

Cory Giacobbe – Parks



Natural Public Space

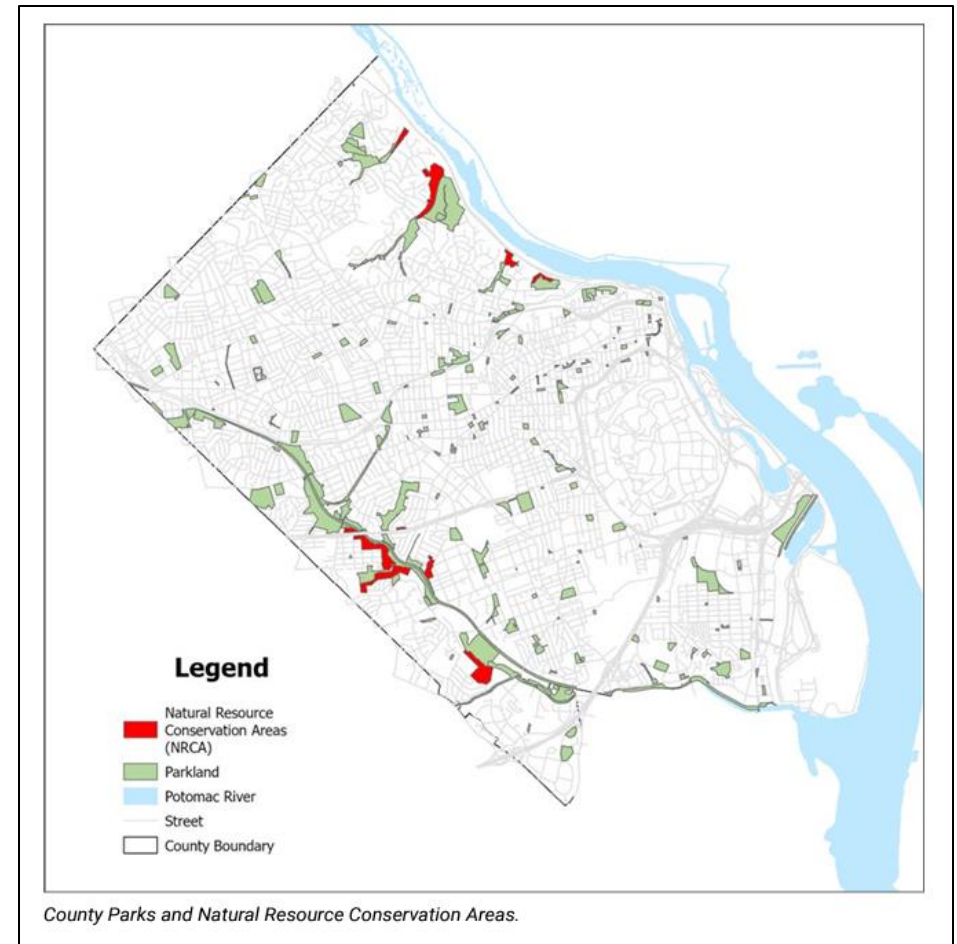
2023 Forestry and Natural Resources Plan:

3.1.1 EXPAND NATURAL LANDS IN THE COUNTY.

- The County should expand its prior commitment from zero-loss of County owned natural lands in the first recommendation of the 2010 NRMP, to expanding natural lands where possible.

3.1.2 UPDATE, MAINTAIN AND REPORT ON THE INVENTORIES OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE ON COUNTY-OWNED LANDS.

