



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



July 7, 2019

Honorable Christian Dorsey, Chairman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Bluemont Tennis Courts Redesign

Dear Chairman Dorsey:

The Sports Commission is aware of the Bluemont Park Tennis Courts and Parking Conceptual Design project that is underway, and wishes to offer some comments in support of the project. We understand that this is a Capital Maintenance project, which means that existing amenities are being upgraded and brought up to County's current design standards. The design scope includes tennis courts, lighting, restroom/storage, shelter, parking lot, site circulation, site furnishing, drainage and landscaping. The Sports Commission certainly favors any focus on maintenance and upgrades to recreational facilities in Arlington, and we are excited about exploring opportunities to extend the functionality of any existing facility.

Tennis continues to be a popular activity in Arlington, and having a large number of courts all in one location (as is the case at Bluemont) provides a great opportunity for larger scale recreation, including moderate scale events. At the same time, it is worth noting the dramatic increase in participation in another court sport, pickleball, in the County. The increased demand for pickleball is reflected in the recently approved Public Spaces Master Plan, where it states "Requests for repurposing or adapting existing indoor and outdoor courts to pickleball have become frequent." Within the same document, action item 1.4 lists the goal "Explore opportunities to expand or add recreational facilities and improve efficiency." The goal of developing a dedicated pickleball facility is mentioned as a component of action item 1.4.

With that, and to help address pickleball demand in the short and medium term, the Sports Commission urges the development of some of the Bluemont tennis courts as multi-use spaces, lined and equipped to serve as both tennis courts and pickleball courts. This is an increasingly common practice around the country, both with [temporary](#) and [permanent](#) solutions. By creating shared use opportunities, Arlington can better serve the growing pickleball community while still upgrading existing tennis facilities.

As overall demand for recreational facilities continues to grow in Arlington, the notion of viewing any recreational space as a multi-use opportunity continues to spread. Most newly developed facilities are designed with various different activities in mind. When redeveloping facilities like the tennis courts at Bluemont, the same thoughts should be kept in mind. This truly helps us maximize the utilization of public facilities; we end up getting more bang for our buck while working to satisfy growing demand without depriving other activities of their facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Brothwell".

Shirley Brothwell, Chair
Sports Commission

Cc: Arlington County Board
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation