

Public Comment Received Online Between January 30, 2026 and February 15, 2026 for the February 19, 2026 Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing

What final feedback would you like RPCA and the Parks and Recreation Commission to consider as updates to the Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy move forward?
Quality of programs. Quality of maintenance of facilities. Hours of operations.
Fairfax county provides scholarships for those who cannot afford programs vs a percentage system which can still be unaffordable. The application is quick and simple online and doesn't require explanation of any personal circumstance, any necessity to convince anyone of approval or be limited to approvals or paying varying amounts based on staff approval but even receiving free or standard minimal costs. This is so important for youth and adult safety, wellbeing, being active and healthy
Seems reasonable
The plan presented reflects the right allocation of resources.
I think this looks great! It's great to see that use of unstaffed parks and facilities remains fee. It's also good to see competitive leagues move to tier 4, as these are a privilege rather than a community service. I had no idea this pyramid framework existed, but I think it's a great way of setting prices for these services - thank you for having a rational and participative process for making these decisions!
No comments
No comments
I agree with the new tier level categories.
Parks are one of the most important components of a community. Please continue to offer all available resources, classes, recreation and even nature scapes , for a community of many neighborhoods.
No comments
See ASA response (attatched)

I am writing to provide feedback on the updated Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy findings. Specifically, I am requesting that Competitive Sports Leagues be moved from Tier IV to Tier III, alongside Recreation Level Sports Leagues. As a community member and parent for someone on the Alexandria Reds and Alexandria Little League Baseball, I believe the current proposal to categorize competitive leagues as "considerable individual benefit" (Tier IV) underestimates the significant community-wide value these programs provide. Competitive leagues should be in Tier III for the following reasons: Community Development & Social Cohesion: Competitive sports are not merely an "individual benefit." They foster community pride, long-term friendships, and a sense of belonging for hundreds of Alexandria families. These leagues keep our youth engaged in healthy, structured environments that build character and civic connection. Skill Development as a Public Good: Tier III is defined as a "balance of community and individual benefit." Transitioning from recreation to competitive play is a natural progression for many Alexandria youth. By placing competitive leagues in a higher cost-recovery tier (125%), we risk making advanced skill development a luxury accessible only to those who can afford it, rather than a community-supported path for all local athletes. Consistency Across Youth Sports: Placing Recreation Level Leagues in Tier III while pushing Competitive Leagues to Tier IV creates an arbitrary financial barrier for families whose children wish to play at a higher level within the same sport. Both levels utilize the same City facilities and contribute equally to the physical health and wellness of Alexandria's youth. Sustainability of Volunteer-Led Organizations: Many of our local leagues rely on volunteer coaches and organizers. Increasing cost recovery requirements for competitive tiers places an undue burden on these community-run programs, potentially leading to increased registration fees that could price out local families. I urge the RPCA to reconsider this tiering and maintain Competitive Sports Leagues at Tier III to ensure that all levels of youth sports remain accessible and supported as a balanced community benefit. Thank you for your time and for considering the impact of this policy on Alexandria's families and young athletes.

1) The tiered structure for Tier 3 and Tier 4 is flawed with the Affiliate program and should distinguish between Affiliate Rec and Affiliate Competitive - The Affiliate Competitive absorb most of the premium field space at any given time. No one program should be allowed to occupy premium field space more than 60-70% of prime recreational activity time (5PM - 10PM). 2) Newer programs /Fledgling programs should be provided time to incubate such as was given to Alexandria Soccer from 2012 forward. The newer smaller clubs should be placed on lower tier as they do not have the same resources as an established club/affiliate. There is a significant difference in club that has been given almost exclusive rights to grow to \$7M revenue annually vs a smaller start up with less \$500K - \$1M in annual revenue. Enforce the 80% Alexandria City Residents rule on a team, otherwise the program or component of the program is moved to Tier 5. Alexandria City should not be funding teams/clubs with minimal direct benefit to AC residents. Affiliates/Partners should not be allowed to run their entire operations out of governmental buildings. Rental or short-term lease are acceptable. Example: ASA is the only soccer organization which their permanent operations are run out of an Alexandria City government building. There is no benefit to AC residents and no other club in the area does this. Additionally, the proximity is ripe for ethical conflicts of interest, perceived collusion and exclusion business practices towards granting field space. Any program which extends beyond its primary sport should be moved to a higher tier for cost allocation. This is a clear indication the program is no longer for the community benefit but acting in self-interest in revenue generation.

