

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

WILLIAM VONDRASEK, Acting Director
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410-396-6132

The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Karen Randle, Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 16-0641 – Bond Issue – School Loan – \$34,000,000

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Department of Recreation and Parks has reviewed City Council Bill 16-0641 – Bond Issue – School Loan – \$34,000,000 as introduced by the City Council President on behalf of the Administration and supports favorable passage of the legislation.

The bill's purpose is to authorize the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore (pursuant to Resolution I of 2016 approved by the members of the Maryland General Assembly representing Baltimore City) to create a debt, and to issue and sell at any time or from time to time its certificates of indebtedness as evidence thereof, and proceeds not exceeding \$34,000,000. The legislation allows for the use of the bonded debt for the acquisition by purchase or lease, condemnation or any other legal means, of land or property or any rights therein in the City of Baltimore, and demolishing, constructing and erecting on any land or property now or hereafter owned by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and/or the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, new school buildings, athletic and other auxiliary facilities including community health and recreation facilities, and for additions and improvements, or modernization and reconstruction. The legislation also allows for the payment of any and all costs and expenses incurred for or in connection with doing any or all of the things herein mentioned, including, but not limited to, the costs, and expenses of securing administrative, appraisal, economic analysis, engineering, planning, designing, architectural, surveying, and other professional services.

The Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) manages and maintains the City's park, playground and playing field system consisting of over 4,862 acres of open space. The Department is responsible for managing special facilities such as swimming pools, senior centers, soccer arenas, ice rinks and therapeutic recreation facilities. BCRP provides indoor and outdoor recreation programs at 40 neighborhood recreation centers and in conjunction with private sector non-profit partners recreation and heritage facilities in support of complementary missions.

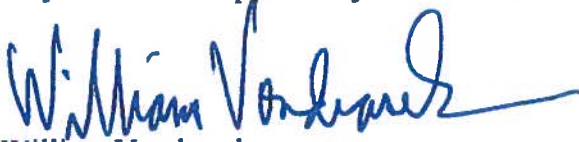
The demand for capital improvements in both parks and recreation facilities continues to be far in excess of the available capital funds. The majority of the recreation buildings are over 30 years old. Many are in need of basic building renovations (electric, mechanical, doors, windows,

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floors, ceilings, interior paint, ADA restroom & entrance remodeling and roof replacement). The Department's new 2015 recreation center and aquatic facilities capital plan projects a minimum cost of \$136 million dollars to transform 7 recreation centers into citywide fitness and wellness facilities with new indoor pools, upgrade 5 existing recreation centers, upgrade 4 existing outdoor athletic centers focused around team sports fields, playgrounds and fitness facilities in parks, transform 4 existing outdoor park pools to provide water park features and add 3 new splash pads.

BCRP's recreation and aquatics plan also includes providing 22 community recreation spaces to be constructed within selected Baltimore City Public Schools as they are renovated and replaced as part of Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) "21st Century Buildings Plan." These spaces would support BCRP recreation programming in combination with access and use of additional facilities within the school (such as the gymnasium, art room, etc.). BCRP currently operates attached recreation centers at 19 of the 22 schools. Two additional schools will be the recipients of new BCRP recreation programs. The recreation programs at all these schools will be further defined as part of overall and individual school MOU agreements with Baltimore City Public Schools and in consultation with residents of the local communities.

In order to protect the City's assets and to best serve and address public needs, recreation centers must be regularly maintained, updated and replaced. These school based community recreation spaces along with the associated BCRP programs are critical elements of the City's recreational infrastructure. After careful review, the Department of Recreation and Parks strongly urges the City Council to support City Council Bill 16-0641.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "William Vondrasek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William Vondrasek
Acting Director