APRIL 23 PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission asked Otak to develop the following to bring back to the next Planning Commission meeting on May 14, 2019:

1. Regional municipal code examples of contiguous open space requirements (size of open space at .5 acres or other similar provisions).
2. Calculations of the example standards below with private open space per DU shown as a separate quantity/acreage of space.
3. Separate calculation of the open space that could be part of setback requirements (under current Code and potential amended setback requirements).
4. An analysis of what the current Code requires related to open space.

Questions Discussed at the Meeting:

- Are these standards sufficient for Town Center?
- Should more open space be required at Town Center?
- How do these standards align with other precedent and regional municipal requirements?
- What provisions should be included in Code related to the qualities of open space to be provided? (What types of open space should be required – see examples below. Consider a menu approach to be determined through Development Agreement process.)
- What should be counted within the open space required (setback areas?)

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS FOR TOWN CENTER

The City of Lake Forest Park's PROS-T Plan recommends working toward achieving a general increase in the ratio of parks and open space lands per 1,000 people in Lake Forest Park, although a specific target ratio is not mentioned. The community currently has an average of 2 acres of parks and open space land per 1,000 population, and this is lower than national averages.

For the purposes of the analysis in the EIS, all of the alternatives propose new residential population at Town Center. As an analysis methodology, the following open space standards were applied. (It should be noted that the nearby jurisdiction of Bothell uses these standards for its downtown as one example.)

- 100 Square Feet of Public Open Space for Every Dwelling Unit (DU)
- 60 Square Feet of Private Open Space per DU
- 60 Square Feet per 1,000 Gross Square Feet of Non-Residential Use

This EIS analysis applies these standards as one potential measure of how parks, recreation, open space, and trails facilities could be provided to serve new residents, employees, and visitors at Town Center. This is a theoretical analysis presented for the purpose of determining potential demand for open space

to be presented for public and agency comments. The actual standard required for Town Center would be determined as an outcome this EIS process and adopted as part of the Town Center Plan. The actual adopted standards in the future may vary from those referenced in this analysis. Based on further analysis and public comments, the City may proceed to use these standards or may develop a different set of standards that may require more or less open space. The City may determine to use incentives and bonus tools that would credit certain types of open space and amenities with more value, reducing the amount of space required based on the level of importance/value to the community. The City may adopt bonus density or other incentives for the provision of open space.

Table A calculates the amounts of open space that would be needed to serve demand applying the example standards. This demand could be served through a wide variety of parks, recreation, open space, trails, and other spaces and amenities at the Town Center as it redevelops.

Table A Planning Level Analysis of Potential Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Demand

Alternative	Public Open Space at 100 SF per DU	Private Open Space at 60 SF per DU	Public Open Space at 60 SF per 1,000 GSF
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (Density To Be Determined)	TBD	TBD	TBD
Alternative 1—No Action (700 to 1,000 DU)	70,000 to 100,000 SF	42,000 to 60,000 SF	10,000 SF
Alternative 2—Varied Form and Height (Up to 1,200 DU)	120,000 SF	72,000 SF	9,000 SF
Alternative 3—Uniform Form and Height (Up to 1,500 DU)	150,000 SF	90,000 SF	15,000 SF

Based on this theoretical analysis, and assuming high end range of the population forecast for each alternative, implementation of Alternative 1 would require up to 170,000 SF or 3.9 acres of parks, recreation facilities, open space, and trails at full build out. Alternative 2 would require 201,000 SF or 4.6 acres. Alternative 3 would require 255,000 SF or 5.9 acres. PLEASE NOTE: A preferred alternative is currently in development. These calculations will need to be re-calibrated to the density of the preferred alternative.

Comparison to a standard of acres per 1,000 population was also analyzed. To determine correlation to this standard, potential new on-site parks, recreation, open space (calculated in Table A above) and existing parks and recreation facilities within walking distance of Town Center and open to the public were counted (see Table B). Table C shows the total estimated existing and new parks, recreation, open space, and trails per 1,000 population.

Table B Existing Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails within Walking Distance of Town Center

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Resources	Size in Acres
Existing Open Spaces within Walking Distance:	
Blue Heron Park	0.50
Whispering Willow Park	0.62
Burke-Gilman Trail in Lake Forest Park (2.1 Miles)	3.05

Lyon Creek Waterfront Preserve	0.89
Existing Rain Gardens and Open Spaces Likely to be Retained	1.40
Third Place Commons	0.23
Subtotal	***6.69***

Source: Lake Forest Park PROS-T Plan; note the Lake Forest Park Civic Club provides another 1.5 acres of open space with recreational amenities, but it is a private facility/property, not open to the public.

