



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

333 WEST OCEAN BOULEVARD • LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802

August 9, 2005

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to develop and recommend a financing structure to provide funds to acquire and develop new open space in underserved areas of the City as identified by the Open Space Element of the General Plan and Strategic Plan of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine. (Districts 1, 4, 6 and 7)

DISCUSSION

The population density in Long Beach is about 9,149 persons per square mile, making the City a dense urban area; more so than cities like Baltimore, Detroit and Los Angeles. This population density, which is concentrated in the North, South and West Park Districts (Target Districts) of the City, as defined in the Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, has created a critical lack of adequate open space for residents (Exhibit A – Population Density Map). In Long Beach there are currently 5.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The Strategic Plan also states that this is substantially below the average of 13 acres per 1,000 residents of 25 other comparable urban cities (Exhibit B – Comparison of Park Resources). Comparably, within the Target Districts there is an average of only 1.6 acres per 1,000 residents versus 16.7 acres in the East Park District. To develop additional open space within these impacted areas, staff is recommending a strategy to acquire existing, underutilized properties and convert them to parkland, as well as make substantial improvements or expansions at existing parks.

The majority of the Target Districts are designated as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible. For many years, the City has utilized CDBG funding for park facility improvements and recreational programming in these underserved neighborhoods. Such programs include after-school and weekend recreation programs in school facilities, teen and youth centers and mobile recreation programs. While these initiatives have helped, additional funding is needed to address the significant lack of parkland and open space in these impacted areas. To this end, City staff is recommending the use of bond financing to generate funds that will be used to acquire and develop new open space and make substantial improvements or expansions at existing parks within the impacted areas of the City.

This letter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Heather Mahood on July 28, 2005 and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on August 1, 2005.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

Approval is requested at this time to take advantage of a favorable bond market.

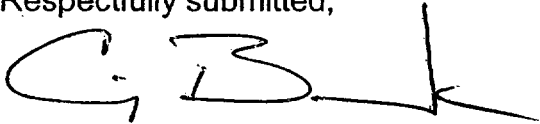
FISCAL IMPACT

Staff is requesting City Council approval to develop a financing structure that may use bond financing to generate funds for the acquisition and development of new open space. Once developed, a specific action plan will be submitted to the City Council for authorization and approval. The initial concept includes utilizing CDBG funding for debt service payments on a new park bond. There is no impact to the General Fund as a result of the requested action.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Adopt recommendation.

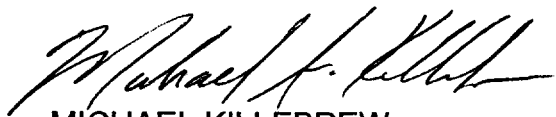
Respectfully submitted,



CRAIG BECK
Acting Director of Community Development



FOR PHIL HESTER
Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine



MICHAEL KILLEBREW
Director of Financial Management

APPROVED:



GERALD R. MILLER
CITY MANAGER

DSW:dsw

Attachments: Exhibit A – Population Density Map
 Exhibit B – Comparison of Park Resources