

**Recreation & Parks
Executive Director Response**

Case # 20-0063-I

CITY OF BALTIMORE

**BRANDON M. SCOTT,
MAYOR**



**DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS**

REGINALD MOORE, *Executive Director*
Dr. Ralph W. E. Jones, Jr. Building
3001 East Drive - Druid Hill Park
Baltimore, Maryland 21217
410-396-7900

Monday, March 15, 2021

Attn: Isabel Mercedes Cumming, *Inspector General*
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
100 North Holliday Street, Suite# 635
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: OIG Management Alert Case # 20-0063-I

Dear Inspector General Cumming,

The City of Baltimore, Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) has received and reviewed the February 11, 2021 memo and related documentation pertaining to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Anonymous Complaint Case # 20-0063-I. The complainant alleged a lack of City resources dedicated to Carroll Park, the years of deferred maintenance services and the failure to update the masterplan since 2001 by the Department of Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP).

In reviewing the case and supporting documents provided, the management and staff of BCRP maintain that Carroll Park has received its fair share of resources allocated to the Carroll Park District.

Funding Allocation

The primary source of funds for the maintenance of City parks is the General Funds. Each year this primary source of funds is appropriated in the agency's annual budget to fund the maintenance of the 4,600 acres of park land. The allocation of the appropriated fund among the 4,600 acres of parks and grassland is facilitated through the Park Districts. The Districts were created with the establishment of physical boundaries marked by select streets and landmarks. The five Park Districts the Parks Bureau established are Carroll Park, Clifton Park, Druid Hill Park, Gwynn's Falls Park and Patterson Park. Each district consists of several hundred patch work acres of parks and open spaces for the Parks Bureau to maintain.

For example, the Carroll Park District stretches from the President Street in downtown Baltimore to Fort Armstead and along the edge of Arundel County, around to West Baltimore to Fort Smallwood then coming north to Frederick Street. The Carroll Park district contains some major and notable parks such as Carroll Park, Middle Branch Park and Reedbird Park. Carroll Park is the major and most used park in the district. It houses the headquarters for the district and therefore commands most of the attention and maintenance resources in the overall district's General Fund budget. With that in mind, the budgeted line items which have been presented as an indication of a poorly maintained Carroll Park, is not accurate.

Each park district has its allocation of the General Fund budget, a management team, and staff to maintain the hundreds of parks and green open spaces within the district. The Carroll Park District budget was appropriated to serve *all* the parks and green open spaces in the district and not just Carroll Park. For clarification, \$85, 295 was allocated to the entire district for maintenance.

409	General Operating and Maintenance Supplies	\$41,586
410	Equipment Maintenance and Repair Supplies	\$5,747
411	Real Property Maintenance and Repair Supplies	\$5,747
450	Supplies for Land Maintenance (Rec and Parks)	\$32,215
	Total	\$85, 295

The expenditure patterns for these selected line items should not be interpreted as the quality of maintenance service in the district. While it is accurate that only \$46,866, was expended on maintenance, the entire budget allocated to Carroll Park District was expended.¹ It is not unusual to see surpluses on some line items and deficits on another. In fact, the Carroll Park District budget has been overspent and expenditures for the selected line items are often subsidized by other funding sources such as the State funded Program Open Space funds, Table Games funds through the Planning Department, the South Baltimore Gateway grant or the Facilities Maintenance Division. Each of these additional funding sources have been playing a major role in the maintenance of the parks both in Carroll Park and the Carroll Park District. The attached sheet shows a list of projects that were undertaken by the South Baltimore Gateway in a comprehensive donation agreement with BCRP for the past couple of years. This is an ongoing partnership with a mission to improve the quality of park service in the Carroll Park District and its most popular and most used Carroll Park.

Carroll Park Service Requests

The service request (SR) system is managed by the City’s 311 system. There are known challenges with the reliability of the current system. One major issue is that the current system is unable to separate and close service requests which require multi-agency actions. For example, if a citizen files a service request about Carroll Park and that request requires actions by more than one agency, the system is unable to close the request for the Agency that has completed its action. Therefore, one likely explanation for the high number of open SRs for Carroll could be that the SRs require multi-agency action. BCRP might have completed their action, but the SRs remain open due to inaction by another agency. Further, the Parks Bureau has a policy of acting or closing an SR within seventy-two (72) hours after receiving it. The Park Bureau latest SR table below shows that there are currently 105 SRs open for the Carroll Park District, which also includes Carroll Park. The oldest SR is dated October 01, 2020. Please note, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, crews are operating at 50%. This reduction in staff has resulted in some delays in response time.

