



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

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Park and Recreation Commission

April 18, 2013

Mayor William Euille
Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg
Councilman John Taylor Chapman
Councilman Timothy B. Lovain
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilman Justin M. Wilson

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission in support of the proposed Play Policy. The policy represents an important cooperative effort between City departments to provide more and improved play opportunities in Alexandria for children of all ages.

This policy as drafted offers a method to systematically consider the need for additional quality play opportunities in the coming years. It provides a vision for thinking about how to encourage play outside of the normal "playground" structures and challenges our traditional thinking about creative design solutions for play. It offers guidance for equitable allocation of public dollars to play areas and playgrounds across the City, as well as forms a partnership that can help leverage outside grants and other funding resources.

In the staff presentation to the Commission on this policy it was pointed out that play is an important cornerstone for child development across all ages. Physical activity is key to the healthy growth of a child's brain and body and impacts positively a child's health as well as their social, emotional, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral development.

During the development of the policy City staff, working with outside experts, identified areas of the City which have less opportunity for quality play and recreation. It is important that we strive to ensure that all children, wherever they live, have places to play that encourage physical activity, social interaction, and learning.

The Parks and Recreation Commission lends our support to this Play Policy as a means to improve the quality, distribution, and access to play across the City and we ask that you offer your support for the policy as well.

With kind regard,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judy R. Guse-Noritake".

Judy R. Guse-Noritake, Chair
Park & Recreation Commission

Alexandriava.gov



April 22, 2013

The Honorable Mayor William D. Euille and
Members of City Council
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

On behalf of the Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission, I am pleased to convey the Commission's unanimous support for the City of Alexandria Playspace Policy. The Commission had two separate briefings on the policy recommendations contained in the policy document, and we are in complete accord with the goals and guidelines and specific recommendations to improve access, quality and distribution of playspaces through park design, transportation systems design, and also incorporating the need for playspace in land use planning and development decisions.

The Commission believes the Playspace Policy represents a creative partnership between city departments to improve the quality of play in the City of Alexandria for children of all ages. It offers a way for Alexandria to systematically consider the need and possibilities for play in the coming years, and provides a vision for thinking about how, collectively, our community can better support play.

Finally, the Commission certainly believes that the Playspace Policy will make an important and long-standing contribution to the health and well-being of our great community. In fact, many of the recommendations in the Playspace Policy have been incorporated in the Commission's draft action plan for reducing child obesity in the City of Alexandria. The draft plan was adopted by the Commission earlier this year and is now being reviewed by other stakeholder boards and commissions. We expect to forward our recommendations to Council later this Fall.

For all these reasons, the Public Health Advisory Commission strongly recommends that City Council give the Playspace Policy the serious attention it so well deserves.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Merritt, Chair
Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission



Making the healthy choice, the easy choice...

Partners

Alexandria Health Department ◦ Department of Community & Human Services ◦ Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority ◦ Public Health Advisory Commission ◦ Congregational Health Partnership, Inova Health System ◦ Healthy Families, Inc ◦ Alexandria City Public Schools ◦ Wise Educational Services, LLC ◦ Alexandria Police Department ◦ Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. ◦ Campagna Center ◦ Alexandria City Public Schools ◦ George Washington University: Project ITAP ◦ Northern Virginia Community College ◦ Virginia Cooperative Extension ◦ Arlington/Alexandria Smart Beginnings ◦ Evening Star & The Neighborhood Restaurant Group ◦ Virginia Commerce Bank ◦ Reading Connection ◦ Northern Virginia Health Foundation ◦ Virginia Cooperative Extension & Master Gardeners ◦ Alexandria Healthy Green Foods Group ◦ Alexandria Pedestrian & Bicycle Program ◦ MRC Leverage Group, LLC ◦ Long & Foster Real Estate ◦ Dept. of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities ◦ Department of Planning & Zoning ◦ Congregational Health Resource, LLC ◦ DeCostas, Inc ◦ Healthy Families Alexandria ◦ Northern Virginia Health Foundation ◦ Dept of Planning & Zoning ◦ WIC ◦ Happy Home Child Learning Center ◦ Creative Play School ◦ Hopkins House ◦ Alive! Center for Child Development ◦ Grace Episcopal Preschool ◦ Child & Family Network Centers ◦ Agudas Achim Preschool ◦ Trinity Mops Preschool ◦ Happy Home Child Learning Center ◦ Creative Play School ◦ Hopkins House Preschool Academy ◦ Alive! Center for Child Development ◦ Old Town ACE Hardware ◦ Grace Episcopal Preschool ◦ La Leche League ◦ March of Dimes ◦ Center for Alexandria's Children ◦ ACT for Alexandria & ACTion Alexandria ◦ Department of Transportation & Environmental Services ◦ Applied Policy ◦ American Physical Therapy Association ◦ YoKid ◦ Celebrate Productions ◦ Parents & Community Members

www.HealthierAlexandria.org/healthylifestyles

April 22, 2013

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN) in support of the proposed Playspace Policy. One of A-COAN's Task Force's – Project Play – helped support the Departments of Health, Planning and Zoning, and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities in developing the policy over the last nine months in order to address this rising problem of childhood obesity in our city. According to a 2007 study completed by Inova Health Systems, 43.5% of Alexandria children, ages 2-5, are overweight or obese. This rate is substantially higher than in other population groups. Being overweight or obese puts children at the risk of many serious health problems, now and throughout their lives.

