

Council Office Building at 100 Maryland Avenue

6th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

Re: 2026 Operating Budget: Parks and Recreation.

Dear Council Members:

As a lifelong County Resident and now a current Member of the County Wide Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission I would like to take this opportunity to bring awareness of funding these high used and much needed Departments. Especially in the area of access, support, opportunity, and quality of life for our residents and visitors.

Of particular interest and concern to me is the inequity of funding of the Parks against Recreation when they work aside and with each other . We are all aware that this current Federal administration is hitting hard against our National Parks with massive cuts and layoffs causing these parks to be understaffed and having to close or not open during the week or for limited hours.

During the weekend of 3/29-3/30 Great Falls National Parks closed access due to lack of parking. This means that residents and visitors will default to local Parks Managed by our County. This will increase the wear and tear of our paths, trails, bridges, waterways and facilities.

The infrastructure of these Parks is already hanging on for dear life because of reduce funding. Bridges, trails and paths need replacing or repairing. By reducing funding, you will also reduce access to our residents who have mobility issues. Bridges are sinking and are not flush to the paths, boards are loose or have holes. Most need replacing and are falls/stumble risks. Paths need to be regraded and are also fall/stumble risks due to roots.

That being said, the Staff and crews of our Parks have done a phenomenal job in maintaining the Park systems. They get the work done! Can you imagine how incredible our Parks would be with adequate funding?

I recommend taking a tour of our Parks or take a Bike ride on our many trails before you make your decision how to fund or to cut funding and see what incredible treasures we have in our 424 Parks and 260 Miles of Trails.

Respectively Submitted,

Robin E Sparer

Silver Spring Maryland 20906

8<sup>th</sup> District