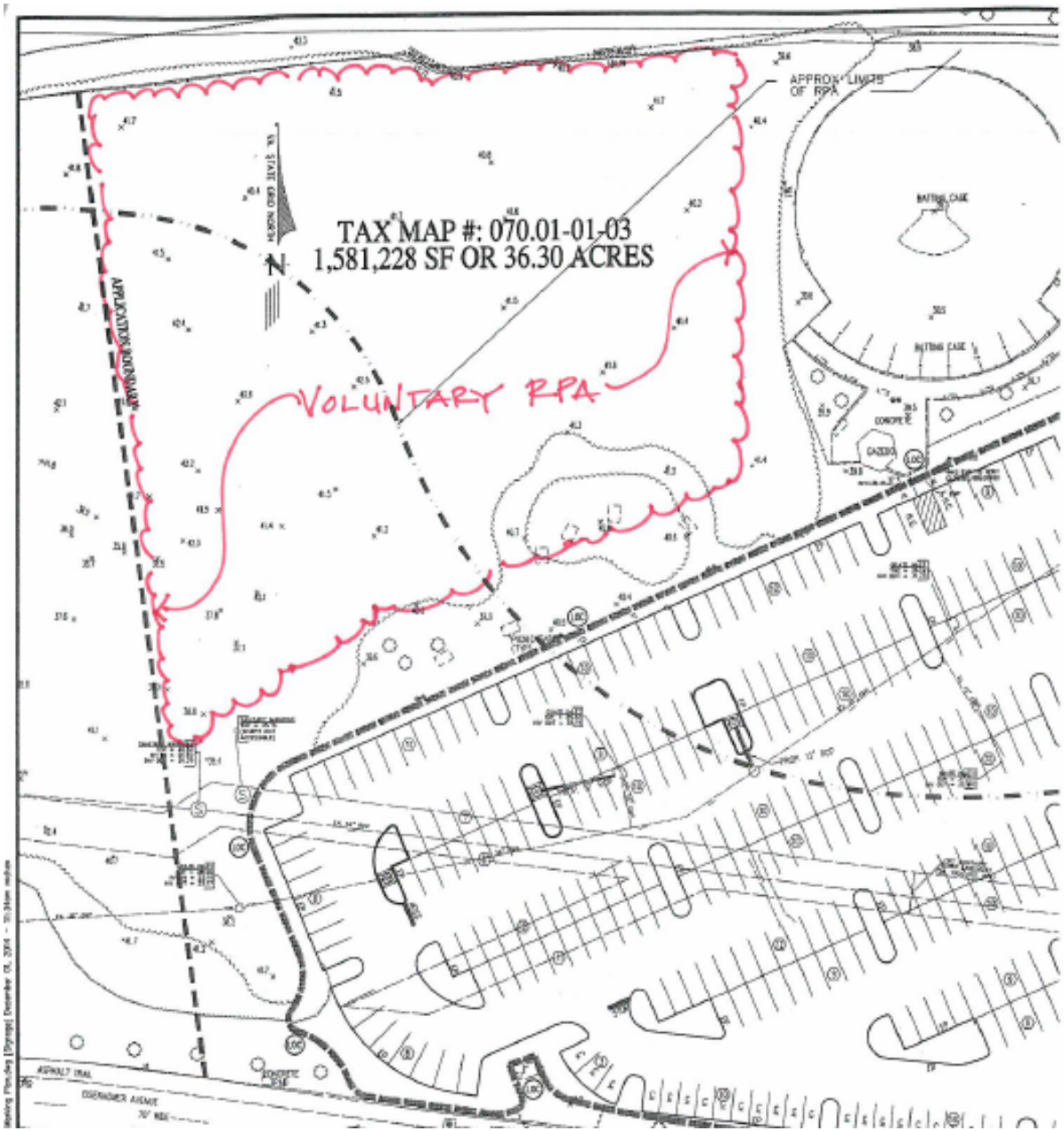
Cameron Run Area Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan

January 15, 2015

Proposed Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for the Cameron Run Area

Resource Protection Areas (RPA)

