

# Public Comments for New Stadium at RFK Campus

Total comments: 7

April 1, 2026 12:04 pm

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**Name:** Binta Robinson

**Date:** April 1, 2026 10:55:03 am

Formal Testimony: Technical Observations on RFK Campus Feasibility and Site-Selection Alternatives for the Mubadala Citi DC Open and the SportsPlex Vision

To: District of Columbia Commissioners

From: Binta Robinson, Resident of Washington, D.C.

Date: April 1, 2026

Subject: Technical Observations on RFK Campus Feasibility and Site-Selection Alternatives for the Mubadala Citi DC Open and the SportsPlex Vision

Dear Commissioners,

This testimony is submitted by a resident of Washington, D.C., and whose family home is near the Rock Creek Tennis Center, to ensure the administrative record reflects the technical feasibility of the RFK Campus Redevelopment site as a viable alternative for professional tennis facilities and the broader "SportsPlex" vision proposed for the Mubadala Citi DC Open. Based on technical briefings and NCPC reviews from February 2026, the proposed multipurpose stadium on the RFK Campus is being engineered with significant flexibility to accommodate diverse high-level sporting events.

## 1. Observed Technical Feasibility (RFK Community Meetings & Open Houses)

Direct experience at the February 2026 RFK stadium campus community meeting and March 24, 2026, RFK Community Open House revealed a significant disconnect between the RFK Stadium site's technical capacity and the current DC government's administrative trajectory. The RFK Site has the capacity to serve as the home of the Mubadala Citi DC Open, if built to do so, but the DC city governmental administration is ignoring that capacity, instead focusing on the Rock Creek Tennis Center.

- **Architectural Confirmation:** At the February 2026 RFK community meeting, an architect from HKS—the firm designing the new stadium—stated a belief that the Mubadala Citi DC Open could fit into the RFK site. The architect further noted that the concerns and ideas presented regarding this alternative were well-founded.
- **Professional Sports Capacity:** When specifically questioned whether the proposed SportsPlex for the RFK site could support professional sports and professional-grade tennis courts—rather than being limited to youth and amateur sports—the HKS architect stated that he felt the SportsPlex could support professional sports, including possibly tennis.
- **Stadium Adaptability:** At the March 24, 2026 meeting, District officials confirmed that the proposed multipurpose stadium for the Washington Commanders can be engineered with the flexibility to also serve as a professional tennis center court for the Mubadala Citi DC Open, (similar to the Miami Hard Rock Model for the Miami Open), if the floors were designed for ATP/WTA professional tennis play.
- **Siting for Secondary Courts (DPR District) (March 24, 2026 meeting):** Staff identified that the DPR District contains sufficient uncommitted "white space" adjacent to the proposed SportsPlex for professional-grade secondary courts required for the tournament, which is within around a 5 minute walking distance of the proposed Commanders' stadium.
- **Capacity within Parks and Open Space (March 24, 2026 meeting):** Officials at the Parks and Open Space Section board stated there is ample space for professional-grade tennis courts, including potential for the remaining Mubadala Citi DC Open courts, as much of this area remains uncommitted.
- **Public Demand and Visual Evidence (March 24, 2026 meeting):** An official at the Parks and Open Space Board acknowledged that the public has explicitly requested racket sports be integrated into the Master Plan, pointing to a planning board featuring tennis courts marked with a green dot.
- **Capacity within the Kingman Park District:** An official at the Kingman Park District board stated that there was space for professional-grade tennis courts, including potential for the remaining (non-center) courts that could serve the Mubadala Citi DC Open in this District.

## 2. Apparent Policy Constraints and Real Environmental Impact Concerns

Despite these technical admissions, a District official at the March 24, 2026 meeting expressed doubt regarding the use of the SportsPlex proposed for the RFK site, for professional tennis, stating a belief that the area was reserved exclusively for youth and amateur sports, though noting uncertainty as these factors were still being studied. This official acknowledged the public desire for racket sports at RFK, yet noted uncertainty in how to reconcile that with internal programming priorities for professional tennis.

In contrast, at least one SportsPlex proposal for the Rock Creek site, visually depicted a paved over portion of a forest for a new parking lot. (See the WAMU article “D.C. is pursuing a deal for the Rock Creek Tennis Center to develop a sportsplex”, by Alex Koma.) Expanding capacity for the Mubadala Citi DC Open at the current Rock Creek Tennis Center site risks increasing impermeable surfaces, which can elevate stormwater runoff into Rock Creek, leading to increased erosion and pollution. These concerns are echoed by a community petition with nearly 2,000 signatures (Change.org Petition) opposing the potential or possible destruction of National Public Parkland at Rock Creek. See <https://c.org/pNbWqDvQ5n>

### 3. Budgetary Disconnect and Lack of Transparency

The District’s commitment of \$9 million to the Rock Creek Tennis Center site for a transfer of jurisdiction to support the Mubadala Citi DC Open, comes at a time of legendary DC budget shortfalls.

- Regarding Chairman Mendelson: In September 2025, the Chairman argued that immediate commitment of these funds was necessary. However, when asked whether he had studied the environmental impact of an expanded footprint in the form of a SportsPlex at the Rock Creek Tennis Center, the Chairman answered that he had not. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson stated that immediate renovation at Rock Creek is required to prevent the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) from relocating the tournament, asserting that the RFK site is non-viable as it would not be ready for another five years. However, a review of the NPS Request for Proposals (RFP# L-ROCR002-2025) for the Rock Creek Tennis Center suggests a modernization window that may be more compatible with the RFK redevelopment timeline than previously characterized. Specifically, the NPS RFP establishes a tiered investment schedule for the selected lessee: Initial Investment: A requirement of \$10 million in repairs within the first 18 months. Long-Term Modernization: An additional \$15 million in improvements over the subsequent 42 months. Combined, the federal government’s own solicitation allows for a five-year implementation period (60 months total) to reach full modernization standards. This federally sanctioned five-year window for the Rock Creek site mirrors the five-year readiness timeline the Chairman attributed to the RFK site.

Furthermore, with the RFK Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act now law, and site clearance projected by fall 2026, the "readiness gap" between the two sites appears significantly narrower than the Chairman’s testimony suggests. If the ATP permits a five-year modernization path at Rock Creek under the NPS lease, a parallel development track at the RFK Campus—which offers greater site flexibility and fewer environmental constraints—warrants a more rigorous comparative analysis.

- In response to a resident’s suggestion during that September 2025 meeting, that the RFK Site could serve as an alternative for hosting the Mubadala Citi DC Open and its vision for growth and expanded footprint—Chairman Mendelson responded that there was no active interest in exploring the RFK site for this purpose.

- Council Chairman Phil Mendelson has expressed a clear strategic preference for the Rock Creek site for the Mubadala Citi DC Open and its possible expansion, as evidenced by his statements in a August 2024 Washingtonian article entitled “Could the Mubadala Citi DC Open Leave Washington?” by Josie Reich, where he indicated a commitment to exploring partnerships to support the tournament at its current location. The Chairman stated, “I’m supportive of our looking further at what kind of a partnership we can have... maybe that’s money, maybe that’s location, maybe that’s working something out with the Park Service.” This early commitment to "working something out with the Park Service" underscores a focused policy direction toward the existing Rock Creek facility rather than the RFK Campus.

- Regarding Councilmember Christina Henderson (July 2025):

- o Inquiries on Costs and Transparency: In July 2025, a community member raised critical questions regarding the total renovation costs of the Rock Creek Tennis Center, potential taxpayer-funded bonds, and the \$14–\$16 million deferred maintenance burden that would accompany a transfer of jurisdiction deal. The Councilmember responded that she did not have an estimate or responses to questions about maintenance, stating that all conversations were "preliminary."

- o Commitment to Site over Alternatives: Despite the lack of financial data, Councilmember Henderson remained committed to the Rock Creek site. In a June 2025 appearance on The Politics Hour with Kojo Nnamdi (cited by WAMU Article– “Rock Creek Tennis Center could get new management — and an overhaul” by Alex Koma), she stated, “It needs an update regardless of whether or not there is a sportsplex there... We need to update those courts in that stadium.” In July 2025, she further suggested to a resident, that because the NPS has no plans to renovate, a transfer is the "only path," framing opposition to the transfer as a community loss.

- Regarding Councilmember Janeese Lewis George: Correspondence from June 2025 and subsequent public statements in December 2025 demonstrate a policy preference for the Rock Creek site for the Mubadala Citi DC Open, based on "neighborhood history." By labeling documented site-selection concerns as "meritless," leadership effectively narrowed the scope of review before the technically feasible RFK alternative could be objectively evaluated.

#### 4. Coordination of Planning and Procedural Integrity

The proposed upzoning of the Crestwood and 16th Street Heights neighborhoods by DC Officials, appears to be a connected action intended to support the increased density/mixed-use aspiration for the proposed SportsPlex/expanded Tennis Center "vision" at Rock Creek Tennis Center. Any city-led proposed upzoning must be evaluated to consider the indirect and cumulative effects of the possible stadium expansion at Rock Creek Tennis Center, to ensure the true scope of the project's impact on the Rock Creek watershed is not masked by fragmented planning and roll out.

#### 5. Documented Bias and Pre-Determined Commitment

Historical records indicate that District leadership has been committed to a singular outcome at Rock Creek for years.

- A 2019 DCist article ("The Citi Open Tennis Tournament Will Stay In D.C. With Mark Ein At The Helm" by Matt Blitz, highlights that owner Mark Ein claimed that the site needed "serious upgrades" to satisfy ATP requirements.

- According to that article, Mayor Bowser pledged that Ein could "count on the city to be there every step of the way" in terms of upgrades.

- This commitment, coupled with FOIA materials produced last year showing that the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and Events DC as "deeply supportive stakeholders" while the proposed SportsPlex project at the Rock Creek Tennis Center was in its infancy, suggests that officials are not open-minded to RFK as an alternative site for the Mubadala Citi DC Open and its vision for expansion. Information as of February 2026 confirms District officials are actively attempting to revive the transfer of jurisdiction deal, even after the NPS moved toward a private lease model.

#### Conclusion:

The RFK Campus possesses the technical suitability, spatial capacity, and sustainable transit potential required for professional tennis, particularly to accommodate the Mubadala Citi DC Open and its desire to grow its footprint. I request that the Commission:

1. Perform or request a formal spatial and technical audit of the DPR District, the Kingman Park District, and uncommitted Parks and Open Space at the RFK site, to accommodate professional ATP/WTA tennis, particularly the Mubadala Citi DC Open.
2. Formally investigate what can be done to make sure the floors of the new Commanders stadium are tweaked or built to allow for professional ATP/WTA tennis play, particularly for the Mubadala Citi DC Open.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Binta Robinson

#### [Attachment](#)

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**Name:** Rebecca Harlan  
**Date:** April 1, 2026 9:30:53 am

We do not want parking garages in Kingman park. It's sad that we are resorting to this regressive mode of transportation and plopping behemoth garages that will be rarely full in a historic neighborhood that's already a heat island. I'm shocked that the city short sightedly closed the street car when it could have ferried thousands of people from Union station on game days and continue to serve senior citizens and school children alike 365 days a year. Instead we're spending millions on garages that benefit no one but tourists, block residential access to nature, and increase pollution and dangerous traffic. We can do better than this! No parking garages in Kingman Park. We have metros, we have bikes and buses. If people want to get to the game, they'll figure it out.

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**Name:** Meredith Holmgren  
**Date:** March 31, 2026 7:07:09 pm

## [Attachment](#)

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**Name:** John Lutz

**Date:** March 31, 2026 11:54:20 am

My name is John Lutz, and I am a resident of the Kingman Park neighborhood. I am writing to share my significant concerns regarding the proposed transportation plans for the RFK Stadium campus, which currently prioritize massive parking structures over sustainable transit.

The centerpiece of a modern RFK must be a new Metro infill station at Benning and Oklahoma Avenue NE. Unlike the proposed parking garages, which represent a massive taxpayer expense for facilities that sit empty for much of the year, a new Metro station provides a permanent, high-capacity solution. Metro can move tens of thousands of visitors per hour, offering a level of service consistent with world-class stadiums while benefiting residents and commuters year-round.

This investment would alleviate the need for the 11 story garages currently slated to tower over our 2 story rowhomes and our beautiful trail system.

To ensure the site is transit-first, the city should shift funding away from redundant parking infrastructure and prioritize the Benning/Oklahoma Avenue Metro station. We should also leverage the existing parking spaces already built at nearby WMATA facilities rather than creating new bottlenecks in a residential neighborhood. For any remaining essential parking, those spots should be relocated south to Lot 8 or the D.C. Jail site to preserve the historic viewsheds and cultural resources of the North.

In 2025, hundreds of Kingman Park residents called for this transit-oriented vision. I ask you to listen to the community and advance an RFK Stadium plan that chooses 21st-century infrastructure over outdated, destructive parking garages.

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**Name:** N Moore

**Date:** March 31, 2026 5:17:27 am

I would like to see redevelopment at the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus encompass the total relocation of the Mubadala Citi DC Open away from the Carter Barron and into this new complex. While there are many disclosed and undisclosed reasons for giving developers and the Mubadala Citi DC Open owners what they want at the current site, absolutely none are weighted in selfless generosity from them, in transparency, in the best interests of the local and larger population, in care for what remains of the City's natural environment, or in fairness to the City's bases for tax revenue.

