

**Portland Parks and Recreation  
Park System Development Charge Taskforce**

## **Meeting Summary**

**December 13, 2012**

**Attending:**

**Task Force Members**

Kevin Johnson, Portland Development Commission  
Denny Stoecklin, Concordia University  
Justin Wood, Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland  
Aubré Dickson, Community Member at Large, National Equity Fund  
Debbie Aiona, League of Women Voters  
Beverly Bookin, Community Member at Large  
Christe White, Community Member at Large  
Keith Skille, Development Review Advisory Committee  
Darlene Carlson, Coalition for a Livable Future  
Jim Sjulín, Community Member at Large  
Noland Lienhart, Community Member at Large  
Jill Sherman, Developer at Large  
Bernie Bottomly, Portland Business Alliance

**City Staff:**

Riley Whitcomb, Parks SDC Program Manager  
Maija Spencer, Parks SDC Program Specialist  
Jim Blackwood, Office of Commissioner Fish  
Commissioner Nick Fish, Portland City Council (attended part of the meeting)  
Mike Abbaté, Parks Director (attended part of the meeting)

**Consulting Team:**

Rita Brogan, PRR

**Summary**

After an introduction of Taskforce members and welcoming remarks by Commissioner Fish, Rita Brogan reviewed the Charge to the Taskforce with Taskforce members. She added that there will be a Public Involvement Plan developed for this project, and that a website has already been set up for this project. Later Parks Director Mike Abbaté offered his thanks to the group for agreeing to serve on the Task Force.

Riley Whitcomb provided an overview of the Parks SDC Program. His slides are attached to this meeting summary. The following notes summarize the Taskforce discussion.

- What is the current level of service based on?
  - It is based on current availability of park acreage per thousand population. The park acreage includes natural area, neighborhood, community, regional and urban parks,

community and botanic gardens, and trails. The current level of service related to SDCs is around 19 acres.

- How does Portland's level of service compare to other cities?
  - We will provide this information.
- How do you know it's the right target?
  - The target was established in the Parks 2020 Vision Process. One of the identified goals and objectives of the 2020 Vision was to maintain the current ratio of parkland to population.
- Do service levels only cover Portland inventory?
  - Yes, it only includes land owned by Portland Parks and Recreation.
- Growth projections predict more people living in the Central City. How can we provide park facilities for them if there is no additional land available for parks?
  - It is admittedly very difficult, but not impossible to acquire land for parks in the Central City. Director Park in the downtown area and Elizabeth Caruthers Park in the South Waterfront are examples of new parks recently added to help meet the impact of growth. The impact of growth on our park system is not just related to local access parks but also for natural area, trails, and city wide park facilities. We also would like to take a look at capacity increasing improvements in existing parks to help meet the impact of growth. An example of that is installation of synthetic turf fields at Buckman Field.
- What happens when there are changes in use?
  - Only in the case of a commercial property being converted to residential would there be a Park SDC fee. Otherwise there is no charge for change of use, but this is not the case for Transportation. Nonresidential (Commercial) SDC's are charged to capture the impact on non-residential employees who work in the city. Information on how this is calculated is in the 2008 Methodology Report.
- The LOS figure of 19 Acres/1,000 population is a broad-brush way of looking at the system. There are numerous park categories that provide unique recreational opportunities for the park users. These include neighborhood parks, community parks, natural area habitat, trails, community and botanic gardens.
- How do we meet the goals of the Parks 2020 Vision Plan? Impacts of growth need to be addressed. We want equity and access to parks; they are critical to our city.
- The timing of the last SDC increase was very bad timing, given what was happening in our economy. It prevented some projects that could have been viable otherwise. The SDC's seem reasonable right now, but we still need to look at how much you are planning to raise them.
- For small businesses ("solopreneurs") we hear that SDC's are a significant hurdle. Keep in mind that in addition to Parks SDC's there are costs related to transportation SDC's, variances, etc. We need to look at the cumulative impact just at a time when businesses are making that

transition from no rent to some rent. This is the fastest growth area in our economy. We have a finite amount of money and we need to make a judgment about our other priorities, like schools.

- We need to be looking at this from a fairness lens. Campuses are different from other kinds of development. Some campuses may already have park land that exceeds the LOS.
- Multi-family units are becoming smaller to meet the need for more affordable housing. We should look at the equity issue. SDCs should be equal to the actual impact of development so that we can incentivize certain types of development.
- It seems like the shift in funding parks is toward SDC's. We are worried about families with incomes just above the SDC exemption line.
- I want to make sure we stay within the parameters of our mission.
- I am interested in how we apply fees in relations to size or value of the unit. Many projects are mixed income.

Riley Whitcomb thanked the group for its excellent participation and noted that the Project Team will be briefing the incoming Mayor in the near future. Based on his guidance we will refine our project schedule and provide Taskforce members with fixed dates for their meetings in 2013.