

PIMLICO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



March 15, 2023

Mayor Brandon Scott
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: FY24 Pimlico Area Local Impact Aid

Dear Mayor Scott:

As Chair of the Pimlico Community Development Authority (PCDA), I hereby submit the Pimlico Community Development Authority's recommendations regarding the City's proposed Spending Plan for FY 2024 Video Lottery Terminal (Slots) Revenue, released on January 10, 2023.

The PCDA held public meetings on January 15 and February 1 to review the proposed Spending Plan and to receive feedback from interested parties. Community members were invited to complete a digital survey and to submit written comments during the public comment period between January 10 and February 10, and to testify at the public forum on February 1. The PCDA then reviewed 50 survey responses and 77 letters prior to their work session on February 15 to deliberate their final recommendations. The Department of Planning published a record of the forum, the survey responses, and letters to the PCDA website.

Participants generally provided comments on the following topics: support for the Park Heights Public Library, support for the capital expansion of a federally qualified health center known as Park West Health Systems, support for Homeowner Repair Grants, and support for more neighborhood-based competitive grants (also known as Neighborhood Initiative Grants). Details about the Spending Plan recommendations follow:

Park Heights Master Plan Area

The PCDA recommends changing the following items in the FY24 Spending Plan:

Homeowner Repair Grants (\$750,000): Increase the amount available for homeowner repair grants from \$500,000 to \$750,000, and target the grants to the Woodmere, Langston Hughes, and Lucille Park Neighborhood Statistical Areas. The PCDA recommends increasing the individual grant amount from \$10,000 to up to \$15,000, thereby increasing flexibility and positive outcomes for homeowners; DHCD is supportive of this recommendation. DHCD also anticipates extending previously allocated homeowner repair grants to the entire Greenspring community

later this calendar year. This would partly cover the inner-block parcels surrounding Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm that were included in the preliminary draft Spending Plan.

Towanda Pool and Playground (\$0): While this project is critical to the Towanda Grantley community and surrounding residents, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks presented this request as a cushion to cover construction change orders and potential overages during the ongoing renovation. BCRP's summary budget shows \$3.9 million in committed funding with an estimated cost of \$3.75 million. The PCDA acknowledges the importance of completing this renovation but recommends eliminating this line item in order to support projects with significant funding gaps and more immediate needs.

Arlington E/MS INSPIRE Garden (\$40,000): The PCDA recommends reducing this request from \$140,000 to \$40,000. The community survey showed 40% support for this project, and the PCDA received several comments and a letter of opposition contending that the initial proposal was too high in consideration of the area's more pressing housing and community needs. Additionally, the school community and community at large are currently at odds over the terms of public access to the INSPIRE Garden. The PCDA recommends that interested parties develop a more effective partnership before the City invests significantly in the garden's expansion.

The PCDA recommends adding the following items to the FY24 Spending Plan:

Lighting and Safety Enhancements in Business District (\$100,000): Based on letters and testimony submitted by business owners who are part of the Pimlico Merchants Association, enhanced lighting and safety measures such as cameras are necessary. The PCDA recommends \$100,000 to fulfill this request.

At the House, Inc. Social Settlement House (\$250,000): The PCDA received 25 letters of support for this request to help fund the construction of the Social Settlement House on Denmore Avenue in the Arlington neighborhood. The purpose of this project is to provide a neighborhood-scale community care center, where youth, older adults, and other residents can access social services and educational programming. At the House Inc. is carrying out the project in partnership with Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc. (CHAI). The PCDA allocated \$200,000 to this project in FY23. The additional funding will help secure the completion and success of a project in which the public is already invested.

1- Mile Radius

The PCDA recommends the following change to the FY24 Spending Plan:

Baltimore Clean Streets (\$0): While the PCDA is supportive of the purpose of this program, and the proposal garnered 67% support in the community survey, the Baltimore Clean Streets program indicated that they have sufficient existing funding. The PCDA therefore recommends

eliminating the \$50,000 proposed for this line item in FY24, and invites the program to apply in future years as needed.

Neighborhood Initiative Grants (\$102,000): Seventy percent of survey respondents support maintaining or increasing the proposed allocation of \$50,000 for Neighborhood Initiative Grants. These grants provide critical funding opportunities to neighborhood associations and other community-based nonprofits in the Liberty-Wabash, Coldspring, and Northwest Community Planning Forum areas. The PCDA recommends adding the eliminated Baltimore Clean Streets funding to this line item, thereby doubling the initial proposed amount to \$102,000. The PCDA also discussed adding a Neighborhood Initiative Grants fund to the Park Heights Master Plan area, and will revisit this idea in FY25.

PCDA thanks you for your leadership and the strategic manner in which local impact aid will be used to rebuild the Park Heights community, as well as benefit the surrounding neighborhoods. We are confident you will give serious consideration to PCDA's recommendations as you finalize the Spending Plan. The entire greater Pimlico community looks forward to seeing the final Spending Plan and, most importantly, moving forward with implementation.

Sincerely,



Chris Ryer
Chair, Pimlico Community Development Authority

cc:

Rashad Singletary, Director, Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods
Justin Williams, Deputy Mayor for Community and Economic Development
B.R. Hammed-Owens, Senior Advisor, Community and Economic Development
Nichole Stewart, Deputy Director, Department of Planning
Chad Hayes, Director of Community Planning and Revitalization, Department of Planning
Kari Nye, Northwest District Planner, Department of Planning