Proposed Use Zones



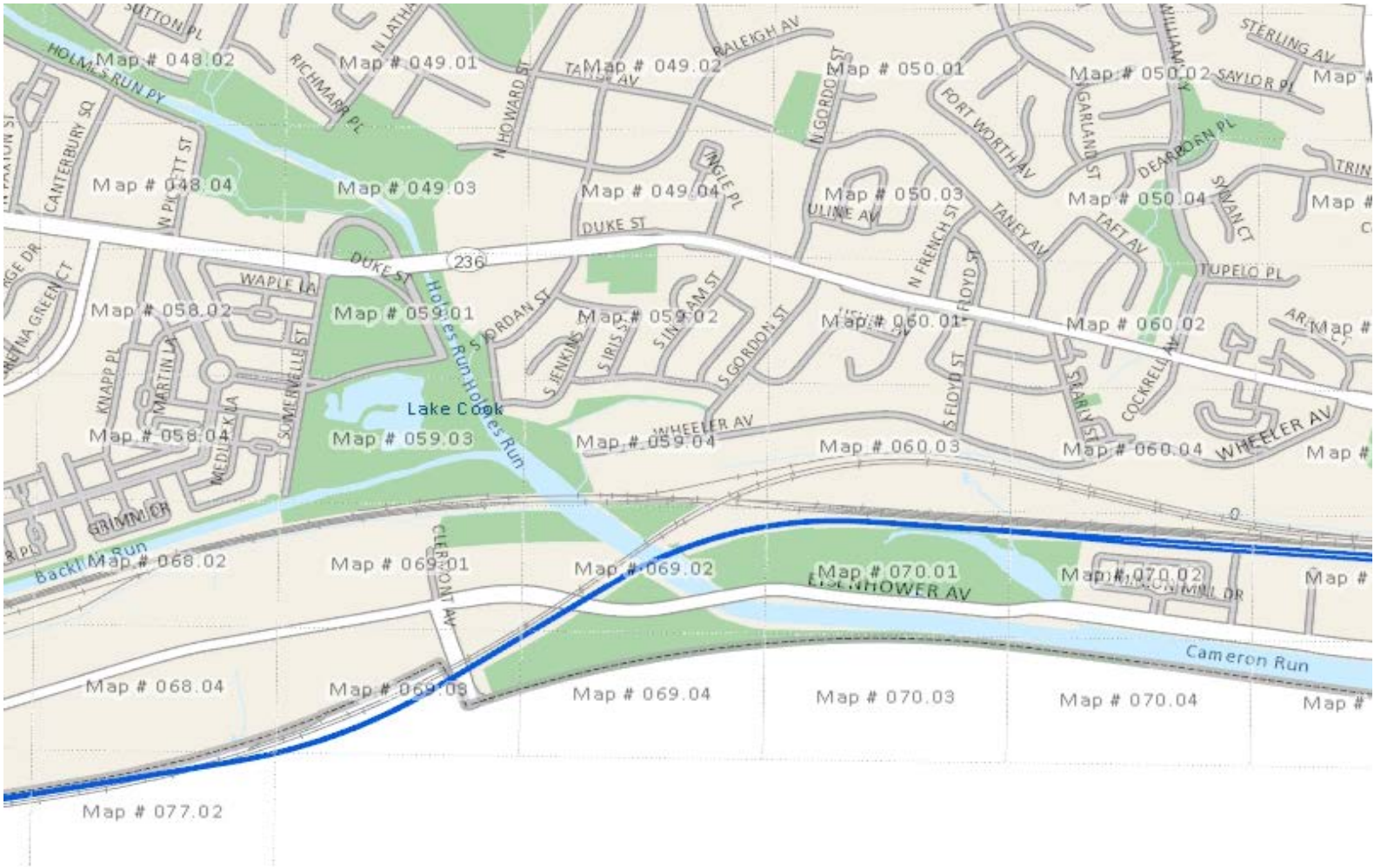
NOVA Parks proposed voluntary RPA for DSUP application

Natural History of the Area Summary

- Clermont Swamp Forest: uncommon to rare swamp forest type; largest stands of remaining Swamp White Oak in the City; only known site for Marginal Wood Fern.
- Clermont Natural Area: important natural area connector, wildlife habitat, and preserve of relic bottomland forest vegetation.
- Joseph Hensley Park: several acres of young, mesic woodland.
- Cameron Run Regional Park: rich, diverse, alluvial levee forest; old-age bottomland trees, only remaining station of rare community types including Smooth Beardtongue and Swamp Chestnut Oak; only known location in Alexandria for Beadle's Oak.

