaces and streetscape elements found throughout these corridors include spaces for outdoor cafes, gathering places for community events, street trees, benches and other furnishings and way finding systems. These spaces have strong relationships to adjacent commercial and residential buildings and streets. They are vital parts of a healthy environment for daytime workers, shoppers, visitors and residents. The streetscapes adjacent to public right-of-ways provide a sense of pedestrian scale, accommodate the urban tree canopy, and mitigate the impacts of urbanization.

The competition for land is strong in these dense urban areas. Thus fee acquisition of property for public spaces is expensive and challenging to assemble. The County has been effective in negotiating public spaces with private developers. Many of the plazas used by the general public are actually located on private acreage with public access assured through recorded easements.

Enhancing Urban Areas Through Public Access to Private Land: Numerous parks and public spaces throughout the County result from easements. They represent an innovative way to expand public spaces. Pike Park, Welburn Square, Grace Murray Hopper Park and Rhodeside Green are all recent examples of parks made possible through public access easements on privately owned land. These easements have been obtained through site plans.

Each of the sector and other plans for the County's urban corridors and centers includes recommendations to increase the limited recreational opportunities, improve connections to and from public spaces, improve the overall appearance of public areas, and adjust the balance between open space and the built environment. Appendix I provides a summary of these recommendations.

- **Rosslyn** is a gateway into Arlington from Washington, D.C. via Key Bridge and Roosevelt Bridge, and the County's most densely developed "downtown." Gateway Park, which spans above I-66, is the largest park in the area. There are also several small centrally located urban plazas, Rosslyn Highlands Park, which adjoins the fire station and Wilson School, and Hillside Park. Unfulfilled needs include enhanced entrances into the County from Key Bridge and Roosevelt Bridge, a central public space at the Rosslyn Metro station entrance and a boathouse along the Potomac River. The close proximity to National Park Service land, national memorials and the Capital also makes this a very special place regionally and nationally. Access to the National Park Service land and the Potomac River virtually doubles the amount of public space that Arlingtonians can enjoy.
- **Courthouse** is the home to the County governmental offices and courts as well as a sizable residential population. The Courthouse area includes significant public spaces at Rocky Run Park and Key Elementary School. The surface parking lot between the county government offices and the county courthouse building is currently used for a weekend farmer's market, and has great potential for redevelopment into a more attractive central plaza. Several economic development studies of a major cultural center in this area have suggested that coupling a center with an outdoor civic gathering space will strengthen the County government complex.
- **Clarendon** is the urban village in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. This sector, at the crossroads of Washington Boulevard and Wilson Boulevard, is planned for a balanced mix of residential, office and retail. Over the past decade this area has become a regional draw for evening dining and entertainment. The major public spaces are Clarendon Central Park, located adjacent to the

Metro station, and the park at N. 13th and N. Herndon Streets. Both parks are currently being master planned. There is a privately-owned park with a public access easement in the center of the retail shops at Clarendon Market Commons.

- **Virginia Square** is the main educational, recreational and cultural center in the corridor. The area includes George Mason University, the newly renovated Arlington Arts Center, Arlington's Central Library, and the largest public park in the corridor, Quincy Park. Five smaller parks in the area will be master planned in the near future – Maury Park, Oakland Park, Mosaic Park, Herselle Milliken Park and Gumball Park.
- Described as the county's downtown, **Ballston** has become a dense, high-rise district at the north end of the R-B corridor. The Arlington Ice Rink project, under construction in 2005 on top of the parking garage at the Ballston Common Mall, will be a primary recreational resource in this sector when it is completed in 2006. The adjacent future park at the corner of N. Randolph Street and N. Glebe Road provides an opportunity to add an artist-designed miniature golf course to further enliven the area. The stadium at Washington and Lee High School, Quincy Park and Bluemont Junction Trail add to the variety of nearby recreational resources. Welburn Square, a privately owned park with a public access easement, is a full-block of public space in the heart of Ballston.
- **Pentagon City** offers a wide variety of residential, office and commercial development and includes the Pentagon, the world's largest office building, as well as regional shopping facilities and public spaces. The major public spaces are Virginia Highlands Park and Aurora Hills Community Center. Several privately owned, - publicly accessible spaces are part of the Pentagon Row development, including an active urban plaza that is converted to an outdoor ice rink during the winter months and Grace Murray Hopper Park. New public space is planned as part of a future residential development called Metropolitan Park.
- **Crystal City's** business core of offices, hotels, stores and residential buildings is connected by privately owned, publicly accessible landscaped parks, including the Water Park and an extensive underground shopping and entertainment complex. Major new public space at the North Tract is planned at the north end of Crystal City.
- **Potomac Yard** will be built in phases and includes a mixture of office, hotel and residential development. New public space is planned at its northern end, as a central spine, and along Four Mile Run. The area's proximity to Four Mile Run connects it to an extensive system of parks in both Arlington and the City of Alexandria.

- **Shirlington Village** offers a mix of residential and commercial space and is currently undergoing substantial redevelopment. It has an established café culture, live theatre and a pedestrian promenade and is considered Arlington's home for the arts. Major public spaces in Shirlington and Nauck include Shirlington and Jennie Dean Parks, Theatre on the Run and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park. Vibrant public spaces are planned for the area along Four Mile Run including additional land acquisition, arts/entertainment, festivals, major outdoor recreation and improvements to the natural environment along the stream.
- **Columbia Pike**, Arlington's original main street, is a mix of the old and new, the down-home and around-the-globe that truly represents Arlington's diversity. A recently adopted plan for growth will provide incentives for new retail, residential and commercial development. The major public spaces in the three-mile-long Columbia Pike corridor are Arlington Mill Community Center, Tyrol Hills, Alcova Heights, Doctors Run, Glencarlynn, and Towers Parks.

F. Major Focus Areas

New North Tract Park

The North Tract is the largest capital park and recreation project that the County has ever undertaken. It is the development of 30 acres of County-owned land on a spectacular location just north of Crystal City and south of the 14th Street Bridge. It is bounded on the north by the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Potomac River, on the east by the CSX railroad corridor and the Roaches Run Waterfowl Refuge, and on the west by I-395 and the Pentagon.

With the scarcity and high cost of land, this park is likely to be one of the last large community-type park opportunities in Arlington. There has been an extensive community effort to develop a master plan for North Tract recreation areas and facilities with long-term involvement of a task force and staff working with a variety of consultants. Following are the adopted general vision and planned components for development of the North Tract.

North Tract Area Plan Vision:

"The North Tract area will be transformed into a distinctive showplace of environmentally sound redevelopment, with a central expanse of attractive public green spaces and high-quality indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are accessible to all Arlingtonians, conveniently linked with nearby urban corridors and the Potomac riverscape, and coupled with complementary private redevelopment."

Five goals highlight the key elements of this vision:

- To make the area a model of effective environmental reclamation and community-oriented reuse.
- To establish and maintain a great urban park offering opportunities for sport, recreation and relaxation for people of diverse ages, interests and skills.
- To provide convenient multi-modal access to and within the area, emphasizing efficient mass transit and safe passageways for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- To exploit the site's potential as a gateway to Arlington County, a greenway near the Potomac River, and a gathering place for the community.
- To forge creative partnerships with private entities, non-profit organizations and other public agencies to complement direct county investments and promote compatible, high-quality redevelopment of adjacent privately-owned sites.

