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Board Matter

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Last month, the Board received a letter from the Fairfax County Athletic Council (FCAC) outlining the Council's concerns regarding equity for girls fastpitch softball, prompted by the loss of the Falls Church softball complex due to renovations and a larger, growing trend of disparity between girls and boys athletic fields.

We have addressed these inequities before. In 2007, the Board established the Girls' Fastpitch Softball Equity Action Plan Review Team (APRT), a collaboration between Fairfax County, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), and the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). The review team's report revealed the need to bring equity to girls sports and tournament complexes. Resources were then able to be directed into Falls Church High School to create a tournament hub for youth softball and remedy existing inequities in field allocation and availability.

Over the years, participation patterns in softball (and baseball) have changed, as have field standards and the facilities in the County's inventory. However, since the APRT completed its action plan over a decade ago, the issue has not been revisited. Recent stories of fields being taken out of inventory remind us that work for equity must be continuous.

The Fairfax County Athletic Council recently voted unanimously to request that the BOS reconvene the APRT to assess progress made and gaps that remain, and to develop recommendations, if necessary, to correct any remaining disparities and ensure equity for girls in Fairfax. Our One Fairfax policy and associated practices give us new tools and resources to draw upon and can help us identify the systemic issues that may underlie any persistent disparities.

Therefore, I direct staff to reconvene the Girls' Fastpitch Softball Equity Action Plan Review Team. The effort should be facilitated and led by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and include the same agencies that were on the team in 2007, including FCPA, FCPS, FCAC, and the Fairfax County Commission for Women. The ARPT should prepare a report updating the original equity findings outlined in the 2007 report and develop a plan to replace fields lost due to school renovations and other impacts. The report should be completed by December 1, 2022.