



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



November 26, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisetto
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Benjamin Banneker Park Framework Plan

Dear Chairman Fisetto,

The Sports Commission received a presentation on the Benjamin Banneker Park Framework Plan at our June 22, 2017 meeting. We support moving forward with the framework plan and believe that this is a necessary renovation to a small yet highly valuable neighbor park. The staging of the different phases is consistent with County CIP policy and provides a well-defined course for the end product while also incorporating concepts for adding recently-secured parcels of land for redevelopment.

Banneker Park is situated adjacent to the East Falls Church Metro station. The W&OD Trail traverses the park alongside Four Mile Run. The trail is a huge draw for bicyclists, runners, walkers, and strollers, who use the path for commuting, exercise, and recreation. The improvement of these trails to allow for the safe use by all participants was a major topic in the Community outreach sessions.

The other features of the park include a small rectangular athletic field, a dog park, a playground, a picnic area and parking, making it a popular area that is enjoyed by a wide variety of neighborhood residents. Despite its smaller footprint, this park provides several important amenities to the neighborhood. Upgrading this heavily used park is a very worthwhile project for the County.

One aspect of the Framework Plan that especially drew the attention of the Sports Commission is the intended expansion of the athletic field. In recent years, opportunities to create additional athletic field space in Arlington have been rare. The plan calls for a very modest expansion of about 20% over the existing field, but even this modest expansion makes an important contribution to help ease the growing shortage of field capacity.



The Sports Commission fully supports the framework Plan as currently conceived including all of the following:

- Athletic field expansion to the west increasing the footprint by 6,000 SF. This will provide additional space for rotating the play areas periodically to help minimize turf degradation.
- Re-sodding with Bermuda grass.
- Upgrading the irrigation controller box.
- Providing new accessible fan and player seating areas.
- Improvements to the parking lot including adding a hammerhead turnaround zone at the end of the drive aisle, striped parking spaces for more efficient parking, and sidewalks around the perimeter for safer access for pedestrians and bicyclists from the parking lot to the park facilities.

Respectfully,

Shirley Brothwell
Chairman

Cc: Katie Cristol
Christian Dorsey
Libby Garvey
John Vihstadt
Mark Schwartz, County Manager