

Memorandum

Date: October 9, 2013

To: Sarah Medary, Assistant City Manager
From: Neil Björklund, POS Planning Manager

Subject: **2006 Parks Recreation and Open Space Bond Update**

This memo addresses questions you posed regarding the status of remaining funding under the 2006 PROS Bond, and the activities we are currently engaged in to implement that Bond Measure. The short answer is that with the remaining bond funding authority in four of the five designated categories, staff is actively pursuing acquisition and development projects that will utilize the funding as originally designated.

As you know, in November 2006, voters passed a \$27.5 million general obligation bond measure for Parks and Open Space. The 2006 Parks and Open Space bond is organized into 5 distinct categories:

- Neighborhood and Community Park Acquisition
- Golden Gardens Park Expansion and Development
- Natural Area Park Acquisition
- Synthetic Surface Athletic Field Development (in partnership with local school districts)
- West Eugene Wetland Education Center (in partnership with local, state and federal partners)

The remaining funding within each of the above categories as October 1, 2013 is as follows:

	Budgeted	Expended	Remaining	Projects In Progress
Neighborhood and Community Park Acquisition	\$10,500,000	\$4,885,000	\$5,990,000	\$1,750,000
Golden Gardens Park Expansion and Development	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0
Natural Area Parks Acquisition	\$7,750,000	\$5,750,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Synthetic Surface Athletic Fields	\$5,000,000	\$4,450,000	\$550,000	\$550,000
West Eugene Wetland Education Center	\$1,750,000	\$0	\$1,750,000	\$0
Totals	\$27,000,000	\$17,085,000	\$10,290,000	\$4,300,000

Below is a summary of accomplishments to date, as well as **active** projects for each of the categories.

Neighborhood and Community Park Acquisition

Activity in this category has increased significantly over the last several months, including acquisition of two important parcels in that last three months. The uptick in the economy appears to have prompted many property owners who had been holding their parcels to now place them on the market. Staff is receiving a steady stream of calls from property owners inquiring about selling them to the City for park land. Public Works staff is currently engaged in two additional neighborhood park acquisitions that are in the negotiation phase, as well as several additional sites that are being actively evaluated.

To support the effort to acquire future Neighborhood Park sites, staff is conducting a Geographic Information System (GIS) screening analysis to identify potential neighborhood park sites. As the analysis is completed for each unserved area, POS staff will identify priority sites that will be pursued by real estate specialists in the coming months.

Accomplishments to date include:

- The City closed on the purchase of an additional 17 acres for Santa Clara Community Park on September 20, 2013. This brings the total area of City-owned land at this site to 35 acres. A Council Newsletter item was submitted on this purchase last week, which noted that the City has been pursuing this parcel for more than 10 years.
- The City closed on a purchase of 4.86 acres for a neighborhood park west of Bailey Hill Rd on the south side of Amazon Creek in July 2013.
- In 2009 the City acquired eight undeveloped residential lots totaling 0.9 acre on Lenore Street in the south Santa Clara area.

Golden Gardens Park Acquisition and Development.

Implementation of this portion of the Bond Measure was completed in 2009. Accomplishments include:

- In December 2007, the City closed on 170 acres of property adjacent to Golden Gardens Park. Physical improvements completed at Golden Gardens include grading of the banks of the ponds to improve safety and plant and wildlife habitat, development of a new trail system circumnavigating the ponds (summer 2008), and native plantings on the pond banks (winter 2008-09).

Natural Area Park Acquisition

The approximately \$2 million left in the natural area category is designated for acquiring land along the Willamette River. The City is actively investigating a key riverfront parcel that it hopes will be acquired with the remaining funding in the Willamette River frontage sub-category, identified in the Bond under the Natural Area Park acquisition category. Previous accomplishments under this category include:

- The Willamette River Open Space Vision and Action Plan was completed the spring of 2010, and was endorsed by the Eugene City Council, City of Springfield, Willamalane Park and Recreation District Board, and the Lane County Parks Advisory Committee. The vision and action plan provides advisory guidelines on acquisition in the river corridor, which is one of the categories of natural area acquisition under the Bond Measure.

- Since passage of the 2006 Bond Measure, a total of nearly 900 acres of ridgeline properties for the Ridgeline Trail system has been purchased, utilizing bond funds together with a variety of other funding sources. The Bond funds expended have leveraged more than \$1.4 million in donations and an additional \$2.2 million in grants and other outside funding.

Synthetic Surface Athletic Fields

All of the original synthetic turf field projects have been completed under budget. Eugene Recreation Division and District 4J have agreed that approximately \$550,000 in remaining bond funds in this category will be spent on an additional synthetic turf field at Kelly Middle School, with the balance to be funded by the school district.

- The work to replace the artificial turf fields at North Eugene, South Eugene, Sheldon and Churchill High Schools has been completed. The City split those expenses 50/50 with District 4J, and has paid about \$870,000 from 2006 Bond funds to cover the City's share.
- Eugene School District 4J has completed construction of synthetic fields at Cal Young Middle School, Madison Middle School, Jefferson Middle School and Spencer Butte Middle School.
- Bethel School District 52 has completed construction of synthetic fields at Willamette High School and Meadowview School.

West Eugene Wetland Education Center

- The construction of Phase 1 of the West Eugene Wetland Education Center continues to be on hold pending private fundraising and partner funding from other entities. It has been several years since City staff has observed evidence of an active private fundraising campaign or other agency funding for this project.