

PUBLIC MEETING SERIES 1 SUMMARY

Purpose

The first series of public meetings for the Arlington POPS process was designed to:

- inform participants about the planning process
- present preliminary analysis results
- gauge participants' perception of Arlington's current public spaces
- ask participants how they envision Arlington's public spaces in the future

The results of the meetings will be combined in aggregate with results from other methods of outreach, including stakeholder and focus group discussions and the statistically valid public survey. These aggregated results will inform the needs assessment and shape the plan's vision and direction.

Dates and Locations

Four public meetings were held at different times and locations to encourage a broad set of participants:

- Thursday, February 4, 2016, 7:00–9:30pm – Langston-Brown Community Center (LB)
- Friday, February 5, 2016, 10:00am–2:00pm – Courthouse Plaza Lobby (CP)
- Friday, February 5, 2016, 5:00–7:00pm – Whitlow's on Wilson (WW)
- Saturday, February 6, 2016, 9:30am–12:00pm – Arlington Mill Community Center (AM)

Format

The two meetings held at community centers started with a 20-minute presentation by the consultant team. All of the meetings followed an open house format with different information/feedback stations. Feedback stations used "dot voting," map-based activities, "money game" budgeting, and open-ended questions and were staffed by members of the consultant team and County staff. The open house format allowed participants to provide their own input, see other participants' points of view, and ask questions.

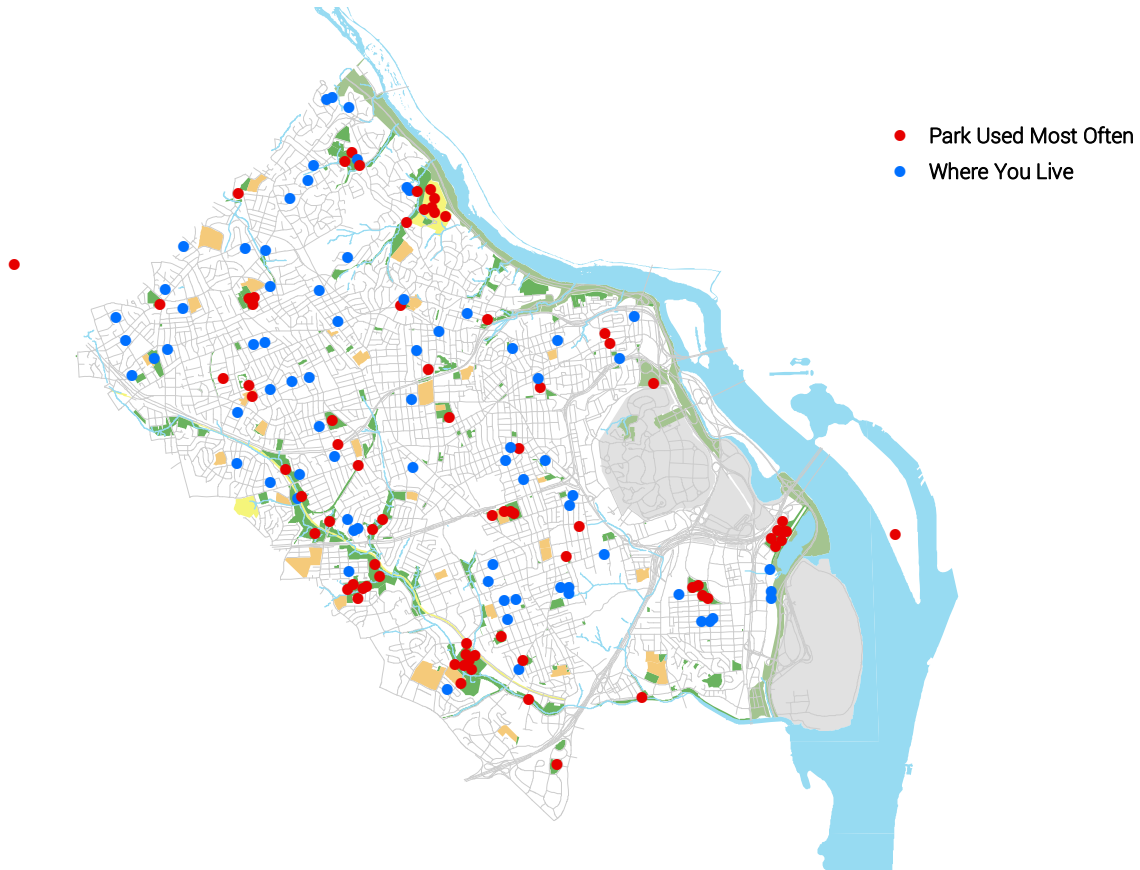
Results

The following is a summary of the input provided at the public meetings by question. Because of the geographic diversity of meeting participants, responses by meeting do not necessarily represent only the views of residents in the immediately surrounding area.

Where Participants Live and Which Parks They Use

Place a dot where you live and a dot on the park that you use most often.

Asked at: LB/CP/WW/AM



Meeting participants live throughout the county. No particular part of the county had significant representation.

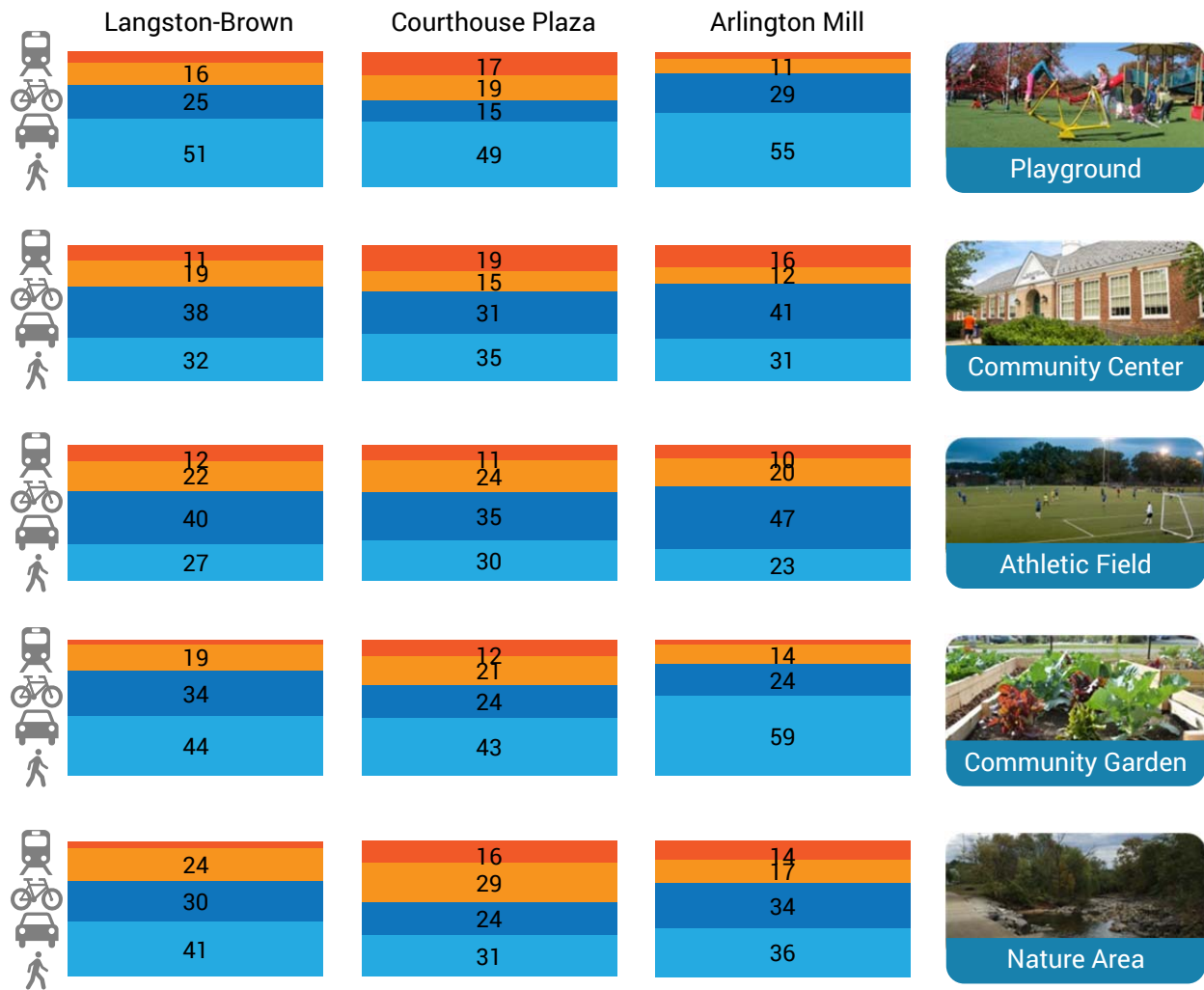
Parks used most often were also located throughout the county. Parks that were chosen by more than 2 participants as the park they use most often included: Long Bridge Park, Virginia Highlands Park, Barcroft Park, Long Branch Nature Center & Park, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Glebe Road Park, and Chestnut Hills Park.

Travel Mode

Place a dot on the ways you would be willing to travel to each of the facilities listed.

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

Percentages of Participants Choosing Each Mode



In general, participants are more willing to walk to playgrounds and community gardens than other types of facilities, while they are more willing to drive to athletic fields than other types of facilities. Participants at Courthouse Plaza—a transit-accessible location—generally showed a greater willingness to travel by transit or bicycle to all of the facilities than participants at the other meetings.

Travel Time

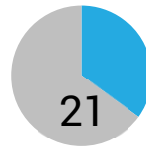
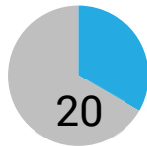
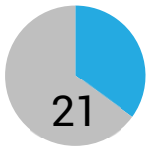
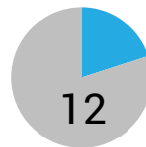
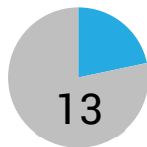
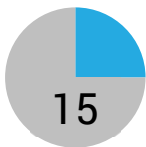
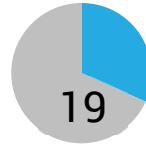
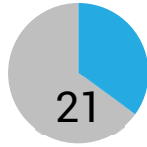
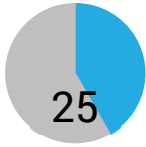
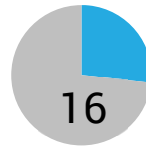
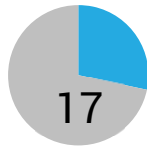
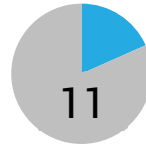
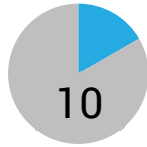
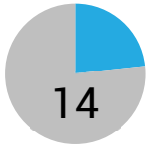
Place a dot on the maximum minutes you would be willing to travel to get to the facility.

