



DATE: November 8, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 4

TO: Parks & Recreation Commission

FROM: Manny A. Hernandez, Staff Liaison

SUBJECT: Parkland Acquisition Criteria Review

BACKGROUND

On May 8, 2012, City Council adopted the Los Altos Park Plan. In the Parks Plan, the highest priority goal is to increase the amount of total parkland. In 2014, the Parks and Recreation Commission was charged by Council to create criteria for acquiring land in Los Altos that would be used as parkland. The Parks and Recreation Commission addressed this matter and made a recommendation to City Council at the October 13, 2015 Council meeting.

At that October 13, 2015 meeting, Council received the criteria report and provided input to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

DISCUSSION

To address the low ratio of park acreage in Los Altos (1.57 acres per 1000 residents), the Parks and Recreation Commission developed a report that suggests utilization of a system of assigning numerical value to important criteria when evaluating land acquisition for park development. A numerical value is assigned to the important characteristics of the land being evaluated and a numerical ranking is created for that plot of land.

Although there are many factors to consider when evaluating land acquisition for park development, the Parkland Acquisition Criteria subcommittee focused on just a few important factors. These factors are:

Location

In creating the criteria, the subcommittee took into consideration that there are zero parks in Los Altos north of Village Park. This area would be the most desirable part of the City to develop a park. Although all opportunities to acquire parkland should be taken into consideration, acquisition of parkland in the North Los Altos area is assigned a higher numerical value according to the criteria.

Size

The Parks Plan shows Los Altos as having the lowest parkland acreage per 1,000 residents when compared to similar cities in the region. In an effort to increase that average, the acquisition criteria places a higher value on larger areas for park development. Although larger plots of land are most desirable for park development and understanding the limited availability of land in Los Altos, it is recommended that properties smaller than .75 acres are still considered for park development.



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Use

A park having the flexibility to be used in different ways is very valuable since it would serve a larger portion of the community. The three components within this factor are passive, medium and active (sports fields). The more usage flexibility a plot of land has, the greater the numeric value.

The point system recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission simplifies the evaluation of land in Los Altos that could be potentially developed as parkland. The higher overall number that is assigned to the land would be considered more valuable for parkland development.

At the October 13, 2015 meeting City Council provided the following input/questions pertaining to the criteria system that was presented to them.

- Prioritize medium use parks in North Los Altos
- Prioritize high use (sports field) in South Los Altos
- No need for neighborhood park in South Los Altos
- High demand for field space throughout the City?
- Use-weighting should be location specific
- Weighting should be to fill-in the gaps on the map
- We should look at anything that becomes available regardless of location
- Is exercise realistic with the land price?
- Limited parcels to compare and make the criteria useful
- This exercise has brought some considerations to light if a parcel becomes available

The Parks and Recreation Commission will review the criteria report that was created and discuss what the next steps should be if the Commission decides to work on this again.