



MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2023

TO: Mayor Jordan and City Council
THRU: Susan Norton, Chief of Staff
FROM: Alison Jumper, Director of Parks, Natural Resources and Cultural Affairs
DATE:
SUBJECT: **Park Impact Fee Study**

RECOMMENDATION:

A resolution to approve engaging a consultant to perform a park impact fee study.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Fayetteville has long valued the benefits of parks as evidenced by adopting its park land dedication ordinance in 1981. This set a precedent for the state. Still, Fayetteville and Bentonville are the only two cities in Arkansas that we are aware that have a park land dedication ordinance or impact fee requirement. Our ordinance has been amended several times to adapt to different circumstances such as adding and omitting minimum park requirements and updating the ratio that determines fees and amount of land to be dedicated.

The ordinance applies to residential lot splits, subdivisions, large scale developments, planned zoning districts, large scale site improvement plans, and small scale site improvement plans; provided that these requirements shall not apply to a lot split or subdivision that does not create one (1) or more vacant lots on which a residential structure could be erected pursuant to the Unified Development Code, and give the developer the option to dedicated land of their choice or fee in lieu.

The ordinance has generated approximately \$10,738,686 for park land acquisition and development and 290 acres of park land since being adopted. The past six years have generated approximately \$3,758,940 and just over 33 acres. Of those 33 acres, only approximately 5.5 are suitable for anything other than a sitting space and much is in the floodway and floodplain.

DISCUSSION:

While the current park land dedication ordinance has served the city well for many years, as the city has grown, development patterns have changed and park needs have changed, and a new process for offsetting impacts to the park system is needed.

During the time the ordinance was adopted, land was developing in large tracts, in less dense patterns, which afforded the opportunity to plan for adequate parks through park land dedication. Development patterns have shifted towards a denser form, on smaller parcels, which limits opportunity for the dedication of quality park land to meet the needs of the development in that area.

We are at a moment where we have adequate park acreage; however, we still have gaps in park service. Most

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of our park acreage is on the periphery of the city in large regional and community parks. Some areas central to the city are not adequately served by park and greenspace, and targeted acquisition is necessary to fill the gap. Our current ordinance severely limits where we can gain land; and in fact, has prevented us from acquiring suitable park land where we need it. Most of the land that has been dedicated in the last five years has been undevelopable land, providing for conservation park. The city strives to provide a variety of types of parks, and spaces for active parks have been minimal.

A new Park and Recreation System Master Plan was adopted earlier this year that recommends updating the way we assess for park impacts. Additionally, it sets a goal to provide park and trail opportunities within a 10-minute walk of every resident. The current ordinance does not allow targeted acquisition which is critical to creating a park system that best serves our growing city.

If approved, staff would move forward with selecting a qualified consultant using our selection process and a separate resolution will be proposed to approve a contract.

BUDGET/STAFF IMPACT:

Funding has been approved for this study in the current 2023 budget. If approved, a separate resolution will be and submitted to approve a contract.

ATTACHMENTS: 2023 Impact Fee Proposal SRF, PLD Ord