The Mubadala tournament enterprise can fit quite well into this pending, multi-billion dollar complex, which is explicitly designed for sporting events. 16th Street Heights, Crestwood, and other communities near the Carter Barron have endured week-long, annual onslaughts of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, increased trash, residential parking upheaval, and late night commotion since 1969. Open attendees descend on the locale by shuttle, traditional taxis or other hired cars, bikes, and a few scooters. On-site parking is overrun, so drivers leave their vehicles everywhere possible on surrounding streets and walk back to the event. Otherwise, a few bus lines comprise the only mass transit in the immediate area. As is, the tennis matches transpire for what direct--or even indirect--benefit to nearby homeowners? During the speech given at the July 27, 2025 ceremony to close that year's Open, self-aggrandizing, non-resident, big business announced that it wants more expansion???

The RFK solution resolves all incongruities of the Mubadala Open circumstances. High seating capacity is its raison d'etre, so it obviously includes more robust transit options and copious parking. Its neighborhood already has a dedicated rail station, plus existing bus lines, with the potential to build a second rail station. So, instead of continuing to disregard the long-standing infringement on the surrounding community, do what is right and demonstrates the most common sense--relocate Mubadala operations to the venue meant to handle them. Without short-changing the City, ensure that its continued presence contributes equitably to the taxes for infrastructure maintenance and general, civic order. Then, the advertised need to (literally) "pave[d] paradise and put up a parking lot" on Rock Creek lands goes away.

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**Name:** Ebony Payne

**Date:** March 31, 2026 5:00:28 am

[Attachment](#)

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**Name:** Jessica Leas

**Date:** March 30, 2026 7:51:23 pm

I have lived in Kingman Park for 12 years and plan to stay until my last days (I own my house); I have lived in DC since 1998. I am very, very opposed to an 11-story parking garages in my neighborhood. Increase public transportation. If you limit parking and improve public, the stadium will not ruin life in our lovely neighborhood.

There are several examples of urban stadiums pushing their attendees to public transportation. My own uncle, who literally hates public transport and never walks, takes the train from Lansdale to Philly to go to Eagles games. Limiting parking won't prevent people from attending. It will limit driving under the influence. It will prevent deaths.

Add bike lanes to surrounding roads (protected) and give discounts on concessions for those who bike.

Obviously the street car would have been a great option from Union Station, but you are removing that.

So that means you'll need to increase buses on game days. Still better than giant sky scrappers of parking in a neighborhood that is already a heat island.

I'm already upset I'm paying for this stadium. I have to beg for pedestrian/ bike safety, but we can spend \$1 billion on a stadium. At least don't make our neighborhood pay in lives.

Do the right thing and limit parking!

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*Historic  
Kingman Park Civic Association  
Since 1928*

**BEFORE  
THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

February 12, 2026

**Re: KPCA Comments Regarding the Proposed RFK Stadium Construction**

On behalf of the Kingman Park Civic Association (KPCA) and its members, the association makes the following comments to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) on the proposed construction of a new RFK Stadium and its surrounding site.

The association has two basic priorities surrounding the stadium deal negotiated by Mayor Bowser. The association supports the construction of a new stadium. However, our members are demanding two important changes, improvements and enhancements. They are as follows:

First, Kingman Park residents oppose the construction of multi-level parking garage near Oklahoma Avenue and Benning Road N.E., along the Anacostia River. This proposal would bring pollution, high traffic and crime. Something the community does not want or need. KPCA supports the construction of a new Metro-Subway station instead. A new station will eliminate the need for parking garages.

The 1993 Proposed Stadium Construction Site Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) found that, “[T]he main source of carbon monoxide (CO) in the project is automobile exhaust. During rush hours, over 10,000 vehicles/hour travel on the major roadways in this area including East Capitol Street, Benning Road, Constitution Avenue, and Independence Avenue (Barton Aschman 1992). Localized high levels of carbon monoxide generally occur during the winter months when traffic is high, average speeds are generally low, and atmospheric conditions (temperature inversions) trap pollutants near ground level.”