Table C Total Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails with Full Build Out Population Forecast

Alternative	Acres at Full Build Out	Acres per 1,000 Population
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (Density To Be Determined)	6.69+ TBD = TBD Total Acres	TBD Acres/1,000
Alternative 1—No Action	6.69 + 3.9 = 10.59 Total Acres	4.4 Acres/1,000
Alternative 2—Varied Form and Height	6.69 + 4.6 = 11.29 Total Acres	3.9 Acres/1,000
Alternative 3—Uniform Form and Height	6.69 + 5.9 = 12.59 Total Acres	3.5 Acres/1,000

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) conducted a 2017 survey of 925 park agencies and found that the median ratio of park land (covering a wide spectrum of parks, recreation, and open space uses) in these jurisdictions was 10.5 acres per 1,000 population, with the lower quartile at 4.4 acres per 1,000.

Lake Forest Park currently has 2 acres of park land per 1,000 population, and the PROS-T Plan recommends working to increase this ratio. All scenarios shown in Table 4.3.9 are above the 2 acres per 1,000 existing condition.

In considering the PROS-T analysis and reference to the NRPA survey, it is important to note that many urban core areas tend to have lower ratios of parks/open space land to population compared to ratios applied to the entire community (due to the densely developed character of these areas and challenges of acquiring land in urban centers. The Town Center planning area is limited in size (just over 19 acres not including the fire station and gas station parcels) and mostly privately owned.

Table D provides a theoretical "test of fit" of open space at Town Center that could potentially be part of redevelopment scenarios.

Table D Theoretical Scenario of Potential On-site Open Space Areas to Show Correlation to Comparable Standards

Type of Space	Estimated Size with Redevelopment (Acres)
Pedestrian corridors/social gathering areas	1.0
Festival/shared street space/farmers market space	1.3
Children's play area	.40

Lyon Creek enhancements/wider setbacks/boardwalk area	.30
Landscaped setback areas with paths	1.5
Private patios and balcony spaces	.20
Rooftop decks	.50
Indoor commons space	.25
New plaza near City Hall	.40
Bike station plaza	.10
Gardens (including existing rain gardens and other new gardens)	.10
Total	**6.05**

COMMENTS ON THE DEIS and in further coordination with the Planning Commission and the Council of the Whole Committee have confirmed a strong desire and interest by the community for a centralized, green open space area at Town Center that could serve multiple functions – places for children to play, social gatherings, events, green space, area for trees, etc. Given the importance of this to the community, the approximate size and location of such a space should be guided by the Code amendments and design standards for Town Center.

Community input gathered during the Town Center visioning process, an intensive public and stakeholder engagement effort involving hundreds of residents, also identified the following public space priorities for Town Center:

- Preserving the function of the Third Place Commons, approximately 10,000 square feet of indoor space actively used by the community. (According to input gathered during the PROS-T Plan development process, residents are generally satisfied with the programs offered at Third Place Commons, but also expressed that the facilities are outdated, restrictive of some public uses, and have limitations in adequately supporting certain types of events). In the Town Center Visioning process, residents recognized that the Third Place Commons space is privately owned and as such could be at risk with future redevelopment. This indoor activity space and place for community events is highly valued by the community, and residents would like to see this function continue as part of future redevelopment.
  - Farmers Market space, currently outdoor space next to the professional office building, near City Hall
  - Better access to/from the Burke-Gilman Trail through a grade separated crossing as well as enhanced at-grade crossings
  - Indoor and outdoor public gathering spaces
  - Places for events and activities, such as
    - Outdoor movie watching
    - Food trucks/picnic spaces
    - Outdoor games (pickleball, bocce, large chess and checkers sets, etc.)
    - Places to sit, relax, socialize
    - Year-round festivals and holiday celebrations

  - Community-scale concerts and performances

- Green spaces, rain gardens, landscaped areas, and TREES (convert the gray to green)
- P-patch/community garden areas
- Play areas
- Things for teens to do
- Senior citizen programs
- Multi-generational—a recreation center/community center with activities for all ages, as well as dispersed places for everyone and activities for all ages
- Places for pets
- Public/community meeting/workshop spaces
- Rooftop gardens and viewing areas (views to Lake Washington and Mount Rainier would be possible from higher floors and rooftops)

The Conclusion of the PROS-T Plan states that residents are generally satisfied with their parks, including nature parks, which are highly valued by the community. Residents also enjoy the farmers market, outdoor summer events, and indoor performances and events at Third Place Commons, and have stated that these experiences contribute to creating a strong sense of community.

