
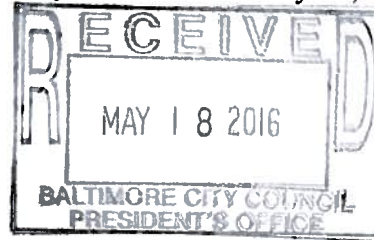


FROM	NAME & TITLE	William Vondrasek, Acting Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO (410) 396-6132	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Recreation and Parks 3001 East Drive		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 16-0643 – Bond Issue – Recreation, Parks and Public Facilities Loan – \$45,000,000		

TO

DATE:

The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council May 18, 2016
 Attn: Karen Randle, Executive Secretary
 Room 409, City Hall
 100 N. Holliday Street
 Baltimore, Maryland 21202



Dear President and City Council Members:

The Department of Recreation and Parks has reviewed City Council Bill 16-0643 – Bond Issue – Recreation, Parks and Public Facilities Loan – \$45,000,000 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 IV of 2016 approved by the members of the Maryland General Assembly representing Baltimore City) to create a debt, and to issue and sell its certificates of indebtedness as evidence thereof, and proceeds not exceeding \$45,000,000. The legislation allows for the use of the bonded debt for the development of buildings owned or controlled by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, public park and recreational land, property, buildings, structures or facilities and for the renovation, alteration, construction, reconstruction, installation, improvement and repair of existing buildings, structures or facilities, to be or now being used for or in connection with the operations, functions and activities of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, public parks and recreation and related land, buildings, structure or facilities; 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 legislation also allows for use of the bonded debt for the acquisition and installation of trees for tree planting programs, the acquisition by purchase, lease, condemnation or any other legal means, of land or property, or any rights therein, in the City of Baltimore, and constructing and erecting on any land or property, new buildings, structures or facilities.

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 provide recreation and heritage facilities in support of complementary missions. The Department also includes urban horticultural and forestry management and operations including street right of way trees and the urban forest.

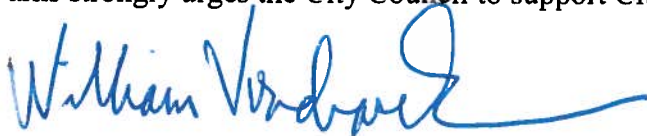
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The demand for capital improvements in both parks and recreation facilities continues to be far in excess of the available capital funds. The majority of the recreation buildings are over 30 years old. Many are in need of basic building renovations (electric, mechanical, doors, windows, floors, ceilings, interior paint, ADA restroom & entrance remodeling and roof replacement). The Department has already appropriated over \$49 million to build new or extensively renovate 5 fitness and wellness/community centers and one park pool. The new 2015 recreation center and aquatic facilities capital plan is projected to require funding for construction at a minimum cost of \$136 million dollars. This includes \$84 million dollars to build or transform 7 recreation centers into citywide fitness and wellness facilities with new indoor pools, \$20 million dollars to upgrade 5 existing recreation centers, \$20 million dollars to upgrade 4 existing outdoor athletic centers focused around team sports fields, playgrounds and fitness facilities in parks, \$13 million to transform 4 existing outdoor park pools to provide water park features and add 3 new splash pads.

The Department also has extensive capital funding needs to support its park facilities in its maintenance yards, park comfort stations and the care and replacement of the basic tree infrastructure in our parks. An analysis undertaken of the annual tree loss over the past three years for our streets and developed park land showed that the Department needs to replace 3,368 trees annually.

Significant park assets are also at risk of being lost or incurring severe damage creating health and safety risks to visitors and staff. Historic structures continue to exhibit structural issues and at many sites, basic infrastructure such as lighting, water, drainage structures and pathways are not functional or approaching the end of their life cycle. Many sites do not have basic identification signs. The Department, using Druid Hill Park as the site for prototype development and field testing, has developed a sign graphic standardization package which will form the basis for a system wide initiative to brand; re-sign, parks and recreational facilities. Implementation will take several years, but is critical to City branding of accessible public parks and facilities.

In order to protect the City's assets and to best serve and address public needs, park and recreation facilities must be regularly maintained, updated and replaced. They are critical elements of the City's infrastructure. After careful review, the Department of Recreation and Parks strongly urges the City Council to support City Council Bill 16-0643.



William Vondrasek
Acting Director

Cc: Angela Gibson, Liaison to City Council