See attached proposal and comments from resident

More daily (weekday and weekend), free and open play available to children and caregivers. Many times it feels like the spaces are wide open and not being used, and the spaces could be more active. Families sometimes don't understand if you have to pay, if you can come in and utilize gyms for 15 mins or if you need to commit to a specific

Public Comment from ASA – Submitted via Survey for 2.19.26 Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing

Dear RPCA Staff and Parks & Recreation Commission, On behalf of the Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA), thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed updates to the Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy. ASA is a non-profit community organization that provides year-round soccer programming for Alexandria youth and families. Our mission is rooted in access, development, and community connection through sport. As an RPCA affiliate, we work in partnership with the City to extend opportunities to a broad and diverse population, often serving a greater percentage of residents with fewer public resources than formal RPCA programming. As drafted, several elements of the proposed policy raise concerns about how community benefit is being defined and measured – particularly as it relates to sports programming and community partners. First, the distinction between "recreational" and "competitive" sports warrants reconsideration. What does "competitive" mean in this context? Competition is inherent to sport at all levels, including recreational play. The proposed designation of competitive leagues and tournaments as Tier 4 (considerable individual benefit) oversimplifies this continuum and risks mischaracterizing programs that provide significant community value. When ASA hosts advanced league play or tournaments within Alexandria, we are directly serving our community by keeping opportunity for play and employment at these events close to home. Local programming reduces travel time and expenses for families, making participation more affordable and accessible. At the same time, hosting competition, regardless of the ability level of the participant, in Alexandria brings visiting teams, families, and spectators into the city, generating local economic activity through hotels, restaurants, retail businesses, and other services. This spending supports local businesses and contributes to the city's tax base, providing tangible benefit to residents beyond the individual participants. Competitive soccer also promotes youth development, physical health, teamwork, and long-term engagement in recreation – outcomes that align squarely with RPCA's mission. Categorizing these programs as primarily individual benefit undervalues their role in strengthening community connections, supporting the local economy, and expanding access to high-quality athletic opportunities for Alexandria families. While we appreciate the recognition of Community and City-wide Events as Tier 1, it is important to acknowledge that much of ASA's programming – including leagues, tournaments, clinics, and community-based initiatives – could reasonably be understood as delivering broad community benefit under this definition. These activities engage large segments of the community, foster civic pride, and make public spaces active and welcoming. Additionally, we are concerned about the proposal to move Tenant