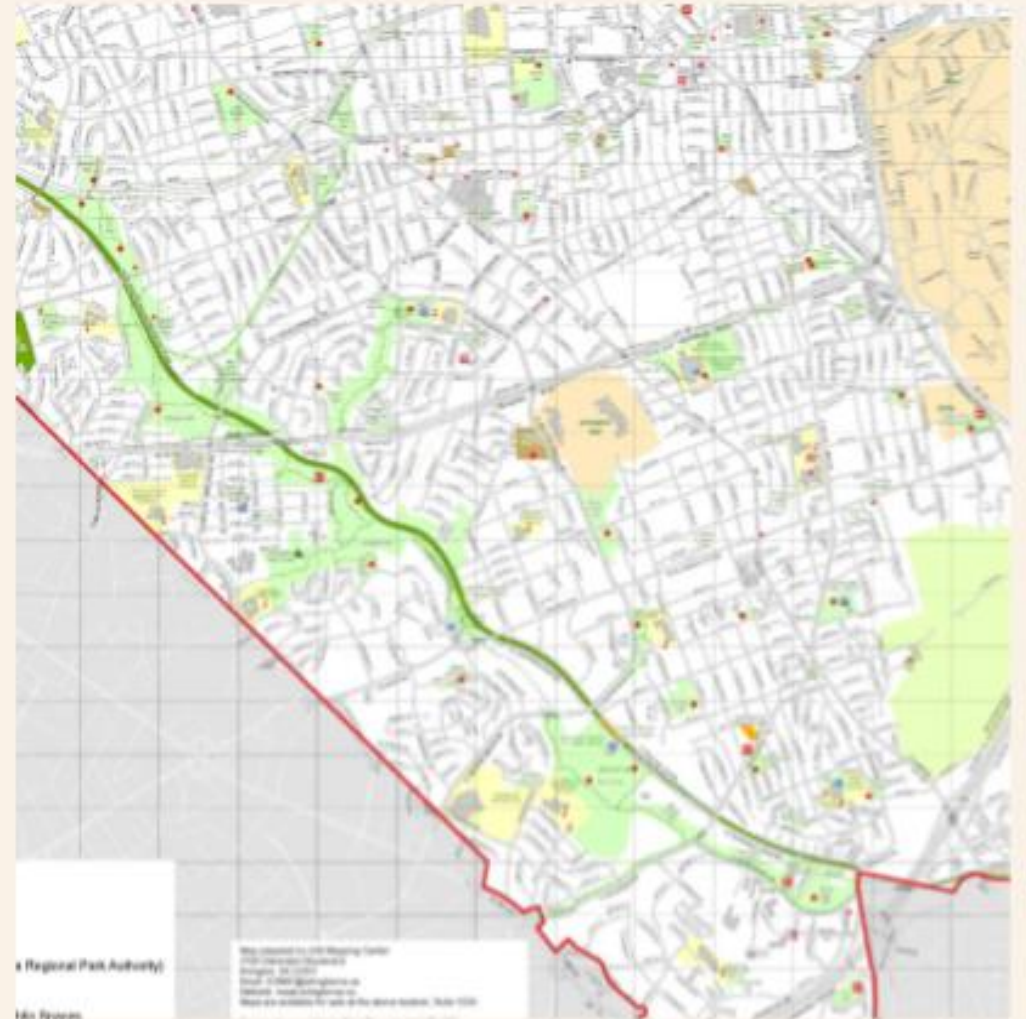
- The Natural Resources Inventory complements the County's tree canopy studies and is maintained in a geographical information system (GIS) and includes riparian buffers, seeps, springs, rare plants, native plant communities, wetlands and unique geologic resources.



History of Parks and Floodplains

Floodplain areas near streams in Arlington were acquired and converted into parkland to prevent issues with damage from flooding.