According to the EIS, ozone is formed in the atmosphere due to the reaction of hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides and sunlight. The main source of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides in the region is automobiles. The highest levels of ozone generally occur during the summer when the increased temperature and sunlight intensity enhance its formation. This is why the proposed construction of a multi-level garage or any garage along Oklahoma Avenue or Benning Road would violate federal environmental laws (Clean Air Act, etc.), federal and D.C., regulations and the D.C. Comprehensive Plans.

Equally important, the proposed Kingman Park District multi-level garage would adversely affect the Anacostia River groundwater quality, terrestrial ecological systems (natural vegetation, which is sensitive to human activities and wetlands, along the Anacostia River, and unearthen organic contaminants known to exist in the soil at the proposed garage site.

Further, RFK Stadium Parking lots 6 & 7's open space (where the multi-level garage is planned) must be reserved for city governmental functions, including but not limited to, (1) emergency winter snow collection storage; (2) location for city recycling of electronics and shredding; (3) special events (demonstrations, and field trips, i.e.,) bus transportation parking facilities; and staging of the RFK Farmer's Market.

The Kingman Park District (where the proposed garage is planned) sits adjacent to the **Kingman Park Historic District** and the Historic Langston Terrace and Langston Golf Course. This alone would adversely affect the cultural and aesthetic features, views and purposes of the historic district. The historic district is on the National Register of Historic Places and the D.C. Inventory of Historic Places. In 1978, the D.C. Council enacted the *District of Columbia Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act (D.C. Law 2-144)*. This law strengthens legal protection and enhancement for all cultural and aesthetic assets as well as designated historic properties. The above citation is one of many laws and regulations that the proposed action would violate that would lead to protracted legal action.

Finally, Kingman Park residents demand the construction of a sports facility with an Olympic size swimming pool. The Olympic size pool is needed to attract world-class events, including but not limited to the FiFi soccer championship games, the Olympics, and college and university swimming competition events. Most important, a swimming pool will provide life-saving skills and exercise for our youth and older adults. Communities east of Georgia Avenue have longed been ignored when the issue of professional swimming pools are raised. The late Wayne Curry, former Prince Georges' County Executive demanded this amenity for the residents of Prince Georges' County when Jack Kent Cooke sought to build a football stadium in the county, and the request was granted by Mr. Cooke. We demand no less.

I hope this statement defines the wishes of the Kingman Park Historic District and the Kingman Park community. We hope it gives food for thought on what the community would like to see.

Sincerely,

*Frazer Walton, Jr.*  
Frazer Walton, Jr.  
President  
Kingman Park Civic Association

Washington, DC 20002

cc: Kingman Park Civic Association  
Executive Committee

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**Re: [RockCreekParkDefenders] National Capital Planning Commission April 2 Meeting: Comment about RFK to be built to accommodate Citi DC Open**

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From Helen Schietinger via groups.io

Date Tue 3/24/2026 10:13 PM

To RockCreekParkDefenders@groups.io <RockCreekParkDefenders@groups.io>

Here's my written statement, perhaps building on the argument that downtown venue will generate more revenue from fans and players alike:

### Statement to the National Capital Planning Commission

Proposal: Hold the yearly Mubadala DC Citi Open Tennis Tournament at the RFK Stadium.

The Mubadala DC Citi Open is a perfect addition to the sports events at RFK Stadium, having grown into an annual world-class tournament attracting thousands of fans to DC. Currently it is held at the tennis stadium in the Carter Barron Recreation Area, in Rock Creek Park in Northwest Washington. The tournament has far outgrown the size of this stadium and recreation area. An event the size of the Citi Open requires large-scale convenient public and private transportation, which are completely lacking: there are no Metro stops, no major thoroughfares for car traffic, and parking is extremely limited. On the other hand, the RFK Stadium Complex will have public transportation, including a dedicated Metro station, easy airport access, and ample parking with nearby highways.

The Carter Barron Recreation Area is also not in an area where players and fans can enjoy the amenities they expect: restaurants, shops and hotels. Each year, a makeshift tent city must be erected in the parking lot for temporary restaurants. These tents must be air-conditioned, and because the residential power grid cannot handle the heavy needs, massive truck-sized generators run day and night during the tournament. RFK Stadium offers nearby hotels, shops, entertainment, a variety of restaurants, and convenient access to downtown DC.

Moving the annual Mubadala DC Citi Open to the RFK Stadium Complex is a win/win proposition. A downtown venue offers more opportunities for fans and players to enjoy their time in DC, and DC deserves to be an acclaimed host to world class tennis. The RFK Stadium Complex can make that happen.

Sincerely,  
Helen Schietinger  
Washington, DC 20011