



Open Space Steering Committee

Second Kickoff Meeting
September 29, 2020

Agenda

1. Zoom Ground Rules
2. Introductions & Icebreaker
3. Open Space Steering Committee Charge of Work & Approach
4. Where we are now
5. What information do you need from us?
6. Meeting Format & Schedule
7. Public Comment
8. Adjourn

Zoom Ground Rules



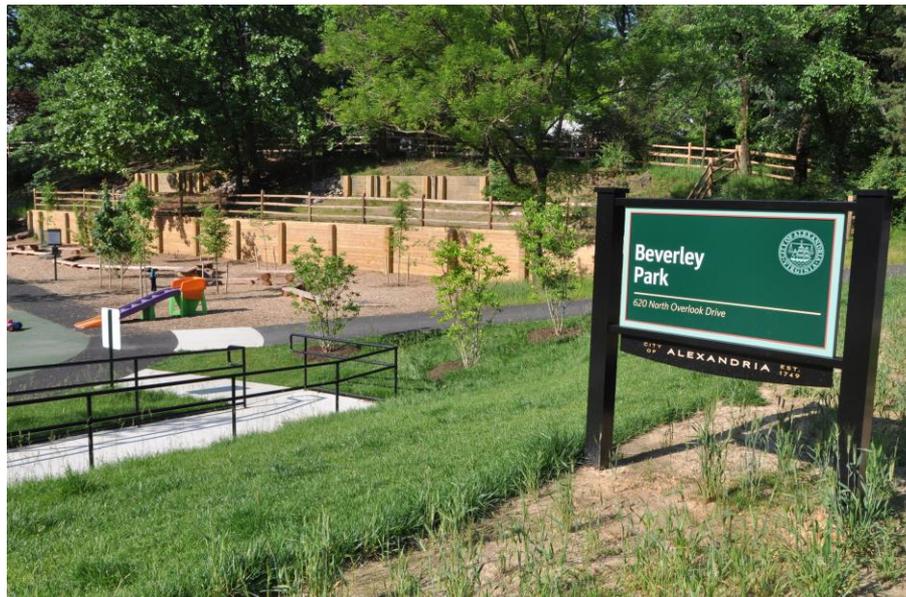
Introductions

- Tell us a little about yourself
- How did you become interested in open space?



Icebreaker

How has your use of open space changed in the last six months?



Project Purpose

This project aims to implement the *Open Space Master Plan* in support of the City's desire to maintain appropriate acres of protected publicly accessible open space for its residents and improve its environmental quality, management, and social benefits.

Open Space Master Plan

The City of Alexandria Open Space Plan Master Plan established 15 ambitious goals for protecting, enhancing, and expanding open space:

- **Goal 1:** Protect and Enrich Existing Parks
- **Goal 2:** Develop Innovative Opportunities for Creating Additional Public Open Space
- **Goal 3:** Complete Implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan
- **Goal 4:** Protect and Expand Stream Valleys and other Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- **Goal 5:** Create an Open Space Network in New Development Areas
- **Goal 6:** Protect and Preserve Institutional Open Space
- **Goal 7:** Protect and Maximize the Use of Public School Open Space
- **Goal 8:** Preserve and Protect Cemeteries
- **Goal 9:** Create Public Open Space from Vacant Land
- **Goal 10:** Link and Expand Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail System
- **Goal 11:** Enhance Streetscape and Gateways
- **Goal 12:** Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas
- **Goal 13:** Encourage the Creation of Civic Parks at and Adjacent to Metro Stations
- **Goal 14:** Beautify Interchanges and Highway Corridors
- **Goal 15:** Protect Privately Owned Open Space

Approach

- Develop a common definition for publicly accessible open space
- Evaluate open space classification descriptions
- Develop new open space metrics
- Identify improvement processes and systems to inventory and measure public access easements on private property
- Recommend standardized easement language to define the degree of "publicness" or "property control".
 - What types of use restrictions and exclusions can be placed within the public access easement?
- Provide guidance on development contributions towards publicly accessible open space



Steering Committee Scope of Work

Three Primary Tasks

1. Update the definition of "Publicly Accessible Open Space"
2. Evaluate methods of pursuing new publicly accessible open space
3. Build on the work of the "Open Space in New Development" discussion, provide guidance for new development's contribution to publicly accessible open space where it is not already guided by the small area plan

Deliverable: Provide staff with feedback and recommendations to update and implement the City Council adopted Open Space Policy Plan

Project Timeline



Where Are We Now

Task 1:

Updating the Definition of
"Publicly Accessible" Open
Space



Task 1: Update the definition of “Publicly Accessible Open Space”

Provide a recommendation for updating and clarifying the definition of what types of publicly accessible open space (use, type, function, and extent of public accessibility) “counts” toward the City’s public open space goals.