Additionally, the PROS-T Plan identifies the following as types of potential improvements were most highly valued by the community:

- Trails and connections
- More parks and open space and improvements to existing parks
- A community recreation center—there is a strong interest in a community/ recreation center providing space for public events, meetings, classes, and active recreation programs
- Lake access/investment in lakefront property

The PROS-T Plan also calls for replacing some parking outside City Hall with a small gathering space or plaza, lighting, possibly a tree grove, and to negotiate the development of public space with Town Center redevelopment. The plan also recommends grade separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing(s) in the vicinity of Town Center, connecting to the Burke-Gilman Trail and lakefront parks and sites (page 39). The PROS-T Plan also calls for the following specific improvements to parks near Town Center:

- ***Blue Heron*—**renovation of landscaping, trails, and gathering areas, interpretive and wayfinding signs, parking improvements, and a nature play coming structure.
- ***Whispering Willow*—**wayfinding signs, artwork, bike rack, create a looped boardwalk/trail, additional trees, bird boxes, seating, and interpretive signs.
- ***Lyon Creek Waterfront Preserve***—wayfinding signs, artwork, handrail on pier, seating, native plantings, bike rack, and other improvements.

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE—FOR DISCUSSION AND CONFIRMATION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

Examples of potential public open space areas and facilities for general public use include:

- Plazas, commons areas, and other social gathering spaces (outdoor and indoor)
- Rooftop decks/areas designed with amenities and open to public use
- Community gardens and p-patches
- Pedestrian corridors and festival/shared street areas designed for public markets and events
- Children's play areas and multipurpose, multigenerational recreational spaces (play structures, sports courts, outdoor games, movie watching area, etc.)
- Food truck/café seating areas and picnic/barbeque areas open to public use/not customer exclusive
- Commemorative gardens, public art displays/sculpture gardens, landscaped courtyards and other types of spaces designed for public use and enjoyment
- Enhanced areas along Lyon Creek for public use (such as a boardwalk system with overlooks along the edge of the creek buffer and/or additional daylighting of Lyon Creek with public overlook areas)
- Landscaped setback areas as long as these spaces are useable (such as including recreational paths/trails in these linear areas)
- Other types of parks and open space areas that could be determined through further planning and design, such as mini-parks, parklets spaces, or neighborhood park for the Town Center community

Examples of potential private open space areas and facilities for the use of residents include:

- Balconies and patios
- Courtyards, gardens/greens, and common areas oriented to private use
- Picnic and barbeque areas for the use of private residents
- Outdoor recreational areas and playgrounds for private use (indoor recreation rooms/spaces for residents would not count toward meeting this standard)
- Rooftop gardens, roof and tiered floor level decks and spaces adjoined to residential floors for the common use of private residents
- Landscaped areas in the private realm with furnishings and amenities (benches, seating, pubic art, etc.) provided they are accessible to and useable by residents

Examples of Open Space Code Provisions

DRAFT REFERENCE INFORMATION FOR DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Draft 9.25.18

JURISDICTION	OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS	DESIGN GUIDELINES	INCENTIVE PROGRAM
Bothell Downtown (Bothell Downtown Plan Part 2)	Non-residential: Office 60 sf / 1,000 sf Lodging 60 sf / room Residential: Public 100 sf / dwelling unit Private 60 sf / dwelling unit	General open space requirements (12.64.305) Street and open space guidelines (12.64.306)	
Burien - Downtown Design Standards (BMC 19.47.030)	Pedestrian-oriented space requirements based on frontage along designated Class A & B pedestrian-oriented streets. Provide certain number of pedestrian amenities based on amount of frontage	Pedestrian-oriented space: qualifying criteria	FAR Bonus (19.15.025) 4 sf of additional floor area for each sf of public open space (no limit)
Kirkland: Central Business District (KZC Chapter 92)	At least 175 sf of pedestrian-oriented space between sidewalk and building (Rose Hill and Totem Lake - 1% of applicable lot area + 1% of nonres. building floor area)	Pedestrian Oriented Improvements - Design Criteria (92.15) Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Oriented Business Districts	
Lynnwood City Center Distrct (City Center Design Guidelines)	Open Space/Public Plazas: every new building shall provide 1% of the sum of the sf of building area and the sf of the site	City Center Design Guidelines	FAR Bonus (LMC 21.60) 5 sf of additional floor area for each sf of public plaza above the amount required by the city center design guidelines
Poulsbo - Commercial Districts (Poulsbo Municipal Code)	Planned mixed-use: 15% of gross site area (18.80.090 H)		Downtown District: Increased front yard setbacks are allowed at the ground level on Front Street and Jensen Way, if the area is designed as a pedestrian courtyard or square (18.80.050 B)
Redmond Urban Center: 21.62 (Red Urban Design Standards)	Non-residential: 3% of building footprint (for total site area > 1/2 acre) Residential: 100 sf / dwelling unit	Pedestrian-oriented open space design criteria Residential usable open space types & design standards	
Sammamish Town Center (SMC 21B)	Non-residential: 1% of net developable area + 1% of gross nonresidential building floor area Multifamily: 10% of building living space; 5% if adjacent or across the street from existing park Townhouses: 10% of building living space	Open space design general requirements and design criteria for pedestrian-oriented space, multifamily open space, and children play area safety (21B.30.160)	Stormwater facility planning: Certain LID/stormwater features can count for required landscaped open space, pedestrian oriented space and common open space (21B.30.100)
Sammamish Town Center Infrastructure Plan (Sam Infra Plan)	All development must contribute 66% of open space requirement to 'Green Spine'	Open Space Development Guidelines: Primary open space, secondary open space, and neighborhood transition	
Shoreline - General Development Standards (SMC 20.50.240 E-G)	Non-residential: 4 sf / 20 sf of net commercial floor area to max. 5,500 sf (public place min. of 400 sf) Residential: 800 sf / development -or- 50 sf / dwelling unit, whichever is greater	Public Places Design Requirements Multifamily Open Space Requirements	Deep Green Incentive Program (SMC 20.50.630) Up to 100% waiver of all City-imposed pre-application and permit application fees

