



# Equity in Arlington County Open Public Spaces

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# OPS is:

- Open public space that does not have a dedicated / specific use.
- A non-exclusive public good.
- Benefits are available to all members of the community at most times.

# OPS offers:

- Improvements to residents' health and well-being, both physical and mental.
- Education opportunities.
- Improved child development.
- Social activities.
- Stormwater benefits.
- Better air quality.
- Lower surface temperatures.

# Equity:

- If we want policy to address inequities with respect to OPS and tree canopy resources, we need to identify underserved communities.
- We need to plan to address these communities' natural space and resource needs.

# Types of Inequities

We looked at “systemic differences in access” by race, residence type, income, APS student race. Most of “systemic differences in access” were concentrated in Orange Line, East Columbia Pike, National Landing, and Green Valley areas.

## **Income:**

- Access to tree canopy is highly correlated with income.
- Positive correlation between access to OPS and income.

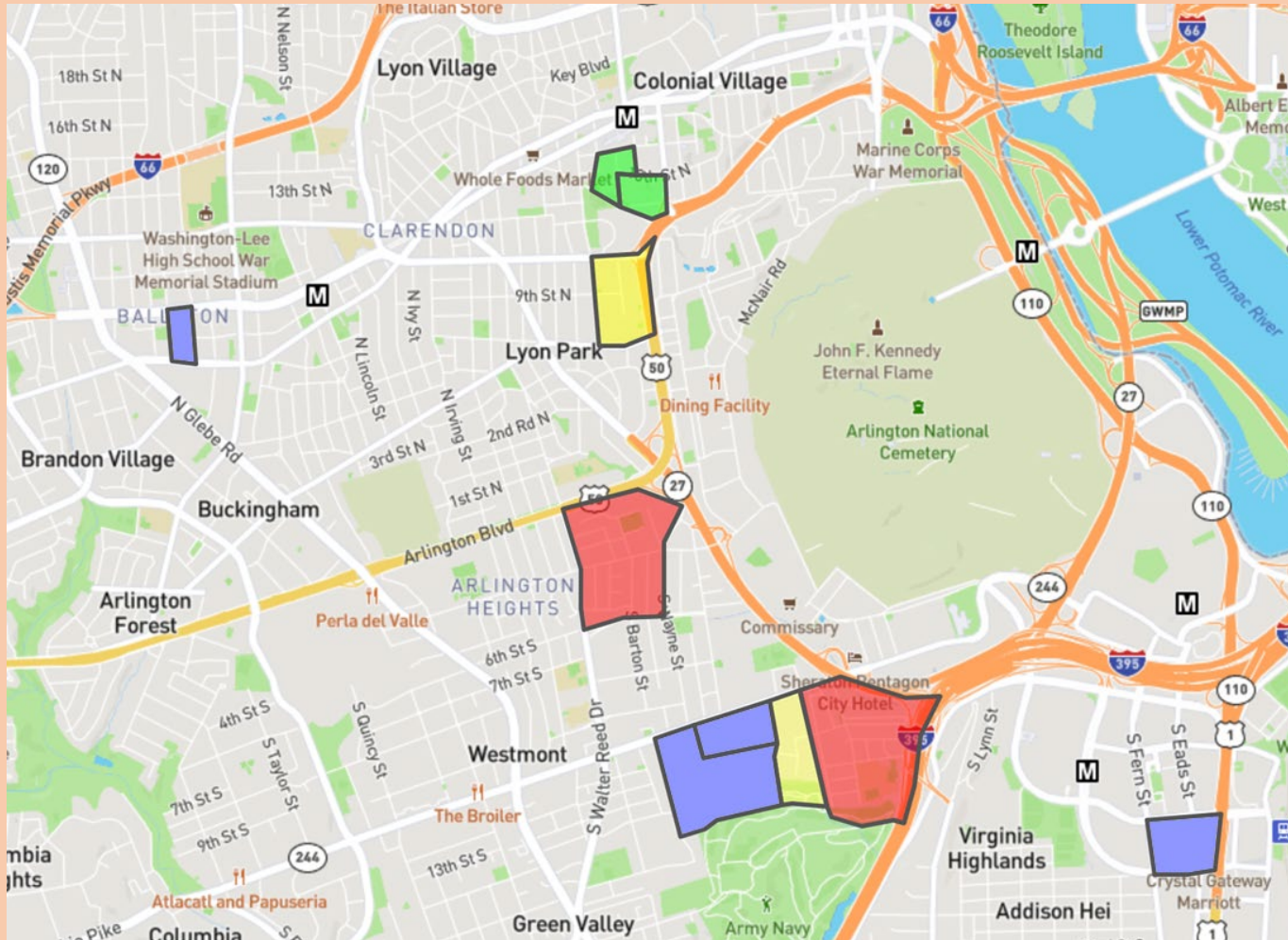
## **Residence Type:**

- High-rise residents highly disadvantaged access to both tree canopy and OPS.
- CAF tends to have pretty decent access to both, compared to market rate.

## **Racial Groups:**

- White elementary students live near much greater canopy than any other group.
- White and Hispanic community members tend to have slightly better access to OPS.

# 2020 Lowest Per Capita OPS



2020 10 lowest per capita OPS census block groups. Color indicates the underserved demographic(s) or group(s). Key:

- Green: Residence type
- Red: Income
- Yellow: Income, residence type
- Blue: Racial group, income, and residence type

# Steps to Increase OPS / Tree Equity

- Biggest gains in equity come from tree plantings, tree protection and new OPS in the four identified areas: Orange Line, East Columbia Pike, Green Valley, and Pentagon City / National Landing.
- Move away from a “lowest-cost” approach to a “cost-benefit” approach to buying land.
- Purchase land as often as possible and treat land holdings as a portfolio; missed opportunities to acquire land means that the land is probably gone **forever**.
  - You can shift land uses to address inequities, move county facilities and parks around to improve inequities.
