March 31, 2021

Jane Rudolph,
Director of Parks and Recreation
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201

Director Rudolph,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to give feedback following the March 17 Online Engagement Opportunity. On behalf of the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) and the business communities we represent in Crystal City, Pentagon City and Potomac Yard, we are supportive of planning initiatives, like the New Park at Eads, which offers a strategic approach to gaining new and exciting green and open space opportunities in our area. Our vision of having a dynamic and vibrant downtown area is premised on having high-quality, well-connected parks and open spaces. Below you will find our feedback on how this new park can align with our expectations:

1. **Coordination with other open space investments**- With the public kick off of PenPlace last week, it is the BID's expectation that this planning initiative closely coordinate recommendations and align park investments and funding in a manner that delivers the same high-quality urban design and park and open space amenities as expected for across the street. We know that PenPlace will be the singular most important development project in National Landing and this new Park at South Eads should be positioned to ensure it is well connected to and offers a balanced amenity package to what is anticipated for PenPlace.

2. **Linking the park with other open spaces via a cohesive Green Ribbon**- While we expect this new park to be transformative, we also expect it to be complementary to the network of open and green space amenities throughout Pentagon City and adjacent neighborhoods. We are supportive of the meandering themed framework and would recommend that any proposed bike and/or pedestrian paths be directly connected to other existing and proposed open spaces thereby furthering the vision of well-connected and safe green network.

3. **Ensuring a logical relationship between the park and the retail spaces at 12th Street**- Given the proximity of this new park to new retail opportunities proposed at the LCOR building (480 11th Street South), we underscore the need to offer complimentary park amenities and connections to this space, thereby activating retail frontage/bays and offering a vibrant and exciting new place for pedestrians. For example, the proposed promenade pathway and plaza should complement and align with the new LCOR retail bays. The BID supports the provision of dedicated, built-in seating and tables. The BID also supports buffering any outdoor fitness areas that are immediately adjacent to retail uses. We emphasize the need to ensure proposed design interventions should complement this new retail centric, street-level experience for retail patrons and visitors.

4. **Planning for a Healthy Tree Canopy**- Healthy trees and tree canopies are integral components of any park, open space, and streetscape. While we greatly appreciate the efforts to protect and preserve the existing Cottonwood tree on the north portion of the park, we urge the County to evaluate its health as well as its aesthetic contributory value to the future open space. Based on the plans, the BID suspects that the proposed protection methods, including a boardwalk and an unactivated root protection zone, may come at a great cost in both funds and space. Redirecting limited resources to a tree that may, in fact, not survive and has limited aesthetic value to alternative priorities within the park such as additional trees and a larger, healthy canopy could yield a far better outcome long term.

Sincerely,

Tracy Gabriel
Executive Director, CEO National Landing BID