



## Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Summary

June 7, 2016, 6:30 – 8:00pm

### Introduction

On Tuesday, June 7, 2016, the City of Forest Grove and MIG held the fourth Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* update and Community Center Feasibility Study from 6:30-8:00pm in the City's Light and Power Building.

This meeting had two primary purposes. The first was to review and discuss Phase 3 findings, including the Parks and Recreation Telephone Survey, Draft Community Center Feasibility Study, Draft Capital Projects List and Cost Estimates. The second was to introduce and discuss a process to identify preliminary funding priorities and partnership opportunities.

Representatives from the following organizations attended the meeting:

- Clean Water Services
- Forest Grove School District
- Forest Grove Chamber of Commerce
- Forest Grove Parks and Recreation Commission
- Forest Grove Parks and Recreation Department
- Forest Grove Swim Club
- Friends of Historic Forest Grove

Parks and Recreation Director Tom Gamble welcomed participants and led a round of introductions. He then turned the meeting over to Cindy Mendoza of MIG, who facilitated a discussion of key findings. The survey report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Copies of the draft park site recommendations were circulated, showing potential site improvements as discussed at the last meeting. Each participant received a summary table of draft system-wide capital projects, prioritization criteria and a scorecard to use to identify funding priorities and comments on these projects.

### Phase 3 Findings

The following provides a brief summary of the key points discussed at the meeting.

- **Maintenance and Upkeep.** In the survey, a majority of respondents noted funding support for park maintenance and upkeep. CAC members asked questions about how this finding is interpreted. This finding is interpreted in the context of questionnaire results to mean an increase in regular maintenance tasks, but also repairing and replacing aging or worn amenities with new recreation options and sprucing up landscaping to take care of existing parks. The questionnaire finding follows:

- *Questionnaire Finding: Respondents are generally satisfied with park maintenance, but there is room for improvement. A majority of respondents (73%) rated existing park maintenance as excellent or good. However, nearly one-quarter found it to be okay or poor. A number of areas of concern were noted in the open-ended responses, ranging from updates needed at specific facilities to general needs for improved cleanliness across all sites.*
  
- **YMCA Program Partnership:** One of the recommendations from the Community Center Feasibility Study is to continue to explore options to partner with the YMCA and School District to provide recreation programs. Recalling a similar past partnership, CAC members noted that the Y was more successful at non-athletic programs, with sports leagues doing a better job in providing youth athletics. It was noted that last time the YMCA needed local support in Board development, which likely would be needed again. There is a concern that Forest Grove families are not as affluent to afford YMCA programs. Low cost and no-cost program options area needed, which is why a scholarship fund is recommended as well as City involvement in programming.
  
- **Funding Needs:** Survey results suggested that there was little voter support for high cost projects such as park development or a new community center. While Systems Development Charges (SDCs) will help fund park development to serve new residents, CAC members considered ways to increase community funding support to provide a higher level of service for existing residents. Comments included the following:
  - City leadership at a variety of levels will be needed to initiate key projects
  - As an outcome of this project, we should ask Council for funding support and ask voters to approve reasonable tax increases
  - Bigger and broader funding requests often generate more interest, so we should not limit funding options to small improvements
  - The City should implement projects to show to people and illustrate success (not the little fixes)
  - The project should not underestimate what voters can afford. Incoming residents are more affluent and are increasing park and recreation demand
  - Doing nothing could increase dissatisfaction in services. Are angry people needed to argue for improvements?
  
- **Funding Strategies:** The next phase of the project will identify funding strategies. A few preliminary strategies were noted:
  - Continue conversations with Pacific University as a partner. The University has been a valuable supporter and funder of past park development.
  - Tie a parks bond measure to other City Other new development (e.g. schools, police department)

- Consider naming rights
- **Communication:** The press can be an ally in creating community support for parks projects. CAC members noted that we need to think about the headlines this plan could generate. The group agreed that a positive headline would focus on the success the community has found in jointly funding and implementing projects with the help of volunteers, partners, community leaders, City staff and others. Several CAC members identified many past examples of this success: e.g., Thatcher, Lincoln, B Street Trail, Fernhill Wetlands. They also discussed in-process projects that could highlight partner successes when the Master Plan is reviewed and adopted: e.g., Rogers Park enhancements and the Lincoln Park Stadium field improvements.

## Homework Assignment

Committee members were given a draft list of capital projects, prioritization criteria and a prioritization scorecard to use to identify community priorities for development. The criteria are based on department goals, described in CAC Meeting #2. The materials were circulated to all committee members following the meeting. **The deadline has been extended. Please return the scorecard to Tom Gamble by Friday, 6/16.**

## Next Steps

MIG will use CAC feedback, combined with comments from the Community Workshop and TAC Meeting, to develop the Draft Master Plan and the System Development Charges Methodology. We will discuss these elements at the next meeting, anticipated to be held in late summer or early fall.