

PIMLICO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



February 20, 2018

Mayor Catherine Pugh
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: FY19 Pimlico Area Local Impact Aid

Dear Mayor Pugh:

As Chair of the Pimlico Community Development Authority (PCDA), I hereby submit PCDA's recommendations regarding the City's proposed spending plan for FY 2019 Video Lottery Terminal (Slots) Revenue, released on January 9, 2018.

PCDA held public meetings on January 10 and January 31 to review the draft FY19 spending plan and to receive feedback from interested stakeholders; the public was also invited to submit comments in writing. PCDA held a work session on February 12, 2018 to review feedback on the spending plan from the public. PCDA considered all public input to develop these recommendations. All written comments received were posted on PCDA's website.

PCDA meetings were very well attended and we received 26 written comments from all Pimlico Local Impact Eligible Areas. Stakeholders generally provided two types of comments: support for spending plan recommendations and/or requests for funding community initiatives. We only received two comments reflecting concerns with the spending plan.

Letters of support were provided for the neighborhood initiative competitive grants, human services, development incentives around Arlington Elementary School, redevelopment of the Ambassador, Park Heights Renaissance's Clean and Green, and the Department of Planning's INSPIRE program.

Requests for funding were submitted for 32 projects. Many requests were also accompanied with letters and signatures of community support from residents, faith-based partners, and local businesses. Of the requests received, common themes emerged around public safety (cameras, lighting, and programs with BPD), infrastructure and beautification (maintenance of vacant lots, sidewalk improvements, and park enhancements), and programming for youth and older adults. We appreciated all the community requests and creative ideas, but we recognize that the requests should be vetted through a full competitive application process. In reviewing the various requests, we think there are three opportunities identified in the spending plan that provide an opportunity for many of these project sponsors to submit proposals for funding.

- **Neighborhood Initiative Competitive Grants.** Many of the requests received outlined a project that would be a good candidate for the neighborhood initiative competitive grants, such as public safety initiatives and community beautification. The draft spending plan includes \$250,000 for Neighborhood Initiative Competitive Grants in Park Heights; we recommend increasing that amount (see below). We recommend that the Planning Department follow up with these organizations to let them know how to apply for these funds.
- **Human Services.** Several requests were made for projects serving youth. The spending plan includes \$520,000 for human services, specifically focused on Out of School Time. We recommend that the Mayor's Office of Human Services follow up with these organizations to let them know how to apply for these funds.
- **Development incentives in the Arlington INSPIRE area.** Several requests were made for development projects in the Arlington INSPIRE area. The spending plan includes \$750,000 for development incentives in the Arlington INSPIRE area. We recommend that Housing and Community Development reach out to these organizations as the agency develops more specific plans for incentivizing development around the school, in the context of the INSPIRE neighborhood plan that is currently underway. We also recommend a strong and collaborative partnership be forged between the leadership of the Arlington Elementary 21st Century School and surrounding community organizations, so that the new school facility becomes a true neighborhood hub that provides full access to community groups for appropriate meetings and programs.

PCDA members largely support the spending plan as written, including the development of a multi-year spending plan, but we do have a few recommendations as detailed below. In addition to recommendations on the current FY19 spending plan, suggested priorities for future years are also outlined below.

Park Heights Master Plan Area

PCDA generally supports the recommendations in the spending plan as consistent with the Park Heights Master Plan. In particular, PCDA supports the neighborhood initiative competitive grants to help community organizations achieve their goals. We recommend that the final spending plan include the following item:

- **Neighborhood Initiative Competitive Grants.** Based on the large number of requests received from Park Heights residents, businesses, and faith-based organizations for community-based projects, PCDA recommends increasing the amount of funding for neighborhood competitive grants. Previously, Park Heights organizations did not receive funding for competitive community grants and community organizations are excited to have the opportunity to implement priority projects and events in their neighborhoods. Community projects could include a wide array of community initiatives that demonstrate significant community impact to address neighborhood needs such as beautification efforts; local arts initiatives; and public safety programs in consultation with the Baltimore Police Department. PCDA recommends that public safety projects receive preference, and that a representative from the Baltimore Police Department serve on the grant proposal review committee. These funds are intended for projects that help neighborhoods to remain and become welcoming, safe, and vibrant places. We recommend using \$237,000 of the funds allocated for Development Support (MRA or other major projects) to increase the amount of neighborhood initiative competitive grants to \$487,000. We understand that the grants administration fees will be adjusted appropriately. To showcase community grant efforts, PCDA

will be highlighting community achievements at future PCDA meetings and in the quarterly report.

Supporting development projects in Park Heights that are “ready to go” but for gap financing remains an important priority. Even with the recommended reallocation of \$237,000 to increase the funding for the Neighborhood Initiative Competitive Grants, \$1 million would remain in the FY 19 spending plan to provide this critical development support. As a part of any Park Heights development efforts supported with public funding, PCDA encourages the City to find innovative ways to employ neighborhood residents, which could include coordinating with the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development to connect residents with jobs and training opportunities.

- **Priority project for future years:**
 - **Corridor Improvement Strategy.** Revitalization of the major corridors is critical to the success of the Park Heights area. In FY18, funding was focused on the gateway to the Park Heights Master Plan area along Park Heights Avenue from Park Circle to Springhill Avenue. For future years, PCDA recommends using a targeted strategy to enhance the main corridors (Park Heights, Reisterstown, and Belvedere) in Park Heights.

One Mile Radius Area

In the One Mile Radius, PCDA generally agrees with the projects and priorities as set out in the proposed spending plan and recommends community organizations continue working with city agencies and apply for competitive grants when applicable. We also recommend re-examining the formula for the distribution of funding in the One Mile Radius area based on need to ensure equitable outcomes. The Department of Planning will assist with providing the relevant data for the analysis.

- **Priority project for future years:**
 - **Liberty Wabash – Staff Support for Community Associations.** In order for the community associations and umbrella groups in this area to increase their capacity to achieve the outcomes that they desire for their neighborhoods, dedicated staff support is necessary. PCDA supports a full-time community organizer and is interested in learning more about this position such as where the organizer would be located. This priority is similar to organizers being funded with local impact aid in other One Mile Radius organizations such as the CASA and CHAI organizers.

PCDA would like to thank you for your leadership to utilize local impact aid in a strategic manner that will 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,



Thomas J. Stosur
Chair, Pimlico Community Development Authority

cc: Mr. Pete Hammen, Chief Operations Officer