Example Comparison for Non-residential Development:

1 acre Net Developable Area (NDA)
0.5 acre Building Floor Area (BFA)

Jurisdiction	Requirement	Open Space Area (sf) to be provided
Bothell	6% NDA	2,614
Lynnwood	1% NDA + BFA	653
Poulsbo	15% NDA	6,534
Redmond	3% BFA	653
Sammamish, Kirkland	1% NDA + 1% BFA	653
Shoreline	20% BFA	4,356

Synopsis:

- In general, downtown plans designate specific locations for desired public open space and have zoning code requirements for adjacent development and incentives for all development to contribute space and amenities to these locations

- Where residential development requirements are specified, the open space provision is a combination of public and private open space (central courtyard vs. private balcony)

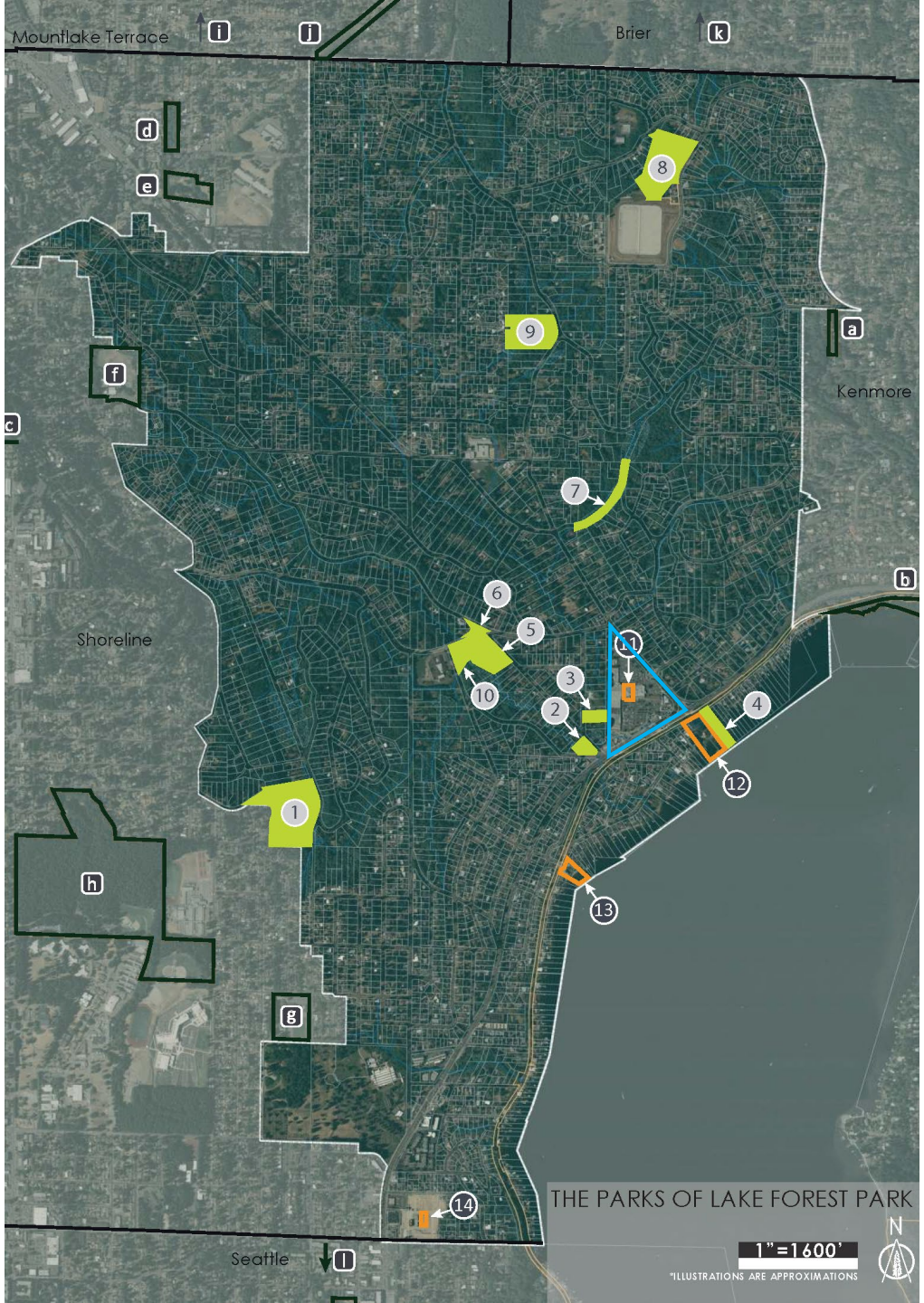
- Pedestrian-oriented space (used by Kirkland, Burien, Redmond, and Sammamish) typically includes some combination of pedestrian amenities such as plazas, seating, landscaping, pedestrian furniture, artwork, water feature, kiosk, etc.

