

# ALEXANDRIA RECREATION PLANNING REPORT



**City of Alexandria  
Mayor's Office**

December 23, 2013



## 1. Introduction to Alexandria Recreation Planning as a Process: **DRAFT**

The City of Alexandria published its *Lose and Associates* 2009 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan and adopted the plan on November 17, 2009.<sup>1</sup> The plan utilized multiple methods of community input, from **2500** surveys to community meetings and interviewing techniques. As stated in the plan:

### PUBLIC INPUT

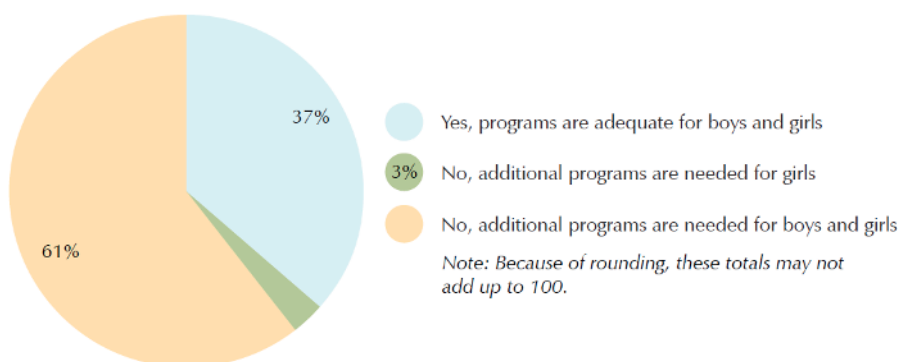
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Public input is the driving force behind all parks and recreation master plans. For the plan to be effective it must accurately reflect the facilities and programs most desired by the citizens of the community. The citizens are the participants in and users of the parks system and recreation programs, and without strong support and usage by them, the parks system becomes ineffective. The recommendations contained later in this master plan were driven by public input gathered through a variety of forums—input recorded in interviews with City staff, key government employees, community leaders, other recreation providers, public meetings and a user survey. Quotes throughout this section are selected from the comments on the returned surveys.

One of the key objectives expressed by the City of Alexandria for conducting a master plan was to gain a clear understanding of public opinion and desires regarding the programs and facilities offered through parks and recreation services. Gathering this public input is, by far, the most valuable component of the master planning process; it provided the planning team with a basis upon which they could formulate recommendations.

We used other methods of obtaining the necessary amount of public input, as well. A Steering Committee, comprised of city residents and stakeholders, volunteered to participate in an evening workshop to help planners determine a direction for the park system's future. In addition, a system-user survey was distributed in February 2009, providing the opportunity area residents to offer opinions about community parks and recreation. Furthermore, six public meetings were held between October and December 2008, offering residents the opportunity to come out and speak on issues that were important to them. The wealth of information gathered through these processes has been recorded and assimilated as follows:

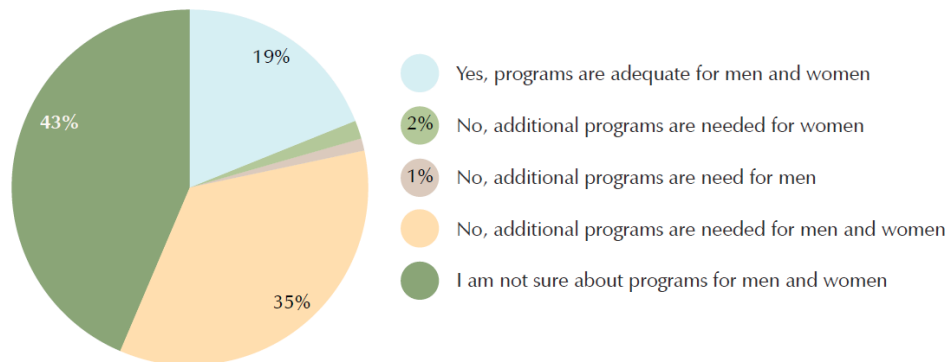
Do you believe there are adequate youth recreation programs for both boys and girls in Alexandria?



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<sup>1</sup> This was accomplished with the passage of Alexandria City Council Resolution No. 8703-2009, formally adopting the plan.

Do you believe there are adequate adult recreation programs for both men and women in Alexandria?



In May of 2013 and throughout 2009, the Alexandria City Council was provided with the information contained in this paper. To restate the discussion, the City of Alexandria seeks collaboration to reinvigorate its current programming in recreation, cultural and arts tourism (and related assets), arts and leisure activities, and at parks, libraries, museums, and sports complexes. This paper presents discussion points allowing for latter stages of input into post-*Lose and Associates* conclusions and how to achieve the goals of that report in a meaningful, responsible, and staged manner. This discussion also relied upon one to two years of funding for programming in order that Alexandria may consider best practices for permanent funding of recreation and arts programming. Those examples are highlighted later in this paper.

