



ARLINGTON COUNTY
SPORTS COMMISSION
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201



July 1, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Planning Commission
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: FY 2019-2028 Capital Improvement Plan

Dear Ms. Cristol,

The Arlington County Sports Commission would like to provide input on FY 2019-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). We recognize that lower-than-expected revenues means difficult funding choices have to be made. We write in support of the County Manager's approach in this CIP for completing planned projects, continuing to plan for the future, and adhering to the maintenance and replacement schedules for key assets.

Completing Planned Projects

The CIP provides funding to complete important projects, including Lubber Run Community Center, Long Bridge Aquatics and Fitness Facility, Jennie Dean Park, Powhatan Skate Park, Rosslyn Highlands Park, and the Gunston Park softball field. Each of these projects adds much-needed sports and recreational capacity to their respective neighborhoods and the overall Arlington community. Although some of these, like the Long Bridge facility and Jennie Dean Park, are "big ticket" items, the County Manager correctly notes that years of planning and community engagement have led to the practical designs that are responsive to community needs. **The Sports Commission fully supports completing these and other projects as planned.**

Continuing to Plan for the Future

Arlington has a physically-active population, and Arlington County has a strong track record for investing in recreational facilities that are important to County residents. The CIP Overview notes that in the last 10 years, the County has added or replaced 33 athletic courts, 21 playgrounds, 14 synthetic fields, 13 natural grass athletic fields, lighting systems for 7 athletic fields, 6 picnic shelters, and 5 new parks.

Despite current funding challenges, it is essential to continue planning for future investments in our community's recreational fabric. The CIP provides funding for planning key sports and

recreational projects, including Gateway Park (planning scheduled for 2022), Quincy Park and Central Library (planning scheduled for 2023-2024), Drew Park (planning scheduled for 2025), an Arlington Boathouse (planning scheduled for 2026), and Mosaic Park (planning scheduled for 2027). **The Sports Commission supports funding for these planning initiatives.**

Adhering to Maintenance and Replacement Schedules

The County's recreational amenities are subjected to heavy use and need to be maintained in good repair and replaced at the end of their expected life cycle. Starting in 2002, Arlington County has made a substantial investment in synthetic turf fields, which better withstand the heavy demand that sustained growth in youth sports places on our community's fields. While significant, the roughly \$30 million allocated in this CIP over 10 years to synthetic turf replacement and field conversion is an appropriate and essential allocation of resources to provide safe and usable playing spaces for our community's youth residents. **The Sports Commission fully supports the CIP funding for the synthetic turf program.**

Our one area of concern in this CIP is the lack of funding for land acquisition beyond the \$3.5 million already in reserves. A key component of the Public Spaces Master Plan is a steady and deliberate approach for land acquisition, in part to address increased demand for casual use space. These demands recently led the Department of Parks and Recreation to adopt an approach by which athletic fields that were previously used primarily or exclusively by sports groups will now serve a dual purpose as athletic fields and casual use spaces. Provided the quality of the playing field is preserved, we are cautiously supportive of this approach. However, some neighborhoods seek to create casual use space by decommissioning athletic fields. We are concerned that limited land acquisition funding will exacerbate the pressure to add casual space in this manner. While our Commission supports the expansion of casual use space, it cannot and must not come at the expense of existing athletic fields. We hope the County Manager will restore land acquisition funding as soon as the revenue outlook improves.

We appreciate the efforts of the County Manager and his staff to develop the FY 2019-2028 CIP and endorse its adoption.

Sincerely,



Shirley Brothwell, Chair
Sports Commission

Cc: County Board Members
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
William Ross, Chair, Park and Recreation Commission
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation