



Demographics





Demographics

Overview

The demographics of Alexandria—general population, race and ethnicity, and income—provide a context for understanding the community and the role of playgrounds. This information, coupled with an understanding of locations of existing playgrounds, provides insights into current geographic gaps in service. For example, areas with higher poverty rates, higher percentages of children, and less access to playgrounds are an area of concern for future playground improvements. The following demographic overview provides additional context for this analysis.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Alexandria City, Virginia has grown about 9.1 percent in total population to 139,966 since 2000, consistent with the city’s long-term growth trend of about 1 percent per year since 1960. In addition, the city’s average household size has remained approximately constant since 2000. This suggests that the number of children in Alexandria has grown and will continue to do so if current trends continue.

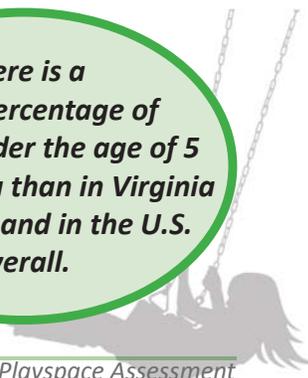
The 2010 race and ethnicity data does not show dramatic changes in the city’s racial and ethnic makeup since 2000. The Hispanic population has grown about twice as fast as the citywide total, reaching 16.1 percent of the total in 2010. The Black and African American population has grown a little more than half as fast as the total, declining to 21.8 percent of the total in 2010. The Asian population has grown faster than the overall average, reaching 6 percent of the total in 2010.

The population in Alexandria continues to diversify. The number of foreign-born persons increased 23.9 percent between 2005 and 2009. Additionally, the number of families who spoke a language other than English at home increased 29.9 percent between 2005 and 2009. This should be taken into account when communicating with families on matters related to play.

Alexandria’s median household income in 2009 was \$76,293, higher than the Commonwealth of Virginia’s (\$59,372). However, 9.1 percent of the city’s population is below the poverty level (2009). Available 2010 U.S. Census data shows the following census tracts with the highest poverty rate:

- Tract 2005 (18.9%) in west Alexandria
- Tract 2016 (15.9%) in east Alexandria
- Tract 2018.01 (14.2%) in east Alexandria

Note: Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Census tracts usually have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents.



There is a higher percentage of children under the age of 5 in Alexandria than in Virginia as a whole and in the U.S. overall.

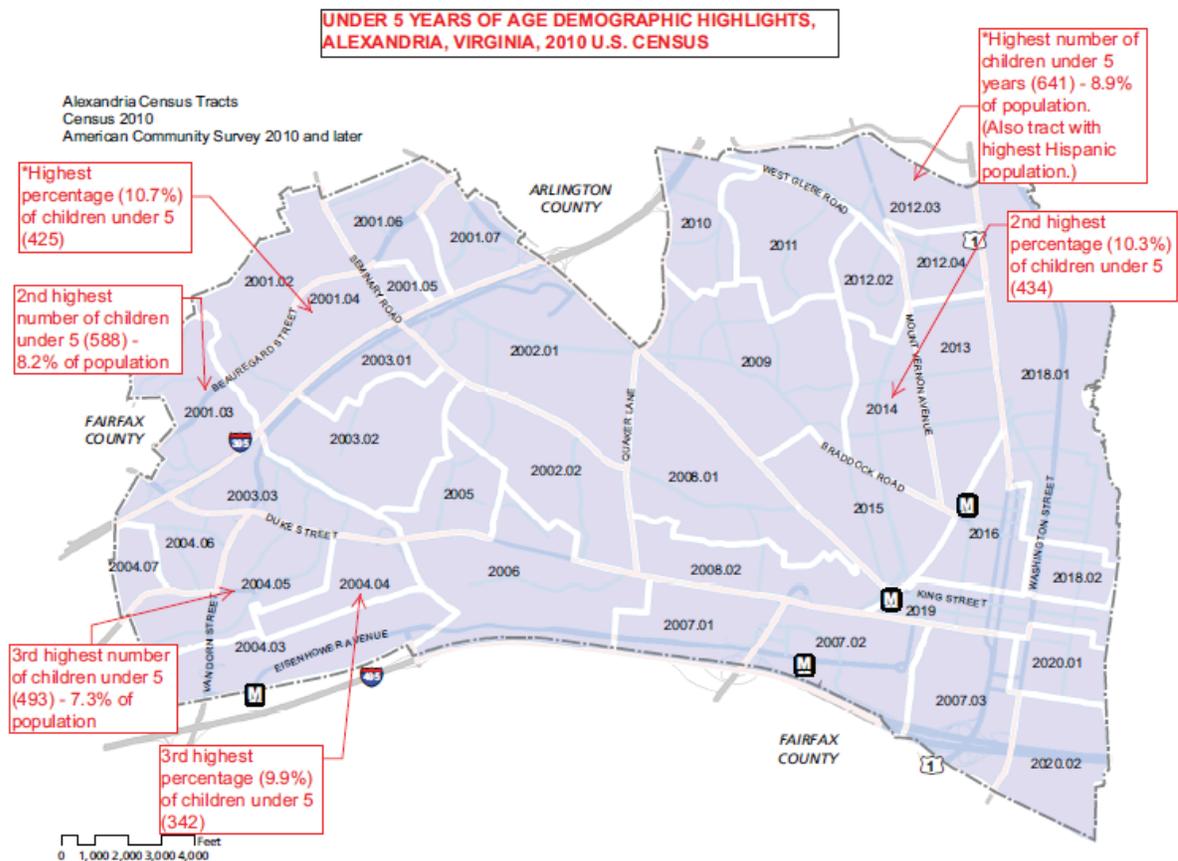


According to the Virginia Department of Education, in April 2011, 53.2 percent of Alexandria public school students in grades K-12, a total of 6,506 children, were approved for free or reduced-price school lunches according to federal guidelines. These statistics indicate that some of Alexandria’s children may have financial conditions that limit their access to transportation and other resources that expand opportunities for play.

Age Demographics

The under-18 population in Alexandria has grown by 2,433 to 17.1 percent of the total in 2010. Children under 5 years of age are 7.1 percent of the total population (totaling 9,964). This is a higher percentage when compared to the United States (6.5 percent) as well as areas in the region including Arlington County (5.7 percent) and the D.C. metro area (6.7 percent). Children under the age of 5 represent the largest percentage of children under 18 years in Alexandria, unlike the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, where the populations are more evenly distributed between the age categories.

The map below shows highlights of the highest number and highest percentage of children under the age of 5 by census tract. The number inside each tract is the official “name” of that census tract. This analysis, combined with the Level of Service analysis for playgrounds presented later in this report, will help identify current geographic service gaps for playgrounds.



Map 2: Demographic Highlights for Alexandria



Playspaces and Density

The maps that follow are designed to show how the locations and calculated play value of the playspaces in the inventory are distributed across the city and how that relates to population densities for children under 5. (The density for all children under 5 was used because census data specifically for ages 2-5 is not available.)

Map 3 shows the densities of children under 5 years old for each census tract overlaid with the locations of playspaces rated as appropriate for ages 2-5 and not restricted during the day (i.e., playspaces at schools are not shown). The purpose of this map is to provide a sense of where playspaces are located in relation to where children live in Alexandria. For example, noticeable gaps occur in the far western and very northernmost parts of Alexandria, where high densities of children under 5 live without playspaces near them. One of those locations is census tract 2001.03, which, as noted on Map 2 (above) has the second-highest number of children under 5 among all census tracts.

Map 4 shows the densities of children under 5 years old, overlaid with the locations of all playspaces in the inventory rated as serving ages 2-5, including schools.

Map 5 shows the location of all playspaces in the inventory, whether or not they were rated appropriate for ages 2-5.