These elements will be meshed in an attractive, environmentally-sensitive overall design with high-quality architecture, public art and landscaping. Key features planned for North Tract include:

- New world-class aquatic and fitness center
- Four synthetic grass outdoor athletic fields (at least 2 will be lighted) with concessions, restrooms and seating area
- Public spaces for seating, art, gathering and other outdoor uses with an "art wall" and waterplay area
- Access to Roaches Run and railroad overlook
- Display garden and future opportunities area with an opportunity for public gardens, children's discovery area, adventure play and other specialized recreation uses
- A network of sidewalks and bike features to connect the area to the community

The project is slated to be a phased development, with the following features currently under design as part of Phase One: Two lighted fields, central public space, open lawn, trails, complete aquatics center with the initial fitness component, surface parking, with an estimated capital cost of approximately \$50 million. A land exchange between the County and a private developer, agreed on in concept in summer 2005, will bring the County additional financial resources for the North Tract, and the opportunity to build its multi-use facility at a prime gateway location with access to panoramic views of the nation's capital and riverscape.

Four Mile Run – Arlington's Major Park Corridor

Back in the mid-1900's, the County Board began considering proposals for acquisition of property before development drove up prices, and intruded on stream valleys and the Potomac River. In 1940, the Trustees of Glencarlyn deeded to the County 95 acres of land which formed an important element of the Four Mile Run,

Long Branch and Lubber Run system. Since that time, Four Mile Run has become the spine for the County's largest park system. This major natural resource and recreation corridor has been planned or designed not as a contiguous park, but rather as many separate park areas: passive and active, fields and community centers, trails and amphitheaters. The major parks along Four Mile Run or one of its tributaries include: Isaac Crossman Park at Four Mile Run, Benjamin Banneker Park, East Falls Church Park, Madison Manor Park, Westover Park, Bon Air Park, Bluemont Park, Bluemont Junction Park, Lubber Run Park, Glencarlyn Park, Doctors Run Park, Barcroft Park, Allie S. Freed Park, Shirlington Park, Jennie Dean Park, and Four Mile Run Park. Two major trails run along side Four Mile Run: the Four Mile Run Trail and the Washington and Old Dominion Trail.

There are currently two large-scale planning efforts being undertaken along this parkland: the Arlington-Alexandria Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan Project (lower section) and the Shirlington Crescent-Four Mile Run: Vision 2030. Other areas along Four Mile Run that have recently been master planned are Westover Park and Barcroft Park.

The Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan Project is a large scale project for environmental restoration and urban planning along the lower two-mile channel portion of Four Mile Run that forms the border between Arlington and the City of Alexandria between Shirlington Road and the Potomac River. In the 1970s, the Army Corps of Engineers began construction of this channel to reduce major flooding. This project was completed in 1980. While it has been successful in eliminating floods, the aesthetic beauty of the stream was lost and its natural functions severely diminished. The current project is a collaborative planning effort among Arlington, the City of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers to restore a more natural setting to this area, promote stream health, improve water quality, enhance riparian habitats, and expand opportunities for public recreation and interaction with this valuable resource.

Four Mile Run Restoration Project Vision

"Through the sensitive and sustainable integration of a restored natural stream channel with an active urban environment the Four Mile Run corridor will be a place where the communities of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can gather, recreate and celebrate a shared waterfront legacy."

The guiding principles for the project are:

- Flood protection – provide protection for a minimum 100-year flood event, considering the current extents of the area and protection for areas currently not protected.

- Environment – create a dynamically stable stream channel with improved corridor habitat and ecology and upstream strategies to improve water quality.
- Aesthetics and Design – improve aesthetics and view shed opportunities throughout the corridor, including encouraging urban design that creates the excitement of the watershed, incorporates green design and incorporates innovative watershed solutions.
- Recreation and Urban Life – enhance recreational opportunities, including creating new opportunities for interaction with the water and appropriate siting of recreation facilities.
- Integration and Balance – create a balance between the natural elements of a restored corridor and urban activity in order to generate a lively, safe and well-used public resource, including integration with surrounding communities and urban development efforts.
- Access and Connectivity – create a place for people to reconnect with water and nature within an urban context, including pedestrian and bicycle access, connectivity between the two localities, and access to all who wish to use it.
- Education and Interaction – provide interpretive opportunities to inform the public about the stream corridor and its interrelatedness.

The Shirlington Crescent Four Mile Run: Vision 2030 project is the second of a two-part, area-wide land use study to improve the Nauck, Shirlington Road, and Four Mile Run Drive area, with emphasis on sectors currently in light industrial use and on the growing inventory of public spaces and facilities. This planning process will establish a long-term vision for this area to be achieved by the year 2030 and will include the exploration of new uses for lands adjacent to Four Mile Run itself. It is an opportunity to guide economic redevelopment and new investment, enhance recreational and cultural activities, restore this section of Four Mile Run to a more healthy natural state, increase connections among the nearby neighborhoods and create more public spaces for all to enjoy. The planning process, including substantial community input, is expected to begin early in 2006.

Chapter 4. Administration and Planning

The management of Arlington County's public spaces requires attention not only to the capital assets, facilities and natural resources of the County, but also to the management practices, funding, land acquisition, planning considerations, technologies, and relationships within and external to the County. This section gives an overview of administration and planning and findings from the benchmark comparisons.

A. Overview of Public Spaces Management and Services

The day to day management of the County's Public Spaces lands management and related services is primarily handled by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR). This Department manages County-wide services and administration related to park development, community recreation, parks and natural resources, sports and cultural affairs. Since many of the recreational and cultural facilities, athletic fields and grounds are shared with the Arlington Public Schools, schools administrators are integrally involved in the provision of public spaces and services

Several other departments work closely with PRCR to provide related land management activities, services and administration. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) manages County-wide services and administration related to transportation, environmental services, utilities services and other related areas. The Department of Community Planning and Housing Development (CPHD) oversees planning and long range development, range of housing choices and quality neighborhood planning. The Department of Management and Finance provides County-wide budgeting, finance, and other administrative support and oversight. The Department of Technology Services implements and plans for information technology and data management. Arlington Economic Development provides information and support services for the business community, tourism industry and real estate development.

Citizen participation is a vital aspect of Arlington County civic life. The County Board appoints several key advisory commissions and boards with various authorities to advise them on public space issues. They are the:

- Park and Recreation Commission
- Sports Commission
- Urban Forestry Commission
- Commission on the Arts
- Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee

- Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Bicycle Advisory Committee

A wealth of other public spaces are privately owned or on regional or federal property. Other spaces are privately owned but have a recorded public access easement which allows the public to use and enjoy them. These spaces are found primarily in the urban corridors.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority owns and manages three regional parks within Arlington County. County residents also have access to approximately 10,500 acres of regional parks throughout Northern Virginia.

The federal government, mainly through the National Park Service and Department of the Army, manages federal properties located primarily on the northern and eastern boundaries of the County. County residents also have convenient access to thousands of acres of federal public space in Washington, D.C. and throughout the metropolitan region.

B. Traditional Funding Mechanisms

Capital Improvement

Arlington County's land acquisition and public space improvements are primarily funded through bond financing and pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) capital funding and are reflected in the County's Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The County typically seeks voter approval of bond issues in even-numbered years. A twenty year history of bonds is in Appendix C.

From 1994 to 2000, the largest single park bond program was land acquisition. Beginning in 2002, the focus shifted to parks and open space development and recreation and cultural facilities. This shift in priorities reflects the need to develop what was acquired over the previous decade as well as complete renovation of major parks and community centers such as Barcroft and Greenbrier Parks and Walter Reed and Langston Brown Community Centers.