¹ See Exhibit 2. Carroll Park FY19 adopted budget was \$1,514,609 and the FY19 actual expenditures 1,538,998.

<i>Park Maintenance SR Report 02/01 - 02/28/21</i>						
<i>Service Requests Total - 105</i>						
<i>Description</i>	<i>Oct-Jan</i>	<i>New SR's</i>	<i>Date of oldest SR</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Asst. Manager</i>	<i>District Manager</i>
<i>Carroll Park District</i>						
<i>Street Lighting</i>	13	0	10/8/2020			
<i>Playgrounds</i>	4	2	10/15/2020			
<i>Ballfields</i>	0	0				
<i>Grass Cutting</i>	1	0	10/16/2020			
<i>Graffiti Removal</i>	9	1	10/21/2020			
<i>Bldg Maintenance</i>	16	2	10/1/2020			
<i>Park Maintenance</i>	42	15	10/2/2020			
<i>Custodial</i>	0	0				
<i>Total</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>20</i>				

Carroll Park Master Plan

A *park master plan* is a plan to develop a park under the right circumstances. It is always the goal of the BCRP to fully implement every master plan. However, the right circumstances include available funding and a supportive government administration for the plan to be fully implemented. Over the years and through various administrations at the City and Agency level, numerous master plans have been developed. Many of the plans were limited in scope, focusing primarily on individual parks or facilities. Unfortunately, many plans remain unfunded and never implemented. The Carroll Park master plan is among those that were not fully implemented due to the lack of financial and administrative support.

In response to the various masterplans that remain and as a part of the BCRP's 5-year strategic plan, REC2025; BCRP is developing an Agency-wide comprehensive plan.² As a part of REC2025, the Agency will reassess past plans to determine the current capacity to complete past projects. The comprehensive plan will include: (1) an inventory of BCRP green spaces and facilities; and (2) capacity mapping to determine BCRP's staffing and financial capacity to handle current and proposed capital projects, inclusive of existing master plans. Ultimately, BCRP capital projects,

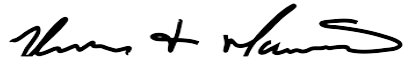
² The full REC2025 plan is available at www.myrec2025.com

including implementation of master plans, will be prioritized, funded, and implemented with an emphasis on equity and access. The Carrol Park master plan along with the others that have accumulated over the last 3 decades will be considered and addressed in this process.

BCRP is committed to utilizing its available funding and resources in a manner that ensures our parks meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Reginald Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

Reginald Moore

Executive Director

City of Baltimore, Department of Recreation & Parks (BCRP)

SBGP Donations YF19

Item	Budgetary Amount	Method Of Payment/Work Responsibility	SBGP Accountancy Code	Under Contract	SBGP Contract ID	SBGP Strategic Focus Area	Neighborhood	Park	Notes	Column1
Parks Activation Committee Programming/Funding Reserve	\$ 203,247.00	SBGP's Vendors	51100-ES Program	No	TBD	Health and Wellness	District Wide	General	Parks Activation Committee Programming/Funding Reserve Location throughout the Parks in the District. This project deliverables will be determined by a planning committee decisions to best activate the district parks.	
Enhanced Landscaping for Middle Branch and Fed Hill	\$ 100,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51200-ES Maintenance & Routine Landscaping	No	TBD	Environmental Sustainability	District Wide	General	Enhanced Landscaping for Middle Branch and Fed Hill. Location Federal Hill and Middle Branch Parks. This project will continue to provide improvements to landscaping to these spaces in Cherry Hill (\$50,000) and Federal Hill (\$50,000).	
Barre Circle	\$ 7,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51200-ES Maintenance & Routine Landscaping	No	TBD	Environmental Sustainability	Barre Circle	Barre Circle Neighborhood	Barre Circle Location Barre Circle Park. This project is for mowing services managed South Baltimore Gateway Partnership.	
Community Plantings	\$ 30,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51200-ES Maintenance & Routine Landscaping	No	TBD	Environmental Sustainability	District Wide	General	Community Plantings Locations through out the District. This project is for general planting services throughout the district managed South Baltimore Gateway Partnership.	
Mayor's Stage at Parkapalooza	\$ 600.00	BCRP	Direct Payment to BCRP	65091-Operations(Marketing)	TBD		Marketing	Pigtown	Location Carroll Park For Mayor's Stage Sponsorship	
Fed Hill Cleaning	\$ 30,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51200-ES Maintenance & Routine Landscaping	No	TBD	Health and Wellness	Federal Hill	General	Fed Hill Cleaning - Location Federal Hill Park. This project is for Federal Hill and Gateway Parks plantings, watering and cleaning.	
Carroll Park Exercise Equipment	\$ 80,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Pigtown/Washington Village	Carroll Park	Carroll Park Exercise Equipment Location Carroll Park. This project will provide funding for exercise equipment in Carroll Park. The locations will be determined as park plans are completed. No contractor selected	
Fed Hill Cannon Upgrade	\$ 20,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Federal Hill	Federal Hill Park	Fed Hill Cannon Upgrade Location Federal Hill Park. This project is for cannon upgrades and general cannon parts replacement managed by the Waterfront Partnership. No contractor selected.	
Middle Branch-Community Connectivity Study	\$ 50,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Cherry Hill	Middle Branch	Middle Branch-Community Connectivity Study Location Middle Branch Park. This project is to conduct a study to determine the best method to connect Middle Branch Park with the surrounding neighborhoods. No contractor has been selected.	

