



## ***Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001***

### ***Public Open Space & Community Recreation Zone Update***

<b>Issue:</b>  Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone Update	Planning Commission Hearing:	June 6, 2023
	City Council Hearing:	June 17, 2023
<b>Description:</b> (A) Initiation of a Text Amendment; and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend section 2-129.1 to change the definition of congregate recreational facilities; amend section 2-181.5 to change the definition of park; and amend Section 6-100 to change the allowed uses, special uses and development requirements in the Public Open Space and Community Recreation (POS) Zone.		
<b>Staff:</b>  <i>Department of Planning &amp; Zoning:</i> Karl Moritz, Director Tony LaColla, Division Chief Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner Sam Shelby, Principal Planner Abigail Harwell, Urban Planner  <i>Department of Recreation, Parks &amp; Cultural Activities</i> Jack Browand, Deputy Director Beth Znidersic, Division Chief Jose C. Ayala, Principal Planner Judy Lo, Principal Planner Ana Vicinanza, Urban Planner		
<b>Staff recommendation:</b> Staff recommends that the City Council INITIATE and APPROVE the text amendment.		

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS, JUNE 6, 2023:** On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission moved to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

**Reason:** The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Brown noted his role on the Open Space Steering Committee and spoke in support of the proposed text amendments. In particular, Commissioner Brown supported the elimination of setback and parking requirements, as they are elements already factored into the park planning process and further regulation is not needed, as well as the height requirements for field netting.

Commissioner Lyle concurred with Commissioner Browns comments, as the proposed changes have been needed and make sense, reducing staff and meeting time.

Chairman Macek concurred with the other Commissioners, speaking in support of streamlining the process, and noting the multiple opportunities and meetings where the public can continue to be involved with park planning process.

Commissioner McMahon spoke in favor of the amendments, noting how the parks and recreation design process is unique with the influence of community input on the development of plans, compared to larger development projects where more discussion is needed, and the proposed amendments would eliminate hurdles to delivering park improvements.

Additional Amendments:

During discussions with staff leading up to the Planning Commission hearing, Commission Chair Macek suggested alternative, clearer language to the Congregate Recreational Facilities definition. Staff supports these changes. Inadvertently, the edits were not raised during the Commission hearing and so the Commission didn't have a chance to discuss them. But staff believe the changes make sense and propose the Council consider them. This includes adding "rinks" after skating under the proposed definition, which would help clarify the intention as a congregate use, since any kind of skating rink or facility is likely to have teams or groups utilizing the space with the possible need for mitigation. Additionally, the definition has been updated so all listed uses are plural, for consistency. As such, staff recommends the following amended definition:

2-129.1 - Congregate recreational facilities.

A public use devoted to recreational activities typically or often pursued as a group or team, such as athletic fields, ~~children's play apparatus areas, archery ranges, court game facilities,~~ indoor and outdoor swimming pools, amphitheaters, band shells, and outdoor theaters, **skating rinks, miniature golf courses, and community recreation buildings,** not including drive-in theaters.

## **I. ISSUE**

Staff from the Departments of Planning and Zoning (P&Z) and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) propose amendments to the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone (POS) in section 6-100 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Since adopting the POS zone in 1989, many of the items identified in Park and Recreation Commission endorsed Park Improvement Plans have required additional Special Use Permit (SUP) approvals to construct or install items in the City's parks. While complete renovations of City parks require development approval through public hearings, smaller improvements such as playground replacement or relocation, or safety improvements such as backstops and netting, scoreboards, and storage are all categorized as uses that also require additional approval through public hearings. As a result, improvements that are identified in Park Plans based on community needs and input are delayed by redundant approval processes.

The purpose of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance is to modify and amend the POS zone regulations by eliminating redundant approval processes and make its regulations more consistent with expectations for the City's parks. The amendments would also include text changes to more accurately capture how both congregate recreational facilities and parks are used in the City. These changes would allow uses typically found in recreational areas or needed for public safety to align with the City's Park Improvement Plans, which are based on community input and needs. Staff believes the proposed amendments would save both the City and residents time for implementing smaller park improvements.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

On September 16, 1989, the new POS zone was adopted by the City Council (Ordinance No. 3401). At the recommendation of the Zoning Task Force, the POS zone was to apply to all public land used for open space and recreational use. The purpose of the new zoning district was to "preserve and enhance the City's public open space and recreational areas by protecting the natural and developed amenities they possess by allowing only that development which respects and is consistent with those amenities," which was documented in the zone's purpose (Zoning Ordinance section 6-101). The City's Zoning Map was updated to reflect many, but not all, of the City's parks, as seen on a map of all the POS property and park property in the City (Graphic 1).

