



CAMERON RUN
BLUE &
GREEN
• PLAN •



Dear Mayor, City Council, and Park & Recreation Commission,

For several years, NOVA Parks has been seeking a renewed long-term lease from the City on Cameron Run Regional Park. By almost any measure, Cameron Run would rank as the most popular recreational facility in the City. Whether it is the 60% of City residents who report using this park on a regular basis, the 100,000 people a year who go to the waterpark, 60,000 rounds at the batting cages, 15,000 rounds played on the mini-golf, or the employment of 175 youth each year.

In June 2016, City Council directed City staff to conduct a public input study of potential uses of this land. NOVA Parks has closely followed and participated in this study led by Michael Baker Engineering. While there has been no consensus on what the future of the park should be, most of the people at the public meetings value the current features, particularly the waterpark, but would like to see if other improvements can be added where space allows. With this input in mind, NOVA Parks has developed the Blue and Green Plan outlined in this document. This plan expands uses where there is space. More importantly, it provides a blueprint for continued investment in the park for decades to come, so Cameron Run Regional Park can continue to be a popular destination for many more years.

The six alternatives developed by Michael Baker and the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities have not been released with estimated costs. However, they are very similar to a range of options NOVA Parks provided the City with cost estimates in June of 2015. Those similar alternatives ranged in cost from \$7.6 million for the park with two artificial turf fields, to \$18.6 million for the indoor aquatic center and one multi-sport field. These professionally developed cost estimates are at the low end of what these facilities would actually cost.

The Michael Baker/City staff alternatives all would be options the City would need to fund with 100% City capital funds. The Blue and Green Plan would be 100% funded with NOVA Parks capital. The Blue and Green Plan is also the only one that dedicates long-term capital investment to keep the park fresh and appealing to the public.

NOVA Parks has put a lot of time and effort into developing a plan that would effectively use every bit of available space to offer maximum public benefit. This plan would not burden the City's already tight budget, and it would provide for another 40 years of continued investment in this City asset by NOVA Parks. To facilitate timely action on this, we have already developed the lease based on our current lease, with the addition of the items in this plan. That lease can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/CameronBlueGreen>

We hope you agree this is a great plan for the future.

Paul Gilbert,
NOVA Parks Executive Director

Summary

The Blue and Green Plan by NOVA Parks is the only plan for Cameron Run that provides for long-term investments in the popular Great Waves Waterpark and enhanced facilities for other City needs, and requires no investment by the City (100% funded by NOVA Parks). Key features of this plan include the following:

- **Enhanced community green space** between Lake Cook and the Townes at Cameron Parke Community. A pocket park with features that will be determined with assistance from the Home Owners Association.
- **A Lazy River** feature added to the waterpark in phase I. And, additional waterpark improvements developed in phase II.
- **A Dog Park** developed between the parking lots for the park and the animal shelter.
- **Upgraded Parking Lot** expanding the available spaces within the existing footprint will allow the park to serve more users and better manage storm water through improved design.
- **Enhanced Nature Interpretation** to identify significant trees and natural features.

These new features will dovetail well with the rebuild of Lake Cook being completed by the City. The end result will be a park that continues to provide an exciting waterpark experience for the 60% of City residents who reported using the park regularly. The revised design will expand passive uses of the park and add new user groups.

The 40-year lease would assure decades of redevelopment to keep this site as the premier recreational attraction that it is known to be.

