



# PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

## Portland Parks and Recreation Park System Development Charge Update Taskforce

### Meeting Summary – June 13, 2013

#### Attending:

##### Task Force Members

Debbie Aiona, League of Women Voters  
Darlene Carlson, Coalition for a Livable Future  
Kevin Johnson, Portland Development Commission  
Jim Sjulín, Community Member at Large  
Dennis Stoecklin, Concordia University  
Christe White, University of Portland

##### City Staff:

Amanda Fritz, Commissioner  
Tom Bizeau, Chief of Staff – Commissioner Fritz  
Warren Jimenez, Assistant Park Director  
Jeff Shafer, Park Finance Manager  
Riley Whitcomb, Park SDC Program Manager  
Maija Spencer, Park SDC Program Specialist  
Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, Park Community Engagement and Public Involvement Manager

##### Consulting Team:

Randy Young, Henderson, Young & Company  
Rita Brogan, PRR  
Shannon Roth, PRR

Following an introduction of Taskforce members, Rita Brogan provided a reminder on discussion ground rules and an agenda overview. Commissioner Amanda Fritz spoke briefly to the group on her particular interest in public involvement and the importance of working with neighborhoods and communities. She stressed that community support and engagement is vital to successful implementation of revised city policy. Commissioner Fritz is counting on stakeholder groups to be involved in reviewing the park SDCs and is pleased to see a wide variety of people and backgrounds engaged in this effort.

Following the departure of Commissioner Fritz, Randy Young reviewed information that was included in memorandums to the Taskforce, including comparison data between 2008 and 2013 park SDCs, and findings on dormitory rates and residential occupancy rates. These documents are attached to this meeting summary. The following notes summarize the Taskforce discussion.

#### Finance

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*Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work and play.*

[www.PortlandParks.org](http://www.PortlandParks.org)  
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner  
Mike Abbaté, Director



### Comparison of Data for 2008 and 2013 Park SDCs

Randy Young first presented data relevant to assessment Parks SDCs, comparing 2008 and 2013 data.

The first three points of comparison addressed items #1: *Current Population*; #2: *Future Population*; and #3: *Population Growth*. Taskforce comments were as follows:

- On item 1, there was a question about the 14.4% decrease in central city population. The chart includes a note that 2013 data more accurately reflects actual park SDC area boundaries. Does this mean that the 2008 data misrepresents Population? Randy replied that the term “misrepresented” should not be assigned to the numbers from 2008. Rather, improved data finding techniques are available for the 2013 numbers. Randy stated that more clear explanations will be provided before taking the numbers to the public.
- For items 1-3, a Taskforce member stated that more visual graphs would help people to better understand the data. Randy agreed that graphs would be helpful and will see what can be done to provide them. In addition, Randy explained that in the 2013 data, the year 2035 was chosen because that is the date selected by the city and all of the jurisdictions.

Randy provided an overview on the next three points of comparison, items #4: *Current Employment*; #5: *Future Employment*; #6: *Employment Growth*:

- Randy explained that before 2008, Parks SDCs were residential only; now businesses pay a percentage of park SDCs.
- It was noted that for item 5, workers come in and will continue to come in from outside of Portland and it is important to account for commuters, and that for 2013 people who live in Portland and also work in Portland will have their impact on parks apportioned between residential and commercial development, whereas in 2008 their entire impact was assigned to residential development.

The next tables included #7: *Average Number of Persons per Housing Unit – Central City*; #8: *Average Number of Persons per Housing Unit – Non-Central City*; #9: *Non-Resident Percentage of Total Hours Available for Parks*; and #10: *Current Level of Service for Fully Developed Parks*:

- For item 8, a Taskforce member asked if the analysis could be conducted more frequently, since more robust data are now available. Riley Whitcomb responded that an annual index is currently conducted, with an annual adjustment that periodically goes up or down. Randy indicated it would need more technical analysis of AHS and ACS data to determine if this would be manageable.
- On item 9, a member asked if these data reflect hours available for parks during the working day and to what level was Randy’s confidence in the numbers? Randy responded that the charts cover various points of data and are the same as used in 2008.
- Related to item 10, the following comments were shared:
  - It was pointed out that there is a big jump in property values in the “citywide acres.” How did this happen? Where are these acres at? Randy and Riley noted they would do some research to find the specific acreage and follow-up with more information.
  - The math appears incorrect under the “2010 acres of fully developed parks per 1,000 population.” It totals 15.23 acres per 1,000 people. However, in the dormitory white paper, the total is listed as 13.22 acres

per 1,000 population. Randy responded that the discrepancy will be fixed; they both should be the same.

- A Taskforce member asked in regard to data showing that acreage has slipped (for example, under “Natural Habitat”) are the 2013 park SDCs addressing this slippage to bring it back up to what was originally anticipated in 2008? Riley and Randy explained that park SDCs address actual level of service, not anticipated level of service.

Regarding item #11: *Needs for Growth* and #12: *SDC Funding Percentage*:

- On item 11 there was a question about the increase in citywide access land. Is this land not already acquired? Riley responded no, these are anticipated needs for growth, not required growth. If they aren’t realistic goals, they will need to be adjusted. There was a question about where this land will come from. The team will follow up with information on available lands to acquire and develop into park land.
- Table 12 reflects current funding policy status. Randy stated that there are policy decisions that need to be made by the City. For example, items such as maintenance needs: will these needs change? In 2008, SDCs covered a portion of the costs; in 2013 the portion may change.