While the purpose acknowledged recreational areas and associated improvements, the POS zone does not permit typical park improvements without SUP approval. Currently, only unimproved geographic features (such as woodland, preserves, and water courses) are permitted without additional public hearings. Even passive recreational facilities (such as trails, picnic areas, and fishing sites) are permitted only with approvals at public hearings. As a result, many parks with existing uses and structures, including active recreation, playgrounds, and other amenities, were considered nonconforming when the POS zone was created. Several amendments have made small changes to the POS zone, such as defining outdoor markets and allowing them with SUP approval and amending the definition of congregate recreational facilities, to name a few, since adoption.

A typical SUP application request from RPCA takes approximately three months for the City to process. This includes an initial plan review, a public comment period prior to public hearing, a

staff report, and a presentation of the request before both the Planning Commission and City Council, who must approve the request. Since 1994, the City has processed 29 SUP applications for RPCA managed properties zoned POS. Of these cases, four were for Alexandria Public Schools (ACPS) temporary trailers adjacent to school sites (which had an expiration date), four were for athletic field or dog park lighting, and four were associated with large-scale park redevelopment (Eisenhower Recycling Center, Hensley Park and Minnie Howard field). Large-scale park projects will continue to require SUP approval for uses such as new athletic fields, lighting for nighttime use, and recycling centers. Of the remaining 17 cases, all had already received City funding approval and were associated with Park Improvement Plans which included community input.

**Chart 1: Projects in POS that required SUP approval**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Project Description</b>
1994	Hensley Park outdoor recreation
1994	Cameron Run Park outdoor recreation
2002	Luckett Field Skate Park
2002	Cameron Run water slides
2005	Cameron Run lifeguard trailer
2006	Montgomery Park picnic shelter and improved amenities
2006	Lee Center Park renovation with new playground
2013	Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial art sculpture
2014	Witter Field safety netting
2016	Taney Park improvements
2017	Warwick Pool, structure and site improvements
2018	Stevenson Park baseball field improvements
2019	Four Mile Run Park playground relocation and improvements
2020	Luckett Field Skate Park Lights
2020	Four Mile Run Educational Trailers
2022	Witter Field safety netting
2022	Hensley Park safety netting

Park Improvement Plans must be implemented to keep pace with the City's aging park infrastructure and as demand for high-quality park amenities continues to increase. These amendments would allow staff to implement Park Plans quickly and efficiently, while continuing to include the community, park users and neighboring properties.

### **III. COMPLIANCE WITH CITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Staff's recommendations would further the following City goals and objectives:

- City Land Use goal to preserve and increase parkland (for both active and passive uses) and open space throughout the City (adopted 1992 Master Plan).
- City Parks and Recreation goal to preserve and enhance the public open spaces and recreational areas by protecting the natural and developed amenities they possess and by encouraging development which respects and is consistent with those amenities. Add

publicly accessible open space by creative and innovative ways (adopted 1992 Master Plan).

- City Parks and Recreation objective to promote continued development of recreational facilities in conjunction with neighboring, regional, state, and federal agencies (adopted 1992 Master Plan).
- City's goal of providing safe and equitable access to facilities and services (adopted 1992 Master Plan).

### *Open Space Master Plan*

In 2002, the City Council approved an Open Space Master Plan, establishing goals for protecting, enhancing and expanding open space in the City. The plan established a framework to address Alexandria's short and longer term open space needs by acknowledging and protecting the City's existing open space and identifying additional open space opportunities for the future. In 2017, the City Council approved an updated Implementation Strategy for the Open Space Master Plan to address the ongoing pressure to provide and protect open space in a growing community. To assist staff in the development of the Open Space Policy Plan, the Ad Hoc Open Space Steering Committee was reinstated on October 16, 2019. One of the charges of work for the committee was to "provide a recommendation for updating the 'Public Open Space' (POS) zone to reflect modern park and recreation functions, such as: play features, lighting (trail lighting, safety lighting, athletic lighting, etc.), ballfield amenities, etc." (Memo to Council October 16, 2019). Staff originally initiated the POS text amendment conversation with the Steering Committee on November 10, 2021, with an update provided on December 13, 2021. On March 28, 2023, staff presented to the Steering Committee the proposed text amendments, which were supported and endorsed by the members.