Item	Budgetary Amount	Method Of Payment/Work Responsibility	SBGP Accountancy Code	Under Contract	SBGP Contract ID	SBGP Strategic Focus Area	Neighborhood	Park	Notes	Column1
Riverside Traffic Calming Project	\$ 60,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Health and Wellness	Riverside	General	Riverside Traffic Calming Project. Location Riverside Park. This project is for the Riverside Traffic Calming Project that is undergoing planning.	
Washington Blvd	\$ 90,000.00	SBGP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Health and Wellness	Pigtown/Washington Village	General	Washington Blvd. Location Pigtown. This project is for Washington Blvd Storm Water Management project. This project will be completed once the project is fully funded. No contractor selected.	
Parkapalooza	\$ 83,200.00	BCRP	51100-ES Program	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Pigtown/Washington Village	Carroll Park	Parkapalooza. Location Carroll Park. This project is a contribution to BCRP's park concert.	
Westport Playground Maintenance	\$ 1,800.00	BCRP	51200-ES Maintenance & Routine Landscaping	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Westport	Florence Cummings Park	Westport Playground Maintenance Location Wesport, Florence Cummings Park. This project will provide general repair to the playground equipment once installed. No contractor selected.	
Ripken Field 1	\$ 500,000.00	Ripken Foundation	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Cherry Hill	Cherry Hill/Reedbird Park	Ripken Field 1 Location Reedbird Park Cherryhill. This project is to contribute tot the building of a Ripken Field. Contractor chosen - Ripken Foundation.	
Solo Gibbs Playground Installation Prep	\$ 58,500.00	BCRP	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Sharp-Leadenhall	Solo Gibbs Park	Solo Gibbs Playground Installation Prep This project is for playground installation at Florence Cummings Park. The site will be determined during the Master Planning process.	
Carroll & Archer	\$ 40,000.00	BCRP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Pigtown/Washington	Carroll & Archer Park	Carroll & Archer. Location Carroll and Archer Streets. This project is for a proposed tot lot. Project requires approval of BCRP.	
Mt Winans Master Planning and Community Garden Feasibility Study	\$ 30,000.00	BCRP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Mount Winans	Atlantic/Paca St	Mt Winans Master Planning and Community Garden Feasibility Study. Location Mt. Winans. This project is established for a planning and analysis to determine if a community garden can be sustained.	
Middle Branch Exercise Equipment	\$ 100,000.00	BCRP's Vendors	51300-ES Capital	No	TBD	Community Development and Revitalization	Cherry Hill	Middle Branch	Middle Branch Exercise Equipment. This project will provide funding for exercise equipment in Middle Branch Park. The locations will be determined as park plans are completed.	
Total	\$ 1,484,347.00									

Item	Budgetary Amount	Method Of Payment/Work Responsibility	SBGP Accountancy Code	SBGP Contract ID	SBGP Strategic Focus Area	Neighborhood	Park	Notes
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