License/Leases for Partners and Affiliates from Tier 3 to Tier 4. Many of the current lease agreements are in place in order to better serve residents - e.g., office space co-located with RPCA to ensure families can sign up for multiple activities in one place. Additionally, lease agreements that allow for ASA to place a storage unit (paid for by ASA) are done so at locations where the City of Alexandria should already have storage on-site. Additionally, ASA provides other essential amenities (coordinating and funding the placement of port-o-pottys at fields where no restrooms are accessible to the public). As a non-profit partner, ASA delivers substantial public benefit through volunteer leadership, community employment and engagement, and efficient program delivery. This shift would place increased financial pressure on organizations that extend RPCA's reach and serve a significant portion of Alexandria residents with fewer public dollars. Increased facility costs will inevitably be passed on to families, reducing affordability and access to community-based recreation. Finally, we respectfully request greater transparency and clarity regarding the outcomes of increased cost recovery under this policy. While the policy emphasizes charging per participant, it does not articulate how the additional revenue generated will be used, reinvested, or equitably distributed. Is there a corresponding framework to allocate space, field time, or facility access on a per-participant basis? Are there minimum standards for facility inputs, such as field quality, seating, scoreboards, lighting, storage, and other infrastructure, that ensure equity across sports, locations, and neighborhoods? Without clear guidance on reinvestment and service levels, it is difficult for partners and families to understand how increased fees will translate into improved or equitable recreational experiences. We respectfully urge RPCA to: Re-evaluate the definition and tier placement of "competitive" or advanced sports to more accurately reflect community, economic, and developmental benefit; Reconsider the reclassification of partner tenant licenses and leases to avoid undermining non-profit affiliates that advance RPCA's mission; and Apply an equity-focused lens that recognizes the value of partnerships in delivering accessible recreation across Alexandria. Clarify how increased revenues will be reinvested to ensure transparency, equity, and tangible benefit to participants and the broader community. ASA remains committed to working collaboratively with RPCA to ensure this policy supports affordability, access, and the long-term vitality of community recreation in our city.

Proposal to the City of Alexandria

Aligning Recreation Field and Stadium Fees to Increase Revenue and Improve Access

By

Andrea Gauntlett - Alexandria Resident

To: Alexandria City Government and Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA)

Subject: Field and stadium usage fees for non-profit, for-profit, and non-Alexandria organizations

PURPOSE

This proposal recommends that the City of Alexandria adopt a **standardized fee structure** for the use of City-owned **fields and stadium facilities** across:

- Non-profit clubs and organizations
- For-profit clubs and organizations
- Non-Alexandria (external) clubs and organizations

The goal is to:

1. **Increase revenue** to support Alexandria's recreation system and reduce the burden on taxpayers.
2. **Improve equity of access** to the limited field and stadium time.
3. **Align practice with the City's Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy**, recognizing that not all activities run by non-profits provide purely community-wide benefit, and many function similarly to private or competitive clubs.

CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Alexandria's current Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy uses a tiered pyramid to determine the appropriate balance of **tax support vs. user fees**. Activities that provide broad community benefit receive higher tax subsidies. Programs that primarily benefit individual users are expected to recover a higher share of their costs through fees.

However, in practice, the **current field and stadium rental model** has the following issues:

1. **Non-profits receive significantly discounted rates** (renting at rate X less than the standard rate), allowing them to reserve and hold a large share of prime field time.
2. **High demand and limited supply** of fields and stadium facilities mean that these discounted reservations effectively **monopolize the schedule**, leaving **minimal to no access** for:
 - Smaller or new non-profits
 - For-profit clubs serving Alexandria residents
 - External clubs are willing to pay market rates
3. While non-profits do provide valuable and often essential services, the **current level of subsidy** means that **Alexandria taxpayers are indirectly subsidizing specific organizations and their participants**, rather than supporting broad, open community access.
4. This model results in **lost potential revenue** for Alexandria City, at a time when maintaining, renovating, and expanding recreation facilities require substantial, ongoing investment.
 - In effect, Alexandria City is:
 - Substantially discounting a scarce public asset (field slots)

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- Allowing a small number of organizations to capture most of that asset, and missing opportunities to diversify users and increase cost recovery in line with the spirit of the Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Pyramid

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

FAIRNESS TO TAXPAYERS

Alexandria City residents fund the construction, maintenance, and operation of fields and stadiums through their tax dollars. Deeply discounted rental rates for certain organizations shift the financial burden from users to taxpayers, even when:

- Certain non-profit programs charge fees
- The primary benefit is to certain teams or programs rather than the community at large

It is reasonable to ask why taxpayers should continue to **indirectly subsidize private or semi-private use** of public facilities, especially when:

- Demand is high
- Access is constrained
- Alexandria City has clear revenue needs for facility upkeep and expansion

ALIGNMENT WITH THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION & COST RECOVERY PYRAMID

The Alexandria City's policy framework already distinguishes between community-wide benefit and individual/competitive benefit. Competitive sports leagues and tournaments, for example, have been placed in higher tiers requiring higher cost recovery.