The adopted CIP for Fiscal Years 2005-2010 projects the following amount for Local Parks and Recreation:

Parks and Open Space Development	\$68,200,000
Land and Facility Acquisition	\$8,000,000
Recreation and Cultural Facilities	\$30,600,000
Parks and Recreation CAPP*	\$11,000,000
Public Art Program	<u>\$950,000</u>
Total 6-Yr CIP	\$118,750,000

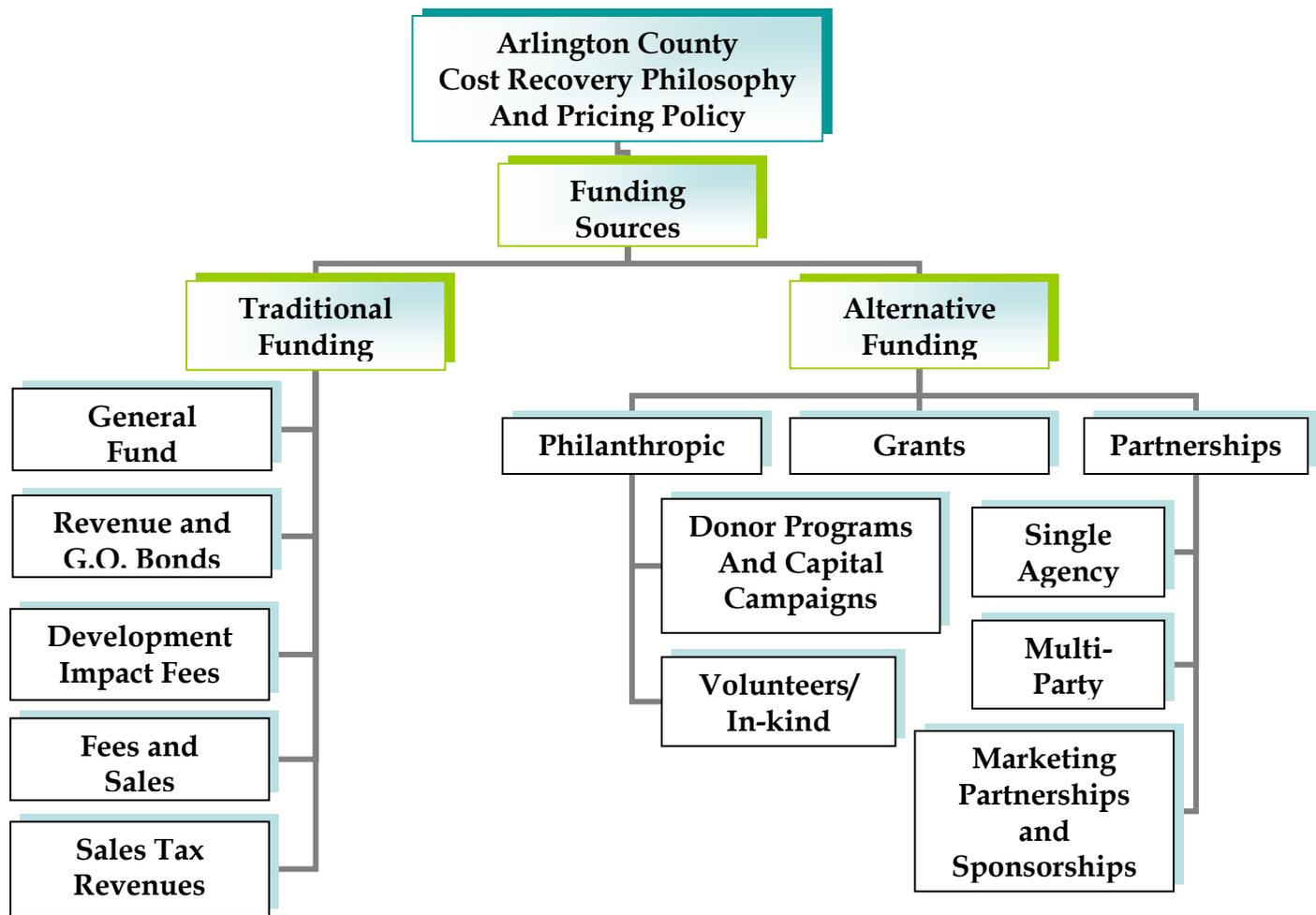
*CAPP is the Capital Asset Preservation Program

Cost Recovery

Cost recovery is an important indicator of performance and responsible use of public tax dollars. For this plan, cost recovery is defined as the amount of funding for non-capital items that comes into Arlington County (not from the General Fund or tax subsidy). Total cost recovery for the management of public spaces is 16%. This means that the County is recovering 16% of the total operating revenue from fees and alternative funding. This is a relatively low percentage as compared to agencies nationwide (averaging 25-50%). It is positioned towards the middle range for most of the larger urban communities as shown in the Benchmarking Comparison on page 40.

C. Alternative Funding Mechanisms

The County has historically used a variety of funding mechanisms to supplement its traditional financial resources. It is important to continue to make use of a variety of techniques such as grants, partnerships, sponsorships, donor programs, capital campaigns, and volunteers to acquire, protect and preserve public spaces. The following schematic shows the wide variety of types of funding mechanisms available.



D. Open Space Acquisition

When purchasing open space, the County considers a variety of factors. Both a geographic and functional balance is important throughout the County. The following criteria are considered:

- Geographic Location – location of the site in relation to other existing or potential sites
- Environmental Conditions – complex of climatic, edaphic (soil) and biotic factors that act upon the site and ultimately determine the form and survival of its ecological community. This also includes the social and cultural conditions of the site
- Multiple Community Objectives – capacity of the site to support several public space activities and/or facilities desirous to the community or to achieve several environmental objectives. The site should provide sufficient space to accommodate the intended uses either as a stand alone or in combination with adjacent open space

- Compatibility with Potential and Identified Uses – site will accommodate and complement the potential and identified intended uses
- Provide Additional Recreational Opportunities – capacity of the site, by itself or in combination with adjacent open space, to provide additional recreational opportunities
- Protection and/or Conservation of Existing Open Space – value of the site in protecting an existing open space site from urban degradation, protecting or preserving a cultural and historic site, protecting an existing natural area or conserving a watershed
- Incorporates a Unique Feature Into an Existing Open Space Area – opportunity to acquire an open space site that offers a single, rare, uncommon, or unequaled natural, man-made or cultural and historic resource
- Makes an Existing Open Space Area More Accessible or Usable – provides additional access and/or other benefits to an existing open space site, making it more usable
- Provides a Greenway Corridor Which Connects Existing or Potential Open Space – links other open space areas, thereby allowing uninterrupted use by people and/or wildlife
- Provides Green Space for Urban Residents, Visitors and Workers – located in a high density residential or commercial area which is deficient in open space
- Mitigates the Negative Environmental Impacts of Urbanization – mitigates the impact on surrounding land areas
- Protects Shoreline and Wetlands, Non-Wetlands, Wildlife Areas, and Other Natural Assets and Vistas – directly influences the future viability and survivability of shorelines, wetlands, and non-wetlands which act as pollution filters, wildlife areas, and natural assets and vistas
- Acquisition Value – amount to be paid for acquisition of the site, which includes the cost of the land and any improvements, closing/settlement, site investigation (includes soil contaminants, asbestos, lead, environmental), and site security costs (includes demolition, fencing, revegetation)

The County has identified a number of potential open space sites which would be desirable for acquisition. The list of potential acquisition parcels in Appendix K represents sites which were identified in the 1994 *Open Space Master Plan*, as well as additional sites identified through the Potomac Yard Phased Development Site Plan, North Tract Area Plan and sector plans.

An Example of Intelligent Open Space Acquisition and Development

The County's recent development of Powhatan Springs Park demonstrates many of the attributes that the County should incorporate into planning new public spaces. The new 5.34-acre park features the County's first skate park and a small soccer field, two much-needed active recreational facilities. These facilities were developed on the site of three former houses, an already developed part of the site and the least valuable part of the park for preservation as a natural area. The site contained an early 20th century house and the remains of another early residence, which was documented through an architectural and archeological investigation, thereby maintaining a historical record of the previous residential use. The County preserved a heavily wooded area near a small intermittent stream and removed invasive plant materials, thus protecting the park's most significant natural resource. The County also developed a children's rain garden contained within the bioretention area. This allows children to learn and explore the natural filtration system. The new park lies between Upton Hill Regional Park and Ashlawn Elementary School, providing a future trail link and wildlife corridor. The park received the 2005 Virginia Recreation and Park Association Award for "Best New Facility" for populations greater than 150,000.