This would provide guidance on easement language (how much and what forms of public access must be provided for it to count) and future policy changes.



Intent of Publicly Accessible Open Space

As stated in the Open Space Master Plan (2003, updated 2017), 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.
 - Its 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.



Alexandria Open Space Typologies for publicly owned and protected open space (Open Space Master Plan)

Classification	Description	Size	Service
Citywide	Contains multiple uses within park boundary including: attracts visitors from all over the City Example: Chinquapin Park	15-20 acres	0-25 miles from users
Neighborhood	May include multiple uses within park boundary; attracts nearby residents Example: Beverley Park	20,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres	0-5 miles from users
Pocket Park	Small open space; mainly single use attracting nearby residents Example: Sunset Mini Park	Under 20,000 sq. ft.	.25-0.5 mile or less from users
Natural Resource Areas	Includes open spaces that are primarily passive-use or preservation areas Example: Clermont Natural Park	No Minimum or Maximum	Citywide



Alexandria Open Space Typologies for publicly owned open space (Open Space Master Plan)

Classification	Description	Size	Service
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools and recreation centers Example: Patrick Henry Field	5-20 acres (average)	0-25 miles from users
Destination/ Historical	Attracts users from beyond the region, typically because of particularly unique features Example: Fort Ward Park, Waterfront Park System	Varies	0-100 or more miles
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other regional entities Example: Cameron Run Regional Park	50-75 acres	0-100 miles from users
Corridors/ Linear Parks/ Trailways	Includes trailways, corridors and linear parks that serve primarily as linear bikeway corridors, may include ROWs Example: Metro Linear Park	No Minimum or Maximum	0-100 miles from users

Existing Definitions

Alexandria Zoning Ordinance

- **2-180 - Open and usable space. 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.**
- That single-family, two-family, townhouse and multi-family dwellings on lots for which emergency vehicle easement areas were counted as open space in the site plan or special use permit approval therefor, existing on March 1, 2000, or for which a building permit application or preliminary site plan application was filed, and was pending or had been approved on March 1, 2000, shall not be subject to the provisions of [Section 2-180](#)(D) as amended by this subsection, shall not be characterized as noncomplying structures, and shall be characterized as structures grandfathered under prior law, pursuant to [Section 12-500](#) of this Code.

Existing Definitions

Alexandria Zoning Ordinance

- Sec. 6-100 - **POS/Public open space and community recreation zone.**
- 6-101 - Purpose and short title.

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.

Active vs. Passive Use

- **Active Use.** Active recreational uses of open space land include primarily programmed activities. The mapping was drawn from identified recreation features in the City's GIS data layers and observations from aerial photographs. Designated Active Use includes: Athletic Fields (baseball, football, soccer, softball, multiuse); Court Sports (basketball, multi-use, tennis, volleyball); Facilities that support such activities (batting cages, press box, spectator seating); Fenced Dog Park, Swimming Pools (kiddie, full size); Performance Space; Playgrounds (sandbox, tot lot, playground); and Skateboard Park.
- **Passive Use.** Passive recreation uses of open space include primarily unprogrammed uses and activities. The mapping identifies any area NOT designated as Active Use as Passive Use. Passive Use amenities include gardens or garden plots, picnic shelters, natural areas, trails, and unfenced dog parks.

Other Definitions

- **City-Owned vs. Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS).** Occasionally, the public is understandably confused regarding ownership, control and authority over public lands within the City. Many ACPS sites provide publicly accessible recreation uses such as playgrounds and athletic fields. Although publicly funded with tax dollars, ACPS's School Board holds the ownership of ACPS property and has authority over its use and disposition.
- **Protected Open Space.** Land that the City of Alexandria has some form of ownership or control of its use. Examples include fee ownership, easements and shared-use agreements. Replaces terms parks, parklands in earlier documents.
- **Public Access.** Public access signals open use by any one member of the public. Public access can be granted in private properties through a public access easement, which is signaled in the property's plat. Historic, scenic, or conservation easements most commonly as found in the City of Alexandria require public access at least one day out of the year. All other open space controlled by the City is considered to be publicly accessible for all residents and visitors to use.

What is Publicly Accessible Open Space?

















What resources do you need from us?



Next Steps

- Next Meeting:
 - Meetings will be scheduled Monthly
 - Preferred day of the week and time of day
- **October Homework**
 - **Review notes on the definitions of open space that staff has compiled.**
 - **Be ready to discuss the definition of publicly accessible open space!**

Public Comment

- Please use the "Raise Your Hand" feature of "*9" to inform staff you would like to comment.
- Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

Information & Questions

- Information
 - [Open Space Planning](#)
- Questions
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