A member of the taskforce asked how other cities assess SDC’s. Randy explained that there is tremendous variability throughout the nation among park SDCs making it virtually impossible to do an apples to apples comparison with Portland.

A committee member shared that new jobs have a multiplier effect in the economy. Placing further impediments in front of business will not stimulate the economy. Randy said that Portland rates are in the middle when it comes to SDCs compared to other cities in the region.

Randy then presented the data for items #13: *Cost per Unit*, #14: *Net Cost for Growth*, #15: *Tax Credit – Central City*, #16: *Tax Credit – Non-Central City*, #17: *Residential Cost per Person*; and #18: *Non-Residential Cost per Employee*:

- Randy noted on item 15 that the tax credits for 2008 were based on market value. Taxes, however, are charged on assessed value. As a result tax credits in 2008 were higher than they should be and Parks is currently losing money.
- A member of the taskforce asked for clarification that the park SDC charge will be determined by the “Residential Cost per Person” . Randy explained that residential development in the central city will pay the cost per person for citywide plus the cost per person for the central city. In the non-central city area, residential development will pay the cost per person for citywide plus the cost per person for the non-central city.

### **Dormitory Rates – White Paper**

Randy presented key findings in a white paper on dormitory rates. The report summarized concerns expressed about applying single room occupancy rates to dormitories, with specific concerns about definitions of terminology and the use of dormitories in summer months. Data were gathered from Portland colleges to inform the analysis and draft recommendations.

The white paper recommends the City of Portland revise its method of calculating park SDCs for new or expanded dormitory space. The new method should account for the average number of

students per dorm room, a reduction for sports and recreation space provided by colleges for students and reduction for campus space that benefits the community. The recommendation is to charge at a rate of **.73 students per dorm room**.

Taskforce discussion included the following:

- There is a distinction between a dormitory and an apartment. Rather than counting how many dorm rooms, the number of students will be housed should be counted. There was concern about not incorporating apartments into the statistics. The team agreed to revise the statistics to include apartments/dorm.
- A comparison of campus open space acreage per 1,000 student population vs. city park space per 1000 people was noted. Campus area is listed as 3.53 acres per 1000 students, the city's ratio was listed as 13.22) acres per 1,000 population.
- Alternative methodology for calculating park SDCs for universities is needed in the parks SDC city code (Title 17, Chapter 17.13). The code doesn't have an alternative methodology. The code language only discusses occupancy and alternative occupancy. Can the code be revised to include alternatives specific to universities? Keep baseline fees, but incorporate alternative for university/colleges to provide incentive to build open spaces. It is important to consider providing incentives for building open spaces on campuses.
- In response to the alternative request noted above, two taskforce members noted that that the city needs to consider whether the open spaces remain available for perpetuity. Can these spaces go away? What about requiring a conservation easement? If a university is willing to agree to dedicate the space and guarantee that it will stay there, it seems reasonable to develop an alternative methodology in the code. Another consideration about adding an alternative methodology to the code is to consider university programs that use public areas.
- Randy reminded the Taskforce that the Park SDCs would be charged on new units, not what is already built.
- Christe White noted that a response memo from University of Portland will be sent to Riley regarding the findings presented in the Dormitory Rates White Paper.

### **Residential Occupancy Rates – White Paper**

Randy presented the white paper on residential occupancy rates.

The report included an explanation of concerns expressed about the applicability of the use of a single occupancy rate for each type of house (e.g., single-family, multi-family, etc.). Specifically, larger housing units typically have more people than smaller housing units, but this difference is not addressed in the current park SDC methodology which uses the same occupancy rate regardless of the size of the housing unit. Data from American Housing Surveys and American Community Surveys were analyzed by the Population Research Center at Portland State University. Additionally, Portland Parks and Recreation provided analysis of data from the 2010 census.

As a result of this analysis, a different methodology is proposed for the 2013 park SDCs. **The new method of assessing park SDCs on new development should be based on the estimated occupancy rates of each new housing unit based on the square footage of the living area of each unit.**

The Taskforce briefly discussed the Size (square footage) versus Type (single-family, multi-family).

- It was noted by several members that they are comfortable in making the leap to size of residential units, rather than adhering to residential type.

- A taskforce member asked for clarification about the Residential Cost per Person (table #17). Specifically, it isn't clear that the "city-wide" charges are added to the "Central City and "Non-Central City" costs. Randy indicated that the report on occupancy rates will be revised to make it clear that all residential development will pay the cost per person for citywide, and that all development will also pay the cost per person for the local access parks, but the rates will differ depending on whether the development is in the central city or the non-central city area.
- It was noted that Taskforce members representing housing development interests were not present at this meeting. Their input is critical to moving forward with the residential occupancy rates proposal.
  - Riley will follow-up with these Taskforce members to update them on the information presented at the June 13 meeting. Details regarding the follow-up with these members will be provided to the full Taskforce at the next meeting.

The meeting concluded and an information packet was handed out to the Taskforce. The packet included follow-up information and supporting documents addressing questions presented by members of the Taskforce at the April 11 meeting.

Riley Whitcomb thanked Taskforce members and set a tentative date for the next meeting on September 19.