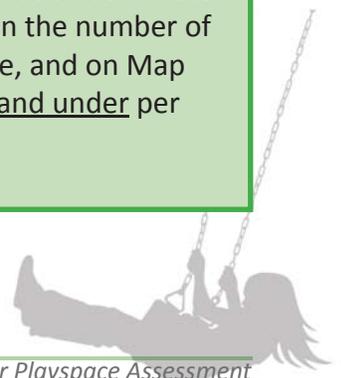
GRASP® Value

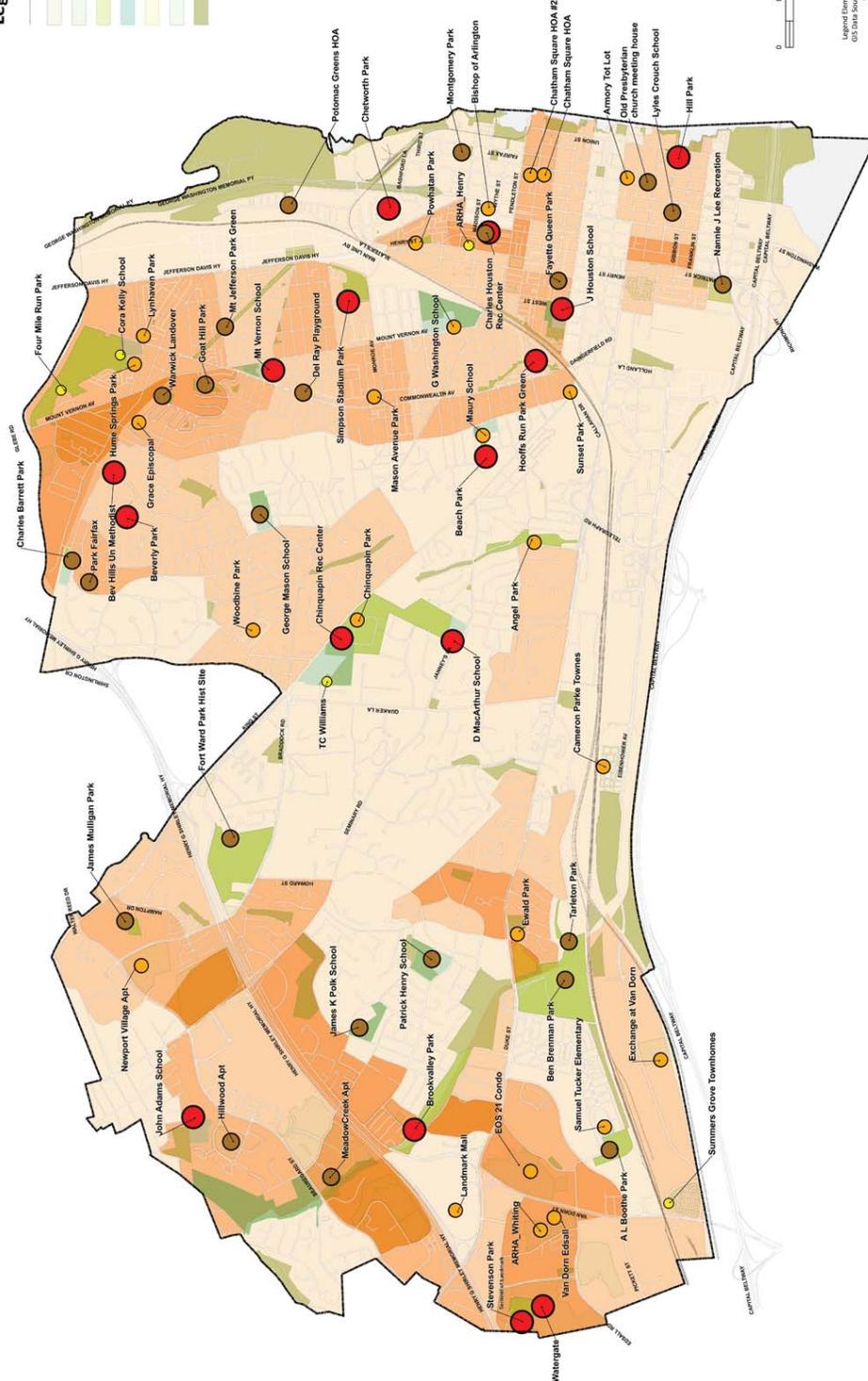
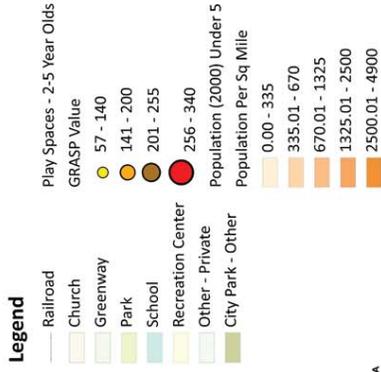
The symbols on the maps show the relative playspace score for each location, as described on page 14. This is also referred to as a GRASP® score. (See Appendix D for more information on the GRASP® methodology.)

The GRASP® Value is a reflection of how much benefit the playspace offers according to the criteria used to evaluate playspaces when the inventory was conducted for this project.

Density

Density is the number of people per a given unit of area. In this case, people per square mile is the ratio used. Note that on Maps 3 and 4, the ratio is based on the number of children under 5-years-old per square mile, and on Map 5, it is the number of all children ages 17 and under per square mile.