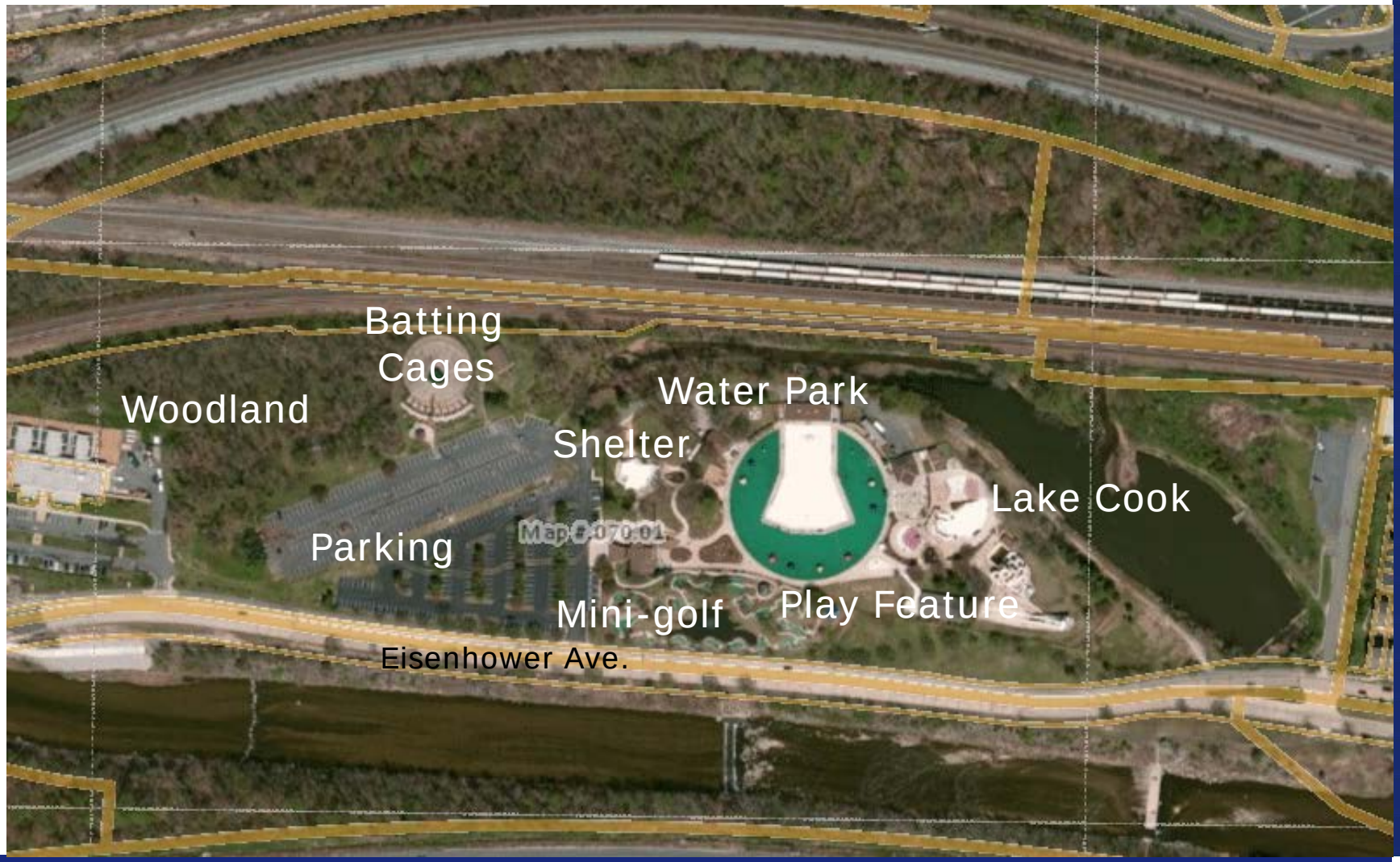
9. Hensley Park (red); Cameron Run Regional Park natural area remnants (orange); old Cameron Run chan

Cameron Run Area Parks and Open Space



Cameron Run Area Parks & Open Space

Cameron Run Regional Park Today



Background

- Alexandria is a member of a group of 6 jurisdictions that support the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks)
- The 6 member jurisdictions are: City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Arlington County, Fairfax County and Loudoun County.
- As a supporting member jurisdiction, Alexandria pays the Park Authority $652,472 annually.
- The lease was originally signed in 1981 and included Hensley Park, Animal Shelter site and City Mulch site
- The lease was modified over time to include the current Cameron Regional Park site
- NOVA Parks proposal to add new water feature and request for a 40 year lease extension

Background

City began a planning process for the park and open space area

Review of existing plans:

- Open Space Master Plan
- Urban Forestry Master Plan
- Eco-City Action Plan
- Citywide Parks Plan for Hensley Park

Background

City planning process for the park and open space area

- Coordination with related current planning initiatives in the area
  - Eisenhower West Small Area Plan
  - Stormwater Improvements, including the Lake Cook Retrofit Project
- Citywide Regional Park Needs Survey (Leisure Vision) to supplement 2013 City Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment
- Public outreach and public meeting
- Public Hearing with the Park and Recreation Commission

