



**DATE:** April 24, 2018

**CATEGORY:** Consent

**DEPT.:** Community Services

**TITLE:** **Park Land Acquisition Strategies Review**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- Approve the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation for staff to modify internal processes and communication with the Parks and Recreation Commission to:
  - Provide an annual update to the PRC of Gatekeeper projects approved by the City Council, especially when park land or in-lieu fees are involved.
  - Review real estate opportunities annually in conjunction with the annual park land in-lieu fee recommendations.
  - Provide opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Commission to review and give input on General Plan areas such as the East Whisman area and North Bayshore Area.
- Approve the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation to update park land acquisition policies and objectives with specific recommendations in the next update of the Parks and Open Space Plan, anticipated for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

### **BACKGROUND**

As part of the biannual Council goal setting process, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommended a City Council project to review the park land acquisition processes and strategies. The PRC wanted to explore possibilities for enhancing and increasing opportunities for acquiring additional land for future park development. The City Council concurred with this recommendation and incorporated the goal into their City Council goals for Fiscal Year 2017-18. This is currently City Council Goal 4.2.

At the September 13, 2017 PRC meeting, the PRC approved a five-step schedule to review and provide input on the City’s park land acquisition processes and strategies. As part of the schedule, the PRC received presentations and held discussions with the Community Services Department, Community Development Department, and Public Works Department’s Real Estate Division. Attachment 1 provides the schedule of the PRC’s review process.

At the March 2018 meeting, the PRC reviewed all of the information that had been presented and consolidated their recommendations for the City Council to review and approve.

**ANALYSIS**

Below is a summary of each step of the review process and the PRC’s recommendations.

**Step 1: Review Current and Planned Park Projects**

The Community Services Director provided an update on the status of current and planned park projects in the City. Eleven new parks are expected in the next five years in Mountain View. The following six parks are at some stage in the City’s design and construction process:

	<b>Park</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.	Schaefer Park (McKelvey)	0.6 acre	Miramonte	\$350,000 (Water District)	Under Construction
2.	Fayette Park	1.3 acres	San Antonio	\$2,210,000	Preconstruction
3.	Wyandotte Park	0.9 acre	Rengstorff	\$3,115,000	Design
4.	Mora-Ortega Park	0.5 acre	San Antonio	\$1,628,000	Design
5.	Evandale Park	0.27 acre	Whisman	\$1,711,290	Design
6.	South Whisman Park	2.7 acres	Whisman	\$5,653,400	Predesign

The following five parks are in the early stages of the planning process in partnership with developers or other organizations:

	<b>Site</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Funding</b>
1.	400 San Antonio Road	0.5 acre	San Antonio	\$3,000,000
2.	Villa Street	0.25 acre	Central	
3.	555 Middlefield Road	1.5 acres	Stierlin	
4.	Old Flower Mart	0.7 acre	Sylvan-Dale	
5.	Los Altos School District	4.0 acres	San Antonio	\$23,000,000

The Los Altos School District project had funding committed by the City Council for land acquisition, the first priority for the Park Land Ordinance. The other four projects are all parks tied to developments. Therefore, the size, cost, and schedule are still being determined through our development review process. Only the 400 San Antonio Road project is far enough along in the development review process that funds were committed towards the project as a placeholder.

Lastly, future sites that staff is tracking for park opportunities include:

	<b>Property</b>	<b>Planning Area</b>
1.	Francia	Whisman
2.	Shenandoah	Stierlin
3.	North Bayshore Precise Plan	North Bayshore

The PRC did not have any recommendations in this step. Staff will update the PRC and City Council on any developments related to these sites.

## **Step 2: Review Community Development Department's (CDD) Role in Acquiring Park Land**

CDD staff reviewed the development review process with a focus on Gatekeeper projects. Key topics included:

- There are various steps of review that staff goes through with a developer for a project.
- Park land (or in-lieu fees) requirements are discussed early in the development review process and refined as a design moves forward.
- Developers struggle with providing park land and making their project cost-effective.
- The City has competing goals of more housing and affordable housing versus more park land.