Alexandria pursued programming as budgeted and customarily implemented through Community Services and Parks and Recreation, and this year, with Council input and approval, selected pilot programming to be implemented primarily through its *Safe.Alex* program. In those pilots, Alexandria: (i) conducted due diligence principally through the office of Community Services to continue a best-practice research and coordinate those efforts with its *Safe.Alex* program; (ii) offered this model for discussion to council members for input; (iii) conducted additional community input meetings; (iv) engaged multiple stakeholders in the foundation, public and private sectors; and (v) followed up this activity with a period of additional “needs assessment and appraisals from multiple stakeholders.”

In 2013, an existing bonded indebtedness for the construction of the Bolton Avenue Public Safety Complex relying on 2.15 mills of ad valorem taxes was no longer necessary. Because of the City’s cash position, the millage rolled off earlier than predicted. This is proposed as a baseline for discussion here, meaning there is an opportunity to use a similar revenue projection, generated then, as a potential source for this newly proposed activity by passage of a new millage.

The City concludes, as supported by its recent “pilot” track record and the findings of *Lose and Associates*, definitive acts are needed to best serve recreation needs. Specifically, when compared to more horizontal relationships (e.g., outsourcing public recreation activities to third parties through cooperative endeavors) as the City had engaged in for decades, the City’s community needs now would be best served if additional vertical (in-

house) recreation staff, led by empowered directors and community input, were used to increase programming (not simply build more capital structures); provided that, the personnel are given a properly and predictably funded and administered revenue source.

## **2. Executive Summary (Dedicated Funding):**

The following provides a summary of considerations regarding capital project resourcing and the cost of operations and maintenance of capital structures.

These issues only generally are outlined in this discussion as provided by the office of the Mayor to address typical capital-operations dynamics—and, as such, do not represent every issue, concern, or scenario involved in such planning. A review of the Administration’s priority capital spending contained in the yearly budget provides a clearer understanding of the commitment to proper life cycling and rating of projects.

### *Overview*

- How does a community ensure *permanent funding* of multiple spheres of activity reported as desired by citizens in the *Lose* report (e.g., the opportunity cost of funding baseball/softball, golf and tennis and to include beginning the address of “natatorium” and swimming-related needs)? What are the community stakeholder contributions? How should the City further analyze these plans? How does the City: (i) justify any request to citizens to fund long-term recreation activities, and (ii) prove public-private partnering is optimized and therefore deserving of a dedicated revenue source?
- We should:
  - Understand “permanent” is not necessarily the operative goal, but long-term financing is imperative for planning. Citizens may desire the right to reassess a millage or financial commitment based on the performance of the particular activity. In some cases, state law controls the terms and conditions of so-termed dedicated funding, such as with a millage. However, if there is not sufficient time to implement and plan capital asset improvement, then the purposes can be defeated. This balancing test is very important to get right and transparent with the citizenry.
  - Follow our commissioned, published, and adopted comprehensive, professionally compiled master recreation plan, *within budgetary constraints*.
  - Commission, publish, and adopt youth coordination of activities, including youth comprehensive planning and oversight through a youth advisory board.
  - Identify other means by which governmental entities or private-sector parties can act as contributors to the projects and the amount of cash (or other

value, credits, guarantees, or in-kind services) the City can receive from other entities, such as use of school board, parish and other private recreation and cultural assets.

- Identify criticisms of any business plans, land-use issues, purchase price (if any), construction price valuations, or financing structures.
- Identify the real and substantial obligations of any partners to provide a proportionate return to the City of Alexandria at some point in the future, when partnering is contemplated. How?
  - Identify a conservative estimate of the economic development, workforce development, and promotion to Alexandria and the region a fully operational and *expanded* entity brings to the table—including expansion of activity already in existence.<sup>2</sup>
  - Identify whether there exists proportionality, which is the critical factor for the public body to give its funds or property. Since this involves taxpayer money, the City of Alexandria has a fiscal responsibility to ensure fairness to all.
  - Identify the commercial efficacy showing the endeavor involves a nearly equal benefit to the citizens compared to the money or property expended or sought to be used by the public entity; and the fair market value dollar-for-dollar match the plan involves with a continuing program or relationship.
- Identify any history of success stories.
- Identify the “public purpose” behind the aid to the potential partner in terms of incentives. Is there a justification since incentives inherently favor one business over other competitors? What is the benefit to all citizens versus whether such a pledge of City assets or funds benefits the person or entity disproportionately to the benefit to the overall community?

