Friends of RedGate Park

November 14, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of Friends of RedGate Park, we urge you to **accept the $1.5 million Land and Water Conservation Fund grant** recently awarded to the City of Rockville for RedGate Park. This funding represents an extraordinary opportunity to advance the RedGate Park Master Plan and deliver lasting benefits for residents.

We believe there are three compelling reasons to move forward:

1. **Extensive community engagement shaped the vision for RedGate Park.**
   The RedGate Master Plan reflects one of the most comprehensive community engagement efforts the City has undertaken, including a survey with more than 1,200 responses, a series of open houses, and numerous public discussions. Residents overwhelmingly supported preserving RedGate as a natural, passive park. Accepting this grant honors that public process and the expectations it created.

2. **Declining the grant would delay needed improvements and impact other City projects.**
   This funding will enable long-requested improvements such as trail connections, habitat restoration, and accessibility upgrades - enhancements residents have awaited for more than five years. Rejecting the grant would not only postpone this progress, it would also:
   - potentially limit funds available for other important projects, including the King Farm Farmstead Park Project and the Twinbrook Connector Trail Project, and
   - place additional strain on the City's capital resources
   - signal to residents that community feedback is not viewed as a compelling factor in decision-making, even when a proposal directly responds to their concerns, and

3. **Turning down the grant would set a troubling precedent for future funding.**
   A decision to reject this award could make it more difficult for Rockville to secure future grants from the National Park Service and other funding agencies. Grantors invest significant time and resources in reviewing applications, and declining an awarded grant can weaken the City's credibility in future competitive rounds.

Finally, we recognize that some concerns have been raised about the "**in perpetuity**" clause included in the grant. However, this provision does not permanently lock the City into an unchangeable commitment. The grant includes a clear process that allows for modifications if a future Mayor and Council determine there is a compelling public need and are willing to pursue the formal conversion process.

In this sense, the clause serves as a safeguard, ensuring that changes to RedGate's status are thoughtful, deliberate, and reflect the will of Rockville residents - protecting the park from incremental or short-sighted changes that could erode its value over time.

By accepting this grant, the City will not only bring substantial new resources to RedGate Park, but also reaffirm its commitment to community input, responsible planning, and long-term stewardship of our public spaces.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your continued leadership on behalf of Rockville residents.

Sincerely,

Board Members:

Wayne Breslyn
Anne Goodman
Elana Mintz
William Nickel
Jake Rose
Chuck Woolery

Friends of RedGate Park
www.RedGatePark.org
save@RedGatePark.org

FRIENDS OF REDGATE PARK

Friends of RedGate Park is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with more than 1,000 members, dedicated to supporting and conserving RedGate Park as a natural refuge for the Rockville community through advocacy, public awareness, and collaboration with the City of Rockville.