

Proposed PLD Ordinance Amendment C20-2014-028

- The Amendment proposes a formula for land and for a fee-in-lieu of land and a park development fee that is defensible in a court of law. Parkland dedication ordinances must be “roughly proportionate” to the demand generated by development. The proposed formula is “roughly proportionate” by being based on the current level of park service (acres of neighborhood and pocket parks per 1,000 people in Austin); the cost of acquiring land suitable for parks in Austin; and the cost of placing park amenities on the land.
- The existing land and fee-in-lieu of land was selected after a review of peer cities and could be considered an arbitrary number since it’s not based on a formula. Today, it doesn’t meet costs for land acquisition in many parts of the City; and cannot pay for both land acquisition and park development.
- The existing parkland dedication fee-in-lieu is among the lowest in the state and country. The new parkland dedication fee-in-lieu would place Austin at about the medium level.
- Increasing the requirements for land to the current level of service and increasing the fee-in-lieu of land follows the fiscally conservative principle that those who benefit from government services should pay for them.
- Not raising the fees and land requirements will require existing residents to pay to expand parkland and amenities to accommodate new growth (either through increased taxes or bond programs)
- Parkland dedication fee and land increases are likely to be absorbed by reducing home sizes; reducing the cost of interior finishes; or paying less for the land to be developed in the first place.
- During the last five years, PARD collected about \$20 million in parkland dedication fees which it spent throughout Austin on land acquisition and park development. During this time period the City’s parkland per 1,000 has rapidly declined. PARD estimates that it would have collected \$60 million in parkland dedication fees and the parkland acres per 1,000 would not have declined at such a rapid pace.
- Since 1998 the City has issued approximately \$66 million in bonds for parkland acquisition, equal to what could be collected in a 5 year period with the new parkland dedication fee.
- The Amendment includes options for infill lots, allowing private park development open to the public to count toward parkland dedication. The Parks Department envisions these spaces being marked with an identifying plaque with the Parks logo so that users will feel welcome.