## **IV. CITY PARK PLANNING**

Since 2012, RPCA staff has worked with the community to develop Park Improvement Plans (Plans). The goal of the Plans process was to study and understand the existing conditions and future needs for Alexandria's Citywide, neighborhood, and pocket parks. The Plans were to ensure a system of open space that equitably responds to the City's recreational and natural resource needs while effectively utilizing available resources. The following Plans have been created and endorsed by the City's Park and Recreation Commission and presented to the City Council. These include:

- Citywide Parks Improvement Plan, endorsed April 10, 2014, addressing six parks over 10 acres in size;
- Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan, endorsed November 19, 2015, addressing 17 parks between half an acre to 10 acres in size; and
- Pocket Park Improvement Plan, endorsed February 20, 2020, addressing 25 parks under half an acre in size, many of which are currently not zoned POS (typically zoned for residential consistent with the neighboring properties).

As Plans are specifically designed to address community needs, with conceptual designs that document where the public would like to certain improvements which are endorsed by the Parks

and Recreation Commission, the process for SUP approval is redundant. Through the RPCA Park Improvement Plan process, communication and input from the public who use and live near City Parks is an important element. No changes to City Parks are made without community input as captured in the Park Plan, which then is the basis for all RPCA projects and budget priorities.

With the proposed amendments, larger or more impactful park improvements, such as community recreation buildings and athletic fields, will continue to require an SUP or site plan approval. Small, needed improvements that received previous endorsement through an approved Park Improvement Plan would be implemented sooner.

## V. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends amending the POS zone to allow for a more streamlined approach for park changes and improvements. The proposed amendments are attached to the staff report (Attachment A) and a summary of the proposed changes are discussed below:

### A. Amended definitions:

**2-129.1 – Congregate recreational facilities:** Staff recommends removing uses that were relocated to the definition of park. Currently, the POS zone lists skating, miniature golf courses and community recreation buildings as distinct uses that require SUP approval. These terms would stay in the definition of congregate recreational facilities and would continue to require SUP approval. The terms children’s play apparatus (playground) and court game facilities (basketball court and tennis courts for example) would be moved to the definition of Park, as staff no longer considers these uses to be congregate recreational facilities. Playgrounds and sports courts do not have the same potential for impacts as they typically do not draw large numbers of users compared to the intense scheduling that congregate recreational facility uses utilize for crowd control.

**2-181.5 – Park:** Staff recommends updating this definition to include additional features commonly found in the City’s parks. Staff also recommends updating the definition to make its structure more consistent with other Zoning Ordinance definitions. Most of the language staff proposes was taken from the permitted uses section of the POS zone (Section 6-102), to compile all the uses in this updated definition. As mentioned in the above paragraph, the terms children’s play apparatus and court game facilities would be included in this definition. Staff also proposes replacing the term children’s play apparatus with playground.

B. **6-100 - Purpose and short title:** Staff recommends updating this section to be consistent with language found in other purpose sections of the Zoning Ordinance and to reflect the intention of the POS zoning better.

C. **6-102 - Permitted uses:** Staff recommends updating the list to remove uses that would be relocated to the definition of Park and simply listing parks and accessory uses as permitted uses. With the definition of Park being updated, all the different elements of a park do not need to be listed individually in the POS zone. Additionally, this would be consistent with

how parks are listed as a permitted use in other zoning districts in the Zoning Ordinance and would address how City parks then could be renovated with these improvements based on the Parks Improvement Plan process and further community outreach.