Citywide Regional Parks Survey

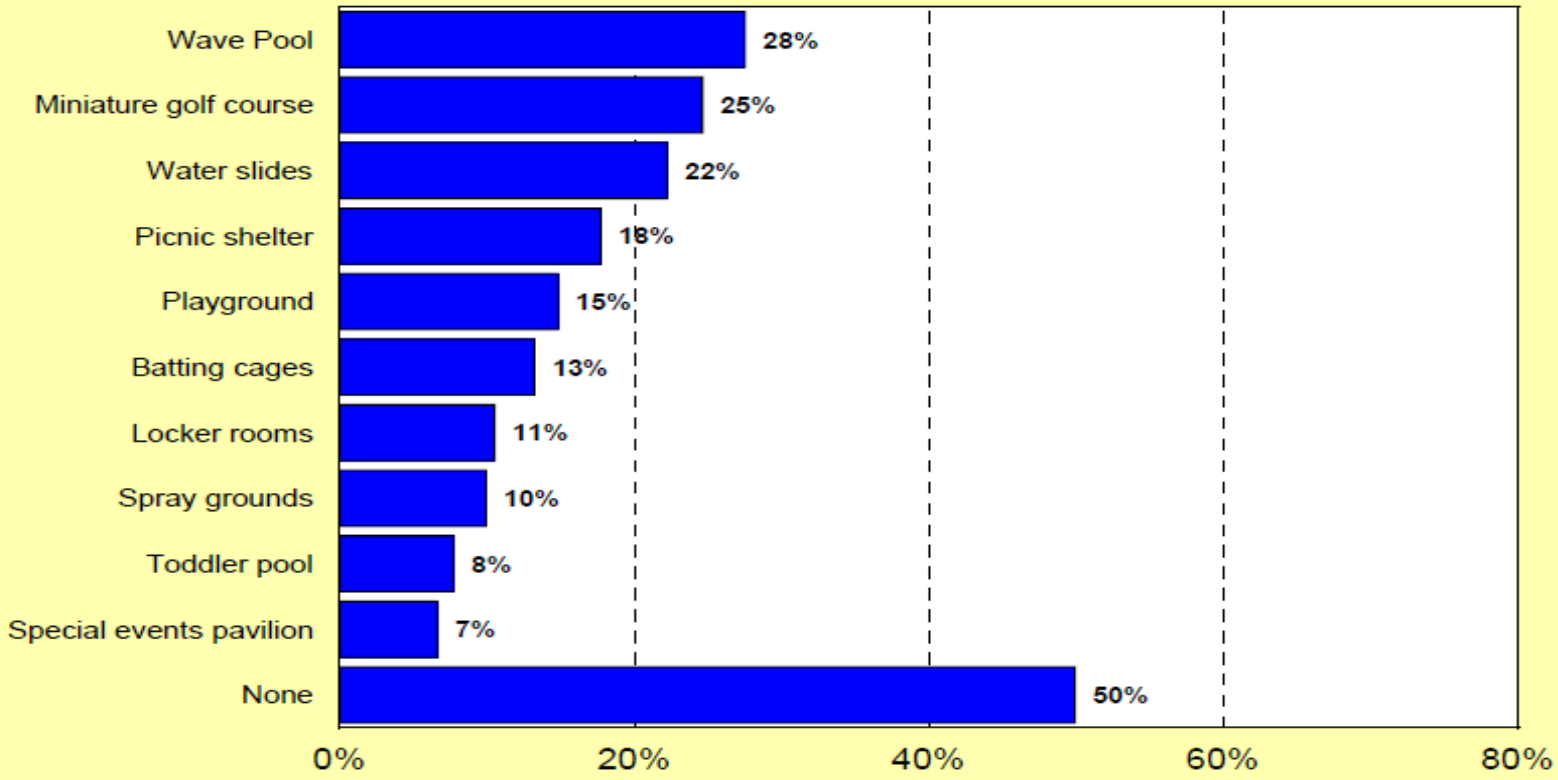
Cameron Run Regional Park Visitation:

- Fifty-five (55%)percent of households have visited Cameron Run Regional Park over the past two years
- Sixty percent (60%)of those visited 2-5 times over the past two years

Citywide Regional Parks Survey

Q5. Facilities Respondent Households Have Used or Visited at Cameron Run Regional Park Over the Past 2 Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections possible)



