

ARLINGTON COUNTY FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

FY2017 PROPOSED BUDGET

BUDGET AREA:	Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)
FAAC REVIEWERS:	Gillian Burgess, Paul Holland, Jessica Olson, Michael Shea
DATE OF FAAC ACTION:	9 March 2016

FAAC Opinion

The County Manager's proposed DPR budget for FY 2017 is \$39,722,615. This represents \$875,919 in base expense changes from FY 2016 to FY 2017 (approximately 2.5% increase). The primary driver for the increased base expense is personnel, contractual, and fleet maintenance. The budget also proposes an increase of proposed DPR revenue from \$169,441 to a total \$9,759,152 in FY 2017. The revenue increase is primarily driven by increased interest and utilization of programs by county residents.

FAAC Recommendation #1			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board approve the FY 2017 proposed budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation as recommended by the County Manager.			
Vote:	Yes: 11	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comment:			

FAAC Recommendation #2			
The FAAC recommends that the County Board support proposed storm water management strategies, including storm-water funded tree planting budget and the MS4 Compliance Manager position.			
Vote:	Yes: 11	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comment:			

Future Considerations

FAAC identified the following future considerations for DPR:

- (1) **Increasing Usage of DPR Facilities and Resources:** Due to the County's growing population, our parks, buildings, trails, and classes will require improving tracking, communication, and coordination with the various stakeholders impacted by DPR activities. With regarding to facilities, FAAC applauds the County and DPR's efforts to integrate facility operating costs when considering major capital projects and hopes to see this practice continue. FAAC is also encouraged by the ongoing efforts and commitment of DPR staff and leadership to improving performance metrics and data management.
- (2) **Partnerships:** FAAC encourages the continued exploration of partnerships between DPR and both internal and external county stakeholders. While DPR already collaborates with APS, we encourage continued review and exploration of additional partnerships, with particular attention to storm water management. FAAC also encourages collaboration with federal stakeholders, including the National Park Service.
- (3) **Land Acquisition:** FAAC is interested in the future approach to land acquisition within the County and how the ongoing update to the 2005 Public Spaces Master Plan, Plan Our Places and Spaces, could be utilized to promote a strategic approach to park and open space land acquisition. With increased demand for parks and open space, a comprehensive and coherent strategy is essential to the successful growth of the County's park infrastructure.
- (4) **Online Registration:** FAAC members remain concerned with recent issues associated with the online registration process for DPR classes and activities. This issue was previously raised by FAAC during a conversation with DPR staff in mid-2015 and just before the most recent registration period for spring classes on March 9. DPR assured FAAC that the department had taken steps to ensure a smoother registration process. However, citizens continued to experience difficulty registering for spring classes at the opening of registration. The growing demand for these classes seems to be putting a strain on the system that has yet to be adequately addressed.
- (5) **Trail Maintenance:** The County's extensive network of trails could benefit from a clear assignment of responsibility for trail maintenance. FAAC is interested in having the County Board direct the County Manager to identify a funding strategy that would consolidate responsibility for long-term capital maintenance of the trail system within one department.