- D. **6-103 - Accessory uses and structures:** Staff recommends expanding this section to provide guidance regarding commonly found park uses and structures that are accessory to a park use. These structures and uses must meet the Zoning Ordinance definitions of accessory structures and uses. Listed as a permitted use, this section works more as a definition specific to the zone. The language “subject to approval of a site plan” would be removed. New development would still require site plan review and approval through a public hearing, in compliance with Zoning Ordinance section 11-400, including buildings exceeding 3,000 gross square feet, parking areas of more than five parking spaces and alterations to grade of two to three feet or more. Further, any land-disturbing activity that exceeds 2,500 square feet would require grading plan review and approval to ensure compliance with stormwater requirements.
- E. **6-104 - Temporary uses and structures:** Minimal changes are proposed for this section from the current language, and include a few uses that reflect commonly applied for RPCA special event permits. These include markets, vendor carts, and temporary recreation facilities (for example seasonal skating rinks). The term markets would include both regular farmers markets as well as seasonal markets. RPCA has an existing policy that permits temporary uses associated with special events or seasonal activities through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) which received City Council approval. By capturing the range of activities that may be permitted in City parks, RPCA and the City’s Department of Code Administration would be able to continue regulating temporary events, structures and activities.
- F. **6-105 – Special uses:** Many of the uses listed in this section are proposed to be removed and added under the definitions for congregate recreational facilities, parks or accessory uses, with no new uses added. As have been the case, all recreational facilities with the potential for significant impacts continue to require SUP approval, including any occupied buildings that will need parking, lighting for congregate recreational facilities and other specific uses that may provide community benefit (such as plant nurseries, public utility structures, and recycling centers). The intent is to differentiate between park uses and congregate recreational uses by amending those definitions.
- G. **6-106 – Bulk, space and yard requirements:**

**Maximum permitted height:** The allowable height is being recommended for an increase primarily for flexibility to accommodate safety structures (such as netting), which typically need a minimum of 30 feet. If additional height is needed above 30 feet, SUP approval would be required up to the maximum of 50 feet. Again, all structures and buildings would have received community endorsement through the Park Improvement Plan process, whether or not the POS zone requires SUP approval of the use. These changes would not

apply to lighting for congregate recreational facilities and dog parks, which are regulated by Zoning Ordinance section 6-403(F).

**Required yard setbacks:** Similar to the height requirements, the recommendation to remove all setback requirements is to provide flexibility. For accessory or smaller park improvements, such as playgrounds, picnic areas or court game facilities, RPCA works with the community to both address the needs and locate them for the benefit of the community, but also minimize impacts to neighboring properties. Larger projects for improvements and new structures, such as community recreation buildings or athletic fields, would continue to go through the development review process. In either case, RPCA's Park Improvement Plan process establishes plans to minimize any potential impacts on existing conditions surrounding park properties.

- H. **Parking Requirements:** The recommendation to remove the parking requirements would allow flexibility to Park Improvement Plans of where to provide parking onsite. There are no minimum parking requirements for POS uses for off-street parking, but parking requirements for community buildings. Similar to the other requirements of the zone, when needed, parking is located to maximize open space and recreation space while taking community needs and impacts to neighbors into consideration. In cases where more than five off-street parking spaces would be provided, the parking area must be appropriately landscaped and must be compatible with its surroundings as required by Zoning Ordinance section 11-400. Any parking associated with a new recreation building or park improvement would also be reviewed under the SUP and site planning process. Off-street parking areas that provide fewer than five spaces would still be included in the Park Improvement Plan process.
- I. **Use limitations:** This section is proposed to simplify language and provide guidelines for screening, lighting and noise consistent with all development requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and City Code.

As noted for many of the proposed changes, communication and input from the community who use and live near City Parks is an important part of the process. No changes to City Parks are made without community input as captured in the Park Plan, which then is the basis for all RPCA projects and budget priorities. Larger or more impactful park improvements will continue to require SUP or site plan approval. Small, needed improvements that received previous endorsement through an approved Park Plan would be implemented sooner.

## VI. PUBLIC OUTREACH

The community engagement process for the proposed text amendment began on March 13, 2023 with a eNews release and e-mail to community leaders. Staff attended numerous meetings with the public as well as various stakeholder groups (as listed below). The public was notified of all milestones in the community engagement process via the City's eNews service and through a website dedicated to the proposed amendments, which listed all public meeting opportunities and posted recordings of the presentations after each meeting.