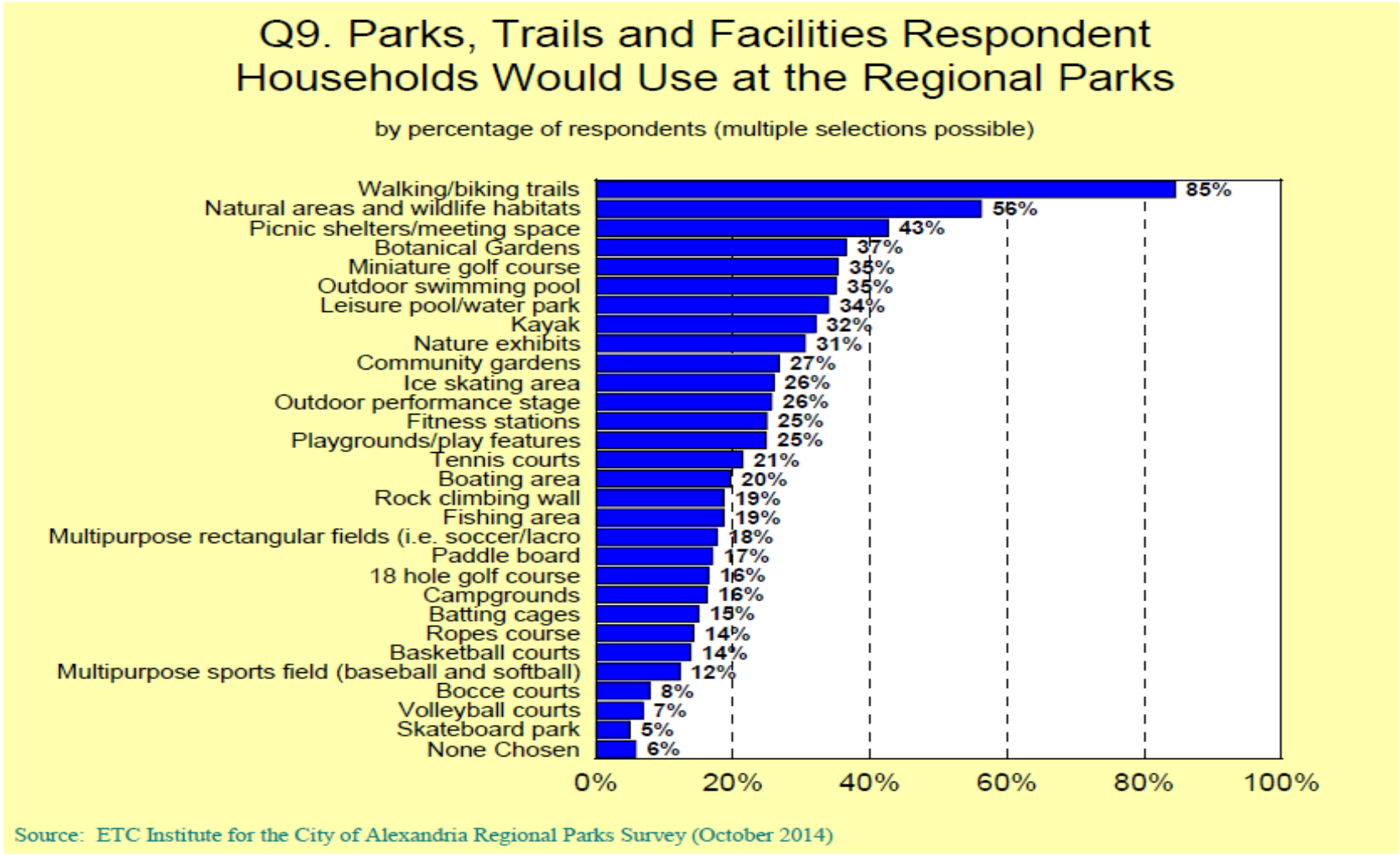
Source: ETC Institute for the City of Alexandria Regional Parks Survey (October 2014)

Citywide Regional Parks Survey

Parks, Trails and Facilities Households <u>Would</u> Use at Regional Parks:

- ❑ Walking and Biking Trails (85%)
- ❑ Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats ((56%)
- ❑ Picnic Shelters and Meeting Space (43%)
- ❑ Botanical Gardens (37%)
- ❑ Miniature Golf (35%)
- ❑ Outdoor Swimming Pool (35%)
- ❑ Leisure Pool/Water Parks (15%)

