

**City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting
June 18, 2019 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Planning Commission Members – In Attendance

Mark Ohrenschall, Chair
Carol Baker
Suzanne Greathouse
Nathan Loutsis
Dennis Olson
Michael Vanderlinde

Consultants & Staff

Debbie Bent, Community Development Director
Janina Meeks, Admin. Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ohrenschall at 7:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizens rendered comments

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Baker motioned to approve the May 21, 2019 minutes which was seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 6-0 with no abstentions.

4. AGENDA ITEMS

The Planning Commission continued discussion of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. Debbie Bent began by reviewing the steps already taken in the process of updating the PROS Plan. The City used a consultant to conduct a statistically valid community survey to identify areas of interest in the community as they relate to parks and recreational programs; the results were presented to the City Council on May 13th, 2019.

Debbie Bent summarized the results of the survey; the top priorities of the community for parks and recreation facilities include access to the waterfront, an indoor swimming pool, nature trails, and surprisingly, a lot of feedback regarding adult recreational programs. Access to the waterfront and indoor swimming have continued through from the last survey to be a top priority for the community. The City's model for recreational programming is to provide the land or facilities and then partner with local and regional organizations to provide the programs (i.e. KWAC and Squire's Landing Park partnership).

The Planning Commission asked for more information about the specifics of the survey demographics and scope of questions regarding the community's willingness to finance the facilities and/or services – specifically in relation to the continued interest in a community swimming pool – the capital expense and maintenance of that type of facility, and how the process should move forward.

Debbie Bent confirmed that Staff had made sure the demographics of the community were included in the survey results. She explained that the survey was focused more on identifying the community's interest in facilities and programs and the gap between what is available and that interest, but it didn't really get into the funding. Having received the survey results, the next step is to review the goals and policies, followed by the demand and needs analysis (which includes comparison to national standards), and then to develop a list of capital projects and address funding.

A facility like a swimming pool or aquatic center is not something the City can manage on its own; in the past there have been efforts to provide a regional facility. Staff thinks regional partnerships would be the best way to move forward with a capital and maintenance expense of that magnitude.

Three questions were kept in mind as the first draft of the PROS Plan was prepared: do the vision, goals and policies reflect the needs of the community; is there anything missing that needs to be added; and is the document consistent, concise and easy to understand? The draft presented is only the first draft; it will be further refined based on the Planning Commission's input and Staff will continuously review throughout the process to make sure there is internal consistency. With the first question in mind, Staff reviewed the previous plan and removed five policies that reflected completed projects and two categories for redundancies.

The PROS Plan vision must be consistent with the overall vision of the current Comprehensive Plan, the latest version was adopted in 2015 looking forward to 2035. The Comprehensive Plan vision includes "supporting recreation and health through well maintained parks and open spaces", which affects the PROS Plan directly, but also "connecting to the waterfront," "providing safe pedestrian and bike links," "providing downtown spaces," and "encouraging volunteerism," all of which are also reflected within the PROS Plan.

Newly included in the draft is the City's service vision, which City Staff worked internally to identify and define what the City does: "Propelling Kenmore Upward: We create a thriving community where people love where they live." This is included as the statement directly relates to the PROS Plan.

The guiding fundamentals of the PROS Plan are principal conditions that define the framework for the park system; mostly focused around the natural environment (waterways, wildlife and natural habitats, and wetlands) and truly frames the parks system. The key values in the current PROS Plan are still valid and relevant: protection and stewardship (responsible planning, management and conservation), partnerships (most efficient and cost-effective way for Kenmore to provide recreation programming), creating balance (balance between passive and active recreation and opportunities for everyone to use), and instilling civic pride (encouraging volunteerism, community gathering spaces like The Hangar, public arts, etc.).

The Planning Commission asked for clarification on how balance in the PROS Plan is defined and what it means in practice – whether based on activities available or space available – and discussed variables of the effect of the parks and recreation programs to the City's development: Is it possible and appropriate to capture the economic benefits of the

parks for the city? Is there any information available on the economic value of the parks and recreation programs? Will there be quantitative data of the acreage or total parks and recreation space? What is the impact of the parks in attracting future business development and new residents? Is future development an appropriate consideration when reviewing and updating the PROS Plan? How can the City capitalize on the parks and program partnerships to entice current residents and youth stay in Kenmore? How can the City capitalize on the regional traffic to the City's parks?