#### *The City Contribution and Cost-Benefit Equation*

The City makes the following general statements regarding requests for permanent or long-term funding of recreation needs. One official once characterized the dilemma as follows: “We can just about afford to build anything; it is operating and maintaining it that confounds us.” This statement was true then and remains the quandary for cities today,

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<sup>2</sup> By “expanded entity,” we mean any partner or a City program that is increased to attract more participants than as “base-lined.” For example, programming creating potential overnight guests creates a justification on economic development grounds, and, if the economic value capture is greater than the City investment (the cost of the expanded programming or capital structures, or both), then the investment makes good community sense. Consider: the Girls’ Softball World Series and summer youth programming.

depending on the relative strength of their tax bases. For Alexandria, the tax base truly supports a healthful capital projects program along with great bonding capacity and financial strength. However, the cost to maintain structures is an entirely different question for cities—and that includes Alexandria.

Consider the following policy points:

- With regard to new capital structures, the City can mostly absorb these costs over time. Providing at once for a number of large projects usually involves borrowing funds and “bonding” those capital expenditures out over twenty or so years with the sales tax or property tax base providing the platform for repayment, i.e., dedicating a revenue stream directly to an activity. Sometimes, fee generation can add support and be considered a long-term support basis. Less dependably, there are grants available for capital and operational uses—and usually these grants must be used for one or the other, have restrictions on stacking with other grants, and are not permanent.

There may even be specific activity funds to use for specific projects, such as targeting at-risk youth. And, finally, least favored by staff, there are impact fees that can be used to allocate the burden of cost on an activity by “assessing” the community cost or “unfair” benefit.

Consider:

- **The City’s Use of Pre-Trial Intervention Funds (“PTI”)(the “Pilot”).** In order to provide support for any consideration for long-term capital and operational funding (i.e., asking voters to pass a recreation tax), the City considered what style and manner of programming for summer needs might be available. The legal and community services divisions teamed up to provide meaningful, measurable programming and demonstrate the City’s commitment to finding unconventional dedicated funds for recreation.

In a world of decreasing support to non-governmental programming and available grant dollars, the City approved new programming reaching *at-risk* youth and general programming for all youth funded in part by the City and in part by non-governmental partners for the 2013 summer pilot. The data from this program were provided to the City Council December 10, 2013. More than 150 children were served by professional-level, part-time support with minimal funds, in part justifying the *Lose* and Administration positions that dedicated City personnel directed toward programming (and not merely maintaining properties) provides a better return on investment than “consulting out” recreation services in the so-termed “de-centralized” fashion the City operated under for much of the 1990s until after 2006.

- **The City’s Direction and Oversight of *ALEXRIVERFÊTE* and the 2013 Girls’ Soft Ball World Series Tournament.** Separate reporting already has been provided,

and in each of these cases the resources of the City allowed for independent growth and “freedom” to the private sector in co-hosting events with the City, while the City almost exclusively provided the “umbrella” marketing, plan and logistical implementation, direction of field personnel, and facility-management services throughout the events but with the individual and existing festivals or youth organizations empowered to control the events and maintain individual brands and responsibilities. The private sector was able to drive its car with an exemplary roadway of support by the City of Alexandria.

The success of both events was unprecedented, demonstrating the capability of a City staff if empowered and possessing the proper expertise. In order to provide for these types of high-level service events, Community Services has shown it can supervise and direct for future events a permanent staff composed of individuals with specific marketing and recreation expertise. Templates for how to handle future events, from planning to execution, have been developed.

- **The Citizens Already Have Made This Finding and Determination for City Personnel.** The Alexandria Home Rule Charter, § 4-10C provides relative to the use of internal resources and staffing for community services and recreation, as follows:

**“The director of community services shall direct and be responsible for programs of athletics; recreational activities; cultural activities such as libraries, concerts, art museums and exhibits; parks and playgrounds; and other leisure time and cultural activities and functions of the city.”**

- When the staff recommends capital investments, it considers the size of the capital expenditure and what programming, if any,<sup>3</sup> is necessary, as well as whether the programming is: (i) top notch, (ii) results driven, (iii) able to be measured as to those results, (iv) in place for a sufficient period of time to serve a public purpose and to provide a commensurate and proportionate return in exchange for the public expenditures, and (v) fair to all concerned.<sup>4</sup>
- On the question of feasibility, the City needs to determine whether the items listed above as (i)-(v) can be met, at which locations, and through what public-private partnering mechanisms they are best achieved. This is illustrated graphically as follows:

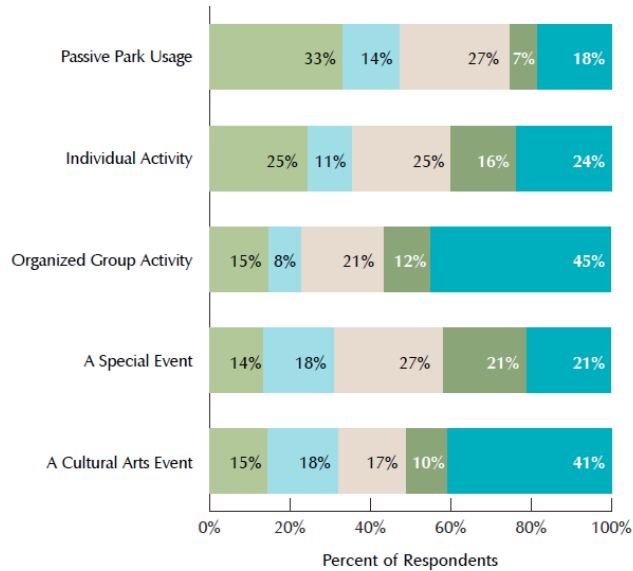
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<sup>3</sup> For example, passive-use parks require little if any programming.