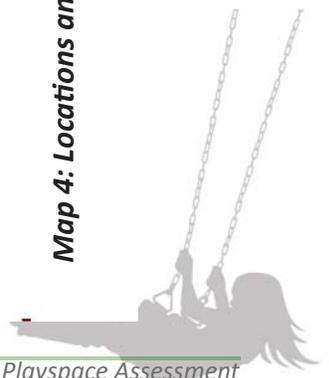




Map Produced For The City of Alexandria By The GRASP Team
 This Map is Intended For Planning & Informational Purposes Only
 Legend Elements May Vary Slightly In Size, Color and Transparency From Those Shown On Map
 GIS Data Sources: City of Alexandria, VA, Map Updated: October 2011
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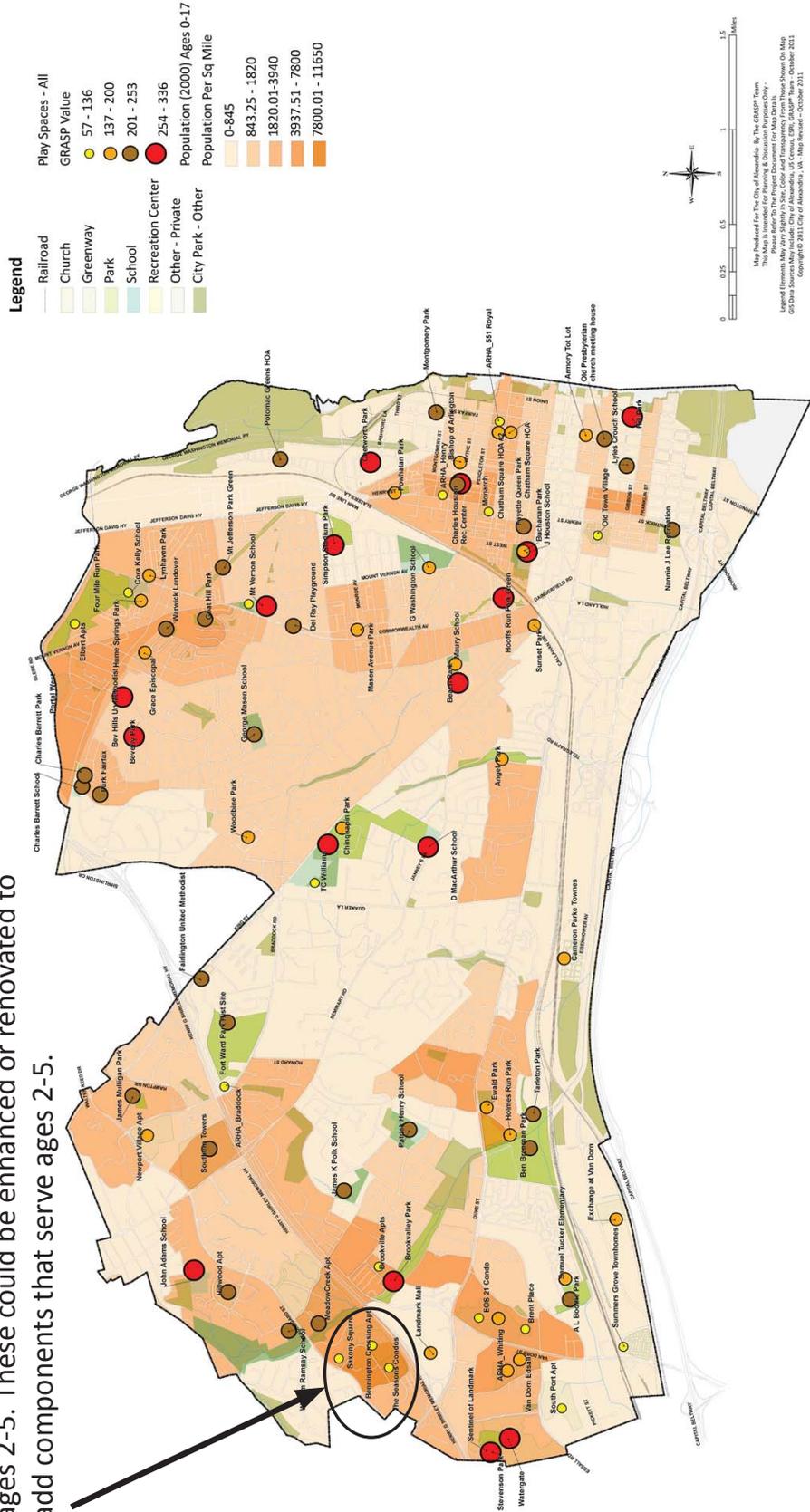
Map 4: Locations and Values of All Inventoried Playspaces Serving Ages 2-5 vs. Densities for Children under Five

Source: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2011/U.S. Census>





Playspaces located where there is a gap in service for ages 2-5. These could be enhanced or renovated to add components that serve ages 2-5.



Map 5: Shows a different comparison. It shows the population densities for all children (not just under 5) and all playspaces, whether or not they serve 2-5 year olds.





The information on the previous pages shows the importance of providing quality playspaces near where children actually live. A priority should be placed on creating new playspaces in areas where there is a high population of children but no playspace. Priority should also be given to increasing the scores for existing playspaces with low scores in areas where the density of children is high.

Map 5 can be used in conjunction with Maps 3 and 4 to identify playspaces that do not currently serve ages 2-5 but that might be remodeled to serve that age group. An example of one such area is noted on Map 5.

