



HISTORIC
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ITEM #16
WRKS
09/24/13

MEMORANDUM

September 15, 2013

TO: Board of Mayor and Alderman

FROM: Eric Stuckey, City Administrator *Eric*
Vernon Gerth, ACA Community & Economic Development
Lisa R. Clayton, Parks Director

SUBJECT: Benchmarking Franklin's Parks and Greenway/Blueways: Current & Future

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to initiate discussion about the type and ideal amount of accessible Open Space (parks and greenway/blueways) to insure new development is contributing its proportionate share to achieve this measurable quality of life benchmark.

Background

Currently, the *Dedication of Public Land for Parks and Greenways/Blueways* is located within section 5.5.4 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Adopted in July 2008, this development ordinance is based on the value of the land being developed. While this type of Ordinance is used in other communities, it does not adequately meet the needs of our community. Shortcomings of this ordinance include it fails to establish a measurable community benchmark for parks and greenways/blueways, it fails to take into account the variation of land values throughout or community which creates inequity in applying the fees-in-lieu option to various projects, and it does not adequately encourage privately maintained recreational Open Space and Greenways within proposed developments.

In 1995, the National Parks & Recreation Association (NRPA) national guidelines were the benchmark for all parks and recreation agencies within the United States. City or County agencies were all included and compared to the median. For example, the 1995 standards recommended one basketball court for every 5,000 residents and one swimming pool for every 20,000 residents. These types of standards were across the board no matter the size of the city/county. Today, it is more meaningful to create a community specific profile and then compare the results against other agencies with similar population, size, and demographics. "PRORAGIS" is NRPA's current database inventory system that compiles this type of information.

PRORAGIS, an acronym for Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and Geographic Information System, launched in January 2011 by the National Parks & Recreation Association. PRORAGIS is a searchable, online database whereby the user (public park and recreation department) fills in valuable information on their profile and controls that data. The data can then be used to generate a variety of reports and users have access to GIS mapping tools. In 2011, the Franklin Parks Department submitted information through a program the division of Recreation and Educational Services with the State of Tennessee's TDEC Division to participate in the national program. Each year, the Franklin Parks Department submits parkland acreage based on 1,000 residents current census numbers for City performance



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measurements for budget purposes. In all, 383 agencies represent the 2012 data in the NRPA - PRORAGIS report.

According to the report, the City of Franklin's parkland falls within the median of acreage of parkland per 1,000 residents which equates to the standard of 6-acres per 1,000 residents.

The City of Franklin currently has 723-acres of parkland with 343-acres unfinished and 6.5 miles of greenway or multi-use pathways along the river/tributary or roadways throughout the city. In other words, 723 acres of parkland – 343 of unified parkland = 380 acres of improved, usable parkland. 70,000 residents / 380 acres of improved parkland = 5.42 acres of improvement parkland per 1000 city residents.

Where Franklin is unique, the park system consists of four types of acreage or recreation: Passive, Historic, and Active & Greenway Connectivity. Currently, there are (72) seventy-two Passive acres; (480) four hundred eighty-two Historic acres; (186) one hundred eighty-six Active acres and (6.5) six and half miles of Greenway/Multi-use connectivity trails in the city.

Financial Impact

The proposed revisions to the parkland ordinance would allow the City to further develop parkland through either the private sector purchasing and/or maintaining a public park/greenway section or the city developing the current unfinished parks within the system. The ordinance would also take in consideration fees in-lieu of for purchasing new parkland for future growth, obtaining easements for greenway connections, and/or making capital improvements to new parks. The true financial impact will be associated to the Capital projects necessary to achieve and maintain the benchmark selected by the BOMA.

Liability

Long-term, without having a City of Franklin Park Master Plan and benchmark identifying exactly which types of parks the city desires, our City may not remain competitive with other communities who view parks and greenways as an essential quality of life amenity. There is truly a need for clear direction to be identified such as specific recreational needs throughout the urban growth boundary and identification land in lieu of the conceptual locations shown currently within the City's Greenway & Open Space Master Plan.

Recommendation

The proposed Parkland Ordinance allows for the City to partner with private development to provide the best recreation for all user groups. What must be determined and agreed upon is the **amount and type** of parkland per acre for benchmarking purposes. The current recommendation is (5) five acres per 1,000 residents and then include the total amount of parkland with the following entities: Schools, County Recreation Facilities in the UGB, private parks within developments that are open to the community, and public golf courses. By evaluating and counting all partnerships, the city will be well above the benchmark each year.