Over the last four years, A-COAN has been working in close collaboration with many community partners to address the obesity epidemic in Alexandria. We have partnered with the Four Mile Run and Old Town Farmer's Markets to enable them to accept SNAP and establish a Bonus Dollar program that doubles the first \$10 SNAP users spend at the markets. We've granted gardening and nutrition grants to ARHA, Alexandria non-profits, and houses of worship to establish and manage gardens to provide food for low-income residents. We've worked with preschool providers, family daycare providers, Alexandria City Public Schools and the Department of Community and Human Services to establish educational programming that encourages healthy eating and active play. And we've been promoting breastfeeding by working with the City and local employers to support them in establishing breastfeeding policies and breastfeeding/pump rooms for nursing mothers returning to work and breastfeeding/pump rooms. In addition, we have been working closely with the Health Department to support a healthy city vending machine policy. These are just a few of many A-COAN initiatives.

The Playspace Policy represents another important way to prevent obesity and encourage physical activity, play, and active living among children and families in Alexandria. In 2012, A-COAN commissioned an Alexandria Playspace Assessment, conducted by expert consultant, Design Concepts, that found that playspaces are not adequately distributed throughout Alexandria and that the available playspaces do not adequately meet the needs of children of all age groups. Specifically, the Assessment identified key areas in Alexandria, in particular the West End and Arlandria, where there is great need for improved access to quality playspaces. It also found that there are far more playspaces for children ages 5-12 in the city, including the playgrounds on ACPs properties. These are unavailable to young children during school hours. In response to the 2012 Playspace Assessment, A-COAN worked with partners to launch Project Play, a community-based effort to expand play opportunities in for all families in Alexandria. A-COAN considers the Playspace Policy is an important way to improve play for Alexandria children.

The Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network and Project Play are in support of the Playspace Policy as a means to improve the quality, distribution, and access to play in the City and we ask that you offer your support for the policy as well.

Thanks for your consideration,

Tricia Rodgers, Chair

Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network



OUR PARTNERS

Allen Lomax, Chair,
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Bezner, Vice Chair, Steering
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William D. Euille and
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Advisory Committee • Youth
Policy Commission •
Families First of Alexandria
• Local Businesses • Dept of
Planning & Zoning •
Alexandria Citizens •

April 22, 2013

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria* in support of the proposed Playspace Policy. The *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria* is a citizen-led coalition of non-profit organizations, schools, municipal agencies, local businesses, the faith community, advocacy groups, government and community leaders, and concerned citizens joined together to promote and preserve a healthy Alexandria community. One of our core areas of focus is encouraging healthy eating and active living. This work is led by our work group, the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network.

In Alexandria, it is critical that we continue to invest in our youth. Providing playspaces for those youth to play together, be active, and grow is an important part of their development in growing up to be healthy adults. The Playspace Policy provides a comprehensive framework for ensuring that playspaces are considered in the planning and policy-making processes as Alexandria grows.

The *Partnership* values the contribution the Playspace Policy makes in creating a healthier Alexandria and we are pleased to offer our support.

Sincerely,

Allen Lomax

Chair, Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

Our Mission is to promote a safe and healthy Alexandria through coalition building, collaborative planning and community action.

From: Eric N. Dobson <edobson@naiopva.org>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2013 10:57 AM
To: Judy Lo
Cc: kwire@mcguirewoods.com; mohara@bohlereng.com
Subject: RE: NAIOP/NVBIA Alexandria September Meeting

Judy:
Thank you again for coming to speak with our group.

NAIOP Northern Virginia is generally supportive of the policy and looks forward to working with staff on the its implementation.

Due to calendar conflicts on when our Board meets, I will not be able to have an official letter available for either tomorrow's Planning Commission hearing or the City Council. I am comfortable with you including in your staff report and presentation that you met with NAIOP Northern Virginia and that we are generally supportive of the policy.

I hope this is sufficient for you and provides you the support you need.

Sincerely,

Eric

Eric N. Dobson
Director of Government Relations and Communications
NAIOP Northern Virginia
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Main 703-845-7080 x 303
www.naiopva.org

NAIOP Northern Virginia is a chapter of NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, (and it comprises over 850 members) serving the local Northern Virginia market. NAIOP is the leading organization for developers, owners and related professionals in office, industrial and mixed-use real estate, with 18,000 members in North America. NAIOP advances responsible commercial real estate development and advocates for effective public policy. For more information visit www.naiopva.org.

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

From: Judy Lo [mailto:Judy.Lo@alexandriava.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2013 6:43 PM
To: Eric N. Dobson
Cc: aclomax@aol.com; Carrie Redden; trodgers@novahealthfdn.org
Subject: RE: NAIOP/NVBIA Alexandria September Meeting

Eric,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Alexandria Playspace Policy to the NAIOP/NVBIA sub-committee.

Attached is the a copy of the Playspace Policy and Implementation Plan distributed at today's meeting, as well as a copy of the 2012 Alexandria Playspace Assessment. Developed with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, the policy aims to improve the health and development of Alexandria youth by improving quality, distribution and access to playspaces. The policy is intended to ensure playspaces are included in City planning and development processes, and to engage the broader development community into thinking creatively about playspace solutions.

The policy will be presented to Planning Commission on October 1 and to City Council on October 19.

Judy Lo, ASLA, RLA
City of Alexandria, Virginia
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Division of Park Planning, Design, and Capital Projects
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