



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** APRIL 20, 2016

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

City Council Consideration of Grant Application to the 2016 Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for Funding to Renovate Ewald Park in Accordance with the Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan.

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of grant application to the 2016 Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for funding to renovate Ewald Park in accordance with the Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

1. Proceed with the grant application to the 2016 Land & Water Conservation Fund for funding in the amount of \$500,000 for Ewald Park; and
2. Execute all necessary documents.

**BACKGROUND:** The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administers a grant-in-aid program for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Local jurisdictions may apply for 50% matching fund assistance from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). These funds are provided from a federal apportionment from the National Park Service (NPS). Sites (or portions of sites) that receive LWCF funding must be open, operated, and maintained in perpetuity as public outdoor recreation areas and may not be converted to other uses without prior approval by the DCR and NPS. The program is a matching, reimbursement program, meaning that the City must provide a match and be capable of financing the project in its entirety while requesting periodic reimbursement.

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) staff proposes to seek LWCF funding for Ewald Park as part of the Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan (Attachment).

**DISCUSSION:** In 2016, RPCA completed a multi-year process to develop a series of Neighborhood Park Improvement Plans that included Ewald Park. Two high priority recommendations in the Ewald Park Plan

include the removal of the pool house and pool and replace it with multi-use courts. The second plans for the relocation of the playground.

The pool has been closed since 2011. When it was open, there was low use as the site is not conducive to a high capacity aquatics facility. The current pool house blocks visibility from Duke Street creating an unsafe setting behind it. The plan recommends replacing the pool and pool house with sport courts to meet the increasing demand in the City. One of the courts will be a multi-use court and include a movable net for tennis and pickleball. The other court will be used for futsal (court soccer).

The current playground is hidden from the street and difficult to access. Moving the playground to the former tennis court area will increase its visibility from Duke Street and encourage greater use. It will also include new and modern equipment and may integrate water features.

The pool house and future playground location are adjacent to each other and, if the grant is awarded, the two areas would be designed cohesively and the one-time construction would limit the amount of disruption to the Park. Simultaneous design and construction also allows for cost-effectiveness.

If awarded, the LWCF would require a 50% match towards the project. The proposed FY 2017 to FY 2026 budget already includes the design of the Ewald playground renovation within the Playground CFMP for \$135,000 in FY 2019. The remaining \$365,000 will be included in the Playground CFMP for FY 2020, which would meet the required match. The City would use the LWCF grant towards the pool house portion of the project.

If selected, NPS awards the LWCF grants in October-December 2016. These grants are highly competitive. The period of performance for LWCF grants is typically from one to three years, which would include FY 2020; this competition will favor projects that can be completed in shorter timeframes.

Staff recommends submitting the Ewald Park project for this grant because it is part of the Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan, which included extensive public engagement, and a 50% match is already planned in the City's budget. Staff considered other sites but did not find that they were suitably "shovel ready" or funded in the CIP yet. The project is considered a priority project in the plan and addresses community needs in a degraded west end park. This will enable staff to implement Phase I of the park plan.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The \$500,000 grant from LWCF requires a 50% minimum match. The total estimated project cost for the Ewald Playground and Pool Conversion Project is \$1,000,000, of which \$500,000 will be a match from the playground CFMP which may potentially need to be accelerated and moved to the FY 2018 and/or FY 2019 City CIP.

**ATTACHMENT:** Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan for Ewald Park

**STAFF:**

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager  
James B. Spengler, Director, RPCA  
Jack Browand, Division Chief, RPCA  
Dana W. Wedeles, Park Planner, RPCA