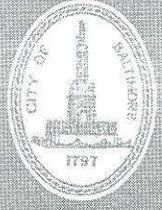


CITY OF BALTIMORE  
STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

WILLIAM VONDRASEK, Interim Director  
DR. RALPH W. E. JONES, JR. BUILDING  
3001 East Drive - Druid Hill Park  
Baltimore, Maryland 21217  
410-396-6132

September 10, 2012

Honorable President Bernard Young  
Members of the City Council  
Baltimore City Council  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: **Council Bill # 12-0058R - City Agency Adoption of Recreation Centers**

Dear President Young:

The Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) has reviewed City Council Bill # 12-0058R which is for the purpose of requesting that the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Housing Commissioner, the Director of Transportation, the Police Commissioner, the Director of Public Works, the Director of General Services, and the Director of Finance appear before the City Council to discuss the status of the City's recreation centers and the feasibility of creating interagency partnerships to allow each of the City's five largest agencies to sponsor two recreation centers each to continue operations of the recreation centers slated for closure or private partnerships after the 2012 summer season.

The Department of Recreation and Parks appreciates the intent of this bill to support the youth of our City and is willing to participate in the upcoming hearing. However, based on the outcome of the Mayor's 2011 Task Force report, BCRP has developed a comprehensive plan based on a professional philosophy, that will create a network of high-quality facilities and programming that will meet the needs of all of our citizens. This forward-looking plan is built on quality over quantity. Under this plan more than \$19,000,000 will be appropriated to build or extensively renovate four community centers as well as increase staff and hours at most of them. There will be a long-term sustainable financial plan for operating the facilities through strategic investments and leveraging outside resources and partnerships. BCRP will operate 31 improved recreation centers; lease six centers to private operators, lease five centers to the Baltimore City Public School System and close up to 10 centers. Afterschool programming will be provided at the remaining centers. Under this plan there will be no layoffs of existing recreation center staff.

We are seeking to implement Charter Center, Collaboration and Partnership programs at up to 25 existing recreation center sites. Five centers will be eligible to become "Charter Centers" that will receive initial operating funds ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 from the Department for the first year. Charter Centers, based on the concept of charter schools, will provide community-based recreational services. Collaboration and partnership programs will offer non-profit, community-based and governmental organizations opportunities to provide recreational or other community programming at existing recreation centers.

*Comments/Refers to Finance*

SEP 11 2012

The Department of Recreation and Parks will continue to reach out to communities impacted by center closings. In the long-term process, we will continue our partnership efforts through social media and direct communication with professional and community associations. We feel strongly that these actions will render positive benefits for the future.

While we are continually seeking assistance through partnership interests; we will defer to the Department of Finance for advisement in reference to such help coming from City agencies.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Vondrasek".

William Vondrasek  
Acting Director

WV/VSO

cc: Angela Gibson, Liaison to the Mayor's Office