

# Cameron Run Stakeholder Meeting 1: Eisenhower Partnership / Townes at Cameron Parke

2/21/2017 - 7 pm

Offices of Michael Baker International 3601 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria VA



## Attendee Comments:

- Former Townes and Cameron Parke HOA President Daniel Anixt noted that he is wary of the planning process. Having the recommendations by summer is rushed. He said he “hopes that true alternative uses will be considered.”
- Sara DeGroot from City of Alexandria, in reference to the Resource Protection Area (RPA) discussion, described the accuracy of the City’s GIS layer, and how it is an approximation – an offset from their stream layer. RPA was field verified at request of City for the waterpark’s parking lot, which is done by a licensed professional.
- Cameron Run Regional Park gets \$8/admission per person, and makes \$600,000/yr profit. Community wonders where the profit is going. Carlyle House, the historic property in Alexandria also run by NOVA Parks, is in debt.
- Bus lines have been cut in the area or run infrequently. Most users drive to park, only 1/3 are Alexandria residents. Streetlights out on Eisenhower. Speeding 60mph on Eisenhower.

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- The mulch pile's (recycling center on Eisenhower Avenue) lease was extended for another ten years.
- Dan Anixt brought up triangle area in northeast corner of Lake Cook. He indicated it is full of weeds, a dumping ground for trash. Has been a fire from ashes before. Drug dealers, jersey barriers.
- One resident said that "Lake Cook doesn't make sense in conjunction with the water park."
- One resident stated his opinion that the pond (Lake Cook) is terrible.
  - Has three overflows to Hunting Creek and one to Oronoco Bay
- General consensus is that NOVA Parks makes a lot of money on Cameron Run with little return to Alexandria.
- Several people felt that the park is not taken care of for as much money it makes.
- Need to be realistic about the City's ability to make investments or improvements to the park ; the City has financial constraints.
  - City is constrained by budget. Mitigation of its combined sewer is a significant budget item requiring immediate resources.
  - Sara DeGroot provided brief overview of City's combined sewer system and City's long-term fix by staggering improvements.
  - Dan Anixt indicated that he was nervous – presentation is talking about investments from City/NOVA parks that can't be made, budget pressure on City.
- Need place for kids. Not much else in the city for kids.
- It would be beneficial to have a NOVA Parks representative. The presentation is missing financial facts from them. (Consultant indicated that NOVA Parks would be at the first public meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.)
- Future on-line survey – make sure they include text comment boxes.
- City is paying for Lake Cook retrofit – in part with grants from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
- Resident said that after a rainstorm, Cameron Run is anything but beautiful.
- Sarah DeGroot described the proposed improvements to Lake Cook from a stormwater perspective
  - Are Lake Cook improvements not handled by NOVA Parks?
    - Sarah: Stormwater improvements are handled by the City.
  - Is the Lake Cook improvements plan funded?
    - Sarah: bids open 2/22/2017. Expected to start construction April 2017 and finish April 2018
  - Is there a maintenance plan for Lake Cook?
    - Sarah: City of Alexandria will dredge/maintain
- City can't use storm-water grant money to improve the derelict corner because it doesn't involve storm-water.

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- As part of the Lake Cook improvement plan, Sara DeGroot stated that they are working on a maintenance MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for the proposed forebay.
- Several residents voiced concerns over mosquito problems.
  - Sara DeGroot, from the city said that she can get some mosquitos captured to determine whether they are predominantly one of two species that reproduce either on large water bodies or small pools. That way, we will know where they are coming from.
- One resident voiced concerns over the city using the northeast parking lot as a staging area for construction slated to begin in late April. The lot is used as the primary overflow parking for the water park. Then people start parking in the residential area.
  - Sarah: She will check with DPI about the staging area
    - Is there a name/email/phone contact?
    - Contact Tayesse Gyes at the Department of Project Implementation at [Tafesse.Gyes@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Tafesse.Gyes@alexandriava.gov) for more information about the Lake Cook construction activities.
- In talking about the Eisenhower East Plan and the Eisenhower West plan, one resident said that being excluded from both plans made him feel like he “lives in the wrong neighborhood” and that it’s an admission of guilt on the city’s part that there is an issue with Cameron Run Park.
- Neil Kumar, a representative of Rushmark Properties where the new development is being built at 2901 Eisenhower Avenue gave some data about the new development.
  - Will have a privately owned but publicly accessible park space
  - 9,000 square feet of retail space
  - 500 multifamily units
  - Technically located in King Street SAP
  - They are paying to install a new traffic light and retime the traffic lights along Eisenhower Avenue.
- Many trees were removed between 495 and Cameron Run during construction of the Wilson Bridge around 2008. They were reportedly not replanted after construction was finished.

## Questions:

1. What is allowable in an RPA? See <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/oeq/info/default.aspx?id=3824>
  - a. What about pervious surfaces? All proposed changes in an RPA are subject to review by the City. Surface type does not guarantee approval.
    - i. What is considered pervious or impervious? Pervious allows water to flow through a surface. Impervious material prevents water from penetrating the material.

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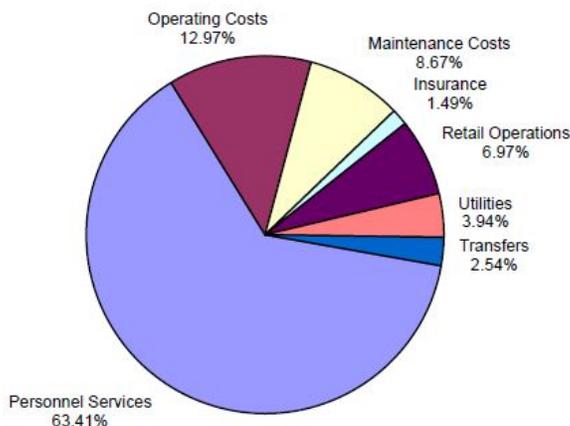
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- b. Can existing structures be removed from the RPA? All land disturbing activities proposed in the RPA must first be approved by the City. The property owner will need to submit a Water Quality Impact Assessment explaining the impacts of the activity and what actions will be taken to reduce these impacts.
- 2. Is NOVA Parks a non-profit?
  - a. **Answer:** Yes. "NOVA Parks, (is) a regional nonprofit organization..." (<https://www.novaparks.com/about/blog/regional-nonprofit-opens-funds-to-support-regional-parks>)
  - b. What do they pay in taxes?
    - i. **Answer:** At Cameron Run Regional Park, sales taxes are charged on admission by the City and State. Those taxes are passed back to each governmental entity. NOVA Parks is a local "Authority" and as such does not pay taxes itself.
  - c. Does NOVA Parks' revenue benefit the City of Alexandria financially? There is no financial contribution from NOVA Parks to the City.
  - d. Where is NOVA's money being spent?
    - i. **Answer:** See below charts (<https://www.novaparks.com/about/press-releases-financials>) :

e.

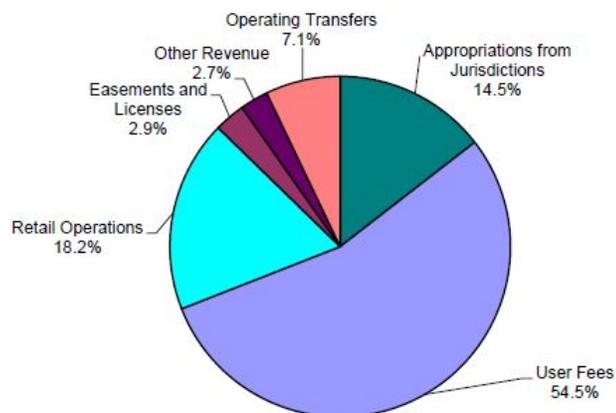
### Where the money goes...

Adopted Budget FY 2017  
(General & Enterprise Funds)  
Operating Expenses By Category



### Where the money comes from...

Adopted FY 2017 Operating Budget  
(General & Enterprise Funds)  
Revenues by Category



- 3. Confirm users of park and where they are from (160,000 from Washington Post?)
  - a. This was asked in reference to residents of The Townes at Cameron Run Parke. Townes and Cameron Parke would need to survey its residents to obtain this information.

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4. Would there be a chance of Alexandria remaining part of NOVA Parks if Great Waves Water Park does not continue?
  - a. NOVA Parks runs this historic property Carlyle House in addition to Cameron Run Regional Park in Alexandria. Membership in NOVA Parks would continue unless the relationship to both properties changed.
    - i. If Alexandria does not remain a part of NOVA, would the \$670,000 that currently goes to NOVA Parks be added to the city's budget?
      1. Membership in NOVA Parks is related to both properties in the City.
  - b. If membership in NOVA Parks is eliminated, what is the cost to the city?
    - i. All costs to maintain and improve both Cameron Run Park and Carlyle House.
5. What do other jurisdictions pay to be part of NOVA Parks?
  - a. **Answer:** Each jurisdiction pays the same rate per resident: \$1.89 operating appropriation plus \$2.57 capital appropriation for a total of \$4.46 per resident according to the adopted 2017 NOVA Parks Budget.  
<https://www.novaparks.com/sites/default/files/pdf/FY%2017%20NOVA%20Parks%20Adopted%20Budget%20for%20Website.pdf>
6. Is entrance fee to the park a tax element for the City or all of NOVA Parks? No.
7. Is NOVA Parks violating the lease by not keeping up with the site or in any other way?
  - a. The lease states: "The Authority . . . shall maintain the Property, the improvements and the park in a quality and state of repair comparable to similarly developed regional parks in Northern Virginia." Source: Lease between City of Alexandria and NOVA Parks (then the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority), June 30, 1981.
8. If NOVA Parks goes away, what's the city's required contribution for Cameron Run Park?
  - a. Refer to question 5
9. What is the time-frame on the Hensley Park improvements?
  - a. Will it be unlocked when the improvements are complete?
    - i. City plans to start the improvements in fall of 2018 and anticipates that it will take 2-to 2 ½ years to build.
10. What are the city's responsibilities as the landlord of Cameron Run Park? To protect the health, safety and welfare of the Citizens of Alexandria. To enforce violations of City codes related to the property or actions occurring on the property.
11. "In terms of general lack of responsibility for the park, who is to be held accountable, City or NOVA Parks?" See answer to question 7.
12. Is the Animal Welfare League a stakeholder that should be invited to public involvement meetings? Yes
13. Who controls vouchers for Cameron Run Park? Any vouchers are controlled by NOVA Parks.

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14. How frequently are the batting cages used and how many people use them? Open 7.5 months March 11 to October 31. NOVA Parks Cameron Run Regional Park fact sheet states that 60,000 rounds of batting are held at the Batting Cage each year, along with 15,000 rounds of mini-golf, 36 shelter rentals, 2,500 entries to the play area, 140 birthday party events, and +100,000 admissions to the water park.

### Group Breakout Comments

- Need to create open green space that is not exclusive to being on a team or part of a club or group.
- "A nicer lawn for families – no dogs."
- Splash pad? (2x)
- Keep the batting cages
  - What is the current usage? Answer 60,000 rounds a year
- Access to natural area between the tracks to the north
- Possible site for a rec/aquatic center. Racquetball? (2x)
  - Nannie Lee is closest rec center
- Like the idea of keeping mini golf or putting it inside in connection with a community/aquatic center
- Build up, not out.
- Lots of dead trees currently
- Do more with less: pockets/nooks/variety in uses
- Bocce court. Fit linear park in between Cameron Run and mixed use path
- Mile markers, wayfinding elements along Eisenhower
- On-site management helps at Hensley. Should be applied to Cameron Run Park.
- Provide for multi-use, multi-age: daytime programming; need a draw for all age groups
- Need a dog park in the Eisenhower Valley
  - Dog park behind Animal Shelter as a way to increase its visibility.
- Potomac Yard is a good example of multi-use in a linear space.

### Maps from Breakout session



