



Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL**

FROM: Councilmember Johnny Khamis

**SUBJECT: ACTIVATESJ –
DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN**

DATE: December 10, 2019

APPROVED:

DATE

12/10/19

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Accept the memo from Mayor Liccardo and Councilmember Jimenez with the following modifications to Recommendation 3:
 - a. Include as a task within benchmark EA4, “Achieve a 10-minute walk to a quality park”, to assemble a multi-department (Planning, Transportation, OED, CAO and PRNS) team to:
 - i. Scour park-deprived neighborhoods for low-traffic streets, col-du-sacs [sic], areas along sound walls, and other underutilized publicly-owned space for conversion to parks and trails. Return to Council with a prioritized list of sites for ready conversion to recreational use.
 - ii. **Look at regulations that might not currently be serving us well or are possibly hindering our progress toward this goal, and return to Council with an analysis of potential Municipal Code changes or other regulatory modifications to facilitate new and creative solutions to our parkland deficit.**

BACKGROUND:

In the past, the strategy for neighborhood parks was large, spacious parks, and pocket parks were deemed inferior and undesirable. In today’s housing strategy of higher-density complexes, and a City that is mostly built out, pocket parks are much more desirable and could be a tool in the box of solutions that we use to increase the number of neighborhood parks. However, regulations are in place representing the former viewpoint and they need to be looked at and modified to allow the City, developers, and the community to act on opportunities for creative solutions to providing parkland.

HONORABLE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

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In addition, there are regulations that require developers to provide their required parkland on the same physical property upon which the development is being built. There may be times where a developer could build more housing on the build site and purchase a nearby parcel that would be more appropriate for a park, increasing the number of units built. However, current regulations prevent this possibility.

We might also look at regulations around the purchasing of private property, such as single family homes. Current regulations require that the seller pay all costs to remove structures and clean soils. This would be cost-prohibitive for someone selling his or her home in order to retire, whereas these costs would be a relatively small amount to the City when acquiring property to create new parkland. We must build in the flexibility to take advantage of such opportunities.

While it may not be desirable to make wholesale changes to our regulations, we must consider ways they can be modified to take advantage of innovative and unique opportunities that arise. This work should be completed before the next opportunity arises, since PRNS can provide several examples of such missed opportunities. Let's focus on these examples and adjust regulations so that we're poised for the next similar situations that present themselves.