<sup>4</sup> Centrally, this inquiry asks whether the targeted consumers of the recreation activity are being reached, and then views the investment as compared to all city recreation consumers. In other words, are assets being fairly allocated?

Using the list below, rank how often you take part in the following park programs:

- Very Often
- Sometimes
- Not at All
- Often
- Almost Never



Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.

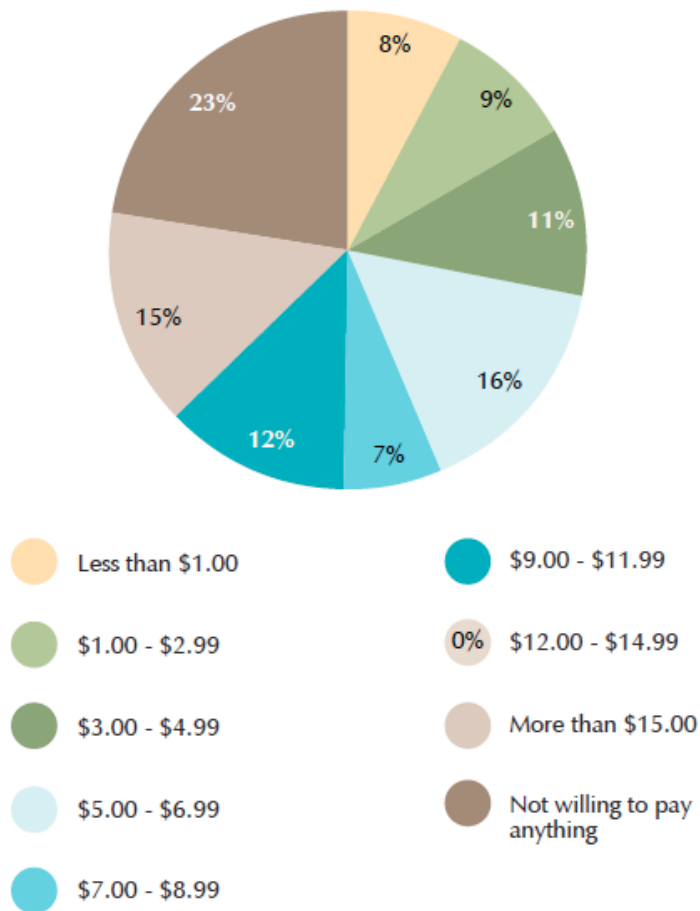
- With regard to new operational costs, the City must be very careful and vigilant about estimating any increase to operational and maintenance responsibility associated with the new capital improvement. *Remember: we can build it, but can we maintain it?*

Consider:

- **The City’s SPARC Program Provided Capital Improvements, such as the “Land of the Jaguar.”** The project was provided within the existing zoo footprint, optimized and corrected costly and defunct/failing infrastructure, was environmentally conscious, and did not increase operations and employment needs.
- Since 2009, we committed to a timeline of activity beginning with comprehensive planning and feasibility. We have engaged in cost assessment through *Lose* and an opportunity-cost assessment through *Lose*, Community Services, and Public Works.
- Here is what we know now:
  - The current Community Services budget simply cannot provide the permanent operations and maintenance funding to cover a material amount (5-10%) of new capital structures relative to the current budgeting.

- On the continuum of options, *Lose* cautions that the City must consider increasing recreation programming by making it more fee-driven (which tends to exclude some beneficiaries) or property-tax driven (which includes more but places the cost burden on a smaller portion of users), or some combination of the two that fairly allocates costs and benefits.
- Of course, a balanced approach is best, and there is a less quantifiable but clearly definable benefit to property owners—whether they comprise a large percentage of recreation consumers or not. Expert opinion varies, but many health and community wellness experts tell us that having top-notch programming helps reduce poor and aberrant health outcomes and reduce negative offender behaviors; builds a better quality of life to attract our children to stay or come home; and brings new investment. Here we state what citizens said about their willingness to pay for top-notch recreation planning and activity:

**How much would you be willing to spend per month to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities?**



*Note: Because of rounding, these totals may not add up to 100.*

- For perspective, every mill brings about \$363,000. One mill is \$10 per \$100,000 in property value. So, 2.15 mills (which was public safety tax that just rolled off) would net \$780,000 per year and 3 mills about \$1.1M per annum, that is \$21.50 per \$100,000 and \$30 per \$100,000, respectively. This means according to *Lose*:
- “Based on the statistically-valid survey, 61% of City residents, (10,932 households) would be willing to spend \$5.00 more per month per household, or **\$60.00 per year**, to support new and/or improved park programs and facilities.”
- With regard to dedicated property taxes, *Lose* said:

### **Dedicated Property Tax**

Alexandria presently has no source of dedicated funding for major repairs, renovations, or improvements to park facilities and recreation amenities. The lack of adequate capital investment threatens the quality of these assets and the situation will likely worsen over time. A dedicated property tax would generate stable annual funding to support the ongoing capital needs of the park system.

### *The Commitment—What is the City Going to do with My Money?*

The City intends the following:

- **A Top-Notch Staff Responsible for Programming and Economic Development.** The City adopts the *Lose* findings, within budgetary constraints, regarding programming areas to accent for maximum benefits. Initially, we estimate funding about 50% of the recommended positions. Stated another way, we think the best practice is to use the new funds, or as combined with existing funds, as follows: 35% for new capital outlay, 35-45% for new positions, and 20-30% for programming.

Consider these *Lose* areas of benefit:

### **Community Programming Benefits**

A well-rounded and diverse parks and recreation department provides many benefits to the community it serves. As discussed in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association publication, “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines,” the four categories of benefits are personal, economic, social and environmental. Each benefit is consequential to the community and has specific rewards.

- **Personal benefits** of a comprehensive delivery system include: a full and meaningful life, good health, stress management, self-esteem, positive self-image, a balanced life, achieving full potential, gaining life satisfaction, human development, positive lifestyle choices and improved quality of life.
- **Economic benefits** include: preventive health care, a productive work force, big economic returns on small investments, business relocation and expansion, reduction in high-cost vandalism and criminal activity, tourism growth and environmental investments that pay for themselves.
- **Social benefits** include: building strong communities; reducing alienation, loneliness and anti-social behavior; promoting ethic and cultural harmony; building strong families; increasing opportunity for community involvement, shared management and ownership of resources; and providing a foundation for community pride.
- **Environmental benefits** include: environmental health, environmental protection and rehabilitation, environmental education, environmental investment, increasing property values and insurance for a continuing healthy environmental future.

These employees would be composed of full-time and part-time employees charged with administering the programming. These employees would replace the costly, wasteful, and logistical problems with multiple organizations administering programming of publicly owned assets—and, at times, profiteering occurring with public assets that falls short of community needs and best practices. Accountability is increased in this model with clear lines of supervision and communication, as well as a duty to provide uses consistent with published policy through public appeals processes in the case of disagreement.

Consider these *LOSE* findings:

**Current Organization Analysis**

The structure of the City's parks and recreation services is different from most that the team has analyzed. The separation of parks maintenance from the recreation programming component, the sports tournament recruiting function (performed by Convention and Visitors Bureau staff), the golf course and zoo does not create an environment for coordinated programming efforts, and can sometimes create issues regarding priority of maintenance, need for specialized care at certain facilities and response to specific needs with respect recreation programs and City goals. This type of organization structure creates an environment where each group operates independently and does not promote cross training or maximize utilization of staff. Overall, this arrangement is very unique when gauged against other agencies analyzed nationally and a more unified approach to the delivery of recreation services is needed.

These proposed personnel are also responsible for providing a single front door with clear points of contact to outside interests in bringing tournaments and programming that have an economic impact to the community.

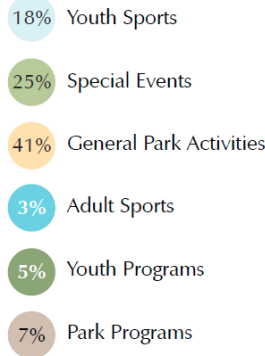
Estimated costs for top-level programming is at least the current community services budget plus \$500,000 per year in positions and programming.

A youth advisory council and master plan will solidify the work and make it accountable to a primary consumer group.

- **A Proposed List of Funding for Recreation and Leisure Activity Capital Priorities and Life-Cycling.** The City relies on the following community input data in order to rate capital and operational projects for purposes of this paper. The first graph represents what persons have participated in from roughly 2004-2009.



The next graph represents what persons indicate as their favorite activity in recreation and parks.



What follows is the past seven-year commitment to these capital ideals by the Administration and ultimately City Council in adopting projects:

**Major Park Improvements**

2006-12.18.2013

**SPARC - \$8,756,556.00**

Council District	Project Name	Phase	Contractor	Status	Amount	Completion
3	Frank O. Hunter (Phase 2)	Loss	TL CONST. CONTRAC	\$ 1,051,000.00	Contract being Executed	Construction is on schedule - Completion March 2014
	SCOPE & CONCEPT			100% CoA	will review and comment.	
City Wide	City-wide Park Signage	Jeff Carbo	Petron	CONSTRU	\$ 270,000.00	Construction underway
	SCOPE & CONCEPT - Gateway Initiative & Wayfinding - WTD			100% CoA		98% Complete
3	Frank O. Hunter (Phase 1)	Loss & Ad	KDC	CONSTRU	\$ 1,600,000.00	Contractor constructing parking areas
	SCOPE & CONCEPT			100% CoA		95% Complete
City Wide	City Wide Park Improvements	Loss	Petron	COMPLETE	\$ 1,755,000.00	Project is Complete
	Acadian, MPAT and City Park				100% CoA	
2	HDQ Park Walking Trails	COA Eng	Petron	Complete	\$ 420,746.00	Project is Complete
					100% CoA	
1 and 3	City Wide Park Improvements	Loss	Petron	Complete	\$ 427,400.00	Project is Complete
	(Harmon Park, Cheatham Park)				100% CoA	
City Wide	Park Signage Masonic Drive	Carbo	Petron	Complete	\$ 137,400.00	Project is Complete
					100% CoA	
4	Zoo Festival Plaza	Carbo		Complete	\$ 395,000.00	Project is Complete
					100% CoA	
4	Land of the Jaguar	Torre Des	KDC Contr	COMPLETE	\$ 2,700,000.00	Project is Complete
	SCOPE & CONCEPT				100% CoA	

**Operation Fast Track - \$1,682,547.47**

City Wide	Recreational Park Improvements		Complete	\$ 1,273,637.53	Completed July 4, 2009
	(Spray Pads)			100% CoA	
3	Acadian Park Drainage		Complete	\$ 408,909.94	Completed March 1, 2007
				100% CoA	

**TOTALS:**

<b>11</b>	<b>Major Recreation Asset Projects</b>	<b>- Total Investment:</b>	<b>\$10,439,093.47 - *Since 2006</b>
1	Contract Phase	- Total Investment:	\$1,051,000.00
2	Construction Phase	- Total Investment:	\$1,870,000.00
8	Complete	- Total Investment:	\$7,518,093.47

**Park Improvements:** Citywide Park Signage, Frank O. Hunter Park, Acadian Park, MPAT, City Park, HDQ Walking Trails, Harmon Park, Cheatham Park, Alexandria Zoo Festival Plaza, Alexandria Zoo LOTJ

**\$10,439,093.47-Total, at least in part, Recreation Projects since 2006.**

With these data in mind, a proposed capital expenditure to complement programming might look as follows:

- I. Practice Fields for Soccer (1), Baseball (4) and Softball (2) \$2M
  - o ROW, land purchases
  - o Field construction
  
- II. Johnny Downs Meeting Facility (small building, soccer and baseball) \$100k
  
- III. Tennis and Aquatic Expansion (Aquatic Club, Links and City Park Courts)
  - a. Cover and repair 50M pool (\$500k)
  - b. Fix diving pool (\$100k)
  - c. Locker and Club facility X 2 (\$1.2M)
  - d. Tennis expansion at Links (\$200k)
  - e. Tennis Expansion at City Park (\$2M) \$4M

**Professional Partial Budgeting Estimates of \$4.438M toward a total of \$6.1M for Items I-III:**

Johnny Downs Sports Complex				
Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total
Parking lot improvements (at handicapped spaces)	1	ls	\$10,000	\$10,000
Soccer equipment improvements (goals and backstop nets)	1	ls	\$311,000	\$311,000
Concrete pads for soccer bleachers	4	ea	\$5,000	\$20,000
Concession/restroom building maintenance	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000
Backstop maintenance at softball complex	1	ls	\$50,000	\$50,000
Relocate batting cages	1	ls	\$18,000	\$18,000
5' Concrete sidewalks (for ADA accessibility)	1425	lf	\$25	\$35,625
Landscape enhancements (shade trees at soccer plaza)	1	ls	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Subtotal</b>				\$499,625
<b>Contingency (20%)</b>				\$99,925
<b>Design Fees/Construction Testing (8%)</b>				\$47,964
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$647,514</b>

Tennis Complex				
Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Total
Restroom/Pro-shop	1	ls	\$600,000	\$600,000
4 Covered tennis courts	1	ls	\$2,072,000	\$2,072,000
4 Outdoor tennis courts	1	ls	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>Subtotal</b>				\$2,872,000
<b>Contingency (20%)</b>				\$574,400
<b>Design Fees (10%)</b>				\$344,640
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$3,791,040</b>

- IV. Bringham Conversion Project—lazy river, parking and zoo recreation expansion \$3.9M
  