E. Planning Considerations

Accessibility and Usability

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in the early 1990's, Arlington has been committed to going beyond the letter of the law to incorporate its spirit of the law into each and every public space the County designs or renovates.

For example, playgrounds should be designed to meet or exceed the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines and American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) standards for playground safety, as well as ADA regulations. When existing playgrounds are renovated, they are minimally being brought up to the current standards of these regulations. Some communities have chosen to meet the minimum requirements of accessibility at most of their playgrounds and then provide one playground that is fully accessible to children with mobility disabilities. Arlington's approach to playground accessibility is to elevate the accessibility of all of its playgrounds so that children of all abilities can play side-by-side in their own neighborhoods. This recognizes that play is not only a physical activity; it is also an important social activity.

Attention should continue to focus on providing facilities that not only are accessible by law, but also strive to being usable for people with all levels of ability or disability. Individuals who are disabled, in rehabilitation from injuries, heart attacks, strokes and surgeries, as well as those suffering from chronic pain such as arthritis can

benefit from various forms of adaptive exercise and aquatic therapy. For many individuals who have a physical disability, water exercise is the only viable alternative.

Environmental Building Initiatives

Arlington is a leader in the design and use of environmentally sound buildings. The use of sustainable technologies to help minimize the impacts of buildings on the environment has gained in popularity over the past 10-15 years. The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. The LEED Rating System addresses many aspects of the design and building process. Reduced site disturbance, water efficiency, energy efficiency, construction waste management, and indoor environmental quality are some examples of the design and building strategies incorporated in LEED. While the LEED program has been around for nearly ten years, it has gained in popularity since 1998 when the first LEED version 1.0 Rating System was released.

One Arlington County facility, the Langston Brown Community Center and John M. Langston School, has been recently rebuilt and has the honor of being the first public building in the Commonwealth of Virginia to be LEED Silver certified. Other public spaces, including the Walter Reed Community Center currently under construction and the Arlington Mill Community Center currently being designed have a goal of being LEED Silver certified as well.

Information Management and Technology

Arlington County is rich with highly educated residents and has been very progressive in adopting and maintaining new technologies for registration, web-based services, and scheduling. The County needs to continue to maintain the priority on these systems to help maintain the high level of customer service satisfaction.

Stakeholder interviews indicate a need for a study that would help identify more strategic uses of technology for public spaces management. There are plans to create a technology investment plan that will detail the future needs, strategic direction, and business systems analysis that would clearly define the future needs and required investment for information management and technology.

Maintenance

The County's maintenance plan is designed to maximize resources and is based upon functional activities that occur in the park or facility. Each park, related park areas or facility is examined for the cultural and natural resource benefits and

recreational opportunities and placed in a maintenance classification. The functional areas are aimed at grouping tasks in terms of their common elements. For each classification staff performs housekeeping tasks (curb appeal), routine and preventive maintenance, program support requirements, emergency repairs and scheduled improvements. The tasks performed for each of these maintenance types are maintained in a database work order system.

Administrative, recreational and cultural buildings are maintained by the County or Arlington Public Schools. Services include routine maintenance, predictive and preventive maintenance and emergency repairs.

F. Benchmarking

Benchmarking is an important tool that allows the comparison of certain attributes of the County's management of public spaces (parks, recreation, arts and cultural and related services) with those of other similar communities. For this plan, Arlington was compared to six other communities. The communities were chosen primarily for their similarities in population density, income levels, bond ratings, NRPA Gold Medal Award status, and adjacency to major metropolitan areas. *The results are shown on the following page.*

Some of the most significant findings include:

- *Arlington is the second highest in terms of expenditures per 1,000 population.* This is consistent with the County's goal of providing "World-Class" community amenities and tracks with the high satisfaction levels demonstrated in the four community surveys.
- *Arlington is second lowest in terms of locally-owned acres per 1,000 population.* This is primarily due to the high population density and lack of available undeveloped land. While this number is low, it is offset by the significant amount of federal, regional and private open space that are available to the community.
- *The cost recovery of 16% is near the middle.* While it is average for the benchmarked communities, there is a trend toward increasing cost recovery throughout the U.S. An average of 25-50% is becoming common for agencies nationwide.

Arlington is a unique community, and comparisons and benchmarking are difficult because few communities are truly comparable. It is more important for Arlington to benchmark against itself over time rather than with other communities in order to track whether the current high level of resident satisfaction is being sustained.

Benchmarking Table 1: Demographics and Amount of Public Space

NOTE: For purposes of comparison between localities, the public space acreage and square foot totals include locally-owned space only.

Community	Population (2003 est.)	Population Density Per Sq Mi	Average Household Income	Bond Rating	Total FTE's	Managed Indoor Space (sq ft)	Indoor SF/1000	Total Acres	Acres per 1000 Persons
Alexandria, VA	131,918	8,562	\$81,439	AAA	133	130,000	985	791	6.0
Arlington, TX	332,696	3,465	\$47,662	AAA	198	135,000	402	4,581	13.8
Arlington County, VA	190,133	7,311	\$87,019	AAA	408	359,194	1,887	903	4.8
Brookline, MA	59,701	8,750	\$108,525	AAA	67	37,615	630	1,085	18.2
Greensboro, NC	231,241	2,116	\$58,823	AAA	309	346,080	1,496	3,753	16.2
Montgomery County, MD	926,508	1,826	\$101,489	AAA	224	N/A	N/A	11,000	11.9
Tacoma, WA	206,112	4,112	\$50,938	AAA	250	167,185	811	628	3.0

Benchmarking Table 2: Budget, Staffing and Cost Recovery

Community	Total Parks/ Recreation Budget	Expenditure per 1000 Persons	Revenues	Cost Recovery	FTEs/1,000	Revenues / 1,000
Alexandria, VA	\$16.8 Million ^a	\$128,900	\$1.5 Million ^b	9%	1.01	\$11,400
Arlington, TX	\$20.4 Million	\$61,400	\$8.0 Million	39%	0.60	\$24,000
Arlington County, VA	\$27.8 Million	\$149,500	\$4.5 Million	16%	2.14	\$23,700
Brookline, MA	\$4.4 Million	\$73,700	\$1.0 Million	23%	1.12	\$16,750
Greensboro, NC	\$27.1 Million	\$117,300	\$3.7 Million	14%	1.33	\$16,000
Montgomery County, MD	\$59.5 Million	\$64,300	\$3.3 Million	6%	0.24	\$3,600
Tacoma, WA	\$34.6 Million	\$165,000	\$7.2 Million	21%	3.05	\$34,900

^a Won NRPA Gold Medal in 2003 with Prince George's County as part of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)

^b General fund allocation only

^c General fund revenues only

Chapter 5. Recommendations

A. Objectives and Priority Recommendations

The County has a strong established system of public spaces. The satisfaction levels from the community are exceptionally high for parks, natural areas, and programs. The real challenge over the next ten to twenty years will be to balance existing resources and programs with new and changing needs. We must strike the right balance as we continue to maintain this quality of service and level of public satisfaction in the future, adjusting to continued population growth, increased demand for programming and natural spaces, and ever changing economics and demographics.

In response to that challenge, this plan sets forth six major objectives to guide policy-making, public investments and County management of public spaces during the next two decades. Within that framework, five key recommendations should receive special focus as the County's highest public space priorities:

Priority 1 – Build North Tract (Recommendation 1.1)

The County Board adopted the North Tract Park Master Plan in February 2004. The new 30-acre park is on a spectacular location just north of Crystal City and south of the 14th Street Bridge. It is bounded on the north by the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Potomac River, on the east by the CSX railroad corridor and the Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary, and on the west by I-395 and the Pentagon. The implementation of the plan will be the largest capital park and recreation project the County has ever undertaken.