The PRC recommended that staff provide an update to the Commission either annually or in the early discussions with developers for each Gatekeeper project since these are larger projects that usually have some park land or in-lieu fee component. This provides the PRC an opportunity to provide input before a development is too far along for any changes to the park location or size. Commissioners also requested that staff include the PRC and community partners, like the school districts, as future developments in the Whisman area and North Bayshore Area are being planned. Lastly, the PRC asked staff to ensure that mailings and public outreach for community meetings for new parks be the same radius or distance as the expected size of the community being served by the park. CSD staff already provides public noticing for community meetings for park projects at the desired radius.

## **Step 3: Review City's Real Estate Acquisition Strategies and Processes**

The City's Real Property Program Administrator reviewed how the City determines park land requirements, including how Park Land In-Lieu Fees are calculated. Staff also reviewed the City's real estate strategies, goals, and challenges. The primary challenges to acquiring park land include:

- As noted above, there are trade-offs between parks and affordable housing, i.e., possibly removing an apartment complex to build a park or providing less housing units at a new development to have space for for park land.

- Mountain View is built out, requiring the City to assemble multiple parcels of land in order to have enough space to build even a half-acre park.

The PRC inquired about marketing such as advertisements in the local newspapers so the community knows that the City is open to acquiring land. The City has advertised in the local newspaper multiple times for extended periods, but has not received any responses. Staff also periodically advertises in other media; performs direct mailings; and does in-person outreach, when possible, to acquire land.

Commissioners were very interested in hearing about staff's efforts to work with nonprofits like the Trust for Public Lands. Staff has contacted such organizations, but has not found an opportunity to work together on acquiring land in Mountain View. Staff continues to work with real estate brokers, nonprofits, and other community contacts regarding available parcels. The PRC recommended staff provide an annual update to the PRC on real estate parcels that are available and areas where there may be an opportunity to purchase or assemble parcels for park land. Starting next year, staff can include this update in the annual park land in-lieu fee recommendations that are brought to the PRC each spring.

#### **Step 4: Address Outstanding Questions or Additional Information**

At the January 10, 2018 meeting, the PRC had the opportunity to discuss the previous three steps and ask staff to follow up on specific questions or concerns in preparation for the development of recommendations at the March PRC meeting. After a brief discussion, Commissioners asked about specific projects and parcels, but did not have further follow-up regarding the City's broader strategies and goals for park land acquisition.

#### **Step 5: Review and Provide Recommendation**

This fifth and final step for the PRC was to review all of the information that had been presented and determine a recommendation for the City Council. The PRC consolidated their recommendations, focusing on staff processes and procedures. The PRC felt that larger strategy and policy changes should be addressed in further detail as part of the next Parks and Open Space Plan update – most likely in Fiscal Year 2019-20.

## **CONCLUSION**

After a five-step review process where the PRC heard from multiple departments regarding the current strategies, the Commission recommended the following:

- Provide an annual update or include the PRC as part of the Gatekeeper process, especially when park land or in-lieu fees are part of the review or discussion.
- Include the PRC as future developments in the Whisman area and North Bayshore Area are being planned.
- Provide an annual report to the PRC on parcels that are being considered for park land or areas where potential acquisition may be possible.

The PRC focused on recommendations for staff to modify internal processes. The recommendations do not require a policy change or modifications to the City's General Plan or Parks and Open Space Plan. The PRC will have an opportunity to revisit these strategies, goals, and policies when the Parks and Open Space Plan is updated – most likely in 2020.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact from the recommendations provided.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

- Do not approve the PRC's recommendations.
- Provide alternative or additional recommendations.
- Provide other direction to staff.

**PUBLIC NOTICING** – Agenda posting.

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JPdIM/BR/2/CAM  
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- Attachments:
1. Schedule for Reviewing Park Land Acquisition Program
  2. Planning Area Assessment and Map from Parks and Open Space Plan
  3. Parks Projects Map