

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Josh Landefeld, Parks and Recreation Services Manager
DATE: 11/8/2022
SUBJECT: Discussion Follow-up to the Planning Commission Meeting of October 18, 2022

Thank you for allowing Parks to discuss our PROS plan draft with your Commission, and for recommending distribution for City Council. We appreciate the feedback provided and would like to respond to some of the topics that were raised during the 10/18 meeting discussion.

PROS Plan Formatting:

There was some discussion about general formatting issues that we have begun addressing already. We are addressing page numbers, labeling of the appendices, and formatting of tables to make the document easier to read and navigate. We are also submitting our document to communications, for a review on their end to make sure the document fits the style used in other City communications.

In addition, this PROS plan will be shared with various other departments, such as Organizational Equity and the Office of Sustainability, to ensure that they have a chance to comment on content. While this is a Parks & Recreation focused document, we understand that there are important relationships with other units and their goals.

PROS Plan Content:

Walkability During the Planning Commission discussion, it was brought up that the City, through its most recent transportation plan, has adopted a goal of a 20-minute walk to a park or open space from any point in the city. Additionally, in 2017, Ann Arbor joined 133 other cities to "10-Minute Walk" parks advocacy campaign urging all mayors to actively pursue the goal. Currently, the majority of neighborhoods already meet this goal. This was also discussed in our Planning Commission Focus Group held during the summer. We like the suggestion of including a walking radius map in the document, and will look to incorporate it.

Safety: Our goal is to ensure that everyone feels safe AND welcome in our Parks, and we understand that police presence can make some parts of our community feel unsafe. We will continue to work with the City's Safety Services Area to ensure the safety of our parks and are excited about new unarmed response program. Parks hopes to work closely with this team to address various issues in parks that need additional resources. Ultimately, Parks does not have an enforcement division but works closely with the City's Safety Services Area Unit to share park goals so that they can use their professional discretion when deciding whether to engage an Unarmed Response Team, the Ann Arbor Police or Fire depending on the situation.

Greenbelt: There was a question that came up regarding three Greenbelt acquisitions that were located on the outside of the designated greenbelt boundary. [Section 3:67](#) of Chapter 42 covers the eligibility of land, specifically:

“Land outside the incorporated boundaries of the City of Ann Arbor within the Greenbelt District; **except that a parcel either dissected by the Greenbelt District boundaries, or contiguous to the Greenbelt District boundary and a parcel under the same ownership within the Greenbelt District as defined in section 3:62(13) may be acquired in its entirety** in the same manner under the provisions of this chapter as if the parcel was within the Greenbelt District.”

The Greenbelt projects that have met this eligibility criteria are the [Landsberg](#) fee simple/conservation easement acquisition, [Schultz](#) conservation easement acquisition, and the [Russell](#) conservation easement acquisition.

An interactive map of all the Greenbelt District conservation lands can be accessed [here](#).

Park Contribution Fee: Staff will review the current formula for park contributions and will take an update into consideration. Of note, the park contribution remains a minor source of funding.

Conflicting Feedback: There are almost always two sides to every issue, and we understand that sometimes there are small but vocal groups who may not represent the broader feelings of the community. We aim to balance requests with the broader recreational needs of the community. We also know that there are groups in our community who have traditionally been underrepresented, and it is our job to make sure that parks are equitable and that we aren't only responding to the most vocal.

New Amenities: We respond to changing recreation trends by considering changes when renovating existing amenities. For example, we consider adding Pickleball infrastructure when we renovate existing courts. We start by asking for input from park users via an online survey to gauge interest, and if there is sufficient interest, we will add Pickleball infrastructure.

We appreciate you bringing up several interesting and thought-provoking questions in your review of the PROS plan draft. Your questions and this response will also be shared with the Parks Advisory Commission who are very active in the PROS plan development as well as policy decisions made within parks. They continue to be an excellent sounding board for staff as we work to maintain and evolve our vast parks system and various policies.

Thank you again for allowing us to present the draft of the PROS Plan to the Planning Commission. We look forward to returning after the review period to discuss other feedback we have received. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

Best Regards,

Josh Landefeld, Parks and Recreation Services Manager.