**Chart 2: Community Meetings and Outreach**

March 8, 2023	e-mail to Alexandria Archaeology Commission
March 13, 2023	eNews release and e-mail to community leaders
March 16, 2023	Park and Recreation Commission
March 17, 2023	eNews release to community
March 20, 2023	Virtual Community Meeting
March 21, 2023	Waterfront Commission
March 21, 2023	Arts Commission, voted to endorse
March 28, 2023	Open Space Steering Committee, voted to endorse
March 29, 2023	ACPS update
March 29, 2023	Federation of Civic Associations
April 6, 2023	eNews release to community
April 10, 2023	Youth Sports Advisory Board
April 13, 2023	e-mail to Beautification Commission
April 18, 2023	Historic Alexandria Resource Commission
April 20, 2023	Park and Recreation Commission, voted to endorse
May 1, 2023	Open Space Steering Committee, Update

On March 28, 2023, the Open Space Steering Committee unanimously endorsed the proposed text amendments. Additionally, on April 20, 2023, the Park and Recreation Commission also voted unanimously to endorse the text amendments. During the course of public outreach, the proposed amendments were looked at favorably to address needed improvements, with letters of support submitted from the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, the Waterfront Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission (attachments #2, #3 and #4). Concerns raised were related to impacts from park improvements on adjacent properties. In particular, concerns were expressed regarding the elimination of setback requirements, increase in allowable height, and concern that the amendments would allow the City to make changes to a park without community input. As has been stated, no changes to parks would occur without community input through the Park Improvement Plans as well as ongoing engagement between the community and the Department of RPCA.

## **VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission initiate and support the text amendments contained in Attachment 1 to amend the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone.

**Staff:**

*Planning & Zoning*

Karl Moritz, Director  
Robert Kerns, AICP, Chief, Planning & Zoning  
Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner  
Sam Shelby, Principal Planner  
Abigail Harwell, Urban Planner

*Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities*

Jack Browand, Deputy Director  
Beth Znidersic, Division Chief  
Jose C. Ayala, Principal Planner  
Ana Vicinanzo, Urban Planner

