

## **Response to Questions on the FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan**

**Request By:** Supervisor Kauffman

**Question:** Is the County able to leverage more developer funding for the Parks? Is the current formula up-to-date?

**Response:**

Under current policies and regulations, the Park Authority and County are not positioned to fully leverage developer funding for parks. Increasing leisure and resource protection needs are heavily impacted by residential development and growth. Diminishing parkland availability and funding shortages magnifies these impacts and will result in greater public funding needs in the future.

Development impacts to park resources are carefully reviewed by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and coordinated through land development review processes led by the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ). Because there is no specific requirement or formula for developer contributions for parks, FCPA must compete with other public services for negotiated proffer funds. The Residential Development Criteria of the Land Use section of the Policy Plan provide criteria used to guide the evaluation of development proposals and address public facility impacts including schools, parks libraries, police, fire and rescue and stormwater management. As part of this criteria, a per student formula exists to offset school impacts, but no similar formula exists to offset impacts to parks.

To demonstrate the impact of new development, the Park Authority uses the Needs Assessment, County Comprehensive Plan policies, and Area Plan recommendations to demonstrate park-related impacts and where park facilities should be located. Policy Plan amendments adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 20, 2005 help to demonstrate the important need for parks. However, it remains a competitive and negotiated effort through rezoning and the County planning process to increase the level of developer funding for the parks. The Comprehensive Plan does set the groundwork for the Board of Supervisors' to adopt a specific formula for Parks; however, the Board has not elected to do so. The negotiated and competitive process for securing proffer funds does not always result in meeting citizen needs for park and recreation facilities.

It should be noted that there is a provision in the Zoning Ordinance which states that developers are required to provide private recreational facilities in all Planned Development Housing Districts (PDH) valuing an amount of \$955 per dwelling unit, or contribute this amount if recreation facilities cannot be accommodated onsite. This provision was never intended to generate funding for Park development, but rather to ensure developers include recreation facilities onsite. Because it is preferable for the developer to build recreation facilities onsite, contributions generated from this provision are not common. Additionally, this provision applies only to PDH districts, and does not apply to affordable dwelling units or other types of residential rezonings. It is important to recognize that private recreation facilities that meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance do not necessarily align with the overall parks and recreation needs of a community as determined by the Park Authority through the Needs Assessment process.

The Park Authority hopes to achieve additional leverage for developer funding in the future. The completed Needs Assessment, followed by the recent Parks policy plan amendments mentioned above, strengthened the foundation for making parks a priority in proffer negotiations; however these were only the first step. The Park Authority, in cooperation with the Planning Commission and DPZ will review the Comprehensive Plan residential development criteria as well as the Zoning Ordinance to identify necessary revisions to ensure future developer funding for parks is adequate to mitigate the impacts of new development on park resources.