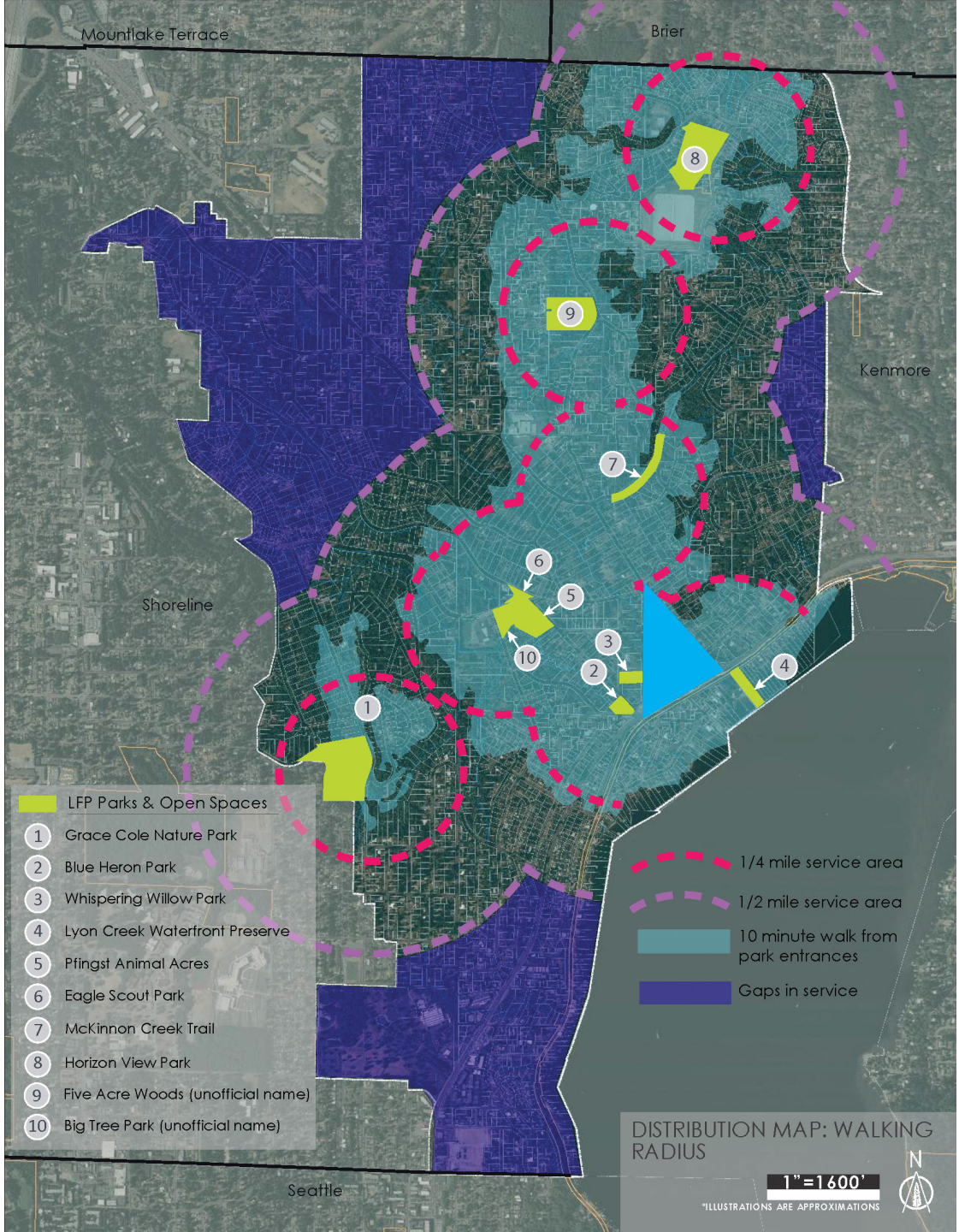
- Most design guidelines encourage developments to provide public access to all adjacent property especially building entrances, public spaces and public right-of-way