  - Can trade land with the private sector as well to more effectively meet residents’ needs.

We evaluate 2019 PSMP and acquisitions since to see how and where county efforts are successful and where they need to be improved.

# 2019 Public Spaces Master Plan

Name	Acres	Income
Maury Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	0.96	\$224,327
Clarendon 10th Street Park <sup>1</sup>	0.97	\$159,167
Virginia Highlands Park Expansion <sup>1,2</sup>	0.23	n/a
20th Street South and South Ives St Park Expansion <sup>1,2</sup>	2.27	\$219,063
Benjamin Banneker Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	3.12	\$171,932
Madison Manor Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.56	\$171,845
Bon Air Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.66	\$211,750
Cherrydale Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.81	\$250,000*
Douglas Park <sup>2</sup>	1.29	\$65,833
Drew Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	0.32	\$42,936
Fort Scott Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.17	\$181,429
South Ives Street Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	2.49	\$181,429
Lang Street Community Gardens Expansion <sup>1,2</sup>	2.47	\$181,429
Glencarlyn Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	n/a	\$79,185
Jennie Dean Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	1.19	\$101,667
Shirlington Park Expansion <sup>1,2</sup>	1.41	\$101,667
Mosaic Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	0.65	\$127,651
Oak Grove Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.56	\$185,875
Penrose Square Expansion <sup>1</sup>	0.31	\$94,583
Tuckahoe Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.65	\$210,789
Glencarlyn Park Expansion #2 <sup>2</sup>	1.71	n/a
Powhatan Springs Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	0.74	\$128,487
Rocky Run Park Expansion <sup>1</sup>	0.21	\$63,064
Windy Run Park Expansion <sup>2</sup>	2.46	\$250,000*
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.22**</b>	

**Building “expansions” runs the risk of entrenching existing inequities.**

- *21.25 of the 26 acres* of planned parks are located in higher income areas.
- *About 22 acres* are located within SFH neighborhoods; 11 near apartments.
- Only one of these proposed developments is close to *Columbia Heights*.

