

Dear Dan & Amy:

Today, the City Council is considering an ordinance related to parklands. Please consider these comments about the current proposal as you decide your vote since I am unable to attend the meeting to make public comment.

First, every development has externalities associated with it. They are both positive and negative. It is my opinion that public entities that provide services to these developments should try to ensure any user or benefactor pays for the services. This goal is difficult, but I find that St. Paul does a fair job of dissecting collections for various services such as alley maintenance and sewer upgrades.

The current parkland proposal attempts to collect monies or land from the users, but it does not seem we are collecting enough. I understand that the current proposal rates is an increase from the past, but our Parks and Recreation Department is strapped for funds. It has been contracting out many facilities and services over the last decade. It has been closing neighborhood centers especially on the Eastside where there are a high concentration of our city's youth. * If there is no possibility for increasing the rates more, the proposal needs provisions to automatically adjust these rates for inflation. *

Second, the Chamber of Commerce commented that St. Paul has enough parks based on report by Trust for Public Land (<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/76832>). I moved to St. Paul in part for this reason as it has a significant community building infrastructure such as parks. A park dedication ordinance is not just about more land. It also funds, creates, maintains amenities on existing lands. * Hence, user and benefactors need to continue contributions to the fund. The commercial sector is a benefactor of our parks as it wants to attract permanent, dedicated residents to our city.

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Finally, I would hope that the provisions which discourage the dedication of land toward paying fees be changed. Every development be required to have some element of green space rather than completely pawning that service to some other part of the city's parkland. * The solution could involve a mix of green space and fees. *

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Ed Davis
Lane Pl