REFERENCE INFORMATION FOR DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

FROM THE LAKE FOREST PARK PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS (PROS-T) PLAN

EXISTING PARKS IN THE CITY AND IN PROXIMITY TO TOWN CENTER



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REFERENCE INFORMATION FOR DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

HOW MUCH SPACE TO SCALE DOES 1 ACRE CONSUME? 2 ACRES?

(THE AREA WITHIN THE TRIANGLE IS ABOUT 18 ACRES)

IF AN AREA OF CONTIGUOUS OPEN SPACE IS PROVIDED, WHAT SIZE SHOULD IT BE? .50 ACRE? WHERE SHOULD IT BE LOCATED?

Issue Brief

National Recreation and Park Association

22377 BELMONT RIDGE ROAD | ASHBURN, VA 20148-4501 | 800.626.NRPA (6772) | www.nrpa.org

NRPA's mission is to advance parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- What is a Pocket Park?
- Benefits
- Funding
- Step-By-Step Plans
- Case Studies
- Resources Index

Creating Mini-Parks for Increased Physical Activity

INTRODUCTION

Providing quality park and recreation space for inner city residents is increasingly challenged by the limited amount of available park space in urban areas. As a result of the diminishing access to parks and open spaces, the physical and recreational needs of urban youth often go unmet. To meet these growing needs, park and recreation agencies are in a position to play an important role in the conversion of unused areas and abandoned spaces into what are being called mini or pocket parks. These unique parks are often created out of vacant lots, rooftops and otherwise forgotten and unused spaces.

WHAT IS A POCKET PARK?

A pocket park is a small outdoor space, usually no more than ¼ of an acre, usually only a few house lots in size or smaller, most often located in an urban area surrounded by commercial buildings or houses on small lots with few places for people to gather, relax, or to enjoy the outdoors. They are also called vest pocket parks, a term first used in the 1960's. Pocket parks are urban open spaces on a small-scale and provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. They also meet a variety of needs and functions, including: small event space, play areas for children, spaces for relaxing or meeting friends, taking lunch breaks, etc.

Successful "pocket parks" have four key qualities: they are accessible; allow people to engage in activities; are comfortable spaces and have a good image; and finally, are sociable places: one where people meet each other and take people to when they come to visit.

BENEFITS OF POCKET PARKS

It is important to note that pocket parks are not intended to service an entire city in the same way as a neighborhood or city park. Each should be created with the specific interests and needs of the contiguous community–that is, the nearby individuals and families for whose use it was originally intended *(Olmos, 2008).* *continued >*

ACQUISITION/IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Many pocket parks have been created as a result of community groups organizing and rallying for more open space within the urban environment. Leftover spaces and other urban eyesores present opportunities for conversion to pocket parks, offering important and desirable amenities to communities. These are often purchased and owned by cities, with the agreement that they will be run and maintained by a foundation or other organization if the city is unable to maintain the park itself. The benefits of these unique urban spaces often include one or several of the following:

- Support the overall ecology of the surrounding environment
- Help protect and conserve local wildlife, landscape, and heritage
- Reduce pollution, traffic, and consumption of resources, such as oil
- Empower local residents to make decisions that affect their community
- Make communities safer and more sociable
- Improve fitness and health
- Regenerate run-down areas
- Reinforce relationships between local authorities and communities

Though pocket parks vary according to specific purposes and locations, there are numerous characteristics that the majority has in common. For example:

- Pocket park users should not have to walk more than 5 to 10 minutes to reach their destination.
- Since parking may or may not be provided, the parks should be accessible by both foot and bike, and should not require the use of a car.
- Parks should serve a resident population of approximately 500-1000 persons.
- Parks should strive to accommodate as many different users as possible, prioritizing the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

Community gardens are a popular choice when creating a pocket park that is being designed for neighborhood interaction by people of all ages. Unlike playscapes, they typically do not include play structures; instead they provide the land, resources, and informational support necessary to grow food for local sale and consumption. Community gardens have a variety of purposes for the people they serve; they unite residents of all ages in fun and productive outdoor activities and facilitate the growth of community solidarity and neighborhood revitalization.

FUNDING POCKET PARKS

There are many possible funding sources for the development of pocket parks. The Trust for Public Land is one organization that offers assistance with private and public funding for mini-parks (Trust for Public Land, 2009). At the local level, public-private ventures, individual contributions, and philanthropic support are often solicited to underwrite start-up and equipment costs.

