Below is a copy of a letter I sent today to Councilman Ramirez as per the idea of reducing Parks Fees on new R3 construction.

As you know, much of north Mountain View falls far below Quimby standards for available park space. This is especially true in the areas of the City north of Alma where parks are few and the greenspace that does exist are mainly school fields that are only available to the public for a few daylight hours a day.

My fear is that by cutting park fees on new R3 development the City ill be not only losing one of its few funding methods for acquiring new parks but by adding new residents it will also be further impacting those few parks we have today.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From:
Date: Wed, Mar 17, 2021 at 12:33 PM
Subject: R3 rules on reduced park fees
To:

I'm wondering what your position is on reduced park fees for R-3 development?

On one hand, I see the impediment that high park fees create to new development. If land in Mountain View is valued at $10M per acre, the park fees on a unit with 3 residents could eventually be as a high as $90,000/unit?

At the same time we all need to acknowledge that Park fees are not the only major impediment to new development in this area. They are but one but are one of many ingredients in the high cost of new construction.

Construction costs are now approaching $400/square foot (lumber has gone up 3X in a year and labor is increasingly tight). Add to this land costs for a 600 square foot footprint (assuming a three story unit) on a property with a .40 land to building ratio is in the vicinity of $350,000/unit.

Using these estimates a 1,500 square foot unit, might cost close to $900,000 to develop before permit, park, and school fees, and interest expenses.

From this point of view "middle housing" doesn't look like "middle class" housing, but rather a denser and only slightly more affordable option for families in need of local housing?

With this as a background, my fear is that if the City reduces park fees on new R3 units, without requiring some alternative accommodations for greenspace, we will end up exacerbating the City's park shortage problem especially north of Alma. (Where much of the park space is school fields which are open to the Community much less than half the day, and where much of R3 zoning is planned.)

Cutting park fees without planning how our new resident's needs for parks will be met, leaves the City no way to pay for additional greenspace, and thus will only increase our park deficit.

I liked your idea of looking to new corporate developments to pay for greenspace.

As I see it, as land continues to increase in price ,it may be that the City someday looks to develop less land intensive recreation options for its citizens that are common today in more urban environments.

These might be linear parks that can be used for walking, bike riding, and jogging, swim and rec centers, rooftop community parks and gardens on the tops of parking structures, or facilities like basketball courts which require less space for play.

I do worry that unilaterally cutting park fees without examining the parks and development issues holistically will make it even more difficult to address quality of life issues in the future.

I'm interested to hear your ideas and as always much appreciate your efforts in this area.

Sincerely,

PS-The MVWSD working group meeting on the Monta Loma Park issue is today at 5P. The District has changed the Zoom link to:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_M8lJ3MdCQCm2sLZsHVtGqw

The Community has been told that in response to pressure from the City, the District is planning to make these meetings more open to the Community. We thank the Council for their help in attempting to create a constructive process and are anxious to see if this actually transpires today.