The North Tract area will be transformed into a distinctive showplace of environmentally sound redevelopment, with a central expanse of attractive public green spaces and high-quality indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are accessible to all Arlingtonians, conveniently linked with nearby urban corridors and the Potomac riverscape, and coupled with complementary private redevelopment. The County should:

- Complete the design and implementation of Phase I of the North Tract Park Master Plan, which includes two lighted synthetic turf fields, multi-purpose center with aquatics and initial fitness components, central public space and open lawn area, support spaces, surface parking and relocation of Old Jefferson Davis Highway.
- Explore opportunities to fund and construct the remaining master plan components, which include additional fitness space, multi-activity center (MAC), racquet courts, indoor track, two additional synthetic turf fields, access to Roaches Run and railroad overlook, display garden and future opportunity area, multi-purpose and walking trails, structured parking, and support spaces.
- Forge creative partnerships with private entities, non-profit organizations and other public agencies to complement direct county investments and promote compatible, high-quality redevelopment of adjacent publicly and privately owned sites.

Priority 2 – Develop a Land Acquisition Policy (Recommendation 1.2)

During the development of this plan, a detailed review of current land acquisition processes and policies was undertaken. The findings demonstrate the challenges the County faces in continuing to acquire open space in a climate where there is limited availability of land, the strong economy has driven up land prices and competition, and acquisition is more opportunistic than strategic.

There is a clear need for a multifaceted approach to land acquisition that can respond to the impacts of growth and community needs and improve the ability to acquire high priority properties. The County should create an acquisition policy that will:

- Develop land acquisition goals and give the maximum flexibility to acquire lands that are consistent with those goals. The policy should provide mechanisms that allow proactive practices in securing property, including purchasing options on high priority sites, paying for the first right of refusal, and the use of eminent domain when necessary to secure properties viewed as critical for protection or for public space development.
- Address the need for natural resource park land that protects sensitive environmental areas and important view sheds. Conservation easements with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust or other collaborations are an option for protecting these types of resources.
- Develop guidelines to foster additional agreements and partnerships with non-profit, regional, state and federal organizations to increase access to open space.
- Address the impact of new residential and commercial development on the delivery of public space amenities, the potential loss of open space, and increases in demand for recreation. This might include such approaches as fee simple land dedication, privately held land with public access easements, or financial contributions.
- Determine how transfer of development rights can be used as a tool to consolidate future public open space.
- Evaluate potential surplus properties and determine if they should be disposed of or incorporated into the County's open space system. Coordinate the disposition of surplus properties between the County and public schools.

Priority 3 – Emphasize Planning for Four Mile Run (Recommendation 1.3)

Four Mile Run flows along Arlington's southwest edge, from East Falls Church to the Potomac River. It passes through a series of parks that are connected by trails and, in certain places, reaches further into the County along tributaries. From Barcroft Park downstream, it is channelized and urban, largely lined by residential, commercial and industrial development. From Interstate 395 east to the Potomac River, it forms Arlington's boundary with the city of Alexandria.

The stream corridor's scope, landscape character, diversity of activities and accessibility to numerous neighborhoods makes it one of the County's most important civic assets. The priority is to focus on the "Lower Reach" from Barcroft Park to the Potomac:

- Complete the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan in collaboration with the city of Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the US Environmental Protection Agency and US Army Corps of Engineers. Develop priorities to implement the guiding project principles – flood protection, environment, aesthetics and design, recreation and urban life, integration and balance, access and connectivity, and education and interaction. Begin implementation.
- Develop the long-term land use plan for the Shirlington Crescent/ Four Mile Run area. As part of the plan, explore new uses for the lands adjacent to Four Mile Run and identify opportunities for expansion of public spaces, including both natural areas and cultural facilities.
- In concert with the long-term overall plan, develop a master plan for the park land between I-395 and Barcroft Park, including the existing Shirlington and Jennie Dean Parks and the five key recently acquired parcels. The master plan should emphasize the development of the area as an important recreational, cultural and environmental resource.
- Continue to acquire ownership or easements for land adjacent to both sides of Four Mile Run.

Priority 4 – Create A Natural Resource Policy and Management Plan (Recommendation 2.1)

The County lacks a county-wide data base of natural resources, including flora, fauna, and habitat evaluations. These resources need to be evaluated, their significance rated, and a management plan developed to guide how to manage and protect them. A Natural Resource Management Plan should be developed to help facilitate the County's ongoing commitment to enhance and preserve its natural resources. The plan's primary goals should be to bring together various plans, practices, programs and options to identify and develop strategies to protect the County's natural resources.

- Bring together various plans, practices, programs and options that identify and protect the County's natural resources.
- Develop a classification system of the various types of natural resources. Clarify and define the lines of authority and responsibility for management of the resources among county, regional and federal agencies.
- Create an additional layer for the County's Geographic Information System to identify and characterize significant natural resource management areas and habitats.

Priority 5 - Maximize the Partnership with Arlington County Schools (Recommendation 5.1)

Arlington County and Arlington Public Schools (APS) have a variety of memorandum of understandings (MOU) and other types of formal and informal agreements for facilities which

have joint or shared use. The most recent example is the MOU that has been developed to allow the County to upgrade school athletic fields to synthetic turf grass. Both the County and APS benefit because the County receives increased use of the fields and the schools receive much higher quality fields at no or little cost.

While there is great benefit to both agencies from the current arrangements, the facility resources are at present only partially tapped resources. They present a real opportunity for enhanced community use when they are not being utilized for their primary mission of education.

- Review all existing formal and informal agreements and MOU's and update all agreements. Create evaluation and enforcement guidelines for both agencies. Priorities of use should be governed by the County Board and School Board and enforcement of the agreements should be made a high priority.
- Establish a policy for joint development and use of facilities.
- Explore creating an Inter-Agency Coordination Board.

These five high-priority action items reflect and advance six broad, long-term policy objectives that form the framework for effective county stewardship of its public spaces. These objectives, and related recommendations, are as follows:

Objective One: Balance Acquisition and Development of Public Spaces

There is a strong documented need for aquatics, fitness, teen center, arts and multi-purpose spaces, along with need for additional outdoor trails, fields and natural areas. The challenge for this plan is balancing all those needs with a realistic sense of what can be accomplished in the near term and what become more long range targets. The County's priorities focus on two opportunities to undertake the development and implementation of a comprehensive recreational plan for two of the few remaining large areas of open space in Arlington County, the North Tract and Four Mile Run. While the number of opportunities to replan and redevelop existing public spaces and facilities (e.g. Bluemont/Bon Air/Reeves and Quincy Park) is important, they become future targets that will not occur until other priorities can be completed.

Recommendation 1.1 - Build North Tract (see Priority 1 above)

Recommendation 1.2 - Develop a Land Acquisition Policy (see Priority 2 above)

Recommendation 1.3 - Emphasize Planning and Improvement of Four Mile Run (see Priority 3 above)

Recommendation 1.4 – Focus on Planning for the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor

Continued focus on this high visibility corridor, its plans, potential increases in public spaces and the connection of those spaces is crucial. The County should:

- Develop a master plan for the five “Central Wilson” Parks (Mosaic, Maury, Gumball, Oakland and Herselle Milliken)
- Continue to achieve major open space through fee simple acquisition or public access easements on privately owned land, with a focus on the civic plaza at Courthouse, public plaza at Rosslyn Central Place and expanding the park in the block surrounding Maury Park.
- Secure adequate and well-designed corridors for the enjoyment of all who travel through these areas.
- Integrate the planning for public paces with the sector plans, ensuring that all development within the corridor helps works towards the vision of the *Public Spaces Master Plan*.
- Evaluate all site plans with the goal of creating additional opportunities for urban public spaces.