Source:Arlington RAMP Story Map



Valuing Parks and Open Space

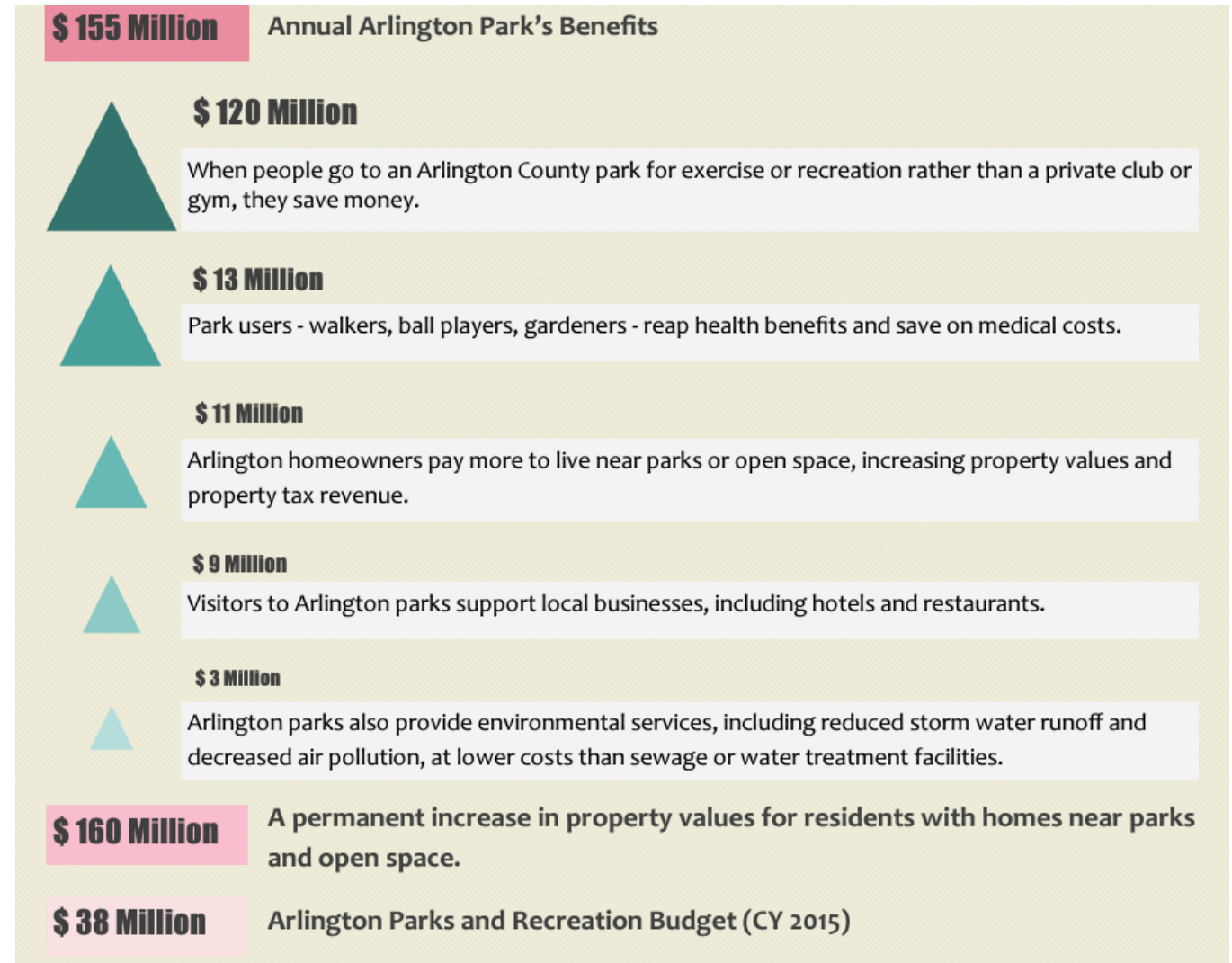
Park Benefits

- Outdoor Activity
- Creative Play
- Community Cohesion
- Mental and Physical Health
- Improved Air Quality
- Soil Conservation
- Reduced Water Pollution and Storm Runoff
- Habitat Preservation

Park Values

It is useful to quantify the human benefits and ecosystem services provided by open space relative the costs of maintaining and expanding parks.

* Estimates for Arlington based on Arlington park acreage and using a formula based on average benefits for 10 U.S. cities from studies by the Trust for Public Land. Estimates are rounded to the nearest million.



