

# ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE



Alexandria waterfront

GUIDE TO  
**OPEN SPACE  
IN ALEXANDRIA**



City of Alexandria  
301 King Street, City Hall  
Alexandria, VA 22313  
703.838.4000

**[alexandriava.gov](http://alexandriava.gov)**



As one of the most densely populated cities in the nation, Alexandria faces a continuous struggle to provide enough open space for all its residents. The City must respond to the conflicting pressures of a growing population calling for open space options and a dwindling supply of potential open space areas.

Between 1990 and 2000, the ratio of open space compared to population stayed constant because the City added 125 acres of open space. Population projections for the year 2012 require that the City add 100 acres of open space over the next 10 years to maintain that ratio—assuming that existing public space will not be diminished.

Against this backdrop, the need for an open space plan became critical. Alexandria adopted its Open Space Plan in 2003 as part of the City's Master Plan.

Following the adoption, the Open Space Steering Committee was formed to guide the first two years of implementation.

The mission of the committee is "to thoughtfully improve, maintain, and expand the open space, parks, natural resources, urban landscapes and recreational areas of Alexandria, through public and private partnerships, into the premier urban open space system in the metropolitan area and to serve as an example to the United States."



Top: **Market Square**

Right: **Cameron Run**

## WHY PROTECT OPEN SPACE?



**Economics.** Open space preservation makes economic sense—protected land increases the value of surrounding properties.

**Greenways.** By connecting protected natural areas, we extend habitat for wildlife, interconnect trails, and provide easier access within and beyond the City for hikers and bikers.

**Water quality.** Water quality is directly related to open space protection. Preserving natural areas, particularly near waterways, helps to slow stormwater drainage into streams, which reduces erosion and pollution of our surface waters.

**Air quality.** Trees naturally filter pollutants from the air and cool local ambient air during the summer, making life more pleasant and reducing energy demands during peak pollution months.

**Beauty.** Alexandria’s landscape is part of what we appreciate about living in the City. Trees, parks, riverfronts, and streamside trails all contribute to our sense of place, our physical and psychological well-being, and our enjoyment of the seasons.



**Oronoco Bay Park trails**

The City of Alexandria has committed to protecting and promoting open space because it is an investment in a higher quality of life for ourselves and future generations. The Open Space Plan allows citizens to participate in an unequalled opportunity to preserve the City’s economic, historical, and environmental resources.

# COMMUNITY GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE



The Open Space Plan provides a framework of 15 open space goals which address the City's short- and longer-term open space needs. The goals acknowledge and protect the City's open spaces and identify additional open space opportunities for the future.

## **Goal 1**

Protect and enrich existing parks

## **Goal 2**

Develop innovative opportunities for creating additional 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 space

## **Goal 7**

Maximize use of public school open space areas

## **Goal 8**

Preserve and protect cemeteries

## **Goal 9**

Create public open space from vacant land

## **Goal 10**

Link and expand pedestrian, bicycle, and trail systems

## **Goal 11**

Enhance streetscapes 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 space



# ONE CENT INITIATIVE



In active support of the Open Space Plan, the Alexandria City Council in 2003 allocated one cent from every \$100 of the City's real estate assessment for the purchase of open-space land and conservation easements. Each year that the City Council votes in favor of this bold initiative, over \$2 million will be available to help the City meet its open space goals.

Qualifying properties are recommended by the Open Space Steering Committee. Final decisions on acquisition are made by the City Council.

Citizens may assist the open space effort by making direct contributions to the city's Open Space Fund. Contributions can also be made to the City's Living Landscape Fund, to aid the development and improvement of existing open spaces.



Left: **trees along King Street**  
Above: **Battery Heights easement**

# WORKING FOR YOU



For assistance in negotiating easements and land acquisitions, the City is partnering with two local groups experienced in the protection and preservation of property.

**The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust** is a non-profit organization established in 1994 which preserves open space by acquiring land and conservation easements, providing stewardship of protected lands, and building public support for conservation. For more information, call 703.354.5093 or visit [www.nvct.org](http://www.nvct.org).



**The Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission** is empowered by the Virginia General Assembly to acquire open space and easements and protect the fabric of historic structures. For more information, contact the Office of Historic Alexandria at 703.838.4554 or visit the AHRPC page at <http://oha.ci.alexandria.va.us>.



Holmes Run

For further information on the Open Space Plan, please contact either of these City departments.

**Recreation, Parks and  
Cultural Activities**

703.838.4343

[www.alexandriava.gov/recreation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation)

**Planning and Zoning**

703.838.4666

[www.alexandriava.gov/city/  
planning\\_zoning](http://www.alexandriava.gov/city/planning_zoning)

To view the Open Space Plan,  
visit any City library or go to  
[www.alexandriava.gov/recreation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation)