

PARKLAND DEDICATION

Issue

Currently, new residential development results in only partial provision of public park spaces in the community. Current enabling legislation allows the municipality to require dedication only if the property is ‘subdivided.’ Minneapolis and St. Paul have received special legislation that allows their municipalities to require parkland dedication when most development occurs. This authorization was handed down due to the amount of development/redevelopment of existing parcels in the Twin Cities that does not require subdivision of the property but still generates need and impact for the park system. Rochester is in a similar situation.

Problem

Rochester is experiencing redevelopment/development challenges similar to those of Minneapolis and St Paul whereby we are anticipating 10,000 new residential units over the next 20 years along with multiple types of commercial & retail development in the downtown core. If legislation allowing a modification to the enabling legislation is not provided, the development of these properties will not be making contributions toward the public park spaces they will be demanding the city provide. Examples of this would be the recently completed Riverwalk Apartments that created 152 residential units where 3 homes once stood or the 324 Apartments that created 50 units on a small 8000 square foot commercial lot, both in the downtown area. These types of projects greatly increase the need for parkland without providing any associated funding to support their resident’s desires. Even with a nominal per unit park dedication charge similar to what the metro area charges the funding provided would be a step towards enhancing existing older parks and trails serving these community members.

Solutions

The primary option to address this challenge is to enact special legislation, like Minneapolis and St. Paul did, to allow other cities of the first class like Rochester to enact parkland dedication requirements for any development without the requirement for ‘subdivision’ of property.

Impact

The purpose of this legislation is twofold. First, this is intended to equalize the terms of development across the entire spectrum of properties in the community. Secondly, it aims to provide adequate parkland improvements serving the downtown area.

