

February 9, 2026

**Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850**

**Re: 2026 Capital Budget Hearings February 9/10, 2026
Replacing the Artificial Turf Field at the North Potomac Community Center**

To the Council:

It is my understanding the County's Parks and Recreation Department has determined the artificial turf athletic field at the Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Center (NPCC) is reaching the end of its useful life and that the County will need to replace it in the near future. As part of its review and approval of the 2026 Capital Budget, County Council is considering a proposal to replace the current artificial turf field at the NPCC with a grass field. I write today to urge the Council to reject this proposal in favor of replacing the existing field with a new artificial turf surface.

I have played soccer in the Montgomery County Recreation Department's recreational leagues over more than 40 years and I can say, without much exaggeration, that I have had the opportunity to play at most of County fields. In my experience, the fields we have played on have been, for the most part, well maintained, albeit not always in excellent condition. Grass fields are unavoidably damaged regularly by weather and overuse.

I currently play in the Men's Soccer Over 65 Division. In the Fall 2025 season there were 5 teams registered for league play in this division. With rosters of approximately 20 players on each team, there are as many as 100 of us who continue to play a game we love in a competitive environment. We play our 8-game fall and spring seasons at the NPCC on Sundays. In addition, a leader from our soccer-playing community has organized county-sanctioned pick-up for older players on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year and on Sundays in the off season. Over the past two years we have played the qualifying games for the Maryland Senior Olympics at the NPCC. In short, the field is an important venue for senior players.

The NPCC's artificial turf field allows us to continue to play the game year-round on a quality surface. Soccer is not necessarily a lifelong sport. The physicality of the game wears on one's hips, knees, and ankles. The consistency of the NPCC's artificial turf surface arguably has less of an impact on our bodies and lessens the risks of injuries that can occur on wet or uneven grass surfaces. Many of us who play in these are retired. It is very clear to me that many of us would not be able to continue playing if we were unable to play regularly year-round and, equally importantly, if the quality of the fields on which we played was uneven.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Weech