



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



March 29, 2022

Dear Mount Vernon Rec Center Customer:

Updating and expanding the Mount Vernon Rec Center continues to be a priority of the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). On Wednesday, March 23, 2022, the Park Authority Board concurred with staff recommendations to close the Mount Vernon Rec Center for approximately two years through the duration of the renovation. The Rec Center will close in early 2023. This was a difficult decision that reflects FCPA's continuing commitment to provide the community with promised renovations, improvements, and facility expansions, including a second sheet of ice and a dedicated fitness center, to mention just a few.

The Mount Vernon Rec Center Renovation and Expansion Project has run into significant delays due to supply chain issues associated with COVID-19, as well as market pressures that substantially increased costs in recent bid openings. These pricing jumps are influenced in large measure by manufacturing shutdowns, shipping availability, raw material costs and availability and a shortage of skilled labor in the building trades.

These trends are impacting projects across the nation and resulting in significant cost increases. A shortfall of over \$20 million in bond funding necessitated the schedule changes, made a phased construction schedule unrealistic and ultimately led to the decision to close for the renovation.

We recognize the impact on our customers and to that end will work diligently to keep construction on schedule. The Park Authority will work closely with our customers to ensure access to facilities that meet their fitness and recreational goals. As always customers may access any of FCPA's nine Rec Centers during the closure. Additionally, FCPA will extend hours at a nearby Rec Center, provide flexibility regarding refunds or membership extensions and will work closely with swim teams and ice users to find other venues wherever possible. We thank you in advance for your understanding and pledge to keep you informed as the project moves forward.

Warmest regards,

Sara Baldwin
Deputy Director
Fairfax County Park Authority

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is Mount Vernon Rec Center (MVRC) being renovated?

MVRC is one of our oldest Rec Centers and is unique in that it is the only Park Authority facility with an ice rink. MVRC was built in 1978 and is suffering from an aging infrastructure, including a failed chiller, failed rink dehumidification system and critical end-of-life cycle repairs for the roof, electrical system and bleachers. These represent \$4.9 million in unfunded critical maintenance needs.

The Park Authority hired Hughes Group Architects (HGA) to perform an existing building assessment. Hughes Group Architects issued the Facility Condition Assessment and Life Cycle Cost Analysis report. This report identified building system deficiencies as well as building program and layout deficiencies. In July 2016, HGA issued a Feasibility Study Report for the renovation and expansion project. This report documented the needs assessment and feasibility study to determine the future of the Rec Center. The recommendations included improvements that could improve the financial performance of the FCPA Rec Center system. The 2016 and 2020 Park Bonds approved by the voters included funding for construction of the Rec Center Renovation and Expansion as recommended in the Feasibility Study.

Past renovations and expansions at other Rec Centers have been successful in bringing in new customers and providing expanded recreational opportunities.

What is included in the renovation project?

The scope includes an approximately 75,000-square foot addition to include a two-story fitness center, multi-purpose areas, upgrades to the existing pool and building and a second sheet of ice, for a total project size of approximately 139,000 square feet.

Why has the project been delayed?

Unfortunately, the Mount Vernon Rec Center Renovation and Expansion Project has run into significant delays due to supply chain issues due to COVID-19, as well as market pressures that substantially increased costs from recent bid openings. These pricing jumps are influenced in large measure by manufacturing shutdowns, shipping availability, raw material costs and availability and a shortage of skilled labor in the building trades.

What are the sources of funding?

All project funding will be provided by voter-approved park bonds.

What other options were considered?

In response to market conditions Park Authority staff developed five alternative options for this project. Park Authority staff considered a variety of options including a two-year closure, eliminating the second ice rink, a phased closure with the rink open, a multi-phase closure and abandoning the project entirely. Pros and cons of each option were considered, including community impact, financial impact and site safety.

What option did the Park Authority staff recommend?

Park Authority staff recommendations favor a two-year closure based on estimated savings on the bond project, limited revenue loss, infrastructure and

systems operation failures, customer needs and a desire to minimize length of closure. The Park Authority Board approved this option on March 23, 2022.

What will happen to the Mount Vernon staff members when the facility closes for two years?

The Park Authority values the experience and expertise of the current Mount Vernon Rec Center staff. All merit staff will be reassigned, and an effort will be made to place seasonal employees at other Park Authority facilities.

When will the Rec Center close and reopen?

The closure of MVRC will begin in early 2023. A 24-month construction timeline will be developed. We anticipate reopening MVRC in 2025. A more detailed schedule will be shared in the coming weeks.

During the closure, can members utilize other Rec Centers in the system?

The Park Authority will work closely with our passholders to ensure that they have access to facilities that meet their fitness and recreational goals. MVRC is one of the Park Authority's nine Rec Centers across Fairfax County. Passholders may use any of the other Park Authority Rec Centers during any closure; the closest two Rec Centers are George Washington Rec Center and Lee District Rec Center, both in Alexandria and both less than five miles away. George Washington Rec Center's hours of operations will be extended to accommodate the closure.

What will happen with organizations that rent the ice rink?

We will work with our ice users to help locate other facility resources for their programs. Ice users have approximately eight months to find an alternative solution.

What will happen with the swim teams?

We are optimistic that swim team programs and swim classes may be accommodated at other Rec Centers.

What will happen with camps, programs and classes?

For now, programs, classes and camps will be held until the official closure. We are optimistic that classes, camps and programs will be able to move to other Park Authority Rec Centers and sites and/or alternative locations.

Where do you go for information on passes, classes, rentals, refunds, etc.?

Despite our best efforts, we understand that some customers may not wish to continue their memberships at this time. We will provide prorated refunds or place passes on hold as desired. Call MVRC for more information. You may also send your requests to Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov (with Mount Vernon in the subject line) for expedited service.

Additional Information:

- [MVRC Expansion & Renovation Web Page](#)
- [Park Authority Board - Meetings Page](#)

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these unprecedented market conditions.

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