Many non-profit sports clubs, though legally non-profit, operate functionally like private clubs:

- They charge membership, registration, and team fees
- They serve a subset of residents rather than the entire community
- They often select participants, form competitive teams, and travel for tournaments

Under the logic of the pyramid, such activities should **not** receive the same level of public subsidy as broad, open community programs. A **standard fee for field and stadium rental**, regardless of tax status, is more consistent with the principle that **users who derive primary benefit should pay a proportionate share of costs**.

EXPANDED ACCESS AND DIVERSITY OF USERS

A system that heavily discounts field time for certain non-profits unintentionally creates a **barrier to entry** for:

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- Smaller local organizations
- Recreational or developmental programs
- External organizations that could partner with or serve Alexandria residents

By establishing **uniform rental rates and a more balanced allocation process**, Alexandria City can:

- Open up the field and stadium time to a broader range of users
- Encourage innovation and new program offerings
- Ensure that public assets are shared more equitably

REVENUE GENERATION AND REINVESTMENT

Demand for fields and stadiums in and around Alexandria is high from both local and external renters. This presents a clear **revenue opportunity**. Charging a standard rate to **all** organizations would:

- Increase annual rental revenue
- Provide funds for ongoing maintenance, lighting, turf replacement, and safety improvements
- Help finance future field expansions and upgrades without solely relying on general tax revenues

This approach directly supports Alexandria City's long-term sustainability and capital planning goals.

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

ESTABLISH A STANDARD BASE RENTAL RATE

Implement a **single base hourly (or per-slot) rate** for field and stadium use that applies to:

- Alexandria-based non-profit organizations
- Alexandria-based for-profit organizations
- Non-Alexandria (external) clubs and organizations
- This rate should be set to reflect:
 - a. Direct operating costs (maintenance, utilities, staffing)
 - b. A reasonable contribution toward long-term capital replacement needs

LIMIT OR ELIMINATE DEEP NON-PROFIT DISCOUNTS FOR PRIME TIME SLOTS

- For **high-demand periods** (e.g., weekday evenings, weekend mornings/afternoons in peak seasons), discontinue or substantially reduce the discounted rate for non-profits
- If Alexandria City wishes to preserve some level of support for youth-serving non-profits, that support could be provided **outside the rental rate** through:
 - a. A transparent, competitive grant program funded from the general budget, or
 - b. A separate fee-assistance mechanism targeted to families, not organizations.

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PRIORITIZE ALEXANDRIA RESIDENTS THROUGH ACCESS, NOT DEEP SUBSIDIES

- Maintain a **priority reservation window** for organizations that primarily serve Alexandria residents, regardless of tax status
- Link priority access to a clear residency threshold (e.g., at least X% of participants are City residents), verified through periodic reporting
- This ensures that **local residents continue to benefit first**, while user fees are more equitable

IMPLEMENT FAIR AND TRANSPARENT SLOT ALLOCATION

- Establish a standardized process to allocate field and stadium time across non-profit, for-profit, and external clubs, for example:
 - a. Minimum and maximum percentage of total hours per organization, or
 - b. A rotation system that prevents any single organization from monopolizing prime slots.
 - c. Publish:
 - i. The allocation criteria,
 - ii. The number of hours reserved by each organization and the rate structure is so that the process is transparent and accountable.