Recommendation 1.5 – Develop a “Clustering Philosophy”

Clustering involves establishing service area boundaries that include a group of parks and/or facilities and treating them as a single unit of service rather than individual spaces. Within the cluster, overall community needs for individual components such as playgrounds, tennis courts, athletic courts, arts and cultural amenities, picnic shelters, sports fields, indoor programming space and other desired components is met without duplicating them in each individual space. To develop this clustering philosophy the County should:

- Determine the service areas for each cluster. Review current service levels and determine areas that are under-served and well served.
- Based on service level, determine where to reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service provided to the community.
- Identify where new replacement or additional components will be constructed and include them in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Recommendation 1.6 – Complete a Detailed Analysis of Indoor Recreation and Nature Centers

While the County has a good overall coverage of the community for indoor recreation centers, many of these are smaller “neighborhood” type centers. In the recreation industry, research shows that creating larger (60,000 sf or more) multi-purpose centers actually increases usage and cost recovery, ability to program for multiple generations, and user retention. The current average size of 25,000 sf or lower in Arlington County is considered very small for optimal use. The County’s two nature centers are located in former single family residences that have been converted for public use. The County should:

- Invest in a detailed inventory of its indoor recreation and nature centers and usage/feasibility analysis to determine what the right mix and size of spaces should be and determine solutions, including increasing the size, combining offerings and programs, and/or closing or re-purposing of some centers, using the clustering

philosophy as described above. As part of this effort, the County should assess the need for historic interpretation and environmental education.

- Include an analysis of “alternative providers” to help determine whether any of the needs are currently being met or could be met by private, public or non-profit facilities or joint use facilities.

Recommendation 1.7 – Optimize Creative Use of Spaces

Arlington County has limited additional capacity for acquiring more public spaces due primarily to the population density, lack of available land, and high land costs. In light of this and with the continued demand for more public spaces, it is imperative that the County look at opportunities to optimize the use of spaces that are available, including partnering and creative repurposing.

- Utilize new technologies in synthetic turf and dark sky lighting to obtain maximum use and availability of multi-purpose turf fields and ball fields.
- Limit, where appropriate, the creation of specific-use facilities that may sit idle during non-programmed times.
- Consider creating additional usable public space by creating space over roadways such as I-66, underground parking garages and the rooftops of buildings.

Recommendation 1.8 – Ensure River Access

Arlington County is a community bordered by a major river, with unfortunately relatively little river access. The Potomac River waterfront is owned and managed by the National Park Service, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway creates a strong physical barrier. The County should strive to increase access for the community, utilizing a variety of strategies and partnerships as necessary to do so. The County needs to work pro-actively with the NPS to find ways to provide these amenities.

- Develop a boathouse facility, to be located between Theodore Roosevelt Island/Little River and Francis Scott Key Memorial Bridge, to be owned and operated by a nonprofit organization or rowing consortium as recommended by the *Water-Based Recreational Facility Task Force* and adopted by the County Board in May 1996.
- Coordinate connectivity, creating trail extensions, multi-use trails, bridges and parking as appropriate to allow for human access and wildlife corridor connectivity.
- Collaborate with the National Park Service to develop a master plan for the Roaches Run and Gravelly Point.

Recommendation 1.9 – Provide Increased Access to “Comfort” Facilities

In the Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey done as part of this plan, the top two improvements the community wanted to see were drinking fountains (34%) and year round restrooms (26%). These amenities help make the experience more comfortable.

- Retrofit existing restrooms so that the community can use them year round.
- Install additional drinking fountains near facilities and trails.

Objective Two – Preserve and Enhance the Environment

Creating and preserving natural spaces is a high priority, whether building a new park, developing facilities, or acquiring land.

Recommendation 2.1 – Create a Natural Resource Policy and Management Plan (see Priority 4 above)

Recommendation 2.2 – Enhance Tree Canopies and Natural Buffers

Arlington County's tree canopy provides many economic and environmental benefits, including providing habitat for birds and climbing animals. It is County policy to strive to have a sustainable urban forest that contributes to the livability of an urban community. This should be achieved through best practices in tree planting, preservation and maintenance while fostering a sense of stewardship among residents. A significant portion of Arlington's urban forest consists of trees on private property. Accordingly, the County should help homeowners to understand the value of tree canopy and native under story plants, and provide incentives for homeowners to plant hardwood tree canopies.

- Plant native species wherever appropriate.
- Coordinate professional and volunteer efforts to control invasive plants and monitor the success of these efforts.
- Make use of available planting spaces on public lands, including school grounds.
- Promote the planting and maintenance of canopy trees on public and private land.

Recommendation 2.3 – Preserve and Enhance Existing Natural Areas

Many parks, including those used primarily for active recreation, contain substantial natural areas. The County wants to preserve existing wooded parks and natural areas. Accordingly, these areas, whether forest or meadows, should not be viewed as “unused” land available for active recreational facilities, but should be maintained as natural areas. Stream valley parks are particularly vulnerable to invasive plant species entering the parks from nearby private properties. If not controlled, invasive species threaten trees, native vegetation and wildlife.

Many of the County's natural areas are in stream valley parks. In addition to wildlife corridors, these parks include riparian buffers that shade streams and filter storm water runoff, contributing to the health of local streams, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, the County is committed to protecting the watershed and stream buffers. To preserve and enhance existing areas the County should:

- Provide sensitively-designed trails to provide access for the public to enjoy.
- Add interpretive signs explaining historical or environmental aspects of an area.
- Monitor stream valleys on a regular basis to identify needs for improvements to riparian habitats and the stabilization of stream banks.

- Develop a County-wide strategy to restore the streams and protect them from erosion.
- Enhance environmental education through opportunities for increased utilization of the nature centers by Arlington Public Schools.

Recommendation 2.4 – Pursue the Use of Easements to Protect Natural Areas and Heritage Resources

As a complement to fee acquisitions and the land acquisition policy recommended above, the County should actively pursue the use of easements to protect natural areas on private land, using tax incentives where possible. The County should give top priority to easements or, if necessary, purchases that abut existing natural areas or would connect existing “islands” of natural habitat. The creation of protected corridors would aid the movement of wildlife and enable a more expansive system of trails for passive recreation. The County should continue to work with land trusts, such as the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT), to secure easements to protect private land from development. This recommendation relates mainly to areas not intended for public access. Additional tools are needed where public use is appropriate.

It is the policy of Arlington County to encourage the use of open space/conservation and preservation easements to implement the County’s goals and objectives for the preservation of natural and heritage resources in private hands, in accord with the County’s Comprehensive Plan, including the following:

- Promote the use of easements for any purpose allowed by the Code of Virginia, such as the preservation of open space, heritage resources, scenic vistas, environmentally sensitive resources, and parks and recreation uses.
- Encourage easements to enhance buffering and screening between uses, such as between a developed area and a park or historic site.
- Protect public park land and lands already under easement by encouraging easements on adjoining properties.
- Support easements to help preserve small areas of open space in already developed areas to shape the character of the community; to protect trees and other environmental resources; to provide visual relief; to preserve wildlife habitat; to provide buffering and screening; to establish community gardens; and to otherwise ensure that suburban and urban neighborhoods may retain open space.
- Prefer perpetual easements as the norm, only accepting a less-than-perpetual easement if it is necessary to ensure the protection of a threatened resource.
- Back easements where appropriate to establish or connect trails or to protect the view sheds of trails and public roads.
- Endorse easements as appropriate to preserve woodlands, monarch or notable trees, and/or rare or otherwise significant stands of trees, as identified by the County Urban Forester.

