

Arlington Parks Coalition Factsheet



Who Are We?

The Arlington Park Coalition is a grassroots, community-led advocacy group committed to the preservation and enhancement of Arlington's parks and community centers.

Why Parks?

Arlington is a small county, with only 26 square miles of land, but it is growing rapidly. Over the last two decades, Arlington's population has increased by 25% (45,000 people), and the number of students in Arlington Public Schools has increased by 70% (10,000 students). During the same period, the amount of parkland has fallen from 9.4 to 7.9 acres per 1,000 residents. For comparison, Washington D.C. has 13.5 acres per 1,000 residents and Fairfax County has 28.3.

Sufficient parkland and open space are essential for Arlington to fulfill its vision to be an equitable and sustainable community. Parks are the only back yards for many Arlingtonians and they provide children and adults places to play and exercise. Recent scientific research has shown that the benefits of green spaces include relieving stress, reducing rates of obesity and depression, improving student performance, and providing valuable ecosystem services, like stormwater management.

Parks have economic benefits as well. A July 2015 county white paper estimated that the ongoing benefits from Arlington parks and open space are worth \$155 million each year. On top of that, the existence of parks and open space was estimated to increase residential property values by \$160 million.

How Are Parks Threatened?


First introduced by the County Board in 2013 under the banner "Public Land for Public Good," the idea that public park lands could be repurposed for housing, schools, and other non-park uses has surfaced in planning discussions throughout our county. The County Board has already voted to transfer part of Rosslyn Highlands Park for a developer to build an office tower. County leaders have suggested building housing at Jeanie Dean Park and Lubber Run Park and pursued adding a school on Thomas Jefferson Park.

Once lost, replacing parks and open space in our urbanizing county will be difficult or impossible. Arlington Parks Coalition supports smart, creative solutions that preserve our parks and their many benefits. Building up rather than out, funding additions to existing buildings, considering vacant private buildings for public uses in the short or long term—these are some of the solutions that Arlington should prioritize instead of sacrificing scarce park land.

Parks and open spaces are necessary and irreplaceable infrastructure, not expendable luxuries. Join us in protecting our parks and building a sustainable and healthful community for all.

Website and petition: arlingtonparkscoalition.org

Social Media: [facebook.com/arlingtonparkscoalition](https://www.facebook.com/arlingtonparkscoalition)

 [@saveearlparks](https://twitter.com/saveearlparks)

Email: info@arlingtonparkscoalition.org

August 7, 2015