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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager
Date: September 26, 2011
Subject: **Parks Bond Land Acquisition Strategy**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Staff recommends adopting the Parks Bond Land Acquisition Strategy.

BACKGROUND

In July 2011, the City Council approved a call for bond referendums to be held in November 2011. Voters will have the opportunity to authorize the City to issue up to \$33,000,000 in bonds to invest in the acquisition of park and open space property and up to \$33,000,000 in bonds to invest in the development of park and open space properties.

If the voters give approval for a \$33,000,000 bond issuance for investment in park and open space acquisition, the Parks Bond Land Acquisition Strategy would guide the City as it makes its determinations of what parks and open space properties will best meet the City's needs.

Since the September 12 discussion, staff has incorporated the Council's suggestions in regard to the criteria considered as well as included further details to the strategy including sections for background, purpose, scope, exceptions, and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council adopt the Parks Bond Land Acquisition Strategy by Resolution

**A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE PARKS BOND LAND
ACQUISITION STRATEGY**

WHEREAS, Dunwoody (the "City") is a municipality created by the 2008 Georgia General Assembly pursuant to Ga. L. 2008, p. 3526; and

WHEREAS, following a public planning process, in June 2011, by Resolution 2011-05-27, the City adopted a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, as detailed in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, based on national standards, and reaffirmed by extensive community feedback, the City's park system does not presently include sufficient parkland, facilities, and recreation opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the City has determined that in a down economy, it is in the best interest to put before the voters the opportunity to acquire land for parks and greenspace; and

WHEREAS, the City identified the issuance of General Obligations Bonds to be the most feasible method to finance the costs of the land acquisition; and

WHEREAS, in July 2011, by Resolution 2011-07-36, the City called for an election to be held on Tuesday, November 8, 2011, to afford to the qualified voters of the City the opportunity to vote in favor of or against the issuance of the Bonds for the acquisition of parks and greenspace; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to be transparent about potential land acquisitions by detailing the strategy by which the City would make determinations of what potential parks and open space properties will best meet the City's needs, and said proposed Strategy is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Dunwoody that by passage of this Resolution the City of Dunwoody approves and adopts the Parks Bond Land Acquisition Strategy, as attached hereto and incorporated herein, to be utilized as the City considers potential land acquisitions of park and open space properties.

SO RESOLVED AND EFFECTIVE this 26th day of September, 2011.

Approved:

Ken Wright, Mayor

Attest:

Sharon Lowery, City Clerk

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Land Acquisition Strategy

PARKS BOND LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY

I. Background

Following the acquisitions of park properties from DeKalb County in June of 2010, the City embarked on a public process to create a Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces. The resultant Master Plan, adopted in June 2011, provides long-range guidance to the City of Dunwoody on park redevelopment, possible land acquisitions for future park space, staffing options, revenue sources, and priorities for on-going maintenance.

As outlined in the adopted Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, for a public park provider, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines suggest a park system, at minimum, should be composed of a 'core' system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents. Dunwoody presently has 160 acres of parkland for its approximately 46,267 residents. This equates to Dunwoody having just 3.47 acres per 1,000 persons, which is well below the national average. Furthermore, because the park facilities have not historically grown with the residential and commercial developments, the City now contends with a park system that lacks a proper mix of facilities, parkland, and recreation opportunities.

In July 2011, the City Council approved a call for bond referendums to be held in November 2011. Voters will have the opportunity to authorize the City to issue up to \$33,000,000 in bonds to invest in the acquisition of park and open space property and up to \$33,000,000 in bonds to invest in the development of park and open space properties.

II. Purpose

If the voters give approval for a \$33,000,000 bond issuance for investment in park and open space acquisition, this strategy has been designed in order to assist the City Council as it makes its determinations of what parks and open space properties will best meet the City's needs by outlining criteria for the consideration of land acquisition. Additionally, these guidelines have been designed as a tool for citizens interested in potential City land acquisitions to understand the criteria the City Council considers in considering land acquisitions.

III. Scope

The scope of this Land Acquisition Strategy covers future land acquisitions funded through the parks bond referendum for acquisition of park and open space property.

IV. Criteria for Evaluation

Land Acquisition Strategy

The City Council shall consider the following criteria when determining acquisitions of park and open space property:

1. Criteria listed in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan
 - a. Overall size and ability of the parcel to accommodate needed facilities identified in this plan
 - b. Usable land outside of state and local stream buffers and waters of the state
 - c. Topography
 - d. Location in relation to the gap analysis; parcels in underserved areas should be given higher priority over parcels in areas with existing parks
 - e. Links to proposed Nancy Creek Greenway or other approved future greenways
 - f. Comparison between housing density in the area and proposed use of land
 - g. Preservation of significant urban forest land
 - h. Seek acquisition of property with historic or cultural resources
2. Adjacent land to existing parks and green space for expansion. It is more cost efficient to expand existing parks than to acquire sufficient land to build a new park.
3. New parkland in areas designated as underserved by the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.
4. Avoid purchasing land with significant economic value for development that would have a significant negative economic impact on the tax digest.
5. New parkland that meets identified recreational needs:
 - a. Structured new athletic fields and flexible multi-use fields
 - b. Walking trails
 - c. Playgrounds
 - d. Passive park space
6. Land for a "Town Green" as suggested in adopted Master Plans.

V. Exceptions

Land acquisitions funded through means other than the parks bond referendum for acquisition of park and open space property shall be exempt from this acquisition strategy.