

METRO REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACES
Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes:

GTAC meeting
Feb. 13, 2002
1 to 3 p.m.
Metro Regional Center, rm. 370

Parks and open space estimates for the UGB decision

Mark Turpel of Metro's planning department discussed the periodic review of the region's urban growth boundary. (Every five years, Metro has the responsibility to assess the capacity of the current UGB to accommodate the next 20 years of expected growth). One of the variables considered is the amount of land that will be used for parks and open spaces purposes within the existing UGB and UGB expansion areas during the study period (2002-2022). Mark asked GTAC to comment on three possible approaches to determining this estimate: projecting on the basis of the past using an acres-to-population ratio (which is what was done in the past); developing a new acres-to-population ratio separating out the "active" parks from the "passive" parks; or estimating based on local standards and goals (and possibly even demonstrated financial capabilities).

GTAC discussed each of the options. Most members were in favor of the first method – using a ratio of acres-to-population to make the estimation, as in the past. Some thought Metro should combine either the first two or all three of the options. See the attached memo from Mark to the MPAC parks subcommittee for more information about GTAC's advice.

Regional Greenspaces System Draft Map

After a brief introduction by Charlie Ciecko, GTAC voted to finalize the Regional Greenspaces System Draft Map and to refer and recommend it to the Metro Council, other policy makers and the public (15 – yes; 1 – abstain, Lisa Hamerlynk from City of Lake Oswego). Next steps will include review by policy makers from all jurisdictions and the Metro Council, and a public involvement process to be conducted by Metro.

Next GTAC meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 1 to 3 p.m. at Metro Regional Center in Room 370.

**METRO**

TO: MPAC Parks Subcommittee
FROM: Mark Turpel
DATE: February 13, 2002
SUBJECT: Additional requested information

Attached please find a copy of the following:

1. The Most Recent Acreage The latest park acreage figures (table titled "Open Space By Type within the Metro UGB - January 2002"

By way of illustration, some examples of "Private Parks" are:

- Keller Woodlands owned by Nature Conservancy
- Dawson Creek Park owned by Dawson Creek Park Owners

Examples of "Private Open Space" are:

- land owned by Oregon Parks Foundation
- Bronson Creek Estates Open Space owned by Bronson Creek Homeowners
- Cedar Mills owned by Wetlands Conservancy
- Nike Campus Open Space owned by Nike

It should also be noted that public and private school lands are not included in this table as they are accounted for separately in Metro's Urban Growth Report. However, they are part of Metro's parks and open space coverage data layer and do provide additional open space.

2. Long Term Past Acreage Data from 1977 from the Urban Growth Boundary Findings showing the number of acres of parks and open spaces for each county and for the whole urban growth boundary (14,926 acres within the area proposed in 1977 as the region's urban growth boundary). Members had asked that we go back for a twenty-year period for data to provide more perspective. This is the only region-wide park acreage data of this vintage of which I am aware.

Comparing the 1977 data (about 14, 926 acres) with the 2002 data (26,380 acres), it shows roughly a difference of about 11,454 acres, assuming that the data are identifying "parks and open space" in the exact same way. This averages to be about 458 acres per year added within the region's urban growth boundary over this 25 year period.

3. GTAC Advice

The Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC), composed of local government park planners met today and discussed the three identified approaches. While there was not one perspective, there was an extensive discussion of options. Following is a summary of GTAC comments.

Project on the basis of the past. Many GTAC members supported this approach. The past ratio - 20.9 acres per acre - was seen as a level below which the region shouldn't drop. Many expressed concern that if option 2 or 3 were used, some might use a lower ratio out of context and confuse an aspirational goal with actual numbers. That is, if a lesser number were used, some might propose that the lower ratio is all that needs to be achieved. Others suggested that the current ratio should be used, but that a higher aspirational ratio should be identified and a lower ratio was what was currently being financed - just like transportation planning. Still others supported the ratio (20.9) but asked what was the need - that it could be substantially higher. Some suggested that the higher aspirational goal might be informed by national standards. Others also suggested that the current ratio should be maintained within the current UGB, but in areas newly added to the UGB, a higher standard should be established because the outlying areas were more hilly and areas like Forest Park, Powell Butte, etc. were needed as additional open space to provide a view of greenspaces and so that residents didn't feel like urban development went on indefinitely.

Separate Out Active from Passive Parks GTAC members recognized that active parks often required "developable" lands (flat lands for ball fields, etc.), and that natural areas could and often were less developable lands (steep slopes, streams, etc.). Some suggested that lands owned by the public as "people places" - not just unusable areas left over from development - should be addressed.

Use Local Standards or Capabilities Members recognized that local System Development Charges (SDC's) were available to buy additional parks and open spaces. As part of the work needed to approve SDC's local governments put together a land acquisition forecast. Some suggested that these should be gathered from the local governments and used as a basis for an estimation. It was pointed out that the SDC's, by law, could only keep a current ratio and could not address deficits, that they only covered a portion of total costs and that they did not address land price increases.

Other GTAC Comments

Combine All Three Methods - Some GTAC members suggested that the three methods all had strengths and weaknesses and by combining them a better estimate could be obtained.

Consider Federal Purchases. - It was pointed out the Federal Government was planning additions to the wildlife refuge in the Sherwood/Tualatin area.

Use State Survey - a new State survey of parks and open space has been completed and could help inform the proc