Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
2019 Needs Assessment Results

Prepared by
Mission
We enrich the City of Alexandria by creating meaningful experiences through public space, cultural activities, and programming.

Vision
We will improve the well-being of every person in our community by connecting them to each other and their environment.
Current Demographics: Population Concentration

- 2018 Population estimate was 151,300
- Alexandria’s population is not strongly concentrated in any one of the 38 Census Tracts in the city. The most populated tracts house no more than 5.4 percent of the city’s population.
Current Demographics: Race and Ethnicity

- The majority of Alexandria residents are non-Hispanic white. Non-Hispanic Black or African American residents represent just over 20 percent of the City’s population, followed by Hispanic residents at 17 percent.

Source: US Census Bureau 2012-2016 ACS 5-year estimates
Current Demographics: Race and Ethnicity

- The majority of Alexandria residents are non-Hispanic white.
- Non-Hispanic Black or African American residents represent just over 20 percent of the City’s population, followed by Hispanic residents at 17 percent.
Current Demographics: Where are foreign born coming from?

Foreign-born residents (excluding people born overseas to parents who were U.S. Citizens) make up about 29% of Alexandria’s population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Share of Alexandria population</th>
<th>Share of foreign-born population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States and US territories</td>
<td>69 percent</td>
<td>18 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>11 percent</td>
<td>13 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>9.9 percent</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>6.9 percent</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>2.7 percent</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America (meaning Canada)</td>
<td>Less than 1 percent</td>
<td>3 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>Less than 1 percent</td>
<td>3 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fun Fact: Southern Towers is 40% Ethiopian.
Survey Methods

- Mailed invitation to online survey
- 6,000 households
- 693 completed surveys (12%)
- ±3.7% Margin of Error
- Results weighted

Survey Methods

- 6,000 households
- 693 completed surveys (12%)
- ±3.7% Margin of Error
- Results weighted
Alexandria residents think highly of the parks and recreational amenities offered by the City, though a lack of information may keep more residents from enjoying the activities.
Household Participation

Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria parks during the past 12 months?

- 2002: 66%
- 2011: 85%
- 2013: 82%
- 2015: 85%
- 2017: 84%
- 2019: 82%
Household Participation

Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria parks during the past 12 months?

- 89% of non-Hispanic white residents visited the parks
- 66% of non-Hispanic black residents visited the parks
Household Participation

Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria recreation facilities (including centers and pools) during the past 12 months?

39% 2019
Household Participation

Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria recreation facilities (including centers and pools) during the past 12 months?

39% 2019

- 70% of adults 65+ have not visited a Recreation Facility
Household Participation

Programs or Events

Class or Program
- 42% (2002)
- 46% (2011)
- 48% (2013)
- 52% (2015)

Special Event
- 22% (2017)
- 38% (2017)
- 18% (2017)
- 43% (2019)
9 (or more) in 10 users rated parks, recreation facilities, classes/programs or special events as Excellent or Good
Household Satisfaction

- **Parks**
  - 2002: 79%
  - 2011: 86%
  - 2013: 84%
  - 2015: 85%
  - 2017: 86%
  - 2019: 90%

- **Programs or Events**
  - 2002: 90%
  - 2011: 90%
  - 2013: 93%
  - 2015: 90%
  - 2017: 85%

- **Recreation Facilities**
  - 2019: 89%

- **2017**
Barriers to Using RPCA Programs

Don’t know what is being offered

Don’t know locations of facilities
over 8 in 10
rate appearance and condition of public spaces as Excellent or Good
Key Finding #2

Respondents who had interacted with RPCA staff praised their efforts and would be open to providing feedback on projects and services.
who had interacted with RPCA staff rated interactions as Excellent or Good
Information Sources Used

- City of Alexandria Website: 38%
- Friends & neighbors: 35%
- Recreation brochure/program guide: 25%
- Newspaper: 22%
- Social media: 18%
- City Newsletter (E-News): 15%
Engaging with RPCA

- Provide feedback through additional surveys: 43% Very likely, 45% Somewhat likely, 13% Not at all likely
- Communicate directly with staff (e-mail, conversations, etc.): 36% Very likely, 42% Somewhat likely, 21% Not at all likely
- Provide comments and feedback through social media: 26% Very likely, 33% Somewhat likely, 41% Not at all likely
- Attend web-based public meetings: 22% Very likely, 38% Somewhat likely, 40% Not at all likely
- Attend public meetings or focus group discussions: 17% Very likely, 41% Somewhat likely, 41% Not at all likely
- On site comment board (sign with a marker attached): 17% Very likely, 33% Somewhat likely, 50% Not at all likely
- Attend a board or commission meeting: 16% Very likely, 40% Somewhat likely, 45% Not at all likely
- Attend a telephone town hall: 14% Very likely, 30% Somewhat likely, 57% Not at all likely
- Join a board or commission: 12% Very likely, 29% Somewhat likely, 58% Not at all likely
Household Need and Importance for Programs and Facilities
Programs: Household Need

- Cultural special events: 72%
- Adult fitness and wellness programs: 64%
- Volunteer/community projects: 53%
- Adult continuing ed.: 43%
- Adult creative/performing arts: 43%
- Adult env. educ.: 43%
- Walking/biking groups: 42%
# Programs: Household Unmet Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>100% Met</th>
<th>75% Met</th>
<th>50% Met</th>
<th>25% Met</th>
<th>0% Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult learn to swim instruction</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult day and weekend travel programs</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking/biking groups</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water fitness programs</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult organized sports programs</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-lingual program</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult technology programs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programs: Importance

- Cultural special events: 30%
- Adult fitness and wellness programs: 27%
- Volunteer/community projects: 16%
- Before & after school care: 13%
- Adult env. educ.: 12%
- Adult continuing ed.: 12%
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Lower Priorities
greater importance/higher unmet need

- Adult learn to swim instruction
- Adult day and weekend travel programs
- Adult continuing education programs
- Adult organized sports programs
- Adult technology programs
- Adult creative and performing arts
- Volunteer/community projects
- Adult nature programs/environmental education
- Adult open play (pick-up gym/field/court/pool use)
- Adult fitness and wellness programs
- Lap swimming
- Before and after school care programs
- Cultural special events (concerts, movies, parades, etc.)

Top Priorities
greater importance/higher unmet need

- Multi-lingual program
- Water fitness programs
- Adult enrichment programs
- Athletic special events (social sports, tournaments, etc.)
- Programs for older adults
- Youth technology programs
- Programs for individuals with disabilities
- Programs for preschool age
- Programs for teens
- Youth enrichment programs
- Youth open play (play groups, pick-up gym/pool use)
- Youth creative and performing arts
- Youth sports classes
- School break camps (fall, winter, spring, summer)
- Youth organized sports leagues

Lowest Priorities
greater importance/lower unmet need

- Lowering barriers to entry for
- Programs for older adults
- Adult continuing education programs
- Adult organized sports programs
- Adult technology programs
- Adult creative and performing arts
- Volunteer/community projects
- Adult nature programs/environmental education
- Adult open play (pick-up gym/field/court/pool use)
- Adult fitness and wellness programs
- Lap swimming
- Before and after school care programs
- Cultural special events (concerts, movies, parades, etc.)

Continued Emphasis
greater importance/lower unmet need
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Lower Priorities
lower importance/higher unmet need

Adult learn to swim instruction
Adult day and weekend travel programs
Adult continuing education programs
Walking/biking groups
Adult organized sports programs
Adult technology programs
Adult creative and performing arts
Programs with your pets
Volunteer/community projects
Adult nature programs/environmental education
Adult open play (pick-up gym/field/court/boondock)
Lap swimming
Adult fitness and wellness programs
Before and after school care programs
Cultural special events (concerts, movies, parades, etc.)
Youth nature programs/environmental education
Youth fitness and wellness programs
Youth learn to swim instruction

Top Priorities
higher importance/higher unmet need

Lowest Priorities
lower importance/lower unmet need

Programs for older adults
Programs for individuals with disabilities
Programs for preschool age
Programs for teens
Youth enrichment programs
Youth open play (play groups, pick-up gym/pool use)
Youth creative and performing arts
Youth sports classes
School break camps (fall, winter, spring, summer)
Youth organized sports leagues

Continued Emphasis
higher importance/lower unmet need
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Lower Priorities
lower importance/higher unmet need

Top Priorities
higher importance/higher unmet need

Adult learn to swim instruction

Adult day and weekend travel programs

Walking/biking groups

Adult continuing education programs

Adult organized sports programs

Adult creative and performing arts

Adult technology programs

Adult nature programs/environmental education

Programs with your pets

Programs for older adults

Athletic special events (social sports, tournaments, etc.)

Volunteer/community projects

Multi-lingual program

Adult open play (pick-up gym/field/courts/pool use)

Adolf M. Hoffman Environmental Center

Water fitness programs

Lap swimming

Programs for individuals with disabilities

Adult fitness and wellness programs

Programs for preschool age

Cultural special events (concerts, movies, parades, etc.)

Youth technology programs

Youth learn to swim instruction

Lower emphasis

Programs for teens

Youth nature programs/environmental education

Youth creative and performing arts

Before and after school care programs

Youth enrichment programs

Youth fitness and wellness programs

Youth sports classes

School break camps (fall, winter, spring, summer)

Youth organized sports leagues

Youth open play (play groups, pick-up gym/pool use)
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Top Priorities
higher importance/higher unmet need

- Adult learn to swim instruction
- Adult day and weekend travel programs
- Walking/biking groups
- Adult organized sports programs
- Adult technology programs
- Programs with your pets
- Achievement programs
- Athletic special events (social sports, tournaments, etc.)
- Adult open play (pick-up game/field/court/pool use)

Adult continuing education programs

Adult creative and performing arts

Volunteer/community projects

Adult nature programs/environmental education
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Top Priorities: Higher Importance, Higher Unmet Need