- Favor the use of easements for the linking of natural areas and parks, the preservation of wildlife corridors, Resource Protection Areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas such as land associated with the Potomac River and its tributary streams.
- Urge easements to preserve open space in already developed areas in order to provide natural areas, protect environmentally sensitive resources and preserve wildlife habitat in an urban or suburban context.
- Preserve heritage resources by the use of easements. Encourage property owners to place easements on their properties, working with the County, a local non-profit land trust and/or a state or national entity authorized to hold easements for the purpose of heritage resource preservation.
- Work with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust to develop an inventory of privately owned spaces that should be acquired or protected with conservation easements.

Recommendation 2.5 – Manage Natural Areas to Maintain Diverse Habitats

The County should strive for a sustainable landscape by planting native and some appropriate non-invasive non-native species on all of its properties. Herbicides and pesticides should be used only when absolutely necessary and when effective and practical non-chemical controls are not available.

- The County should gradually convert its planting of annuals to native and proven non-native perennial trees, shrubs and flowers, thereby reducing maintenance and watering needs.
- Set a goal of devoting fifty percent of nursery space to perennials within five years and implement sustainable landscaping practices throughout the County.

Recommendation 2.6 – Continue to Move Toward More “Green” Practices

The County has been very proactive in adopting sustainable environmental practices and should continue to place priority on those practices, including:

- Decrease the use of impervious surfaces where possible while maintaining accessibility where desired.
- Narrow street corridors when feasible.
- Decrease the dependence on herbicides and pesticides.
- Increase the number of meadow type habitats.
- Increase the educational opportunities for private property owners.
- Increase interpretation resources.
- Provide ongoing resources to control invasive species.
- Continue to monitor the “Green Industry” for best practices.

Recommendation 2.7 – Develop and Implement a Green Infrastructure Plan

Like the built infrastructure, a green infrastructure system consists of “hubs” --- large areas that are vital to the area’s ecology --- and “corridors” --- linkages that provide protection for

the movement of wildlife and plant life across the landscape (ecological corridors), recreational access (trails) and enhancement or restoration of water quality (riparian corridors). Accordingly, the County should develop and implement a green infrastructure plan based on these guiding principles:

- Embrace green infrastructure as the framework for conservation.
- Finance the protection and management of green infrastructure as a primary public investment.
- Design, plan and map a green infrastructure system that functions across multiple landscapes and scales and is grounded in scientific and land planning theories and practices.
- Provide hubs and corridors both within the County and with linkages to the green infrastructure system in surrounding jurisdictions.
- Engage the public in defining a green infrastructure plan that stimulates action by people with diverse backgrounds and interests.

Objective Three – Improve Access and Usability

All of the planning and funding in the world means little if the community is not able to get to the spaces to use them. This realization translates into a heavy emphasis on access for all and transportation, working closely among County departments to ensure that any new facility or other public space is walkable, accessible, and usable, has adequate parking, and/or is on major transit lines.

Recommendation 3.1 – Make Public Spaces Usable for People of All Abilities

Arlington County has implemented a strong focus on usability of all public spaces for people of all abilities, but there remain facilities and lands that are not adequately accessible. The County needs to maintain a focus that supports all people's need for play, leisure time and social interaction. This should extend above and beyond what is required by law, including technical research, design expertise, and citizen input related to creating and redeveloping public spaces that are accessible and usable by all.

- Renovation projects should continue to incorporate the requirements and guidelines of the US Access Board on Recreational Facilities. The benchmark for Arlington in renovation projects and new construction should go beyond ADA compliance to state-of-the-art model projects commensurate with the County's world-class community planning and development.
- Create places for all children to play together with siblings, friends and peers.
- Support the right leisure time experience for all.
- Consideration should be given to developing the County's first-ever universal design/accessible playground to create a fun place for children and adults of all ages and abilities to recreate in a setting that is accessible to the greatest number of people. Integrate a variety of play experiences and challenges where persons of all

ages with physical, sensory or developmental disabilities can interact and socialize with able-bodied individuals.

Recommendation 3.2 – Update and Implement Trail Systems Management

Community members want to enjoy Arlington County's "walkable community" attributes. This requires safe connecting trails for walking, biking, jogging and alternative modes of transportation.

- The County needs to update the GIS system, to include details on length of trails, trail surfaces, connections and accessible locations. The database should include on-street bicycle lanes and key segments of sidewalks as well as off-road trails. This information resource will make future decisions on trail location, land acquisitions, and easements more equitable and easier to justify and manage.
- Improve access and safety of the Arlington portion of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park in partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. This should include improvements to the trail crossing and amenities at Lee Highway and trail head improvements at the Shirlington Road trail terminus.

Recommendation 3.3 – Ensure Good Transportation Access

The value of the transit system in providing access to park and recreation components is evident. Facilities located near one transit stop are, in effect, located near all transit stops linked by good service. This should be taken into account when locating new components. For example, it may not be necessary to duplicate facilities designed to serve the immediate neighborhood at multiple transit stops. Putting one facility at one transit stop and sizing it with the capacity to serve the cumulative population of several transit stops could serve the needs of all. This may not work for all components (such as Community Canine Areas), but could work fine for facilities such as basketball, tennis and arts facilities. In effect, multiple transit stops can be combined into a single "cluster" as described elsewhere.

- Locate facilities with a county-wide draw near transit stops and other forms of multi-modal transportation whenever possible.
- Include transportation planning and access planning for all renovated or new facilities. In addition, the plans should provide an emphasis on walkability, alternative access modes (friendly to bicyclists, skateboards, in-line skating, etc.), and maintaining accessibility for all.

Objective Four – Enhance Arts, Culture and History

Arlington has established itself throughout the region as a community that offers dynamic and unique arts activities and one that provides focused attention to historical preservation. The County's Arts Incubator Program is a national model for innovative public support of the Arts. The Needs Assessment shows strong participation and support for arts and cultural activities. Extensive research shows that, in addition to being a vital means of social

enrichment, the arts are also an economically sound investment. The County should maintain its focus on the arts, cultural and historical programs and facilities, and continue to meet and/or exceed the community's expectations.

Recommendation 4.1 – Develop a Major Arts and Cultural Center

There is need, demand and justification for building a multi-use centralized cultural center. Building upon the results of the report prepared by a consultant in November 2004, planning should continue to determine the funding, siting, construction costs, schedule and final programming for this center. The current preferred site is in the Courthouse Plaza area, where a center could be designed in concert with a major underground parking facility and outdoor central plaza.

Preliminarily planned components include:

- Two theatres
- Dedicated space for the Visual Arts
- Core programs focused on serving the Arlington Arts Organizations
- Space to support arts education activities
- Flexibility to accommodate a wide variety of ancillary uses

Recommendation 4.2 – Focus on Arts, Cultural and Historic Elements

The County must continue to be creative and proactive in finding ways to incorporate historical and cultural recognition in the development and operation of recreational facilities and areas. Potential ideas for this include:

- More cultural, historical and arts interpretive signs along walking, hiking and biking trails should be included. New trails should be evaluated to see if they are appropriate for development around cultural, historical and arts themes.
- Incorporating public art concepts as outlined in the Public Art Master Plan.
- Incorporating small exhibition spaces in all recreation and community centers.
- Increased recognition of Arlington County's cultural diversity, historical heritage, and richness should be designed into recreational facilities and public space areas.
- When land is being considered for acquisition, County planners should work with historic preservationists early in the process to ensure that historical aspects of the acquisition are identified and that any development of the site respects identified elements.
- County departments should proactively integrate planning for projects with the goals outlined in this plan, the Public Art Master Plan and the forthcoming Historic Preservation Master Plan.

In addition, facilities for smaller concerts and events should be distributed throughout the urban corridors to encourage local activities with a dynamic flavor to occur close to transit stations and restaurants. This will not only encourage walking as a means of access to these events, it will help build a sense of community within the neighborhoods.