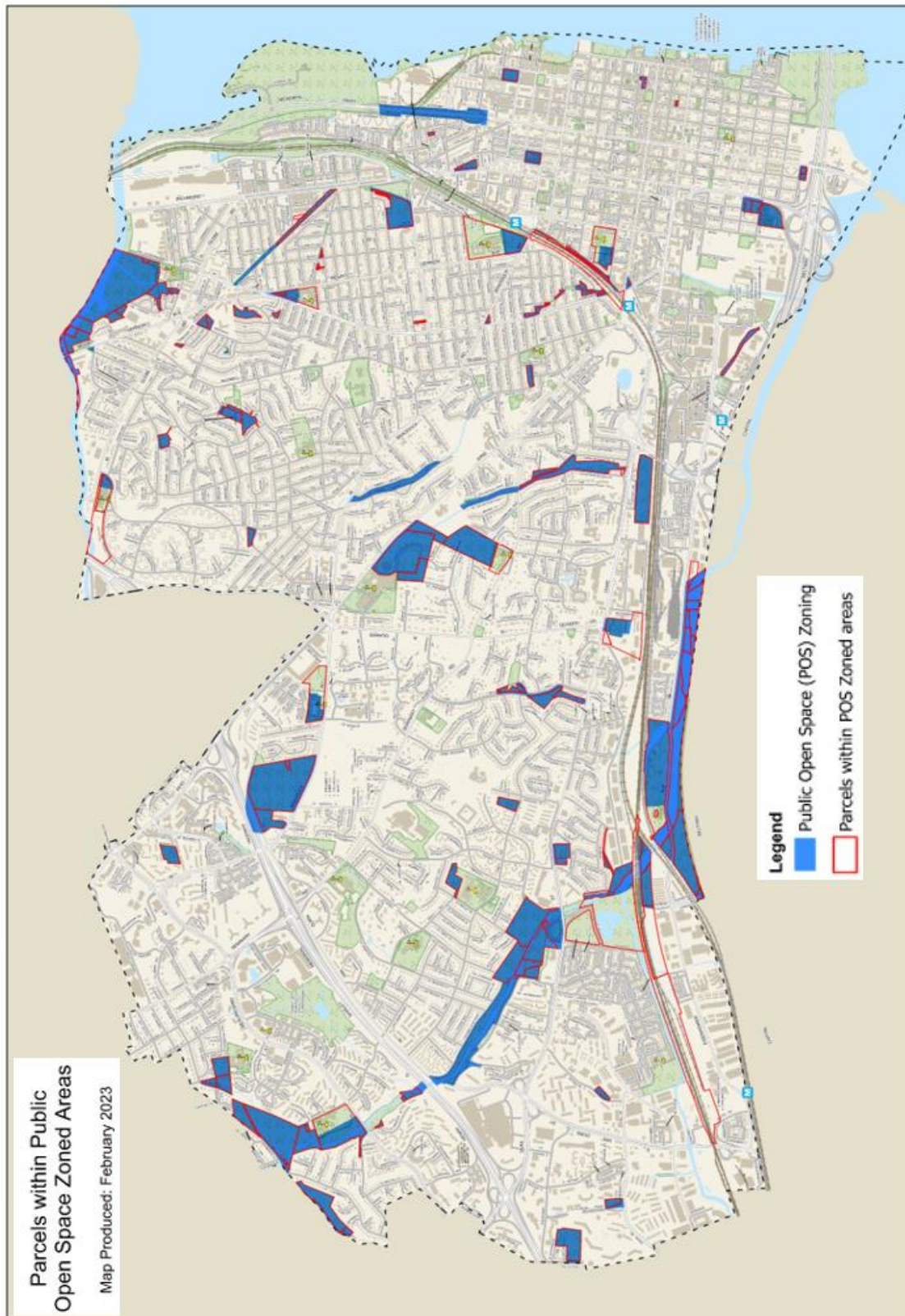
**Graphics:**

1. Map of POS Zoned Parcels and Parks

**Attachments:**

1. Proposed text amendments
2. Letter of support from Alexandria Commission for the Arts, dated May 12, 2023
3. Letter of support from Waterfront commission, dated May 18, 2023
4. Letter of endorsement from the Park and Recreation Commission, dated May 18, 2023

**Graphic 1:** Map of POS Zoned Parcels and Parks



## ATTACHMENT 1: PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS

### ARTICLE III. – DEFINITIONS

2-129.1 - Congregate recreational facilities.

A public use devoted to recreational activities typically or often pursued as a group or team, such as athletic fields, ~~children's play apparatus areas, archery ranges, court game facilities,~~ indoor and outdoor swimming pools, amphitheaters, band shells, and outdoor theaters, **skating, miniature golf courses, and community recreation building,** not including drive-in theaters.

2-181.5 - Park.

**A lot, parcel, or tract of land reserved for public use. A park may include** ~~A public area reserved for natural or artificial~~ **horticultural landscaping; natural or unimproved geographical features such as woodlands, meadowlands, or wetlands; wildlife sanctuaries and preserves; water courses, streams, lakes and ponds and other similar features. A park** ~~which may include~~ **contain memorials and** recreational facilities and structures. **including but not limited to: court game facilities; hiking, walking, and bicycle trails; fitness areas; commons, greens, squares, and picnic and sitting areas; playgrounds; fishing sites, and other similar facilities.**

### ARTICLE VI. - SPECIAL AND OVERLAY ZONES

Sec. 6-100 - POS/Public open space and community recreation zone.

6-101 - Purpose and short title.

The POS zone is ~~intended~~ **established** to **provide,** preserve, and enhance Alexandria's publicly owned open spaces, **parks, recreational areas, and similar areas** ~~and~~ to protect the natural and developed amenities they possess by allowing only that development which respects and is consistent with those amenities. This zone is intended to apply to all publicly owned open spaces, parks, recreation facilities, and similar areas.

6-102 - Permitted uses.

The following are permitted uses in the POS zone:

- ~~(A) Recreational areas consisting of natural and unimproved geographic features such as woodland, meadowland or wetland areas, wildlife sanctuaries or preserves, water courses, streams, lakes and ponds, and similar geographic features;~~
- ~~(B) Improved outdoor recreational facilities intended for passive and/or non-congregate recreational activities only, such as hiking and bicycle trails, squares, greens and~~

~~commons, sitting areas, picnic areas and fishing sites, and like facilities, subject to approval of a site plan.~~

**(A) Parks;**

**(B) Accessory uses, as defined by sections 6-103 and 7-100.**

6-103 - Accessory uses and structures.

Accessory uses and structures, including outdoor storage, **restroom structures, maintenance sheds, score boards, netting, semi-enclosed shelters and pavilions, shade structures, concessions structures, and off-street parking.** ~~park guard facilities~~ **Other uses or structures as may be approved by the director if the accessory use or structure complies with the definitions in the zoning ordinance.** ~~are permitted in the POS zone, subject to approval of a site plan.~~

6-104 - Temporary uses and structures.

Temporary uses and structures compatible with the purposes of the POS zone, such as **markets, vendor carts,** fairs, festivals and competitions, **temporary recreation facilities,** and structures associated therewith, such as tents and band shells, may be permitted by resolution of city council, subject to such limitations, terms and conditions as therein specified; provided, that city council may by resolution delegate such approval authority, in whole or in part, to the city manager, under appropriate standards and guidelines, and subject to appeal to city council.

