

**Public Spaces Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee
Written Public Comment- 04/20/2023**

Entry Date	Comment
04/19/2023	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for the April 20 PSMP-IAC meeting. I wish I could attend in person or Zoom, but I will be traveling to North Carolina at the time of the meeting. I have several comments re field availability and utilization:</p> <p>BASE CAPACITY PLANNING ON ACTUAL FIELD USE, NOT SCHEDULED FIELD USE</p> <p>1. I remind DPR staff and the Advisory Committee of the importance of basing capacity planning and investments on ACTUAL field utilization rather than SCHEDULED field utilization. Fields are often scheduled for practice or games and not used -- or barely used. Four students with no coach kicking a ball around on a field scheduled for a team practice or a game is not really field utilization. Years ago DPR had roving monitors record data on field use that showed dramatically lower field use than scheduled, with many reserved fields going unused. We have been assured that steps have been taken to assure that scheduled fields are actually used and that actual use data will be used in future investment decisions, but the public has not seen any such credible data, if it has indeed been recorded. The County could waste a lot of scarce capital on expansion of field capacity if real actual data are not recorded and used as the basis of planning and spending decisions.</p> <p>PROXIMITY OF AND IMPACT ON NEIGHBORS MUST BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DETERMINING CRITERIA FOR FIELD USE.</p> <p>The October 18, 2021 showed conclusions of DPR on recommended hours of field utilization based on age of the players on the field. So adults or older children would be scheduled to play later than younger children on lighted fields. The recommendations did not include any consideration of the close proximity of neighboring homes. There is a huge difference between the impact of noise (and even lights) on neighbors 75 feet and at the same level as a field vs. the impact from a field 200 feet away down in a valley. Most lighted rectangular fields (i.e., those that may have referees' whistles and cheering crowds) in Arlington and elsewhere are far away from neighboring homes or down in a "valley" which contains noise and focused lights. Before this process is completed, the County must incorporate siting relative to neighboring homes in decisions on location and hours of lighted fields. Just as proximity to homes is a factor for pickle ball courts, it must be a factor for rectangular and diamond fields as well.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>I'd also renew my request to be included in the distribution list for this Committee. Though I've signed up multiple times, I did not receive the email about the meeting sent out at 11:51 this morning and only learned of it from other interested citizens.</p>
04/20/2023	Regarding PSMP Action Step 1.4.3 - "the County ... should work to meet

demand for pickleball through a combination of dedicated and multi-use facilities”

DPR has egregiously neglected this Action Step, and needs to aggressively devote considerable resources to remedy the mess that their neglect has caused. I assert without fear of contradiction that this Action Step has been on television news more than any other Action Step in the PSMP, getting coverage multiple evenings on the local CBS affiliate Channel 9, and the local Fox affiliate Channel 5, not to mention coverage in the local press, and then additionally was on national television when it was covered by Stephen Colbert.

Overcrowded courts, unmet demand.

In terms of working to meet demand, step one would be to establish a measure of demand, but DPR has refused to do so multiple times. Pickleball officially has zero dedicated facilities in Arlington. Zero. When it comes to mixed use facilities, the number is woefully insufficient - overcrowding is endemic. There is demand for league play, but no place to hold it. There is demand for outdoor tournaments that would have positive economic impact on the County, but nowhere to hold them.

Neighboring municipalities to Arlington’s north, south, east, and west have been cutting ribbons left and right on both dedicated facilities and multi-use facilities for pickleball. The present situation in Arlington can’t be blamed on the slow speed of government - our neighbors are getting it done. The present situation in Arlington can’t be blamed on a lack of available land - neighbors like Alexandria are getting it done.

This is a neglect issue. In contrast, tennis has seen the Marcey Road project started and finished in the time that has passed since the PSMP was enacted.- new courts for tennis, none for pickleball. Planning for a flagship facility - for tennis - was kicked off six months after the PSMP was enacted, and before funding was secured. In contrast, DPR waited years to begin planning a pickleball facility, and is currently planning a debacle of a facility at the Walter Reed Community Center that increases the number of courts from nine courts to a whopping nine courts - no increase at all, despite an overwhelming demand for more courts, more courts, more courts. Also: DPR has chosen a location that puts the pickleball community on a collision course with irate neighbors who are complaining about noise. The lack of foresight is emblematic of the lack of planning around pickleball, planning that the pickleball community has called for multiple times over the last few years. Pickleball has exploded in Arlington, and nationwide, and is only getting bigger. Pickleball is arguably larger than tennis in Arlington, and thus deserves more resources than tennis. DPR’s neglect of Action Step 1.4.3 has put us in a dire situation, with coverage on television news. Aggressive measures will be required to fulfill the obligations set forth in Action Step 1.4.3. It’s time to work to meet demand for pickleball, for real this time.