

To: Environment and Transportation Committee members

Subject: HB 1057

Date: March 4, 2022

House Bill 1057 (HB 1057) has great implications for the Prince George's County residents and stakeholders!

There are so many questions that need to be answered prior to this bill moving forward.

- Why is the County attempting to expedite this bill without letting people know in advance nor conducting public hearings?
- Why was this a late filed bill yet some select special interest group for elite sports had sufficient time to plan in advance a video, website and witnesses?
- Why was recreation not listed as a legislative priority in the 2022 Legislative Priorities brochure the County published on Jan. 13, 2022, and yet the bill was introduced within the next couple of weeks?
- Why is creating a Recreation Authority under the County better than M-NCPPC, the current Nationally recognized gold medal award winning Parks and Recreation Department?
- Why is the entity of a Recreation Authority deeming a best practice when there is no data that supports these being successful in parks and recreation?
- Why are the voices of the elite athletes and the private backers more important than the community at large and those that patronize the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation?
- Why has there been no study of the fiscal impacts of moving the Recreation fund to the county to ensure that property taxes will not be raised due to this action?
- Why is the Work Group comprised almost entirely of elected officials?
- Why did County Executive Alsobrooks hold a press conference on February 28 regarding youth violence and include many youth stakeholders except for M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation?

- With all the needs that exist in the County (i.e. food deserts, violent crime, schools, health disparities, homelessness, housing affordability) why is the creation of this Recreation Authority considered an emergency?

M-NCPPC, Dept. of Parks and Recreation received funding approval for a Youth Sports Division in 2020. Even amidst a once in a lifetime pandemic, the Division was formed and has undertaken the process of developing a Youth Sports Strategic Plan. They invited the entire Prince George's County community to take part in the strategic planning process by adding their voice to the conversation, taking online surveys, and contribute ideas directly through our virtual engagement platform, Social Pinpoint. Their strategic planning process is very comprehensive.

Visit <https://www.pgparks.com/4990/Youth-Sports>

GAME ON: YOUTH SPORTS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Prince George's County has a proud legacy of youth sports. We are committed to creating even more opportunities to empower our young people. Through 2020–2021, the newly created Youth and Countywide Sports Division is developing a Youth Sports Strategic Plan to create new programs and strengthen existing ones while improving facilities for the next generation. To grow together, we need input from everyone – youth, adults, families, coaches, athletes, and community leaders. Game On!

Did the proponents of elite sports take the time to provide input to the Dept. of Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Strategic Plan? If not, why not? Have elected officials taken the time to look at the current Youth Sports Strategic Plan that is underway? If not, why not? Any identified deficiencies in youth sports programs should be addressed through the strategic plan. The Strategic Plan underway should be given sufficient time to be finalized and implemented.

In summary, HB 1057 is premature and should be stopped in committee. The Prince George's County community deserves answers to these questions and more!

Sincerely,

Darilyn Marinelli