Citywide Regional Parks Survey

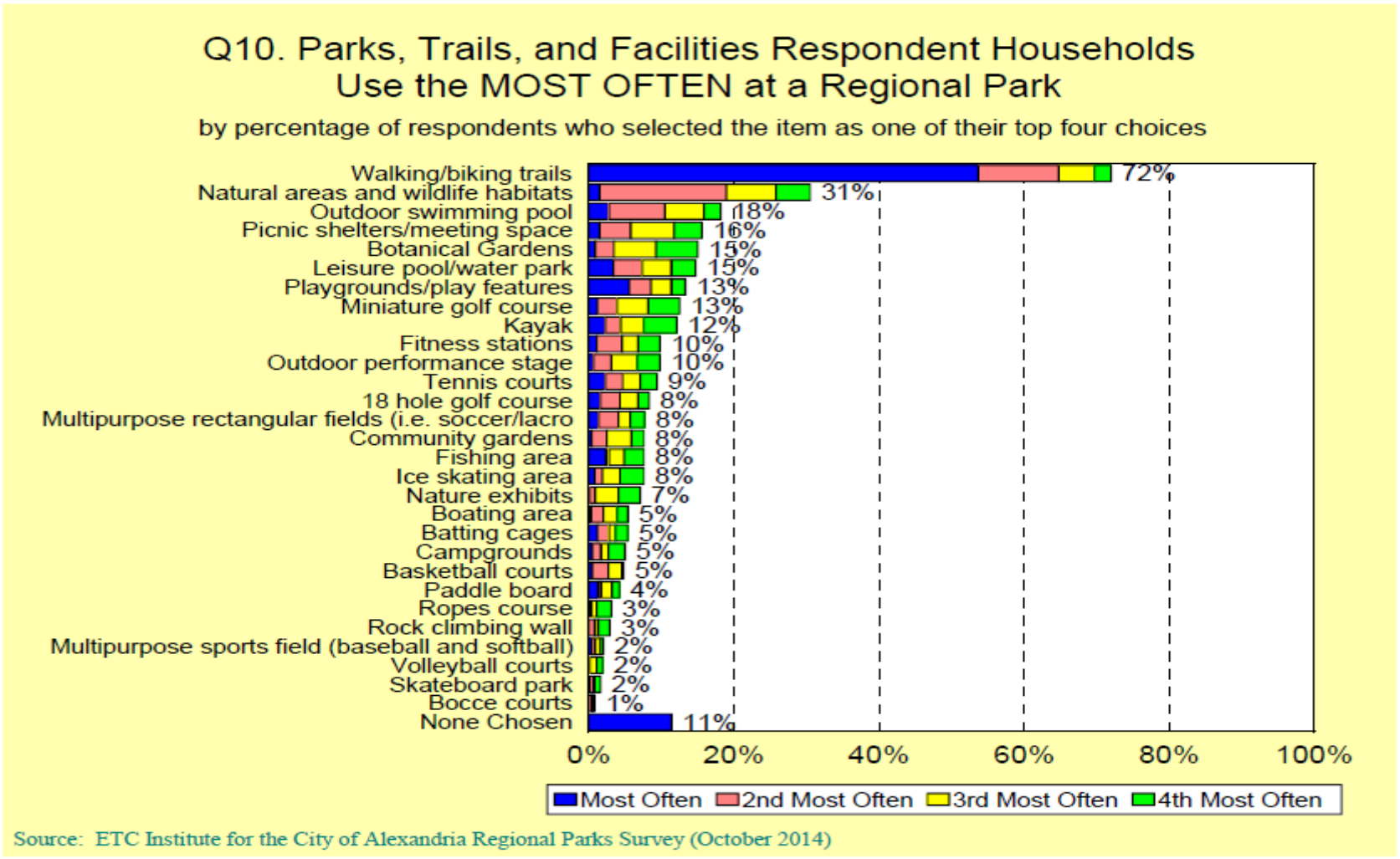


Citywide Regional Parks Survey

Top Four Parks, Trails, and Facilities Households Would Use Most Often:

- ❑ Walking and Biking Trails (72%)
- ❑ Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats (31%)
- ❑ Outdoor Swimming Pools (18%)
- ❑ Picnic Shelters and Meeting Space (16%)

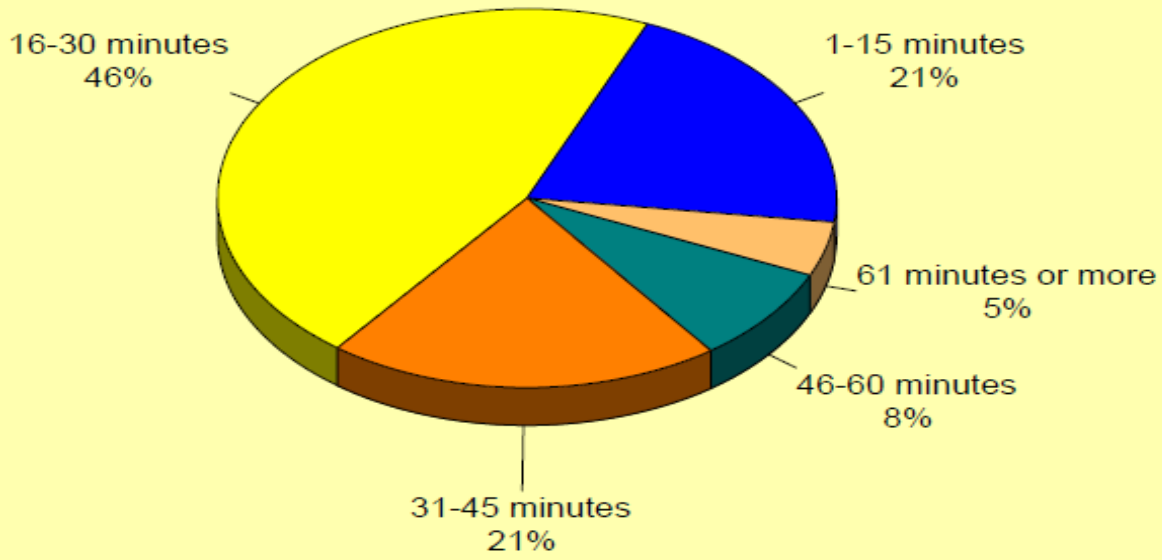
Citywide Regional Parks Survey



Citywide Regional Parks Survey

Q11. The MAXIMUM Time Respondent Households Would be Willing to Travel to a Regional Park to Use the Facility they Would Use the Most Often in Question #10?