- Volunteer/community projects
- Adult continuing education programs
- Adult creative and performing arts
- Adult nature programs/environmental education
- Walking/biking groups
- Adult learn to swim instruction
- Programs with your pets
- Adult day and weekend travel programs
Programs: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Top Priorities: Higher Importance, Higher Unmet Need

- Volunteer/community projects
- Adult continuing education programs
- Adult creative and performing arts
- Adult nature programs/environmental education
- Walking/biking groups
- Adult learn to swim instruction
- Programs with your pets
- Adult day and weekend travel programs

- 62% need for adult learn to swim in non-Hispanic black residents
- 10% need for adult learn to swim in non-Hispanic white residents
- Both demographic groups say their needs are 38% met
Facilities: Household Need

- Walking paths: 91%
- Farmers' Markets: 77%
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats: 76%
- Biking trails: 66%
- Outdoor running/walking track: 60%
Facilities: Household Unmet Need

- **Rock climbing walls**: 11% 12% 9% 22% 46%
- **Indoor running/walking track**: 16% 10% 14% 18% 41%
- **Community gardens**: 20% 10% 19% 21% 30%
- **Fishing areas**: 19% 14% 18% 25% 25%
- **Indoor social lounge**: 16% 22% 14% 19% 28%
- **Outdoor facility for older adults**: 16% 16% 25% 24% 19%

Percent of Respondent Households

- 100% Met
- 75% Met
- 50% Met
- 25% Met
- 0% Met
Facilities: Importance

- Farmers' Markets: 31%
- Walking paths: 28%
- Biking trails: 21%
- Outdoor track: 13%
- Indoor pools: 12%
Facilities: Plotting Unmet Need & Importance

Top Priorities: Higher Importance, Higher Unmet Need

- Indoor pools
- Indoor exercise and fitness facilities
- Rock climbing walls
- Outdoor public art
- River/stream activities
- Nature center
- Indoor running/walking track
- Community gardens
- Fishing areas
- Indoor facility for older adults
Zip Code Needs

Lowest visitation to recreation facility (21%), 22311

Lowest park satisfaction, 22302

Highest visitation to recreation facility (56%), 22301

14% of adult learn to swim needs met, 22312

100% of adult learn to swim needs met, 22301
Open Participation

RPCA Wants to Hear from You – Participate in the 2019 Needs Assessment

For Immediate Release: August 2, 2019

Every other year, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) conducts a needs assessment to understand the community’s desires for its park, recreation, and arts facilities and programs. RPCA serves the community in order to build community connections, improve its well-being and invest in the environment. The information gathered through the needs assessment survey helps determine priorities, develop budgetary needs and improve services.

Get involved by completing the 2019 RPCA Needs Assessment Survey, providing location-specific feedback on a map, or asking questions about the project. In the mapping feature, drop a pin in the location of a park or recreation facility, then leave an idea, upload a photo, or tell us how you use facilities.

The deadline to participate in the Needs Assessment Survey is September 15. The findings will be available online and presented to the Park and Recreation Commission in October.

In addition to the self-reporting online feedback platform, RPCA also worked with the National Research Center earlier this summer to conduct a statistically accurate survey with randomly selected households. This combination of collection mediums will ensure that the survey results are demographically representative while also receiving feedback from a larger number of respondents.

Visit alexandriava.gov/Recreation to learn more about the RPCA Needs Assessment and see previous results.

For additional Information, contact Urban Planner Dana Wedele at 703.746.5491 or by email at dana.wedele@alexandriava.gov.
## Open Participation

Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria parks during the past 12 months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probability Survey</th>
<th>Open Participation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you rate the quality of the parks you visited?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Probability Survey</th>
<th>Open Participation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Open Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you or members of your household visited any of the City of Alexandria recreation facility (center or pool)</th>
<th>Probability Survey</th>
<th>Open Participation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate the quality of the facilities you visited?</th>
<th>Probability Survey</th>
<th>Open Participation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Open Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate the appearance and condition of street trees, landscaped medians and right-of-ways?</th>
<th>Probability Survey</th>
<th>Open Participation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Open Participation**

- Open participation survey respondents were more likely than the probability sample survey respondents to express a need for parks and recreation programs and facilities. There was great variability in which group expressed having those needs met.

- For both survey respondents, the list of programs most likely to be considered important included:
  - Cultural special events (concerts, movies, parades, etc.)
  - Adult fitness and wellness programs

- The open participation had a higher importance for:
  - Volunteer/community projects
  - Before and after school care programs
  - Youth organized sports leagues
  - Adult day and weekend travel programs
  - Programs for preschool age
Open Participation

• For both survey respondents, the top four most important facilities included:
  • Walking paths
  • Natural areas and wildlife habitats
  • Farmers’ Markets.

• The other item for the open participation survey respondents was community gardens while for probability sample survey respondents it was biking trails.

• Fewer open participation survey respondents reported having access through their HOA or apartment complex to recreation facilities such as a clubhouse, fitness center or swimming pool compared to the probability sample survey respondents.
Questions?

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