**The process for the 2019 PSMP lead to planning for increased inequities.**

Sources: Arlington County [Property](#) database, [2019 PSMP](#), U.S. Census Bureau, and authors’ calculations. Acres are calculated by including parcels that appear consistent with the maps in the 2019 PSMP; these calculations are just estimates, however, and may differ from official plans. \* Median income is top-coded at \$250,000. \*\* Total is an approximate and does not include the Glencarlyn Park Expansion. <sup>1</sup>The park appears to be within walking distance to a building at least as dense as a garden apartment. <sup>2</sup>The park is located within a neighborhood of detached, single-family houses.

# Land Acquisitions Since 2019

Name	Acres	Income
Fort Scott Park (705 31st Street S) - purchase <sup>1,2</sup>	0.32	\$234,583
18th Street S (Dominion conveyance) <sup>1</sup>	0.23	n/a
27th Street Abandonment	0.18	n/a
Harris Teeter (950 S George Mason Dr) (public access easement) <sup>1</sup>	0.43	\$101,250
Three Oaks Park (1800 14th St N) (land conveyance) <sup>1</sup>	0.14	\$83,341
Jennie Dean Park (VDOT Right-of-Way land conveyance) <sup>1</sup>	1.65	\$137,379
Chestnut Hills Park (reduces the park by 4,128 SF) R-O-W deduction <sup>2</sup>	-0.09	\$157,069
Greenbrier Park (reduces the park by 5,869 SF) R-O-W deduction <sup>2</sup>	-0.14	\$157,069
Arlington Junction Park (S. Eads St. & Army Navy Drive - dedicated for park use) <sup>1</sup>	0.6	\$152,891
Short Bridge Park (land conveyance) <sup>1</sup>	2.32	\$114,145
Short Bridge Park (new public access easement recorded) <sup>1</sup>	0.30	\$114,145
Rosslyn Highlands Park (easement 21,947 SF + 9,000 SF (playground)) 0.71 acres - reduces the park by 21,325 SF <sup>1</sup>	-0.49	\$99,327
Zachary Taylor Park (4582 N. 26th Street - Anne Terborgh estate - land dedication) <sup>2</sup>	0.92	\$161,875
Jennie Dean Park (3520 and 3522 S. Four Mile Run Dr.) - purchase <sup>1</sup>	0.15	\$137,379
VDOT Property – purchase <sup>2</sup>	7.50	Very high
Water Park (public use and access easement)	1.38	\$117,007
Met Park (public access easement) <sup>1,3</sup>	2.47	\$169,167
Gateway Park (permanent easement obtained) <sup>1,3</sup>	3.69	\$193,971
Lang Street Garden (1128 28th St. S.) – agreement <sup>1,2</sup>	0.28	\$143,272
Center Park (public park easement, 1901 S Bell St)	1.03	\$186,681
Lang Street Garden (1126 28th St. S.) – agreement <sup>1,2</sup>	0.31	\$143,272
Lang Street Garden (2814 S. Arlington Ridge Road) – agreement <sup>1,2</sup>	0.29	\$143,272
Drew Park (2402 S. Kenmore St.) – agreement <sup>1,2</sup>	0.07	\$93,942

- Met Park and Gateway Park were already included in 2020 analysis.
- Biggest acquisition was in the richest, most sparsely populated part of county.
- Except for Fort Scott and VDOT purchase, most projects are closer to high-density residences.
- **Although deviated from the 2019 plan significantly toward more urban areas, resources are still tilted toward high income residents.**

Sources: data provided by DPR to Forestry and Natural Resources Commission. <sup>1</sup>The park appears to be within walking distance to a building at least as dense as a garden apartment. <sup>2</sup>The park is located within a neighborhood of detached, single-family houses. <sup>3</sup>This park was already in the 2019 analysis.



# Conclusions

- Land acquisition deviated substantially from 2019 PSMP, but efforts were still inadequate to address structural inequities.
  - Orange line: Losing space
  - Eastern Columbia Pike: None
  - Green Valley: Drew, Jennie Dean
  - National Landing: Water Park, Short Bridge Park, Center Park
- A number of acquisitions were in more urban areas, but Arlington still needs considerably larger investment in these areas.
- We need to plan to include target acquisitions to address inequity funding through budget, the CIP, and/or the allocation of surplus funding.
- The longer we wait, the more current inequities are going to increase and become more entrenched, which will make it even harder to solve them in the future.