by percentage of respondents

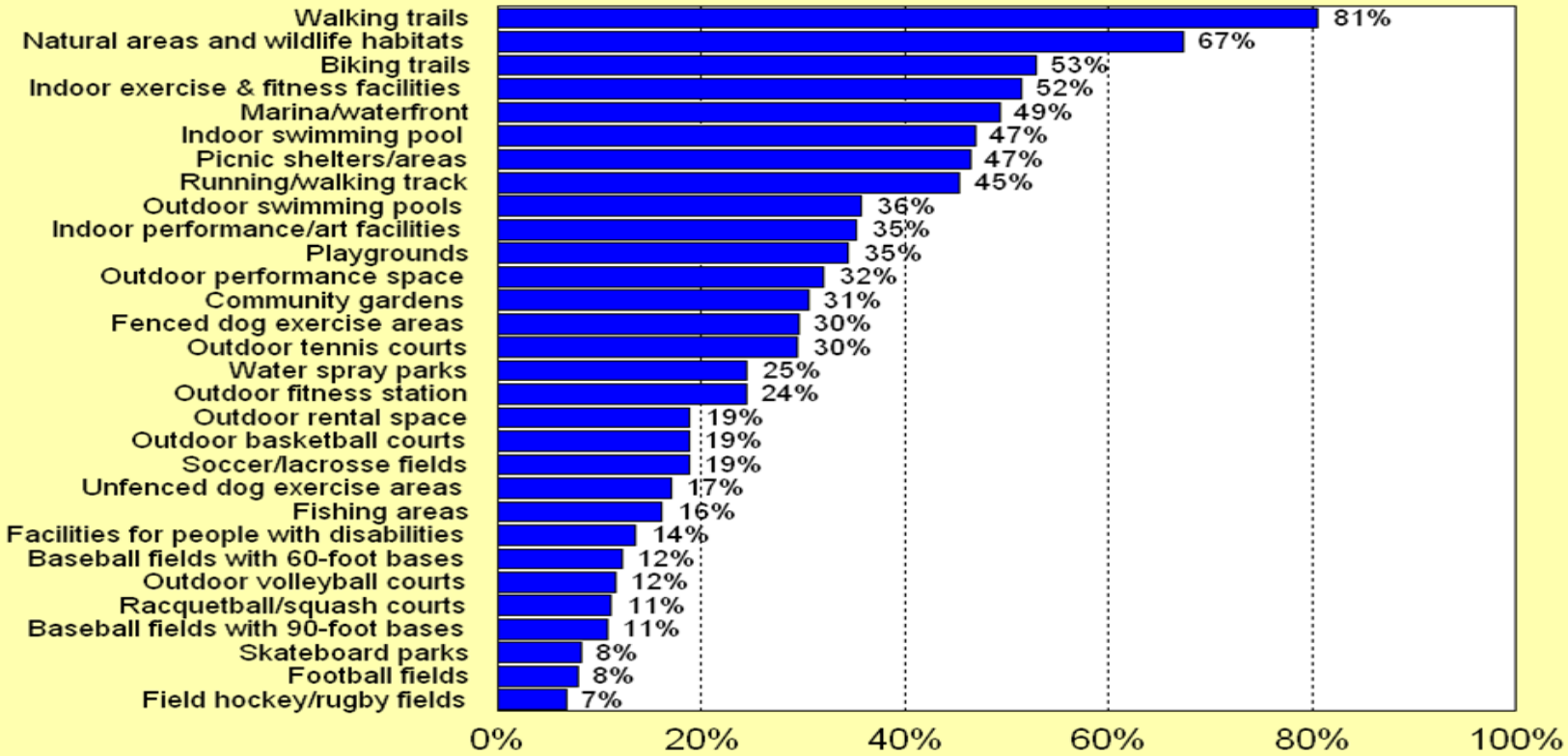


Source: ETC Institute for the City of Alexandria Regional Parks Survey (October 2014)

2013 Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment

Q5. Parks and Recreation Facilities Respondent Households Have a Need for.

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2013)

Public Feedback

- Limited parking with peak use at Hensley Park
- Limited parking with peak use at the Cameron Run Regional Park
- Eisenhower West planning poll identified protection of nearby parks and open space as a top priority
- Environmental Policy Commission and Arlington and Alexandria TreeStewards want to ensure protection of native woodland areas throughout the Cameron Run area
- Maintain the amount of parking adjacent to Lake Cook

