



**MEMORANDUM**

Community Services Department

**DATE:** March 28, 2018

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Park Land Acquisition Review and Recommendation

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**RECOMMENDATION**

- Recommend staff review internal processes and communication with the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the following items:
  - Gatekeeper projects approved by the City Council.
  - 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 East Whisman and North Bayshore areas.
- Recommend Parks and Open Space Plan incorporate specific park land acquisition objectives and recommendations in the next update, anticipated for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

**BACKGROUND**

As part of the budget process for the current fiscal year, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommended a City Council goal to review the park land acquisition processes and strategies. The PRC wanted to explore alternatives to enhancing and increasing opportunities for acquiring additional land for future park development. The City Council made this one of their Council goals.

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. A summary of each step in the schedule is provided below along with recommendations from that meeting that the PRC had.

For the PRC's reference, City Council Policy H-9 and Chapter 41 of the Mountain View City Code address park land dedication or fees in lieu thereof. This section of the City Code describes how the City follows Sections 66477 and 66479 of the Government Code of the State of California, commonly referred to as the Quimby Act, in order to acquire park land or utilize park land in-lieu fees. In addition to this code, staff also utilizes the City's General Plan and Parks and Open Space Plan when examining park land acquisition opportunities.

### **SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS**

Below is a summary of each step of the review process and comments or recommendations made by the PRC at each step.

#### **Step 1: Reviewed Current and Planned Projects**

The Community Services Director provided an update on the status of current and planned park projects in the City. There are 11 new parks 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	Pre-design

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 are 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 on each of these projects as they move forward in the planning, design, and construction processes.

## **Step 2: Reviewed Community Development Department's Role in Acquiring Park Land**

Senior Planner Diana Pancholi from the Community Development Department reviewed the development review process with a focus on Gatekeeper projects. Key topics included:

- Informal versus formal review processes for developments.
- 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 either annually or in the early discussions with developers for Gatekeeper projects since these are larger projects that usually have some park land or in-lieu fee component. Commissioners also requested that staff include the PRC and other 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.

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

Real Property Program Administrator Dennis Drennan from the Public Works Department reviewed how the City determines park land requirements, including how Park Land In-Lieu Fees are calculated. For review, park land dedication is only applicable to residential development. The amount of park land that needs to be dedicated for a development is determined by the formula  $A \times B = L$ , where "A" equals the park land dedication requirement per dwelling unit (Section 41.6), "B" equals the number of new dwelling units, and "L" equals the land required for dedication. The in-lieu fee is calculated using the formula,  $A \times B \times C = F$ , where "A" equals the park land dedication requirement per dwelling unit (Section 41.6), "B" equals the number of new dwelling units, "C" equals the fair market value per acre, and "F" equals the in-lieu fee.

Mr. Drennan then reviewed the City's real estate strategies, goals, and challenges. The primary challenges to acquiring park land include:

- Competing with affordable housing, i.e., possibly removing an apartment complex to build a park or providing less housing units for a new development for park land.
- Mountain View is also built out, requiring the City to assemble multiple parcels of land in order to have enough space to build even a half-acre park.
- Staff continues to work with real estate brokers, nonprofits, and other community contacts regarding available parcels.

The PRC recommended that staff place 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 reached out to organizations like this one, but have not found an opportunity to work together on acquiring land in Mountain View. The PRC recommended staff provide an annual update to the PRC on real estate parcels that are available and areas where there may be 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 March 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 is to review all of the information that has been presented and determine if there is a recommendation for the City Council. If the PRC does not feel that any changes need to be made at this time, there will be a future

opportunity to review the processes and strategies when the Parks and Open Space Plan is updated – most likely in Fiscal Year 2019-20. The PRC may also recommend that staff modify internal processes without needing to take formal action for policy change or adjusting larger strategies, which may require updates to the City Code or City plans.

## **SUMMARY**

Over the course of the review process, staff recorded the following recommendations from the PRC.

- 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.
- Staff provides an annual report to the PRC on parcels that are being considered for park land or areas where potential acquisition may be possible.

These recommendations require 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.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The March 28, 2018 PRC meeting is the final step of the review schedule for the PRC. Based on the recommendations from this meeting, staff will provide a report to the City Council summarizing the findings of the PRC.

JPdIM/BR/2/CSD  
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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. Park Projects Map