



POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: SB 0021 Education - Public School Stadium Grant Program and Study – Establishment

Position: Informational

Date: January 17, 2024

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel

Jordan Baucum Colbert, Government Affairs Liaison

Dear Chair Guy Guzzone and Vice Chair Jim Rosapepe:

The Prince George’s County Planning Board (the “Board”) has not voted on an official position yet, however, based on the subject matter of the bill, staff has prepared an informational statement for the bill in its current form. The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“the Commission” or M-NCPPC) respectfully requests that the Budget and Taxation Committee consider this information and include it in the record.

What this Bill Does. This bill seeks to invest in student athletics in Prince George’s County. This bill in its current form establishes a Public-School Stadium Grant Program which would require the Interagency Commission on School Construction to implement and administer such a program. This bill requires the Interagency Commission on School Construction to conduct a comprehensive study analyzing the current condition of public high school athletic and physical education facilities in the State. This bill also requires Prince George’s County Board of Education and the Commission, on or before a certain date, to meet to discuss potential partnerships to upgrade public high school athletic and physical education facilities.

Background. The Department of Parks and Recreation manages close to 400 parks on more than 28,000 acres of parkland. The Park & Planning and Development Division works closely with the community and elected officials to assess needs and determine priorities for parks and recreation facilities in Prince George’s County. Throughout the years, the Commission has earned national accreditation for its innovative parks and recreation programs and strong management from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. Accreditation was earned in 2004, 2009, and 2014. M-NCPPC is one of a select few accredited parks and recreation agencies in the United States.

Commitment to Investing in Youth Athletes. The Department of Parks and Recreation are Committed to investing in student athletes and ensuring they have a space to grow, develop leadership skills, and will succeed in college and beyond. The Department of Parks & Recreation in Prince George's County have worked together with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) for years utilizing Administrative Procedure 1330 for use of PGCPS indoor space (gyms) for various youth and adult sports and recreation programs on weekends and holidays.

In 2015 the Commission and PGCPS entered into a Joint Use Agreement where the artificial turf fields at Gwynn Park, Oxon Hill and Wise High Schools are available to the community through the Commission. This agreement allows for the Commission to utilize the space for recreation programming. In HB101 2019, additional state funds were set aside for PGCPS athletic facilities and required an MOU between PGCPS and the Commission to further enhance permitting and public use of school fields.

Committee to Review and Revamp Administrative Procedure 1330. Recently, representatives from the County Executive's Office, the Commission and PGCPS have formed a committee to review and revamp the existing 1330 procedure as well as discuss the possibility of the permitting of certain PGCPS athletic spaces to be coordinated by a single entity to make the process more efficient and streamlined for the public. This committee is currently discussing and reviewing various options, creating models for which this would function and researching other jurisdictions procedures. The goal of the committee is to expand the current number of outdoor diamond and rectangle fields at PGCPS properties that are a part of the shared use agreement. This will allow for increased availability of space throughout the county for athletic programming and community use. The increased number of fields and a more centralized/user friendly permitting process is the goal.

Continued Commitment to Improving Access. The maintenance of PGCPS Athletic Fields is the responsibility of PGCPS, except for Sasscer Fields (PGCPS property) where an MOU with Commission is in place pertaining to use and maintenance. This agreement was signed by both agencies in 2021. The Commission continues to demonstrate its commitment to improving access, shared use and permitting procedures.

For additional information, please contact the Commission via Jordan Baucum Colbert, Jordan.BaucumColbert@mncppc.org.