OPEN SPACE IN ALEXANDRIA BY OWNERSHIP

### Ordinance

According to section 2-180 of the Zoning Ordinance, open and usable space is that portion of a lot at ground level which is:

- (A) Eight feet or more in width;
- (B) Unoccupied by principal or accessory buildings;
- (C) Unobstructed by other than recreational facilities; and
- (D) Not used in whole or in part as roads, alleys, emergency vehicle easement areas, driveways, maneuvering aisles or off-street parking or loading berths.

The purpose of open and usable space is to provide areas of trees, shrubs, lawns, pathways and other natural and man-made amenities which function for the use and enjoyment of residents, visitors and other persons.

Note: The Zoning Ordinance does not distinguish between public, private, or public open space.

### Intent

As stated in the Open Space Master Plan (2003, updated 2017), the City of Alexandria has committed to protecting & promoting public open space. It is an investment in a higher quality of life for ourselves and future generations. We seek to protect public open space because:

- It connects the community: Our parks and facilities are the public's common ground that equitably bring together our vibrant and diverse community.
- It improves well-being: Our programs and facilities motivate the community to make healthy choices and live active lifestyles through all stages of life and at all levels and abilities.
- It's an investment in our environment: Our commitment to natural spaces provides physical, mental, and community benefits, while offering opportunities to engage with and conserve our natural resources.

### Measurement

The Open Space Master Plan sets a target to maintain 7.3 acres of publicly accessible open space per 1,000 residents. This puts Alexandria on par with cities of similar densities. The target is currently being met and, given forecasted population growth, is expected to be maintained through 2025. If the City gains the 193 acres of public open space promised through small area plans, we expect to maintain the target through 2045.

### Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public open space</td>
<td>1,012.06 acres of publicly owned, maintained and accessible open space. Of that, 587.24 acres are City owned parks, 162.01 acres are shared-use spaces, including space owned by APCS, 262.81 acres are federally owned and managed through the National Parks Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private open space</td>
<td>111.59 acres of private open space with public access. Of those, 9.59 acres have conservation or historic easements on their properties, 102 acres have public access easements on their properties.</td>
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### Method of Protection

Public open space is obtained through:

- Acquisition using the Open Space Fund. Land purchased with the fund is protected through the code established in the Open Space Fund.
- Land donations
- Dedication in private property conveyed to the City

Small Area Plans, and CDD zoning requirements within those planning areas, designate the amount of open space that private developments are required to protect for public use. (There are currently 193 acres of future publicly accessible open space to be protected through the development process).

Once a site in the Small Area Plans is up for development, there may be a public access easement provided on the site. These properties generally include easement language in their development conditions that state:

- A perpetual public access easement(s) shall be provided for public park and recreational use for the property described. The easement area(s) shall be accessible and usable by the public in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the directors of RP&CA and P&Z.

If a development cannot meet its required open space in the CDD because of site constraints, there are two options that the City and developer may agree to a monetary contribution for:

- A one-time contribution to improve a nearby open space that is predicted to see increased use as a result of the new development
- A one-time or on-going contribution to a maintenance fund for a nearby open space that is predicted to see increased use as a result of the new development

Additionally, some Small Area Plans require that developments contribute to an Open Space Fund to acquire future public open space.

### Zoning

Most public open space is zoned POS. The POS zone is intended to preserve and enhance Alexandria's publicly owned open space and recreational 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.

Zoning requirements, as stated below, are not for public open space. The Zoning Ordinance requires all private properties, except nonresidential uses in commercial/office/industrial zones to have a setback for private open space. Generally, mixed use zones require 40% of land areas to be open space. The multifamily residential portion of each development shall provide a minimum of 25% of land area as open and usable space; provided however that a portion of the space which would otherwise be required as green area may be met by comparable amenities.

### Quality & Need

On City owned sites, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities develops park plans based on a biennial needs assessment, community feedback, market trends, and environmental impact. These plans inform the City's CIP & partnership opportunities.

### Note

The City has a partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust which seeks to work with property owners to place conservation easements on properties, which protects the space in perpetuity and, in some cases, allows for public access to the site.