While some parks are financed almost entirely with private funds, many are typically financed by a combination of various funding sources. For example, capital support for the acquisition, design, and development of the 6th Avenue NW Pocket Park in Seattle, Washington consisted of joint contributions from the Pro Parks Levy, the Neighborhood Matching Fund, and the local community. These organizations continue to contribute towards enhancement of parks including: large lawn areas, landscaping, paths, neighborhood gathering areas and interactive features for children's play.

CREATING A POCKET PARK

In organizing pocket parks, designers must often work out a delicate balancing act so that all groups can use the space in peaceful co-existence. There are no set designs for pocket parks; each one is different depending on the size and use of the space, but because space is restricted and user needs are both diverse and vary throughout the day, conflicts can sometimes arise between different groups. Thus, park and recreation agencies can fulfill the community's vision for the parks by assisting in the development of an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, doable improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them. More importantly, park and recreation agencies can help design parks to provide the maximum benefit to the community. Since mini-parks cannot provide all the benefits of large parks, park and recreation agencies can help identify what trade-offs may be necessary. As with any new park or recreation innovation, there are challenges in the development of pocket parks.

Some of the more commonplace examples of issues typically faced in the development of pocket parks include:

- Limited money and staff time
- Insufficient Pocket Parks to meet high demand
- Insufficient support for training and 'networking'
- Too few volunteers

STEP-BY-STEP PLAN FOR CREATING A POCKET PARK

The following steps can help your neighborhood get started in creating a beautiful oasis of green for all to enjoy!

1. Secure the community's commitment. The more inclusive the decision-making, the more successful the park will be. Start talking to as many neighbors as possible and secure them to help you throughout the process. Think about those in your neighborhood. Is there someone who is an expert gardener, someone who knows what's going on at every block or someone that can let you use their spigot for water? Seek these people out and get them involved.

2. Convene a steering committee. You will need local leadership for the project. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to create a committee with divided responsibilities in terms of planning and working on the project.

3. Choose a site. Think about how the site will be used. What kinds of improvements are needed? Keep in mind how much the neighborhood can realistically take on to address issues such as the creation and maintenance of the plan and make sure the space suits all expectations.

4. Plan. Determine a site plan either with the help of a landscape architect. Begin to strategize how the landscaping will be installed, how it will be funded, and how the neighborhood will maintain it in the long run.

5. Identify and secure potential partners. Partners should be local businesses, nonprofits and other organizations available in the city. Identify the roles of each partner and secure a written understanding if possible.

6. Secure long-term and short-term funding. Begin to look at various resources for funding in the form of grants, in-kind materials and money from businesses. Consider corporate sponsorships and be sure to think long-term about funding and saving money for maintenance and repairs in the future or to cover other necessary items including liability insurance coverage.

7. Schedule work days in advance. Assign a project manager and plan out what activities need to occur in what order. Can everything be done in one day, or will it take multiple work days?

8. Plan a big work day/dedication/celebration event. This is a very important part of the process to the neighborhood and to the partners. This is a chance to possibly garner media attention, as well as involve as many people as possible.

9. Implement a maintenance plan. Before any plants go in the ground, the neighborhood should agree to a maintenance plan and document it in writing.

10. Pursue consistent engagement. Just as maintenance is a never-ending job, so is everything else involved. On-going communication with the neighborhood especially should keep them interested and involved in your project. *continued Page 4 >*

CASE STUDIES

ROTARY CENTENNIAL PARK

Location: Long Beach, California

Description: Rotary Centennial Park, a new Mini Park is located on the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Junipero Street. The park was first constructed when the Rotary Club approached the department with the idea of collaborating on the construction of the new park in celebration of the100th anniversary of Rotary International in 2005.

Challenges: Develop a viable plan converting the city-owned undeveloped land along the former Pacific Electric right-of-way that is surrounded by a densely developed area with nearly 80 percent of the residents living in apartments with no backyards.

Outcomes: To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Rotary International in 2005, the Long Beach Rotary Club raised $100,000 to help design and construct a 1.2-acre park at Pacific Coast Highway and Junipero Avenue. Long Beach Rotary involved the public and stakeholders throughout the design process. Community input was translated into plans that incorporated a solar system theme with art installations of planets, a sundial sculpture, benches, turf, trees, playground equipment, and a shade shelter. These creative elements have made Rotary Centennial Park one of the most unique and inviting parks in the city and a welcome addition to a park-poor neighborhood. Custom engraved "Community Bricks" were sold at $50 and $100 each. The additional funds went to help pay for educational public art. The park was dedicated on May 21, 2005 on Rotary International's 100th anniversary.

Lessons Learned: Continuing support from the park's partner became a critical aspect of the project continuing success. The Rotary's involvement didn't stop with the park's creation and every month since the park opening, Long Beach Rotarians have held work parties to help clean, repair and maintain the park.