Long-term Investments

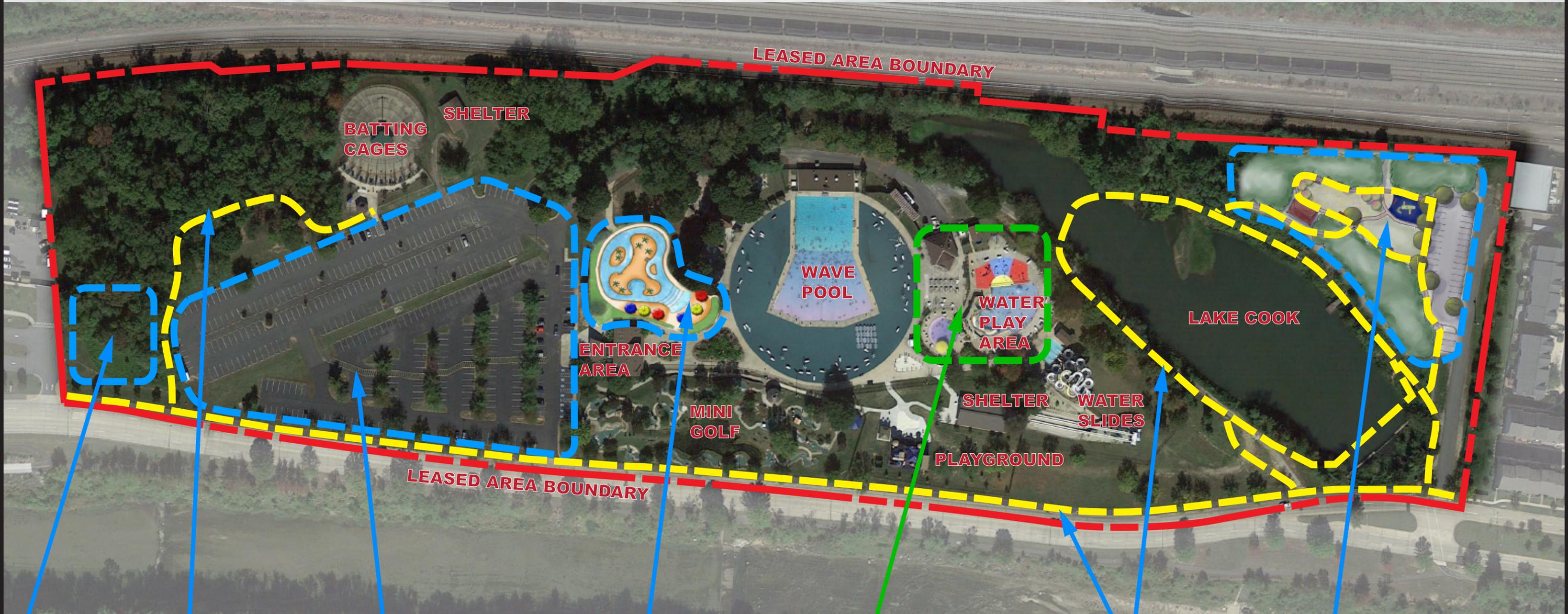
Successful public facilities take on-going, long-term investment. This approach has driven the success of Cameron Run for over 30 years. Nearly every year there are investments made, over the last 20 years \$6 Million has been invested in upgraded facilities.

NOVA Parks started the dialog about a lease extension on Cameron Run in 2012 when significant new investments were being proposed. The Blue and Green Plan would bring long-term investment with \$3.5 million in improvements in the next 3 years, and an additional \$4 million in redevelopment after 15 years. This plan will assure that Cameron Run continues to be a state-of-the-art attraction.



BLUE AND GREEN PLAN

CAMERON RUN REGIONAL PARK



DOG PARK
(PHASE 1)

NATURAL
INTERPRETIVE
AREA
(PHASE 1)

PARKING LOT
IMPROVEMENTS
(PHASE 1)

LAZY RIVER
PLAY POOL
(PHASE 1)

REDEVELOPED
WATER PLAY
AREA
(PHASE 2)

PARK TRAIL
SYSTEM
(PHASE 1)

NEIGHBORHOOD
PARK AREA
(PHASE 1)

Plan Specifics

Community Green Space

The space between Lake Cook and the Townes at Cameron Parke community currently has a gravel drive and small parking area. This is an unattractive area where illegal dumping sometimes occurs. The dredging and rebuild of Lake Cook will use this area as a staging ground, which will further degrade this space.

Working with the Townes at Cameron Parke HOA,

NOVA Parks will develop a plan to rebuild this area into an attractive community park. Whether it is a playground, benches, trails, grassy areas or other passive features, this area will reflect the desires of the community. Paving the entrance road and parking area and making this a useful park area will change the nature of this corner of the park and serve a number of community needs.

Lazy River



One of the most popular features of a premium waterpark is a Lazy River. This feature has a river-like channel where people in inner tubes float along as the water current gently moves them through the curving course. This new feature will rapidly become one of the most popular waterpark feature next to the wave pool.

In future years, a second wave of waterpark development will rebuild the area that is now the splash pad, smaller pool and baby pool. Trends in waterparks change over time, and the redevelopment of this area in the future provides an opportunity to build the 'next big thing' in that area.

With the first phase of waterpark development in the next three years, and the second phase in 15 years, Cameron Run/Great Waves will be able to remain one of the best waterparks in the greater Washington area.

Dog Park

Using the area between the park's parking lot and the City's Animal Shelter, a dog park can be installed. This area will provide another resource to the City's many dog owners. It will also be a nice amenity for the animal shelter, and provide another multi-season activity along with the batting cages, mini-golf and play area.