DIFFERENTIAL PRICING ONLY WHERE CLEARLY JUSTIFIED BY POLICY

If Alexandria City decides to maintain differential pricing, it should be:

- **Narrowly tailored** and explicitly tied to the Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery tiers (e.g., truly open, free community events vs. team-based club activities).
- Limited to programs that:
 - Is free or extremely low-cost to participants
 - Is open to the public without selection or tryouts

In all other cases—especially for **league play, competitive teams, and club activities**—the **standard field and stadium rate should apply**, regardless of non-profit or for-profit status.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

INCREASED REVENUE

- Moving non-profit rentals from deeply discounted rates to a standard rate will **increase total fee revenue**, potentially significantly, given the high volume of usage by these organizations.
- Allowing external organizations to access available slots at the same standard rate will further increase revenue and field utilization.

REDUCED TAXPAYER SUBSIDY FOR PRIVATE BENEFIT

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- Taxpayers will no longer bear as much of the cost for activities that primarily benefit specific organizations or teams.
- Freed-up general fund capacity can be redirected to:
 - a. Truly public, broad-access programs and capital needs that benefit all residents.

MORE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO FIELDS AND STADIUMS

- A standard rate and transparent allocation process will make it harder for any single organization to monopolize field slots.
- New and smaller clubs, as well as recreational and developmental programs, will have a fairer chance to obtain field time.
- Residents will benefit from a wider range of program options.

STRONGER ALIGNMENT WITH CITY POLICY

- The proposal is consistent with the City's own **Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Pyramid**, recognizing that the **nature of the program** (community-wide vs. individual/competitive) should drive cost recovery expectations—not simply non-profit legal status.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Non-profit sports and recreation organizations provide essential and valuable services, especially for the community. The intent of this proposal is to:

- Ensure that **user fees more accurately reflect the private benefit** derived from intensive, scheduled use of limited public facilities.
- Encourage non-profits to incorporate realistic facility costs into their operating models, just as families and participants currently pay for uniforms, travel, and equipment.

To support equity and inclusion while still aligning fees with cost recovery, Alexandria City could:

- **Expand or promote existing fee assistance programs for families** who cannot afford program costs, regardless of whether they participate in a non-profit or for-profit club.
- **Create a targeted scholarship or grant fund** that non-profits can apply to offset the impact of higher rental rates on low-income participants.
- Encourage non-profits to adopt **sliding-scale fees** or offer a defined number of scholarship spots per season.

This approach keeps the focus on **supporting residents in need**, rather than subsidizing organizations broadly through below-market-rate field rental.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

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DATA AND ANALYSIS

- Quantify current field and stadium usage by organization type (non-profit, for-profit, external)
- Analyze current revenues vs. direct and indirect costs
- The model projected revenue under a standard rate structure

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Present the proposed fee changes and rationale at public meetings
- Solicit feedback from residents, parents, coaches, and organizations
- Clearly explain how additional revenue will be reinvested into facilities and community programs

POLICY ADOPTION

- Incorporate the new fee structure into the updated **Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy** and associated fee schedules
- Set a phased implementation timeline (e.g., over 1–2 seasons) to allow organizations time to adjust

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Annually review:
 - Revenue performance
 - Field and stadium utilization rates, and distribution of slots across organization types
 - Adjust rates and allocation practices as needed to maintain fairness, financial sustainability, and resident access

CONCLUSION

Alexandria's fields and stadiums are valuable, limited public assets. The current practice of offering significantly reduced rental rates to non-profit organizations—who then dominate available field time—results in:

- Lost revenue for Alexandria City
- Unequal access for other clubs and organizations, and an unnecessary burden on taxpayers.

By adopting a **standardized field and stadium rental rate** for non-profit, for-profit, and non-Alexandria clubs, and by managing allocation more equitably, Alexandria City can:

- Generate **additional, sustainable funding** for recreation facilities, ensure more **equitable access** to public fields, and better align actual practice with the Alexandria City's **Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy**.

This proposal respectfully urges the City Council and RPCA to consider these changes as part of the ongoing update to the Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Policy and to prioritize a fee structure that is fair, transparent, and fiscally responsible.