THE FARM-A-LOT PROGRAM

Location: Detroit, Michigan

Description: Detroit has more than 28,000 vacant parcels owned by the city almost half of them residential plots—that generate no significant tax revenue and cost more to maintain than the city can afford. Finding new uses for this land has become one of the most pressing challenges for a city that lost a quarter of its population in the past decade. There are groups and individuals all around the city who have begun to use vacant land — some privately owned, some city-owned — as personal gardens, community gardens and even full-scale farm operations.

Challenges: While gardens are widespread throughout the city, they are generally small in scale and comprise only a tiny fraction of the total number of vacant lots. Inadequate city resources are an obstacle to conscientious land use and effective community management of open space. In addition, gardeners are faced with a lack of long-term security and the issues of liability and insurance are not addressed.

Outcomes: The City of Detroit Recreation Department created and manages the Farm-A-Lot program whose goal is to facilitate the reuse of vacant city-owned lots for agriculture. Farm-A-Lot provides soil tilling services and free seeds to residents interested in using vacant lots in their neighborhoods for growing vegetables. When the Farm-a-Lot program which tills 500 to 600 urban gardens, hit the dirt, several of the city's most active "green" organizations came together to fill the void. These organizations, Greening of Detroit, Detroit Agricultural Network (DAN), Michigan State University Extension and Earthworks Urban Farm, banded together as the Detroit Garden Network and each group brings its urban gardening partners one piece of the puzzle needed to get started and keep going.

Lessons Learned: Urban agriculture (UA) programs like Farm-A-Lot help the City of Detroit by reducing urban blight, providing educational opportunities, and improving access to fresh produce. Annual costs for maintaining city park space are much higher than the cost of maintaining an urban garden and cities can save 100 percent on maintenance costs of the parcels when community groups and non-profits pay the costs of their own activities and upkeep.

CASE STUDIES

BALTIMORE OPEN SPACES

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

Description: Baltimore City covers approximately 80 square miles, is designated a separate county and has at least 12,000 vacant houses and 14,000 vacant lots which have been difficult for the City to maintain.

Challenges: As Baltimore City struggles to manage its 6,000 acres of formally designated parkland, effective management of approximately 14,000 vacant lots and small spaces is hampered by such things as the lack of a central database, property maintenance standards and schedules, the ineffective use of liens to ensure regular property maintenance and the lack of formal coordination among city agencies and non-profit organizations.

Outcomes: Despite its dwindling population and shrinking tax base, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP) department has often been regarded as an innovator and leader in managing open spaces. The BCRP, Housing and Community Development, and Public Works have had a positive impact on the urban environment by supporting neighborhood open space initiatives. Many community groups in Baltimore along with BCRP are committed to transforming vacant lots in their neighborhoods to attractive green spaces.

Lessons Learned: While community management is not an appropriate strategy for every vacant lot, it can be an important component in managing vacant lots and neighborhood open spaces. An example is Baltimore's Vacant Lot Restoration Program started by the Parks and People Foundation. The program has provided training, technical assistance, and site improvement funding for 23 neighborhood-managed open spaces. While the successes and failures of the projects are in many ways unique to the sites themselves, they can also illustrate the challenges commonly experienced by communities everywhere.

Adequate maintenance of community parks and gardens has emerged as the major issue facing many Baltimore sites. Park and recreation agencies can be the best resource for the planning and organization of such efforts whether community based or managed by public agencies.

CONCLUSION

A research team from the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine has found that distressed neighborhoods where vacant lots have been converted into small parks and community green spaces are associated with reduced crime when compared to neighborhoods with unimproved vacant lots.

In some sections of the city, residents of neighborhoods with improved vacant lots also reported "significantly less stress and more exercise," suggesting that the improvements had an effect on residents' perceptions of safety outdoors. The team also noted that studies have shown that the presence of urban green space is linked to lower rates of mortality and health complaints and to mental health benefits.

It undoubtedly takes more than increased, tended green space to cure crime, improve general health, increase exercise and other issues associated with distressed neighborhoods and vacant lots. Pocket parks have been successful because they are able to respond to the needs of local communities but their success requires careful planning, local empowerment and significant local support. The benefits of these parks go far beyond their communities, and positively impact the well-being of the city and region in which they are located.

The creation and implementation of a written constitution and management plan are important to ensure park sustainability. However, in order for a pocket park to be truly successful, it is imperative to involve community interest, support, and participation in the planning and maintenance process *(Project for Public Spaces, 2009b)*. The active investment facilitated by community groups fosters a sense of ownership, which, in turn, creates a strong incentive for them to protect and preserve their park *(Project for Public Spaces, 2009b)*.

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