

ANC Support of Modifications to Parkland Dedication Ordinance

March 27, 2007

The Austin Neighborhoods Council supports the concept of parkland dedication for all new residential developments. We see this as a means to fairly distribute contributions to the growth and enhancement of parks in Austin to serve new residents.

If a fee is to be assessed on a per unit basis, we believe that the fee should be at least \$750 per unit. This value is still far below per unit fees in comparable cities like Portland and Seattle where the fees range into several thousand per unit and is also well under the per unit fee in Texas cities such as El Paso and Arlington. It reflects the needs that we have in Austin.

We do however have concerns that setting a simple per unit flat fee is regressive, and think that it is appropriate to consider, instead, a fee that is based upon the valuation or square footage of a unit. If a fee structure based on valuation or square footage is utilized then the fee for an average sized unit should equate to at least \$750 per unit.

We support the proposal to provide an exemption to a parkland dedication fee for units that qualify as “affordable” under a City program. We oppose the waiver of parkland dedication fees for non-affordable units in a project. Because the Commercial Design Standards ordinance currently provides a complete waiver to the current parkland dedication fee for a Vertical Mixed Use project, it should be updated to be consistent with this approach.

Finally, ANC would like to recognize the importance and need to provide for neighborhood parks. We feel that establishing small neighborhood “pocket” parks should be a high priority for PARD and the City of Austin and strongly encourage an implementation/application of the Parkland Dedication ordinance which focuses on taking and providing neighborhood parkland whenever possible.

Laura Morrison
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