6-105 – Special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the POS zone pursuant to a special use permit:

~~(A) Public Park and Community recreation buildings, including enclosed and semi-enclosed shelters and pavilions, providing functions and facilities such as gymnasiums, meeting rooms, game rooms, arts and crafts centers, and dining and dancing facilities;~~

**(A)** ~~(B)~~ Congregate recreational facilities;

~~(C) Commercial facilities customarily incidental and subordinate to the operation of public recreational uses, such as refreshment stands and small shops providing sporting goods and related services.~~

**(B)** ~~(D)~~ Cultural facilities such as botanical gardens, arboretums, nature centers, conservatories, historic sites, archeological sites, **and** monuments and memorials;

**(C)** ~~(E)~~ Plant, tree and flower nurseries;

**(D)** ~~(F)~~ Public utility rights-of-way, ~~man-made lakes, ponds and water courses,~~ and similar public works compatible with the purposes of the POS zone;

~~(E)~~ (G) Facilities for the Lighting of any area congregate recreational facilities in the POS zone for nighttime use, exclusive of necessary pathway and parking lot lights for pedestrian safety, signage, and flagpoles; and

~~(H) Outdoor food and crafts market;~~

~~(I) Temporary public school classroom trailers in conjunction with adjacent public schools. This subsection shall expire on June 30, 2006. Any trailers permitted under the authority of this subsection shall be removed by that date.~~

~~(F)~~ (J) Public recycling center, provided that the director finds that the use does not interfere with an established active or passive recreation area; that no trees will be removed to accommodate the use, unless such removal is approved by the Director of Recreation Parks, recreation and Cultural Activities, and that uses adjacent to the recycling site are compatible with recycling activities.

~~(K) Indoor and outdoor roller skating and ice skating rinks, and miniature golf courses.~~

#### 6-105.1 - Prohibited uses.

Any use which is not a permitted, special, temporary or accessory use pursuant to this section 6-100 is prohibited.

#### 6-106 - Bulk, space and yard requirements.

The following bulk, space and yard requirements shall apply in the POS zone:

(A) *The maximum permitted height of a building or structure is: 30 45 feet; provided, that with a special use permit the height may be increased to an amount not to exceed 50 30 feet for a building or structure or, in the case of an ornamental structure as defined in section 2-197.1, to an amount not to exceed 50 40 feet.*

~~(B) Required yards:~~

~~(1) Front yards. None is required.~~

~~(2) Side and rear yards. A setback of 20 feet is required when adjacent to any residential lot or zone; otherwise none is required.~~

~~(3) Special setback. Any area intended for active and/or congregate outdoor recreational activities shall be located at least 30 feet from any property zoned for residential purposes or shall be so screened as to provide visual and auditory privacy to such property.~~

~~(4) Required landscaping. All yards shall be landscaped in a manner consistent with the natural setting to be maintained in the POS zone.~~

~~6-107 - Parking requirements.~~

~~Off-street parking requirements applicable to the permitted and special uses in the POS zone are set forth in Article VIII. Parking for temporary uses shall be as specified in the approval therefor. In addition, all parking areas located within the POS zone shall comply with the following standards:~~

~~(A) No parking areas shall be located within any required yard, and a maximum of 50 percent of any proposed front yard may be devoted to parking, if compatible with adjacent front yards.~~

~~(B) All parking areas shall be landscaped in a manner consistent with the natural setting to be maintained in the POS zone.~~

6-108 - Use limitations.

The following limitations and conditions shall govern all ~~permitted, special and temporary~~ uses **and structures** in the POS zone:

(A) Outdoor storage shall be entirely screened from view **with a vegetative and/or architectural screen.**

(B) All lighting shall be located and shielded so as to prevent the direct glare of beams onto residential properties and streets.

(C) All public address systems, loudspeakers or other sound-producing activities shall be designed, located and operated so as to avoid any undue disturbance or any nuisance to surrounding areas.

6-109 - Nonconforming use exemption.