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

Langston-Brown

Courthouse Plaza

Arlington Mill

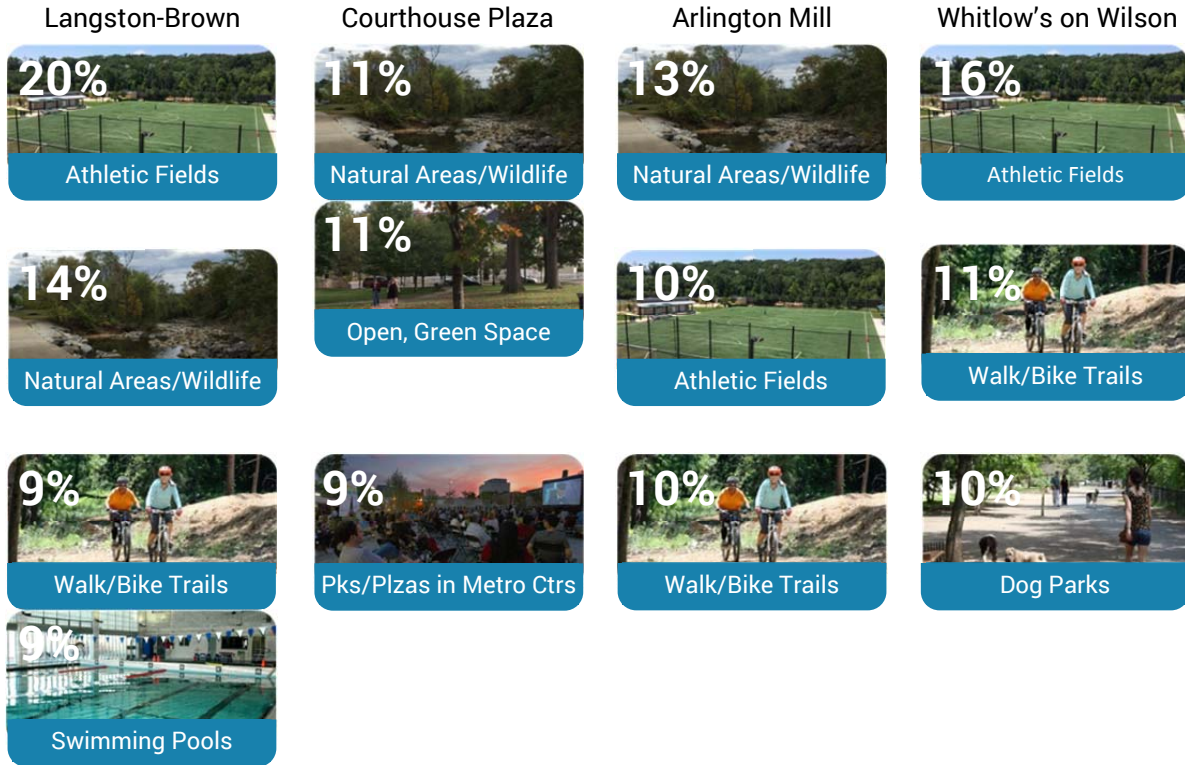


Participants are willing to travel about 10–15 minutes to a playground or a community garden, while they are willing to travel 15–20 minutes to a community center and 20–25 minutes to an athletic field or nature area.

Most Important Amenities

Of the amenities pictured, which are most important to you?

Asked at: LB/CP/AM/WW



Similar amenities were chosen across the different meetings as the most important. Natural areas and wildlife habitats, athletic fields, and walk/bike trails were among the three most important amenities at each meeting. (Amenities in the graphic above that are touching each other are tied.)

Most Important Programs

Of the programs pictured, which are most important to you?

