



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 8, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Open Space Master Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy.

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the Open Space Master Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receives the Open Space Master Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy and authorizes the City Manager to proceed with its implementation.

BACKGROUND: In 2002, an interdepartmental staff team and the Open Space Steering Committee produced the City of Alexandria Open Space Master Plan, establishing fifteen ambitious goals for protecting, enhancing and expanding open space. The Open Space Plan established a framework to address the City's short and longer term open space needs by acknowledging and protecting the City's existing open spaces and identifying additional open space opportunities for the future. City Council adopted the Open Space Master Plan in 2003 and an interdepartmental work team developed an action plan in 2004.

DISCUSSION: In the fall of 2016, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) hired Lardner-Klein Landscape Architects (LKA) to document successes in the protection and expansion of public open space since the plan adoption in 2003. In addition, LKA, in cooperation with an interdepartmental work team, developed a ten-year strategy to continue the implementation of the Open Space Plan.

A summary of successes to date include:

- ***Goal 2 - Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open Space:*** Acquisition of and creation of additional open space (103 acres)
- ***Goal 3 - Complete Implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan:*** City Council adoption and implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan

- **Goal 5 - Create an Open Space Network in New Development Areas:** Increased connectivity between open spaces and existing park and trail improvements, including Potomac Yard Park
- **Goal 12 - Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas:** Urban Forestry Master Plan approved in 2009
- **Goal 13 - Encourage the Creation of Civic Parks at and Adjacent to Metro Stations:** Eisenhower, King Street, and Potomac Yard Metro Stations have approved plans that call for significant improvements to the civic space

The City of Alexandria's Open Space Master Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy addresses the ongoing pressure to provide protected public open space in a growing community. This update recognizes the City's successes to date and the challenges inherent in continuing such successes. Working from the City Council adopted 2003 Open Space Master Plan recommendations, this implementation strategy makes recommendations for the next ten years with actions in support of the City's desire to maintain appropriate acres of protected public open space for its residents. These actions include a focus on data collection and analysis, policy, and opportunities to form and support innovative partnerships between public and private sectors.

The 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy consists of an Executive Summary (Attachment 1) identifying a proposed work effort through the articulation of strategies and actions (Implementation Table), tied to the original fifteen goal statements. The updated Implementation Table outlines **Strategies** and **Actions** necessary to build upon the City's successes to date.

A summary of strategies and actions:

- **Goal 1: Protect and Enrich Existing Parks**
 - **Strategy:** Advocate, Monitor, Protect and Pursue Public and Private Funding Sources
 - **Action:** Pursue alternative funding streams, including grant opportunities and development contributions focused on specific projects or funding sources
- **Goal 2: Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open Space**
 - **Strategy:** Expand Opportunities to Add Publicly Accessible Open Space
 - **Action:** Create/integrate parkland and recreational amenities on top or in coordination with other public infrastructure (including new underground and aboveground parking structures, stormwater facilities and buildings)
- **Goal 7: Protect and Maximize the Use of Public School Open Space**
 - **Strategy:** Monitor ACPS Development Proposals
 - **Action:** Consider practices such as the provision of rooftop athletic / recreational fields, or the construction of parking structures with rooftop open space/recreational/athletic facilities in the redevelopment or construction of new schools to protect and provide open space

In addition, the updated implementation strategy includes Six Technical Appendices supporting the findings in this document (Attachments 2 through 7):

- **Appendix 1.** Updated Mapping and Total Acreage Calculations
 - The City of Alexandria's existing Open Space GIS data layers were updated and annotated based on the research conducted during the 2017 Update;

- Appendix 2. Confirmation of Recordation of Public Access Easements
 - A list of approved public access easements through 2015 were verified through a search of court records;
- Appendix 3. Open Space Approved Since 2001
 - Documentation of recent Small Area Plans (SAP) open space proposals;
- Appendix 4. Projected Population
 - Population review for benchmarking purposes, population density, geographic size and ratio of open space or parkland acreage to 1,000 residents;
- Appendix 5. Active/Passive and Pervious/Impervious Acres
 - Identification of the amount of active/passive and pervious/impervious open space within the City's protected open space system and recommendations for the overall percentage to work towards in the next ten years; and
- Appendix 6. SWOT Analysis
 - An analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats affecting the City's ability to protect, enhance and expand its open space system was performed.

The Park and Recreation Commission endorsed the City of Alexandria Open Space Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy on February 16, 2017 and staff provided a presentation to the Planning Commission on March 7, 2017.

FISCAL IMPACT: Implementation of the strategies included in the Open Space Plan 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy will be accomplished as funding is provided in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) approved by City Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Executive Summary
2. Appendix 1. Updated Mapping and Total Acreage Calculations
3. Appendix 2. Confirmation of Recordation of Public Access Easements
4. Appendix 3. Open Space Approved Since 2001
5. Appendix 4. Projected Population
6. Appendix 5. Active/Passive and Pervious/Impervious Acres
7. Appendix 6. SWOT Analysis
8. 2017 Updated Implementation Strategy Presentation

STAFF:

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