Enhanced Nature Interpretation

From the enhancements to Lake Cook to some of the trees on the site, Cameron Run has numerous natural resources that present opportunities to educate the public and actively identify and protect the resources. From specific trees to ecosystems, elements of the natural resources will be interpreted through better signage.



Upgraded Parking lot

The current parking lot was built during two different development phases long ago and is not an efficient design. Using new engineering standards, the parking lot can be developed to better accommodate the popularity of this park, and better manage storm water.

Why the Blue & Green Plan, and Why Now?

The City owns the land that Cameron Run Regional Park is located on, and NOVA Parks has developed, reinvested and run this park for 36 years. Today, the park is the most popular recreational attraction in the City. Under the current lease, the last full summer season under NOVA Parks management would be 2020.

City staff has worked with a consultant organization to develop six different options for a future Cameron Run. Five of the six plans would eliminate or significantly reduce the existing waterpark. The one plan that would keep the waterpark as it currently exists would not provide for the new features and the continued investment that the Blue and Green Plan would.

The plans that would eliminate or reduce the waterpark are all based on the City funding a redevelopment that would cost many millions. With the mandated sewer improvements, Metro costs, a significant backlog of capital needs, the City is not well positioned to take on a large and unnecessary expense like rebuilding Cameron Run.

The Blue and Green Plan would be fully funded by NOVA Parks. The renewed 40-year lease would allow NOVA Parks the necessary time to pay for the improvements. This frees up City resources to address other vital City needs.

The Blue and Green Plan is a win-win-win. The City wins and gets an enhanced park for no capital investment, NOVA Parks wins because they can continue to operate the park they are proud of building and, most importantly, the public wins by being able to have and use an outstanding park that will continue to get better and better with ongoing investments.



Who We Are ...

NOVA Parks (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) is a regional park organization with major destination parks in 3 Cities and 3 Counties in Northern Virginia. Each of those jurisdictions has a local park agency that focuses on community athletics. NOVA Parks provides unique parks that are major regional assets.

Alexandria joined NOVA Parks in 1969, when the Carlyle House was purchased and restored by NOVA Parks. The Carlyle House was built in 1752 and played a significant role in the French and Indian War. It is a home that was frequently visited by George Washington, and during the Civil War it was the hospital that the PBS series “Mercy Street” is based on. Today, the Carlyle House is one of the biggest historical attractions in Old Town Alexandria, boosting the tourism economy of the City.

In 1981, the City leased some land to NOVA Parks to develop as a regional facility. NOVA Parks built what we know today as Cameron Run Regional Park. The formula was time for investment. The City provided a 40-year lease, and NOVA Parks built a premium regional park and provided expert management. NOVA Parks has invested over \$10 million in continuous facility improvements at Cameron Run. The Great Waves waterpark is one of the most popular in the region with 100,000 visitors a year, in addition to the batting cages, mini-golf and other amenities that see thousands of uses a year. A remarkable 60% of City residents reported using Cameron Run on a regular basis in a City survey.

City residents benefit from a robust regional park system every day. The drinking water source for Alexandria is the Occoquan Reservoir, and NOVA Parks has 4,000 acres of forested parkland buffering and protecting this drinking water source. 4,000 additional acres of NOVA Parks land provide forested shoreline and public open space for the Potomac River. A 2014 poll conducted by the City found large numbers of City residents use NOVA Parks facilities located outside of the City.

- 31% of City residents use the W&OD Trail
- 21% of City residents use Pohick Bay Regional Park
- 19% of City residents use Bull Run Regional Park

Return on investment with the NOVA Parks partnership is great for Alexandria residents. Because NOVA Parks is largely self-funded, only a very small amount of tax dollars supports the world class facilities and programs NOVA Parks offers. All six jurisdictions contribute the same \$4.46 per capita to NOVA Parks. Below is a comparison of per person, per year investment in NOVA Park vs. City Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA), based on 2015 budget numbers.

	City of Alexandria Recreation/Parks	NOVA Parks
Operating Cost Per Person	\$150	\$1.89
Capital Cost Per Person	\$27	\$2.57

For this small investment in NOVA Parks, the City gets the Carlyle House, a premium and expensive to operate historic site at no cost to the City. Cameron Run, the single most popular recreational facility in the City sees continued long-term investments from NOVA Parks. And residents get access to a 12,000+ acre regional park system that significantly enhances the quality of life for all of Northern Virginia.