No use or structure, otherwise subject to the provisions of this section 6-100, which was in existence on September 16, 1989 or for which a preliminary or combination site plan approved on or before September 16, 1989, continues in force and effect, shall be deemed a nonconforming use by virtue of any provisions of this section 6-100, nor shall any such use be subject to the provisions of this section 6-100; provided, however, that no such use shall be extended or enlarged to a size or density in excess of that which existed on, or which was described in, a site plan approved as of September 16, 1989, unless compliance with the provisions of this section 6-100 shall have been had.



*The Honorable Mayor Justin Wilson and Members of the Council  
City of Alexandria, Virginia*

*RE: Support for Public Open Space Zone Text Amendment  
April 18, 2023*

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council:

The Commission for the Arts supports the Public Open Space Zone Text Amendment proposed by the Public Arts Commission. On March 21, during our regular meeting, we were given a presentation on the proposed amendment by city staff. As the Commission for the Arts works regularly with staff in Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, and much of Alexandria's public art is situated in parks, we have some familiarity with the complexity of regulations for these public spaces.

Updates such as increased efficiencies in planning and approval processes would allow parks to be designed and redesigned at a faster and more responsive pace. This could positively impact public art projects that might otherwise be delayed pending approval for park designs. Increasing structure heights from 15 to 30 feet or up to 50 feet with a Special Use Permit would ultimately allow for the possibility of larger or taller works of public art. Particularly in parts of Alexandria in which there is higher zoning density and therefore taller nearby structures, this would allow for greater flexibility in aesthetically harmonizing the scale of public art with its surroundings. Finally, reducing the amount of uses requiring a Special Use Permit could allow for greater access of local arts non-profits to use public spaces for performances, workshops, or other community events.

While there are many reasons to support the proposed amendment, particularly how it is designed to streamline typical recreation uses, we think that the amendment will also have a positive impact on art and culture for Alexandria. Please reach out to the Commission for the Arts, should you have any questions or comments about this letter.

Most Cordially

Brian Kelley  
Chair, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Cc: Members, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

James F. Parajon, City Manager  
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager  
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts (RPCA)  
Matthew Harwood, Staff Liaison, Alexandria Commission for the Arts





# *Alexandria Waterfront Commission*

*Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities*

*1108 Jefferson Street*

*Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

Attachment #3

May 18, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and members of City Council  
Honorable members of the Planning Commission

Re: Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone Update

On April 18, 2023, the Waterfront Commission unanimously endorsed the City's proposal to amend the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone text.

The Waterfront Commission supports the proposed text amendment to the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone. The proposed text amendment opens the language allowing for uses that are typically found in contemporary parks including playgrounds, sports courts, fitness equipment, and accessory uses. By increasing flexibility in the use and provision of the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone and by implementing the already approved Plans, the proposed changes will improve the City's open space. Additionally, these changes reduce staff time, project time, and costs, allowing for park improvements to be implemented more efficiently and expediting community enjoyment of these improvements.

Sincerely,

Stephen Thayer, Chair  
Alexandria Waterfront Commission

cc: Waterfront Commission members  
James F. Parajon, City Manager  
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager  
Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning  
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Jack Browand, Deputy Director (RPCA), Staff Liaison to Commission  
Bethany Znidersic, Division Chief, RPCA  
Jose Ayala, Principal Planner, RPCA  
Ana Vicinanzo, Urban Planner III, RPCA



## *Park & Recreation Commission*

Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural  
Activities 1108 Jefferson Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

May 18, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and members of City Council  
Honorable members of the Planning Commission

Re: Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone Update

On April 20, 2023, the Park and Recreation Commission unanimously endorsed the City's proposal to amend the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone text.

The Park and Recreation Commission supports the proposed text amendment to the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone. The proposed text amendment opens the language allowing for uses that are typically found in contemporary parks including playgrounds, sports courts, fitness equipment, and accessory uses. By increasing flexibility in the use and provision of the Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone and by implementing the already approved Plans, the proposed changes will improve the City's open space. Additionally, these changes reduce staff time, project time, and costs, allowing for park improvements to be implemented more efficiently and expediting community enjoyment of these improvements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Beggs", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chair Steve Beggs, Chair  
Alexandria Park & Recreation Commission

cc: Park & Recreation Commission members  
James F. Parajon, City Manager  
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager  
Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning  
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Jack Browand, Deputy Director (RPCA), Staff Liaison to Commission  
Bethany Znidersic, Division Chief, RPCA  
Jose Ayala, Principal Planner, RPCA  
Ana Vicinanzo, Urban Planner III, RPCA