Examples of Open Space Benefits

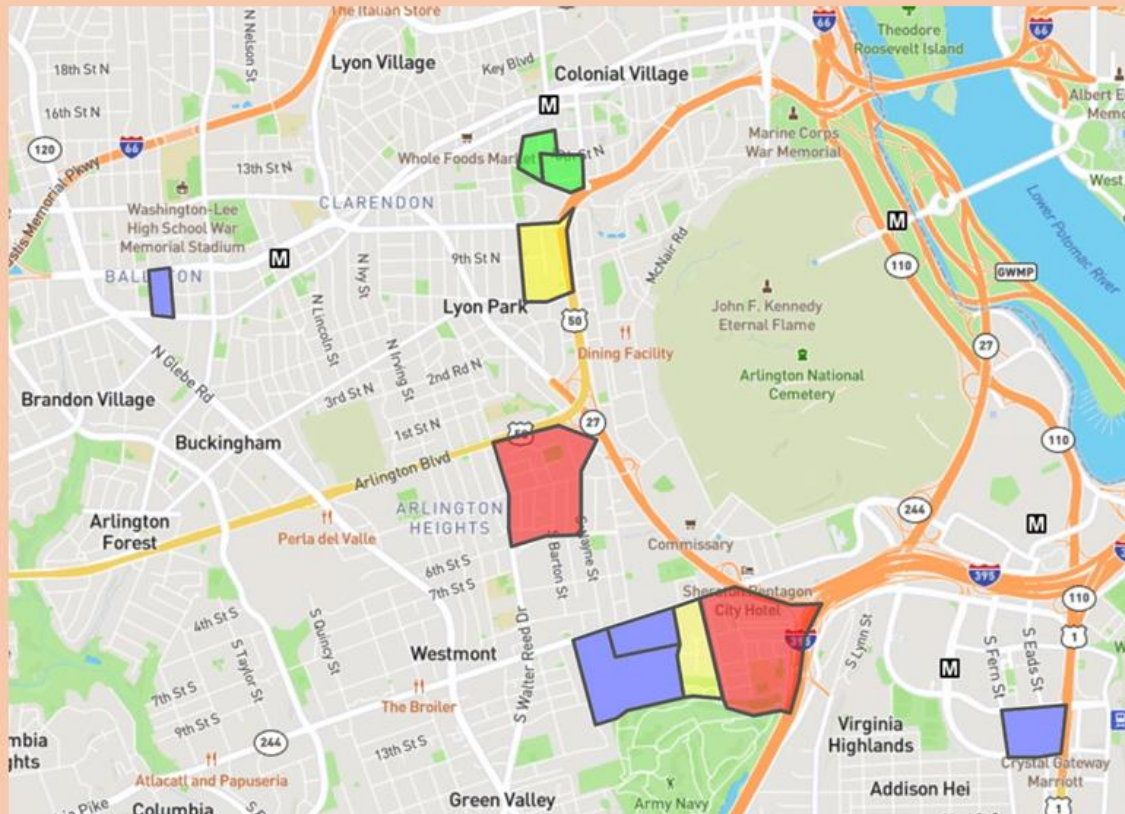


- Health Benefits – clean air, clean water, fitness, mental health
- Community Cohesion – group activities foster social connections
- Environmental
 - Air – trees filter pollutants and create oxygen
 - Cooling extreme heat – tree canopy and ground-level vegetation reduce temps
 - Absorbing and filtering stormwater
 - Support biodiversity
- Economic
- Arlington Joined Biophilic Cities Network in 2020 – Research indicates that people are happiest, emotionally and physically healthiest, and most productive when working and living in close proximity to nature. Exposure to nature (**and natural elements**) can reduce stress, aid recovery from illness, enhance cognitive skills, improve academic performance, and aid in combating childhood and adult illnesses.