Debbie Bent explained that the values as described in the PROS Plan aren't quantified by the acreage or space, more of an overall theme to strive for balance between active and passive programs and opportunities for everyone. Kenmore has more natural, passive space than active space, and there is a need for more active recreation in the community. Staff is unaware of data specific to Kenmore, but generally it is understood that a good parks system is attractive to commercial and residential developers and businesses. The City has a good list of parks and recreation facilities assets to bring back and will look into the value of the parks system and its relation to and effect on future development.

The obstacles identified to implementing the current PROS Plan are still valid; a new obstacle "securing assets for future generations" was added to the draft because as the City grows and ages, it is important to have a plan of repair and replacement of aging assets. The opportunities identified in the current PROS Plan were updated as there has been significant activity, particularly to Walkways & Waterways, that needed to be reflected in that section.

Debbie Bent reiterated that this draft is a "first cut" and to keep in mind the lenses of consistency, clarity, conciseness and what is missing as the review continues. She noted that the objectives and policies of the PROS Plan all fall into five general areas: related to acquisition and development, related to planning, related to stewardship, related to partnerships, or related to funding.

Goal 1 to provide waterfront access was expanded to include a policy to develop a plan to expand the trail at Squire's Landing Park, which is currently under development and expected to complete in 2023. Previous PROS Plan ideas included expanding a potential waterway or boardwalk to neighboring cities; the new goal does not address including areas outside the City and would need to be expanded to include that.

Goal 2 is to provide safe routes to parks, recreation and open spaces; the new policy in the goal is to make sure there is a map of safe pedestrian and bike routes. The Planning Commission asked if the City currently sends out any communications to let residents know of other opportunities available to them in neighboring cities; Debbie will check with the City's Recreation Coordinator to find out the answer.

The revised Goal 3 combines prior Goals 3 and 6; Policy 3.1.7 is new. The Planning Commission asked for clarification in policy 3.1.7 on the change from the use of "habitat" to "vegetation management plan" and "parks with critical areas" instead of just "parks." This could potentially be a result of trying to be concise and may have lost some clarity in the attempt, staff will review this again.

Goal 4 is to create a balance of passive and active recreation opportunities. The Planning Commission again requested more information outlining how balance is defined specifically to Kenmore, how to measure the balance as defined, and how to know when the desired balance has been achieved. They emphasized that the increasing population of the City be considered when addressing the future of the parks system. Commissioner Loutsis focused on the youth (under-eighteen) and young adult participation in the survey. The youth of the city greatly rely on the parks and there is opportunity to reach out to the younger residents to learn what they think of the parks and what is missing or could be improved so the next generation is more incentivized to stay in Kenmore.

Recreation programming and community events are addressed in Goal 5 of the PROS Plan. There hasn't been any indication from the Council to change the model currently in use, so the City will continue to provide facilities and partner with local organizations to provide recreational programming.

A new Goal 6 was added to be deliberate and mindful in engaging the community and involving them in the update in different ways (i.e. surveys, demand and needs analysis, inventories, etc.) to make sure the PROS Plan is informed by the community's priorities and goals. The Planning Commission suggested that regular opportunities for community engagement and feedback should be included, not just during the update schedule. Commissioner Loutsis recommended that the City reach out to local schools, like Inglemoor High School, and arrange to meet with and get feedback from the under-eighteen demographic.

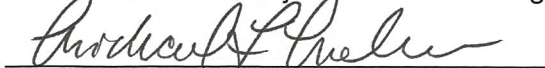
The final goal of the PROS Plan update is to create a financially sustainable park system through partnerships and stewardship. The City doesn't currently have a stewardship program, but it is something that Staff thinks needs to be developed as the parks system grows. Commissioner Vanderlinde suggested strengthening the sustainability of the parks systems by creating a dedicated fund to ensure maintaining the parks system doesn't fall victim to variances in available resources over time. Debbie explained that currently the process to build/improve parks includes identifying the feasibility, cost of maintaining and eventual replacement of the facilities.

5. OTHER ITEMS

Commissioner Loutsis made a motion to cancel the July 2nd meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Olson. The motion passed 6-0 with no abstentions.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ohrenschall adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.



Planning Commission

Approved by Planning Commission on:

8/20/2019