



## Land Acquisition Criteria & Methodology (DRAFT)

Priority Action 1.1 of this plan calls for adding at least 30 acres of new public space over the next 10 years. New public space could include a combination of additional land acquired by the County, public space developed by other public entities, privately developed spaces with public easements, and the addition of rooftop, deck parks, or similar spaces.

Having clear guidelines for public space land acquisition provides the County with a way to objectively evaluate potential acquisition opportunities against the broader public space goals of this plan. Land acquisition is an important component of turning the multitude of recommendations in this document and other adopted County plans into reality. The following methodology has been developed to give the County Manager clear guidance as to when a land acquisition opportunity should be presented to the Board for its consideration for acquisition.

### Criteria

In order to evaluate potential acquisition opportunities, acquisition criteria have been developed to guide the County's evaluation and decision making process. The criteria are divided into three parts:

- Part I assesses alignment with other County Board approved plans.
- Part II assesses alignment with the general priorities of this plan.
- Part III assesses alignment with the goals particular to the intended eventual use of the site. There are three subsections of criteria for Part III based on the primary use for the proposed site: recreational/leisure purpose, natural resource purpose, or historic preservation purpose. Each site will be evaluated using whichever of the three primary purposes is being considered.

### Part I: Alignment with Other County Plans

- The site is identified within an existing approved park master plan or park framework plan.
- The site is identified as future parkland in an adopted comprehensive plan element or sector, area, or corridor plan.
- The site is identified as future parkland in an existing neighborhood conservation plan.

**Step 1:** If the property meets any of the criteria in Part I, the County Manager shall bring the potential acquisition to the County Board for its consideration.



## Part II: Alignment with General PSMP Priorities

Responding to the forecasted population growth and emerging trends, the County looks to both expand existing, as well as create new public spaces, in its goal to meet the need for a variety of different uses and experiences.

In most cases when a new opportunity acquisition arises (not associated with an existing master plan), it is not known exactly what the planned use of the space would be. However, in many instances a potential primary function or character can be inferred by the property's location, size or features. If a general idea of the property's future use can be inferred, then meeting the following criteria in a specific category can strengthen or prioritize the County Manager's evaluation of whether they will bring the potential acquisition to the County Board for its consideration.

**Step 2:** If the property does not meet any criteria in Part I, but meets at least 1 of the criteria in Part II and Part III, the County Manager shall strongly evaluate bringing the potential acquisition to the County Board for its consideration along with any appropriate rationale to justify the acquisition.

### Associated with existing parks:

- The site shares its perimeter with an existing public space and is essential to the expansion of an existing public space.
- The property is an infill property of an existing park, located on the corner of a park or would serve to "normalize" a park boundary or shape.
- The site will allow the creation of new pathway connections to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the existing park.

### Creation of a new park

- The site has been identified as one of the sending sites eligible for the transfer of development rights.
- The site could be used to create a new park and offers future potential expansion opportunities that would result in a park of at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre.
- The site is a "Generational" opportunity that if not acquired at the point of time of the offer, would not be an opportunity again.
- The site has been identified as a defunct private indoor or outdoor recreation facility (e.g., golf courses, swimming pools, community houses, etc.)



### **Part III Alignment with PSMP Priorities/Site Intended Purpose**

When evaluating potential acquisition opportunities, the County will use the criteria from one of the three subsections below that correspond to the **primary** purpose of the site.

#### **Natural Resource Purpose**

- The site could be used to enhance, protect, or expand natural resources, such as tree canopy, meadows, or other appropriate ecosystems.
- The site could protect or expand a Natural Resource Conservation Area.
- The site could provide linkages between habitats/wildlife corridors.
- The site includes one or more of the following:
  - stream valley / floodplain
  - wetland
  - unusual habitat type (e.g., relatively undisturbed soils, uncommon plant/animal colony, etc.)
  - champion tree site
  - natural outcrops
  - meadow
  - existing healthy tree canopy
- The site could increase the diversity of habitats for critical species.
- The site could include green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff from surrounding public spaces.

#### **Recreational/Leisure Purpose**

- The site could facilitate adding or expanding recreational amenities that are needed based on the Level of Service Analysis (e.g., playgrounds, fields, courts, etc.)
- The site is in an area that does not meet access standards for one or more amenities, and could provide one or more of those amenities.  
(See “Arlington’s Context-Sensitive, Activity-Based Approach to Providing Amenities” on page 89)
- The site could be used to create a new multi-use activity center to provide year-round access to indoor athletic courts and fields.
- The site is part of a planned joint-use facility with Arlington Public Schools.
- The site could be designed to support casual, impromptu use or connection with nature.
- The site could improve connections to trail systems within or beyond the County, includes a segment of a future planned trail, or widen an existing trail.



- The site is in a location that could create better connections across or around current barriers, including the George Washington Memorial Parkway, I-395, Joint Base Myer- Henderson Hall, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Army Navy Country Club.
- The site could facilitate more seamless connections between County and National Park Service or NOVA Parks spaces.
- The site provides potential recreational access to water.

### **Historic Resource Purpose**

- The site is individually listed on or eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The site is called out for acquisition based on its historical and/ or cultural value by an accepted Neighborhood Conservation Plan.
- The site is listed on the County's Cemetery Inventory and/or the Arlington Genealogical Society's Cemetery List.
- The site is listed on the *Arlington County Large-Lot Historic Resources Survey* dated 1985.
- The site has been recorded as an archaeological site with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, or by the Arlington County Historic Preservation Program.

In addition to the criteria listed above, other important site attributes would be considered when evaluating the site for potential County Board consideration: challenges of development of site (e.g., topography), existing trees and vegetation, site accessibility, environmental constraints, etc.

### **To be included in the final draft:**

- Land Acquisition History
- Mechanisms & Funding sources
- List of Potential Acquisitions
- Maps of future public spaces identified in the County Board approved/accepted plans