Open Public Space Disparities

Data analysis and presentation by Jon Huntley – ACCF April 2024 General Meeting

2020 Lowest Per Capita OPS



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

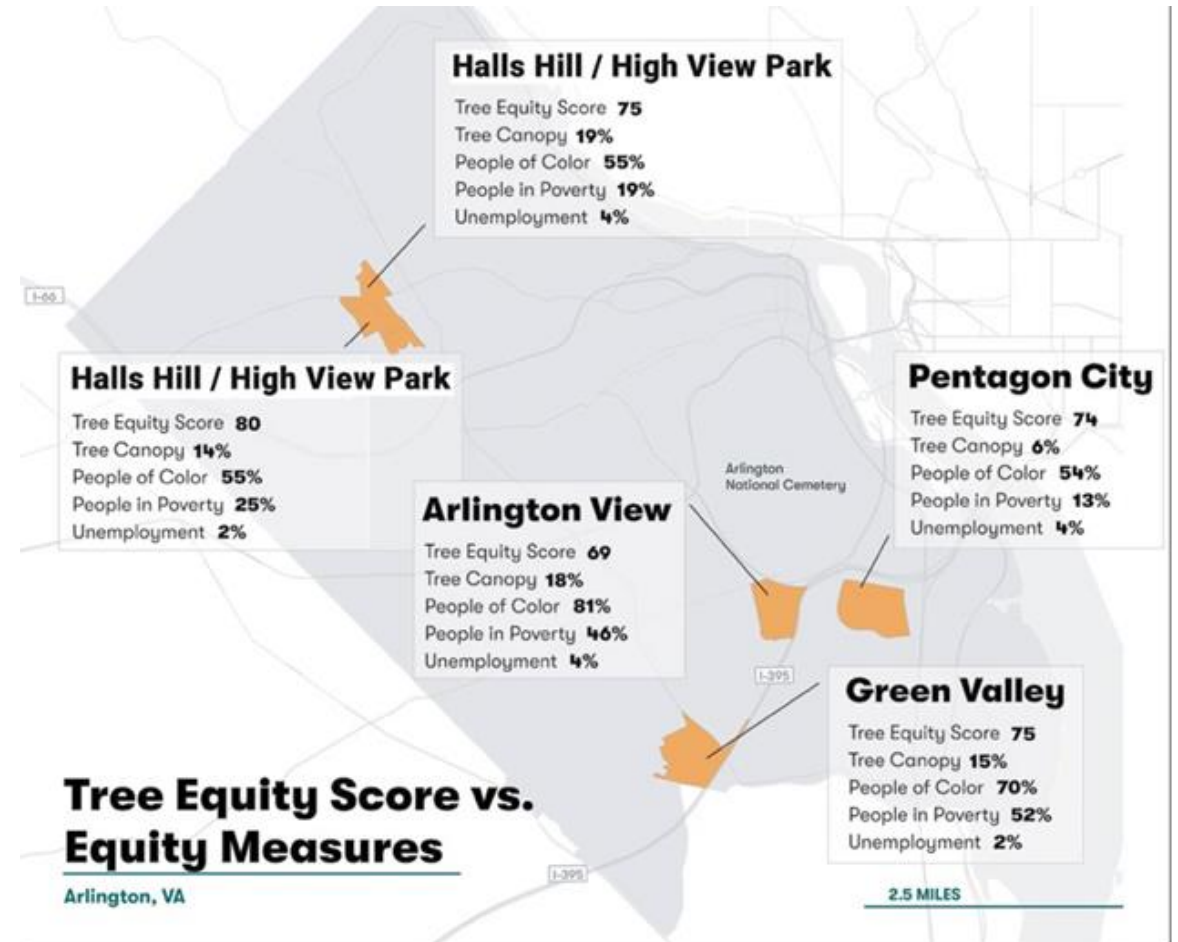
- Green: Residence type
- Red: Income
- Yellow: Income, residence type
- Blue: Racial group, income, and residence type

Tree Equity Score

American Forests' Tree Equity Score National Explorer tool suggests that less affluent neighborhoods in Arlington offer less tree canopy — often half as much — than more affluent ones.

These affected neighborhoods are characterized by higher percentages of people of color, households with incomes at or below the County median, foreign-born residents and renters.

Credit: American Forests



American Forests' Tree Equity Score National Explorer tool suggests that less affluent neighborhoods in Arlington offer less tree canopy — often half as much — than more affluent ones. These affected neighborhoods are characterized by higher percentages of people of color, households with incomes at or below the County median, foreign-born residents and renters.⁵ Credit: American Forests

1.2.7 DELIVER PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN A MANNER THAT SUPPORTS EQUITABLE ACCESS TO NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

Opportunities

- Prioritize projects that incorporate an equity analysis
- Prioritize "large impact" projects
- Expand training programs for landscaping firms to build capacity to provide ecological benefits
- Explore potential synergies with DPR and Stormwater Program
- Integrate a market-based program with the County's regulatory programs for development (stormwater and trees)

Equity is Essential

- Equity must be a key consideration in any program that provides financial incentives and/or reimbursement to private property owners
- People who need affordable housing also need access to nature

Photo Credit:
<https://cblpro.org/>



Parks Committee Goals

2024 ACCF Parks Committee Goals

- Resolution supporting implementation of the FNRP
- Invite speakers on key parks topics
- Encourage the County to produce metrics to measure progress on open space goals and equity goals
- Encourage County to prioritize open space and biophilic elements in all land-use decisions
- Communicate the economic, human, ecosystem and inherent value of open space and functioning ecosystems



Above: Restored meadow in Barcroft Park