- V. Dog Park—Masonic Corridor \$50k

VI. Senior Citizen Park—Masonic Corridor	
a) walkability	
b) shuffleboard	
c) horseshoes	\$50k
VII. City Park Lighting, walking trail	\$150k
VIII. Cheatham Park—capital improvements	\$250k
IX. Civil Rights Memorial Park Match	\$500k

EXPENSES:	\$11M
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REVENUE:	\$11M
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SPARC/other Funding:	\$5M
Amortized Tax:	\$6M

2.15 mills:	20 years:	\$15,600,000	(\$780k@annum)
2.50 mills:	20 years:	\$18,150,000	(\$907k@annum)
3.00 mills:	20 years:	\$21,780,000	(\$1.1M@annum)

**3. Next Steps and Actions to Date:**

The *Lose and Associates* 2009 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan concluded its public input as follows:

**Summary of Public Input Findings**

The completion of public input brought about consistent themes throughout the various stages of the process. While some input forums had stronger desires for specific facilities over others, the overall direction for future improvements was relatively parallel among all the groups. The priorities were also consistent with the deficiencies noted during the planning team’s analysis of the current parks and recreation system. The most consistent evaluation throughout the entire process was that it was time for the City to focus on renovating existing facilities, providing indoor recreation facilities, and providing a greater variety of programs and facilities.

The surveys were intended to further gauge the community’s desire for recreation facilities and programs. As with the public meetings, the top priorities were similar. A few priorities that had been highly desired in the public meetings did, however, receive a lower priority by survey respondents and vice versa. The public meetings are generally representative of current park users. The mail survey also includes non-users, which is why it is such an important component of the overall response.

Various funding solutions were discussed throughout the public input process. The response by survey participants was a desire to fund park projects through state and federal grants, but citizens may also support a bond program. The survey also points to support for dedicating funding to parks.

In conclusion, the people of Alexandria want programs that meet their needs and the needs of their families; they want indoor facilities; they want facilities that will provide a broader range of recreation opportunities; and they want more communication and information about Alexandria Parks and Recreation.

As outlined, the Administration piloted activity in 2013. Now, several items are scheduled to follow this report for implementation in the immediate term of 2014. Included in this schedule are increased **SafeAlex** activities, *AlexCorps*, and a summit to address permanent funding and other needs presented by this paper and the adopted comprehensive plan.

**Components.** The program components shall:

- a. Commence with a **SafeAlex** community report card and health Summit.
  - i. This program shall include how community health relates to crime prevention and overall quality of life.
  - ii. Alexandria will create a youth master-planning component. Out of this component, a mayor's youth board will be created.
  - iii. Alexandria will measure the continued implementation of part-time programming by the recreation specialists.
  - iv. The specialists and youth board shall make recommendations regarding the an overall infrastructure plan.
    1. There will be further recommendations made for the permanent funding structure.
  - v. Finally, the participants and youth *Alexandria Corps* shall have an indigence component for the availability of service scholarships, bus passes, and other *Alexandria Corps* scholarships—including offsetting program participation costs for qualifying youth and participants.
- b. The Summit plan may resemble the following:

**COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN**  
**Non-Governmental Partnerships**  
**Children and Youth**

- I. Adoption of City Goals Contained in the *National League of Cities* document, titled “A City Platform: For Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth”
  - Discuss and match how we meet four essential tasks
  - Discuss and match Key Action Steps to local organization action items
  - Other goals and plans
- II. Adoption of Agenda Plan of Action for Summit in First Quarter of 2014
  - Consider revisions to this agenda
  - Consider Agenda for follow up meetings
  - Consider who needs to be present

### III. Establish Timeline of Activity for Funding Pool

- Explain *Mayor's City Match Plan* idea and clearinghouse for best practice activity
- Set up turn around for this agenda's implementation
- Identify and Set up goals for Key Strategic Partners
- Identify community investors
  - Goals should include clear milestones for achievement by each Key Strategic Partner, *e.g.*, identification of funds each is responsible for achieving and/or how important stakeholder or community investor face time is achieved

### IV. Identify Next Steps

- Next meeting of Key Strategic Partners
- Subcommittee work/division of labor
- Identification of other strategic partners
- Identification of right match ups and meeting times with potential community investors
- Establish conservative, reasonable and attainable "fundraising" goals publishable to community investors
- Establish what a detailed operational year with proposed community and other investor funding as optimal, realistic and worst case looks like for NGO partners

### V. Identify other Key Stakeholders

- GAEDA
- APACVB
- FOTAZ
- The Rapides Parish School Board
- The Alexandria Police Department
- Pineville Civic and Government leadership
- The Rapides Parish Sheriff
- Faith-based community players
- Various foundations

### VI. Identify Key Community Players and Voices

- Identify specific players for political, cultural, and community influencing significance
- Solicit help

