



Legislation Text

File #: RES. 2022-R058, **Version:** 1

To declare the City's commitment to ensuring equitable access to extracurricular programming, recreational opportunities, and public spaces for the children, young adults, and residents of the city of Richmond; honoring the legacy of Arthur Ashe, Jr. as an element of the overall design of the proposed Diamond District redevelopment; pursuing opportunities for providing the recreational and organizational opportunities previously served by the Arthur Ashe, Jr. Athletic Center on sites in the general proximity of the proposed Diamond District redevelopment prior to the transfer and demolition of the Center; and intending to prioritize the appropriation of funds to support and expand recreational and extracurricular opportunities for the youth, young adults, and residents of the city of Richmond through the development and maintenance of community centers, athletic fields, public parks, and other facilities that provide safe and healthy enrichment opportunities.

WHEREAS, the Arthur Ashe, Jr. Athletic Center (the "Center"), located at 3017 North Arthur Ashe Boulevard, with Tax Parcel No. N000-1510/009 in the 2022 records of the City Assessor, is a 6,000-seat athletic facility containing a basketball court, indoor track, and other amenities that served the children and families of Richmond for nearly forty years; and

WHEREAS, the Center has historically served as an important community-gathering center hosting youth athletic competitions, concerts, summer camps, vaccination events, graduations, and other programming; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the Center has experienced substantial deferred maintenance leading to a significant reduction in programming; and

WHEREAS, today, the lack of modern amenities and the significant costs associated with needed repairs severely limit how the building can be used; and

WHEREAS, the Center is owned by the City and is located on a 4.015 acre parcel within the a larger group of parcels intended for redevelopment as part of a project known as the Diamond District; and

WHEREAS, changes to the Center are not included in the first phase of the proposed Diamond District redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the important role the Center has played in the City's history and, therefore, included the relocation of the functions of the Center as one of the stated goals in its December, 2021, Diamond District Request for Interest, its March, 2022, Request for Additional Information, and its June, 2022, Request for Offers; and

WHEREAS, the redevelopment of the Diamond District will provide new recreational amenities, public space, employment opportunities, and mixed-income housing for the families of the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the redevelopment of the Diamond District will prioritize multi-modal transportation, making it easier for families on foot, bicycle, or public transportation to move within the Diamond District and to nearby family-friendly activities, including the Science Museum of Virginia, Children's Museum of Richmond, Battery Park, the future Fall Line Trail, and surrounding neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the creation of new greenspace and connected public spaces, will provide Richmond's families with new access to retail, entertainment, restaurants, and gathering space; and

WHEREAS, a new, publicly-owned baseball stadium proposed for the Diamond District not only will enable the City to continue to host a minor league baseball team but also will create a modern facility available for other public uses like graduations, concerts, and other public gatherings; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the public amenities planned for the Diamond District, Virginia Commonwealth University plans the development of a 40-acre athletic village immediately east of the Diamond District that includes new modern athletic facilities, which Virginia Commonwealth University officials have indicated could be made available for recreational use by the City's youth and young adults through a separate use agreement; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby declares the City's commitment to ensuring equitable access to extracurricular programming, recreational opportunities, and public spaces for the children, young adults, and residents of the city of Richmond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, as future phases of the multi-year Diamond District redevelopment are pursued, the City will remain committed to honoring the legacy of Arthur Ashe, Jr. as an element of the overall design of the Diamond District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the City vigorously will pursue opportunities for providing the recreational and organizational opportunities previously served by the Center on sites in the general proximity of the Diamond District prior to the transfer of the parcel on which the Center is situated and the demolition of the Center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in line with the goals of City's Equity Agenda, adopted by Resolution No. 2021-R032, adopted June 14, 2021, and the vision established by the City's Master Plan, approved by Ordinance No. 2020-236, adopted December 14, 2020, the Council intends to prioritize the appropriation of funds to support and expand recreational and extracurricular opportunities for the youth, young adults, and residents of the city of Richmond through the development and maintenance of community centers, athletic fields, public parks, and other facilities that provide safe and healthy enrichment opportunities.