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

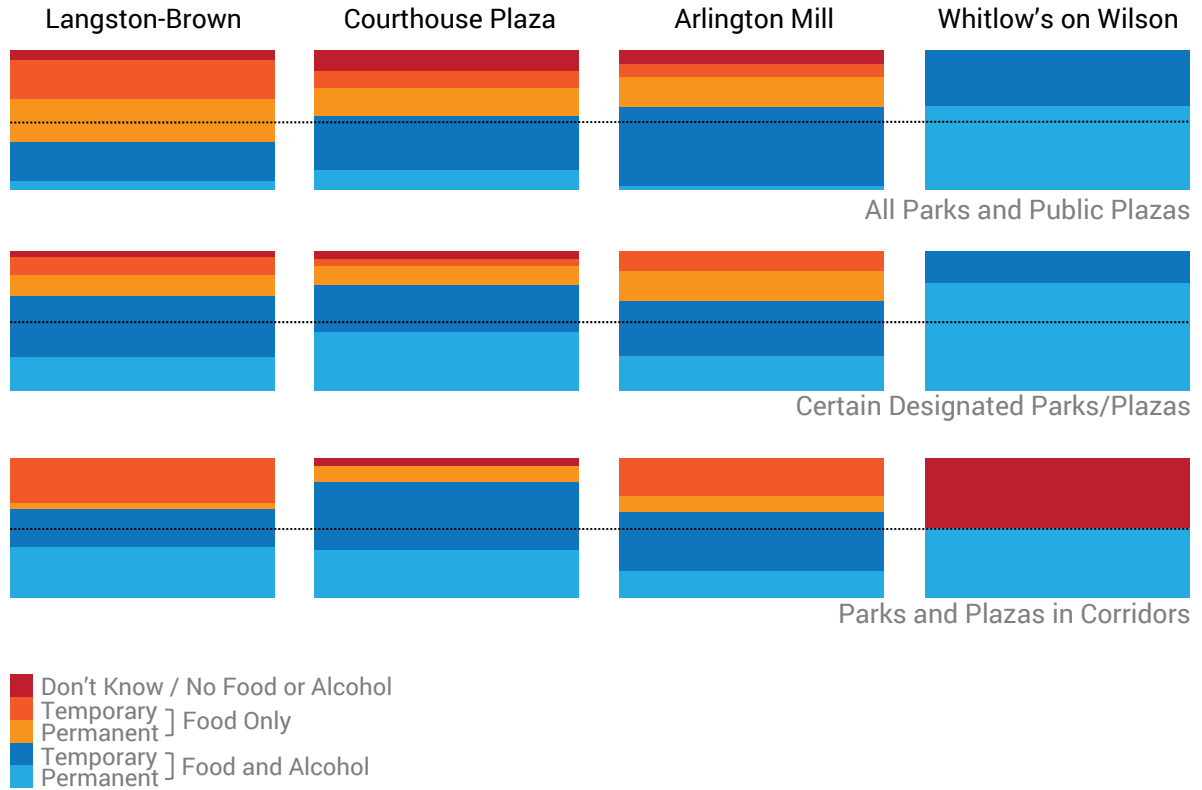


Environmental stewardship and nature programs were among the three most important programs at each meeting. Sports leagues were among the top three at two of the three meetings. *(Programs in the graphic above that are touching each other are tied.)*

Food and Alcohol

Are you supportive of the sale of food and beverages (both non-alcoholic and alcoholic) in the following locations?

Asked at: LB/CP/AM/WW



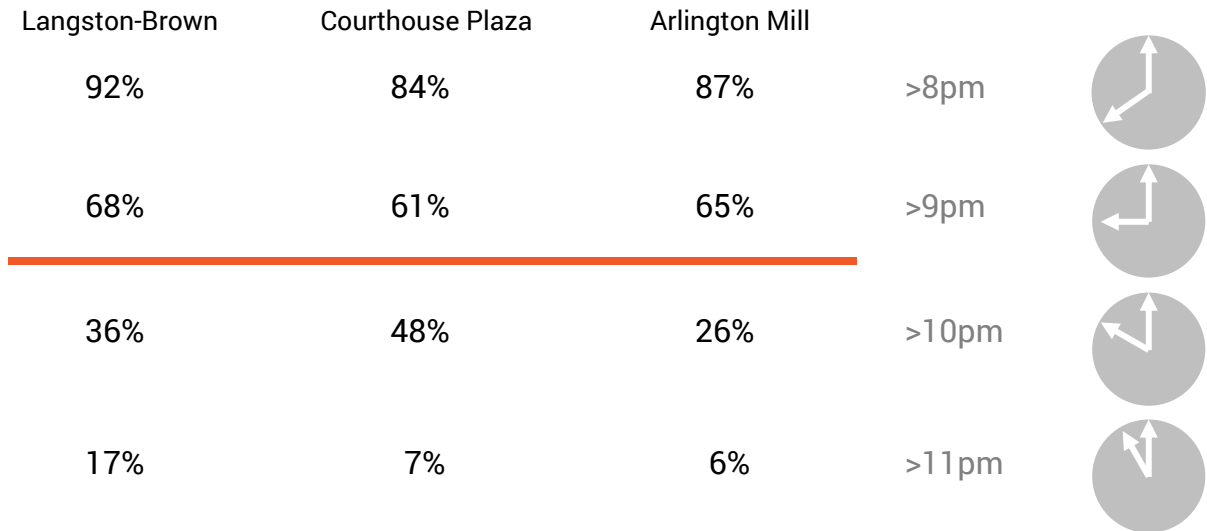
More than half of participants support having both food and alcohol in parks and plazas in corridors and in certain designated parks and plazas, at least on a temporary basis. The same was true for all parks and plazas from participants at Courthouse Plaza, Arlington Mill, and Whitlow's on Wilson.