- Formulate common themes and voices
- Formulate a common brand for presenting to stakeholders
- Formulate a common brand for presenting to community investors

VII. Adopt Action Items for Stakeholders

VIII. Formulate Second Major Agenda: A Shared Community Vision for NGO partnering and the establishment of a single NGO-City partnership as “clearinghouse” for select activities (Agenda to Follow)

IX. Plan and Schedule Summit (Agenda to Follow)



## **1.0 - Introduction**

Throughout the nation, municipalities are beginning to understand the importance of involving young people in short-term and long-term planning as well as the implementation and organization of certain city programs and initiatives. Involving young people in the City's planning process ensures that the needs and hopes of the next generation are addressed and considered. Our City's young people are major stakeholders in the future of this City. It is imperative that City government recognizes and is capable of responding to the opinions of this stakeholder group, which accounts for nearly a quarter of our entire population.

## **2.0 - Purpose**

Alexandria Corps will help design recreation activity and the future of Alexandria as well as other initiatives working with the Youth Resources Coordinator and Master Plan Consultant in the creation of the Alexandria Youth Master Plan using three major pathways:

- Service** - Introduce civic engagement to a broad range of youth through short-term meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- Influence** - Encourage and train young people to participate in a variety of advisory roles and provide valuable input.
- Shared Leadership** - Enable youth to serve in positions of authority and as voting members on city boards and committees where they help to create policy.

## **3.0 - Scope**

- **Employ short-term volunteer programs throughout the City in a number of different areas** (i.e. volunteering at the Zoo, improving neighborhoods - noting needs such as blight - and aid SafeAlex.)
- **Partner with organizations to identify additional short-term volunteer opportunities both locally and regionally** (i.e. Boy Scouts of America, the Red Cross, and the Hope House).
- **Engage young people in the planning and implementation of the citywide development plans and strategies.**

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- Conduct a series of youth-oriented community meetings to determine how young people would like to see Alexandria develop.
- Establish the Youth Commission to take on project-specific tasks.
- Help the City to research, write, and propose specific ordinances (i.e. bicycle safety).

## **4.0 - Objectives**

**4.1.** Establish a Youth Commission - COA residents - 20 high school aged students

04 young adults between the ages of 20 & 30

02 adults - one School Board & one City Council

- Works with Youth Resources Coordinator and Master Plan Consultant to develop a Youth Master Plan.
- Focus Group of Young People to provide perspective and feedback on plans/projects.

**4.2.** Hold a series of meetings with young people, School Board officials, teachers, various stakeholders to assess present and future needs.

**4.3.** Determine which neighborhoods are being under-served and which programs and facilities are under-utilized.

**4.4.** Hire a consultant to facilitate the development of the Alexandria Youth and Family Plan through an open RFP process to conduct the process to allow city officials to be equal participants in planning, allow citizens to drive the process, and gain experienced insight.

**4.5.** Develop and Implement Alexandria Youth Master Plan to effectively coordinate the services, supports, and opportunities that youth need to thrive and develop a shared framework that ensures their healthy development. Achieving these objectives reduces fragmentation among individual agencies and organizations that are addressing specific issues, helps cities and schools make choices in allocating resources among competing priorities, and establishes a sustainable long-term strategy for improving outcomes for children and youth.



#### 4.5.1. Alexandria Youth Master Plan

**The goals of the Youth and Family Master Plan are youth driven and address the following areas:**

Behavior & Social Skills

Education

Employment

Health & Wellness

Leadership & Communication

Recreation & Entertainment

Transportation & Mobility

**Five key elements form the backbone of an effective youth and family master planning process. Each component is an integral part of the planning effort, and when neglected or ignored such efforts often falter.**

**a) Engage key stakeholders throughout the community.**

Engage community members and stakeholders throughout the process and involve residents in a series of community forums.

**b) Establish and promote a shared vision for youth.**

Develop and promote a shared community vision for children and youth.

**c) Assess needs and design comprehensive strategies.**

Evaluate what's working (i.e., strengths/assets on which to build) and what is not (i.e., biggest problems and challenges).

**d) Create a framework for shared accountability.**

Monitor key stakeholders after strategies have been crafted to ensure that new programs and policies are effectively implemented.

**e) Coordinate city, school, and other community efforts.**

Establish coordinating body to sustain coalitions and keep critical partnerships on track.



## **5.0 - Implementation Strategy**

Implementation should be focused on the following connective strategies:

- **Sustainability:** Ensure that programs and services can be sustained for the duration of their need.
- **Partnership:** Implementers should seek collaborators where possible to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of services.
- **Accessibility:** This includes communication to potential users, the economic resources of potential users, and transportation availability.
- **Skill Development:** Resources should be made available to enhance the skills of those responsible for implementing programs and for parents.

## **6.0 - Organizational Structure**

