

## Resolution in Support of Desired Open Space Equity in Arlington

Whereas, in 2019, Arlington updated its [Public Spaces Master Plan](#) (PSMP) to prioritize “[ensuring] access to spaces that are intentionally designed to support casual, impromptu use and connection with nature [PRIORITY ACTION 5 (REC. 1.3., PG 61)].”

Whereas, Arlington joined the campaign led by the [Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL), the [Urban Land Institute](#), and the [National Recreation and Park Association](#) to ensure that walkable parks are available to all residents in all neighborhoods.

Whereas, the Arlington County Board approved the PSMP with guidance on the acquisition of generational opportunities.

Whereas, Arlington joined the [Biophilic Cities Network](#) in 2020, citing several goals, including “equitable access to green spaces, parks and other natural elements.”

Whereas, parks are one of the few common assets that allow neighbors to gather as a community in a healthy environment to enjoy all the benefits nature can bestow, irrespective of age, race, physical ability, or socioeconomic status.

Whereas, the Arlington County Board has made a commitment to equity through the [2019 Equity Resolution](#).

Whereas, a [study](#) by the Arlington County Civic Federation’s (ACCF) Parks and Recreation Committee (P&R) used publicly available data sources to examine equity in Arlington County residents’ access or proximity to Open Public Spaces (OPS) by measuring the OPS per capita acreage and number within a walkable distance across groups, sorted by household income, type of residence, language spoken at home, and race.

Whereas, the study found that residents living in areas with median incomes below \$125,000 typically have significantly lower proximity to OPS; residents of townhomes live in areas with significantly fewer trees; residents of elevator apartments live in areas with significantly fewer trees and have statistically significant less OPS within a walkable distance; Black, Hispanic, or Asian APS elementary students have less proximity to tree canopy; and, Asian residents with below-average proximity to OPS have less access than Black and white residents throughout the county.

Whereas, the ACCF P&R study found that Arlington County’s PSMP and related plans will NOT address inequities and will exacerbate the issues.

Whereas, adding more residents to high-density corridors further degrades the ratio of residents to public park/recreational acre within a walkable distance.

Whereas, the Arlington County Civic Federation has not specifically addressed equity issues in previous resolutions, it is intentionally making a cultural shift and equity focus to align with community expectations and County Board priorities.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation

1. Urges the Arlington County Board to reevaluate its planning processes to provide additional OPS more equitably in terms of proximity, quality and quantity, especially in areas of increased density. This may include, but not be limited to the following:
  - [Restructuring calculations for density](#). The County leadership must more equitably balance what is good for residents versus what is good for developers.
  - [Reconsidering land acquisition in high-density locations](#). Improving equity with respect to OPS and tree canopy coverage necessitates acquiring public OPS in high-density areas.
  - [Accelerating general parkland acquisition](#). Given the County’s desire to increase the population while concurrently pursuing PSMP goals, expediting parkland acquisition immediately is essential.
  - [Reorganizing space uses](#). Arlington must focus efforts to increase the quality of and public access to alternative open space as current negotiations do not address inequitable deficits in appropriately sized, proximal OPS.