Evening Outdoor Recreation Facility Use

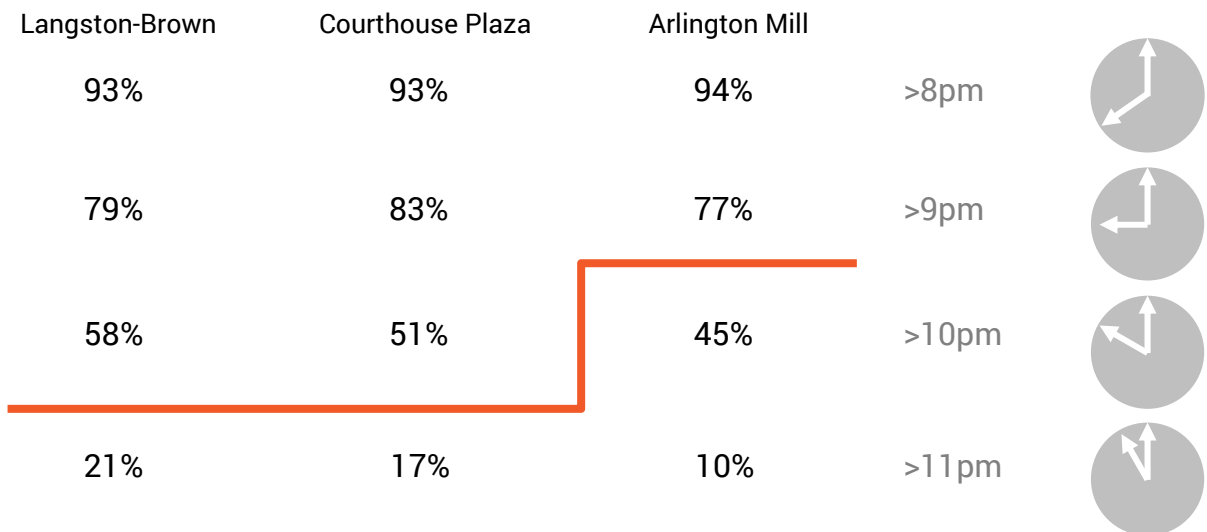
Which is the latest time in the evening you would consider using outdoor recreation facilities? Please choose one of the options for weekdays and one for weekends.

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

Weekdays



Weekends



More than half of participants would consider using outdoor recreation facilities past 9pm on weekdays and weekends. At Langston-Brown and Courthouse Plaza, more than half of participants would consider using outdoor recreation facilities even later—past 10pm—on weekends.

Importance to a Healthy and Active Lifestyle

How important do you think quality parks, facilities and programs are to the overall pursuit of a healthy and active lifestyle for you and your household?

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

Langston-Brown	Courthouse Plaza	Arlington Mill	
94%	93%	94%	Very important
5%	7%	6%	Somewhat important

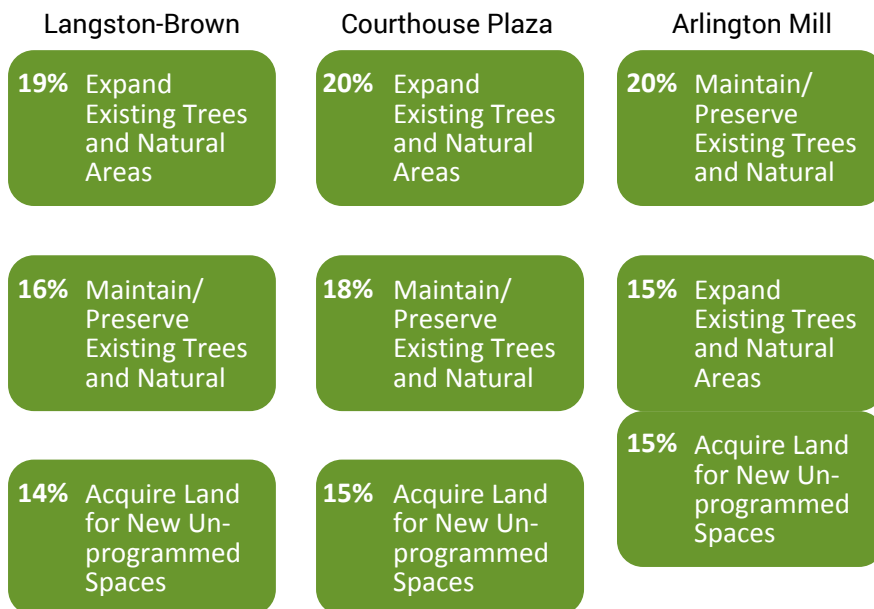
Nearly all participants indicated that quality parks, facilities, and programs contribute to a healthy and active lifestyle, with over 90% saying they are very important and the remainder saying they are at least somewhat important.

Spending Priorities

If you had \$1,000 to spend on the following improvements to Arlington's park and recreation system, how much would you allocate to each?

- Acquire Land for New Unprogrammed Spaces (trails, picnic areas, etc.)
- Acquire Land for New Organized Sports Facilities (baseball, softball, rectangular fields)
- Expand Existing Trees and Natural Areas
- Maintain/Preserve Existing Trees and Natural Areas
- Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Existing Parks
- Improve Existing Baseball/Softball and Rectangular Fields
- Improve Existing Indoor Community Centers
- Develop a New Indoor Community/Aquatic Center
- Develop New Baseball/Softball and Rectangular Fields

Asked at: LB/CP/AM



The same three spending priorities rose to the top at each of the three meetings. Respondents indicated a preference for spending money on maintaining and preserving trees and natural areas and on acquiring land for new unprogrammed spaces.

Open-Ended Questions / Emerging Themes

What improvements would encourage you to walk or bike more to parks?

What does Arlington County do well with its public spaces?

What should Arlington County improve upon with its public spaces in the future?

Which parks or recreation facilities need the most attention?

What programs would encourage you to use public spaces more?

Are there any park facilities, programs, or funding priorities that we missed?

Asked at: LB/CP/AM

A number of themes emerged from participants' responses to the open-ended questions.

Fields

- split between those who advocated for more grass fields and others for more synthetic fields
- split between those who said there are too many fields and others too few fields
- lack of adequate drainage and lighting
- need for multi-use and unstructured fields

Natural Areas

- more preservation, natural areas, and unstructured green areas
- replacement of invasive plants with native species
- more urban agriculture and community gardens
- better support of nature centers and additional programming

Tennis and Pickleball

- too many tennis courts
- more outdoor pickleball courts
- possibility of adding pickleball courts or converting from tennis courts

Indoor Sports

- larger, more variety of indoor sports facilities
- large sports complex
- multi-use facilities
- more specialized facilities for gymnastics, swimming, and ice hockey/skating
- more drop-in sports, classes, and play areas

Maintenance

- concern about maintenance overall, including adequate funding for maintenance
- drainage of grass fields in particular

Seniors

- outdoor fitness equipment in parks
- walking paths