

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

From: Carolyn Hope, Park Planning & Cultural Arts Manager, 556-2313, cjhope@redmond.gov
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Date: September 30, 2015

Subject: 2016 Park, Arts, Recreation, Conservation and Culture (PARCC) Plan
Initial Commission conversation and input on concepts for Level of Service

BACKGROUND

The City needs to update the Park, Arts, Recreation, Conservation and Culture (PARCC) Plan, which is part of Redmond's Comprehensive Plan. Planning Commission held an initial study session on July 22, 2015 regarding goals for the update, public involvement and overall schedule. One key component of the 2016 update is to review and propose modifications to the levels of service (LOS) standards for parks and trails.

The level of service analysis and resulting standards are fundamental to the PARCC Plan update since they are used to estimate community demands for parks and recreation services today and through 2030 and will inform policy decisions and proposed updates to the PARCC Plan. By extension, LOS standards will also inform future updates to impact fees following updates to the PARCC Plan.

The attached PowerPoint presentation briefly summarizes the current LOS methodology and proposed concepts for updates. The current policy basis for LOS can be found in Chapter 10.B of the [Comprehensive Plan](#) and is attached to this memo. This includes the specific standards and other policy guidance. Also, slides 5 to 7 in the attached PowerPoint provide a summary.

Staff's proposed concepts for modifications to the LOS approach are an effort to shift from acreage per population calculation to a method that better reflects the characteristics of park space, not just the size, so as to inform policy and capital project priorities. The rationale for this change is due in part to a nationwide trend. While the acreage per population approach has been widely used due to its simplicity, it does little to inform decisions based on geographic equity, quality, variety and capacity of parks and facilities. In 2013, the Washington State Recreation Conservation Office proposed new guidelines for levels of service. We have been evaluating new approaches for levels of service since 2009. This year as part of work on the PARCC Plan update, staff are evaluating the various methods and balancing possible approaches based on research of best practices in addition to resident feedback we received in our recent public outreach. During this study session staff will describe proposals for sports and fitness facilities, children's play features, and trails. In an upcoming study session, staff will describe proposals for resource parks and recreation.

Staff has received initial feedback from the Parks and Trails Commission on September 3, 2015 and from City Council on September 22, 2015. See the “SUMMARY OF MAJOR IDEAS TO DATE” section below for summaries of these conversations.

PREPARATION FOR THE SEPTEMBER 30th STUDY SESSION

Staff asks that the Commission review the attached draft Level of Service PowerPoint presentation and existing policies. Please note that staff will update the presentation for the September 30 meeting to reflect ideas from the recent conversation with Council.

At the study session, staff will describe new proposals for level of service methodologies for park and trails and will seek Planning Commission feedback. If the Commission has issues for discussion or questions regarding the materials provided, please let David Shaw know prior to September 30.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR IDEAS TO DATE

Parks & Trails Commission Meeting Summary (Sept. 3):

The Parks & Trails Commission (PTC) discussed proposed level of service (LOS) methodologies at their September 3rd meeting. The current LOS methodology was briefly reviewed and new methodologies for sports & fitness facilities, play features and trails were presented. Staff also proposed a new park classification category called “Urban Parks”.

Key conversation points were as follows:

1. General support for the direction that the proposed methodology is headed.
2. Account for population density and proximity to transit in the analysis.
 - a. Staff will research ways to account for population density in the service area method. One concept is to create a service density analysis that would show how individual service areas overlap thus creating a density map. The service density would be overlaid on the population density to identify gaps in service.
 - b. Staff will research ways to account for transit proximity as it relates to service area.
3. Look into varying the service area radius proportionally to the size of the park or facility and articulate the service that regional facilities provide.
 - a. Staff suggests maintaining the service area radii as proposed as they are designed around guidance from the RCO and research on preferred walking distance to park facilities. Facility quality and public demand have a greater impact on service than size alone. Staff will research methods for accounting for this in the analysis.
4. The methodology appears to be affective at identifying LOS gaps geographically.

City Council Meeting Summary (Sept. 22nd):

Staff presented the same topics described above to City Council.

Key conversation points were as follows:

1. General support for the direction that the proposed methodology is headed.
2. Add informative details to the analysis and presentation by highlighting how the system relies on partners to provide services by showing how their service areas layer together.

- a. The approach outlined in Parks & Trails Commission 2.a above would address this comment. Service areas provided by partners such as schools, adjacent parks, etc. can be identified via the service density method.
3. Include population density in the analysis.
 - a. This would be addressed with the method suggested in 2.a above.
4. Add information on the potential service increase by partnering with schools.
 - a. This would be addressed as outlined in 2.a above.
5. Should programmed vs. un-programmed (passive) fields be treated the same in the sports and fitness analysis? Currently, the analysis includes only sports fields designed for programmed sports and does not include open fields for passive and pic-up use that may be occasionally used for programmed sports.
 - a. Staff will take this item back to Parks & Trails Commission for further discussion and direction.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

Follow up study sessions with the Planning Commission on this and other components of the PARCC Plan update will be scheduled in the near future.

ENCLOSURES

- DRAFT PARCC Plan Level of Service PowerPoint Presentation
- Comprehensive Plan Ch. 10.B Level of Service Excerpt