

DRAFT

April 19, 2016

The Honorable Derrick L. Davis, Chair
Prince George's County Council
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Re: Proposed Fiscal Year 2017 Maryland-National Capital
Park and Planning Commission Budget

Dear Chair Davis:

The Bowie City Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comments pertaining to the upcoming FY 2017 Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Budget.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Green Branch Athletic Complex - The City supports the development of this large complex of lighted, irrigated, grass and/or synthetic turf athletic fields. Lacrosse, football, soccer and baseball all have high participation rates in the Bowie area. This project will enhance field access for the local sports programs and potentially provide additional economic benefits to the surrounding community. The City looks forward to collaborating with the County and the M-NCPPC during the concept development for this park and asks that this project be moved forward as quickly as possible.

Foxhill Park - The City is appreciative of the recent construction of restrooms at Foxhill Park. It was a long needed amenity. Hopefully the facility will open for park visitors in the very near future. There are currently four baseball fields at Foxhill Park. One of the fields (field #3) is the primary field with lights and 70-foot base paths. The other three ballfields (#1, 2 & 4) have no lights and all share a single outfield. The Bowie community continues to see significant growth in the number of youth baseball participants. The City continues to request that the Commission consider consolidating the three non-lighted fields into two lighted fields with 70-foot base paths. The ultimate goal is to have three lighted 70-foot base path fields at this location.

The reconstruction of MD 197 Collington Road will impact the existing hiker-biker trail access to the park from Faith Lane. Due to the proposed location of the noise walls and the construction of a new hiker-biker trail adjacent to the new roadway, the current trail alignment, which traverses a steeply sloped area going down to Foxhill Lake, will be abandoned. The City of Bowie requests that the Commission

plan for a replacement trail that meets ADA standards, so the community can have access to the park from the north.

Sandy Hill Park - The Sandy Hill Park redevelopment involves construction of two soccer/lacrosse fields, one baseball field, a picnic shelter, playground, walking trail and 195 parking spaces. The ball fields and parking lots are to be lighted. The baseball field will have a 90-foot dirt infield. All fields will be irrigated. Design is completed and under County review. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2017 with completion scheduled for June 2018. At the current time, with the existing Commission and City fields, there is a backlog of field requests from user groups, and we hope this project will be completed on time and open as scheduled.

Bowie Heritage Trail - This trail is the northern section of the City of Bowie's planned Bowie Heritage Trail. It will extend from the Bowie MARC station eastward through Bowie State University and State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources lands to the northern terminus of the WB&A trail. The City supports the ongoing trail construction and looks forward to its completion.

Horsepen Branch Pumping Station - Phase One of this project includes a bicycle pump track, multi-aged playground, picnic shelter, and a half-court basketball court. The bicycle pump track has been constructed and the remainder of the Phase One is projected for completion in June 2017. The City appreciates the work being done at this location and supports the future project phasing.

WB&A Trail Spur - The proposed bridge over the Patuxent River is a critical link between the WB&A in Prince George's County and the WB&A in Anne Arundel County. Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County and the State are currently working on an MOU, so that this project can move forward. The City supports this valuable trail connection project.

PLANNING MATTERS

Sustainability Plan – The City Council appreciates the cooperative working relationship achieved with Commission staff in the preparation of the Bowie Sustainability Plan. This worthwhile project has stimulated resident involvement. It identifies ways to guide our community toward long-term sustainability. This planning effort can also be used as a template for future efforts for other municipalities in Prince George's County. The City supports continued funding in FY 2017 to finalize the Plan and fund publication costs.

Update of 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan – Because the County Zoning Ordinance states that Master Plan updates must be conducted no later than six years after the preceding Sectional Map Amendment, the 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Master Plan is a good candidate for an update in some form. With development challenges continuing to impact the City, the need for the guidance of an updated

Master Plan or Sector Plan for certain portions of the planning area is readily apparent. For example, the Bowie Town Center boundary will need to be assessed for its mixed use development potential, and the Center will need to be reviewed expeditiously for conformity with the Plan Prince George's 2035 Suburban Center typology table, in order to inform future policy changes and development character. In addition, the Melford mixed use community is emerging with a vision that is much denser and more transit-oriented than envisioned when the 2006 Master Plan was being prepared. Plan Prince George's 2035 incorporated Melford into the Bowie Center. If a full Master Plan update is not possible, the City Council recommends a Sector Plan for the Bowie Center in FY 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to give our perspective on these projects. We look forward to working with Prince George's County on projects of mutual interest in the Bowie community.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Todd Turner