Additional opportunities for cultural experiences should be provided throughout the County as well. This can happen by integrating art and interpretive features into all parts of the County's Public Spaces system. For example, benches, play apparatus, and even utilitarian features such as backstops for softball can become pieces of art with a little extra thought put into their design.

Objective Five – Develop and Enhance Partnerships

Arlington County has and needs to continue to create partnerships with Arlington Public Schools and other private, governmental and non-profit organizations. These partnerships help leverage funding and other resources for the community, and will continue to be more and more important as the availability of land lessens or becomes more costly. In order to minimize risk and inefficiencies, and provide for equitable, mutually-beneficial and well-managed partnerships, the County needs to pro-actively plan and set policy for procuring and managing partnerships.

Recommendation 5.1 – Maximize the Partnership with Arlington Public Schools (see Priority 5 above)

Recommendation 5.2 – Create and Implement a Partnership Policy

Arlington County needs to formalize all partnerships in a written format.

- Develop a policy that provides an outline of what types of partnerships are appropriate for the County, the approval and procurement procedures, steps for partnering, monitoring and evaluation criteria, risk management and exit strategies if for some reason a partnership does not go as planned.
- Identify a system for tracking and identifying all current and potential partners. A "Sample Partnership Policy" has been provided as part of this planning process.

Recommendation 5.3 – Create a Partnership Plan with Managers of Federal Lands

Arlington County includes 1,052 acres of federal lands managed by the National Park Service and other federal agencies, including the land along the Potomac River and Arlington Cemetery. The Potomac riverfront, in particular, has a great potential for creating additional recreational and natural area access for boating, fishing, wildlife watching and additional trails for Arlington citizens if creative partnerships can be implemented and managed.

- Initiate relationships with the NPS to create potential partnerships and a plan for development of access and use as feasible for this important riverfront corridor and other federally-owned lands within the County.

Recommendation 5.4 – Review and Update all other Agreements

The County should inventory all other current formal and informal agreements with other governmental, for-profit and non-profit agencies.

- Agreements should be updated and formalized into writing in accordance with the partnership policy (discussed in 5.1), with an ongoing list kept in a centralized location to help minimize duplications and maximize standardized offerings.

Objective Six – Manage Assets Effectively

The County has become large and somewhat decentralized. This has led to the need for more specific policies, standards and performance measures to help guide the various departments and divisions in reaching their common goals to fulfill the mission and vision for public spaces.

Recommendation 6.1 – Evaluate Controls and Methods for Pricing and Cost Recovery

As the County has grown and evolved over the years, the issues of pricing and the relationship of funding to cost recovery has grown inconsistently across the PRCR Department. While there are some approved fee policies, determination for fees, prices, subsidy levels and cost recovery is varied throughout the agency. In addition, the basis for the supplemental fees budget is dated and insufficiently defined. In order to help remedy these inefficiencies the County should:

- Create and implement a clear pricing and cost recovery policy, an easily articulated philosophy, and approved pricing formulas.
- Re-evaluate and clarify the use and expectations of the supplemental fees budget relative to other program areas.
- Evaluate other potential forms of revenue, including alternative funding, concessions and contracting, impact fees, land dedication requirements, advertising, etc.

Recommendation 6.2 – Create a Life Cycle Costing Assessment

A Life-Cycle Assessment should be compiled in a digital format that will build on current park inventories and add information related to the condition of each facility and the anticipated number of years to major renovation or replacement. The goals of this assessment will be to gain a better understanding of deferred maintenance needs that have gone unmet and develop a strategy for renovating or replacing facilities.

- Collect and review current capital project data and recent CIP's to determine trends in replacing or renovating facilities.
- Review current plans being developed on sports fields to determine lifecycle on turf replacement for both natural and synthetic turf surfaces.
- Review historic data on replacement of facilities and components.
- Conduct field audits to develop a condition inventory of all facilities.

- Review all proposed park plans and determine if on-going capital projects include major replacements or renovations to gather cost estimates for current projects.
- Establish lifecycle replacement standards and projected costs.

Recommendation 6.3 – Create a Technology Investment Plan

Arlington County should create a technology investment plan related specifically to the public spaces management that would detail the future needs, strategic direction, and business systems analysis to clearly define the County’s future needs and required investment for Information Management and Technology.

Recommendation 6.4 – Create Alternative Funding Policies and Resources

In evaluating the potential for additional revenue and cost recovery, there is great potential for a substantial increase from alternative funding sources such as partnerships, grants, and sponsorships. In order to create a positive return on investment for these activities, it is recommended that the County:

- Create a strategic plan for alternative funding procurement.
- Centralize the authority for procurement of all sponsorships and grant applications into this function.
- Centralize the inventory, authority for, and location of all partnership and sponsorship agreements.
- Create a sponsorship policy that outlines acceptable sponsorship activities, levels, authorities, and approvals.
- Create centralized processes for grant writing, funding procurement, servicing of partners and sponsors, reporting, evaluation and performance measurement.

Recommendation 6.5 – Create Facility Design Standards Guidelines

The County should create facility design standards that address near and long term operational costs, maintenance costs, utilization of land resources, best management practices, standard construction and replacement materials, compliance with ADA, LEED and National Playground Safety requirements, and other issues. This guideline document should help guide all future planning efforts.

- Determine the full scope of information to be covered in the guidelines.
- Initiate the development of design standards.

Recommendation 6.6 – Update and Manage all Policies, Guidelines and Maintenance Standards

As the County has grown, policy and guideline development has occurred on an “as needed” basis. The County should update and manage all policies, guidelines and maintenance standards for management of all parks, trails, natural areas, and facilities. This includes

defining and inventorying all types of facilities and creating consensus on management practices and classifications.

- Review and inventory the various policy and guideline documents that are in place or have been previously developed.
- Create a list of the necessary management documents under the County's purview.
- Develop maintenance standards and staffing levels.
- Evaluate the current maintenance data base system and determine how to evaluate true costs and resources needs.
- Allocate resources to update or create needed policy and guideline documents.
- Implement the updated standards and maintenance management practices.

Recommendation 6.7 – Implement a 5-Year Master Planning Schedule

As an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the *Public Spaces Master Plan* should be updated every five years.

- Schedule the update to the next 2010 *Public Spaces Master Plan* by allocating resources to begin the update starting in 2008. The update should include an update to the parks and Recreation Resident Survey and Youth Survey.

B. Next Steps

Arlington County is continually striving to keep up with the expectations and needs of the community. The public spaces are heavily used and have numerous positive impacts including encouraging healthy lifestyles, promoting social well-being, providing opportunities and facilities for enjoyment, and enhancing the quality of life.

This *Public Spaces Master Plan* provides a guiding mechanism for continuing to meet existing and future community needs, and expanding the positive impacts of this portion of the County's services. The strengths of this plan stems from the extensive research, community involvement, analysis of needs, and public review that form the basis for the recommendations it contains. The recommendations of this plan are designed to create goals primarily for the PRCR Department, cultivating:

- Focus on consistently meeting and exceeding citizen expectations;
- Using innovative ideas and methods to successfully meet challenges posed by budgetary, facility and staffing limitations;
- A public space system that benefits residents by increasing services to all age groups and providing diverse opportunities;
- A stewardship approach to providing high-quality facilities, existing and future, through judicious use of public funds;

- Cooperation and partnerships among the County departments, Arlington Public Schools, community-based recreational amenities, other national, local and regional governments, and the private sector in providing recreational services and facilities;
- A proactive planning process guided by community needs and executable strategies; and a process for reviewing and updating this document.

Ultimately, this plan is designed to serve as a planning and decision-making tool facilitating participation for everyone in Arlington County.

Appendices