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Feedback

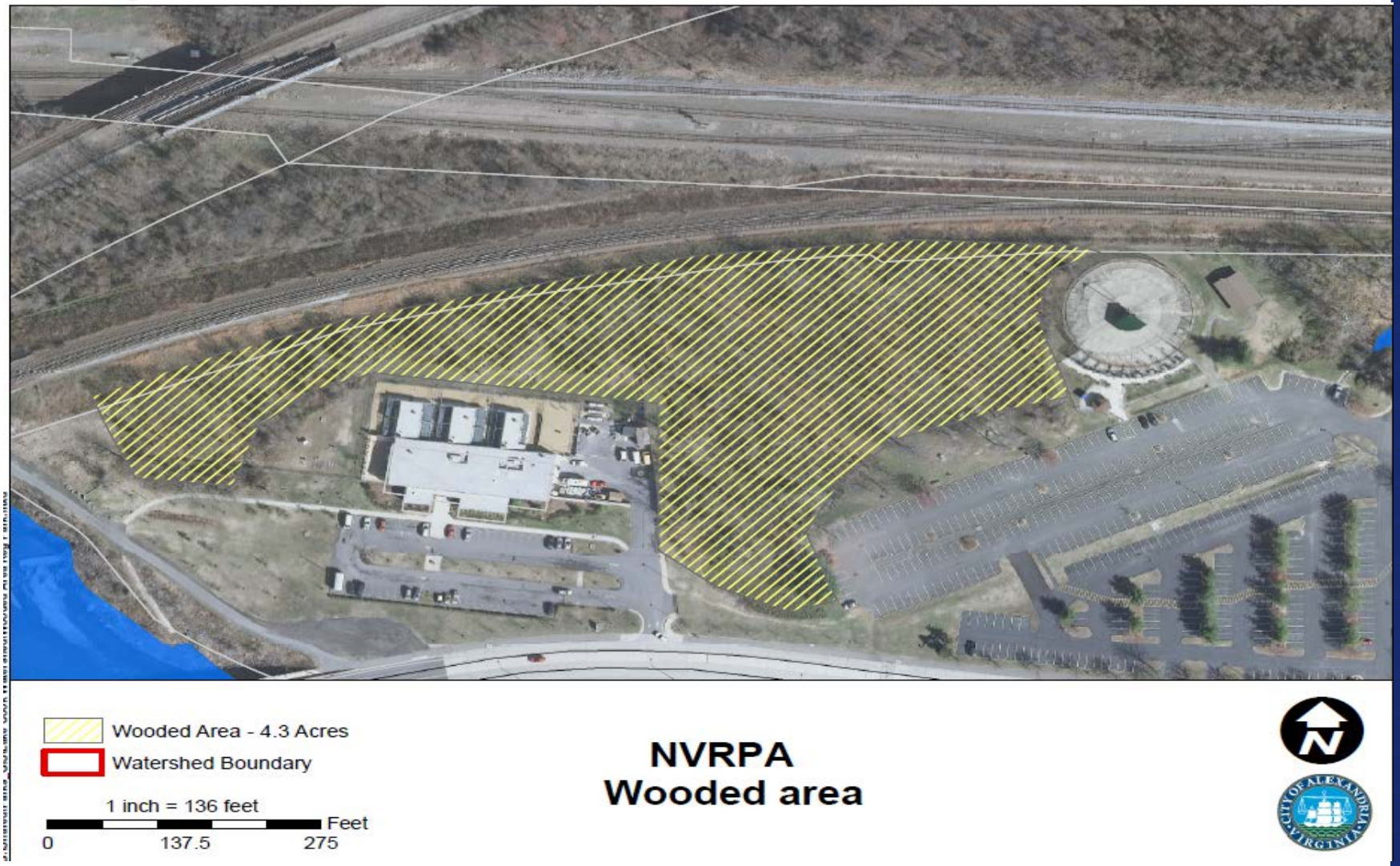
- Support Lake Cook improvements as long as there is no impact to Great Waves operations
- Nature Trails more appropriate for Clermont Natural Area, not on the Cameron Run Regional Park site
- Hope to maintain options for further expansion of Great Waves

Proposed Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for the Cameron Run Area

Key Plan Elements

- Active Recreation Areas: Section of Cameron Run Regional Park, all of Joseph Hensley Park, and City Mulch Site
- Nature Trail Connections: Clermont Natural Area, Lake Cook Loop, and Connection from Lake Cook to Holmes Run Trail
- Protect Natural Area and Passive Use Recreation Areas
- Improved Lake Cook with Enhanced Access

Proposed Protected Natural Area



Approved City Plans

Open Space Master Plan

- Goal 1:Protect existing natural resources and expand public education and enjoyment of them.
- Goal 4: Protect and Expand Stream Valleys and Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Goal 5: Create an Open Space Network in New Development Areas
- Goal 10: Link and Expand Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trail System
- Goal 12: Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas

Approved City Plans

Urban Forestry Master Plan

- Recommendation 1: Citywide tree canopy coverage of 40%

Eco-City Action Plan

- Goal 3: Protect and Enhance Alexandria's Open Space and Green Infrastructure Including Wildlife Habitat, Parks, Trails, Tree Canopy, and Watersheds

Next Steps

- Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation on the Coordinated Park and Open Space Plan for the Cameron Run Area
- Ongoing Implementation of the Citywide Parks Plan for Joseph Hensley Park, Holmes Run Park and Ben Brenman/Boothe Park
- Lake Cook Stormwater Retrofit Project Design and Implementation
- City Council Consideration of Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's Request for Lease Extension and Improvement Plan