

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT
Charter Amendment Restricting Sale of Parks and Natural Areas

This measure would amend the Corvallis City Charter by adding a new section with two paragraphs related to City-owned parks and natural areas. The text of the proposed amendment follows:

1. Sale or transfer of city-owned parks or natural areas, or any change of use of city-owned parks or natural areas to a use not associated with parks or natural areas, shall only be approved by a prior vote among the electorate.
2. Land that has been acquired for park or natural area purposes shall not be used for any other purposes unless the use is strictly temporary in nature and is compatible with park or natural area use. Such temporary use shall not be subject to vote of the electorate if the temporary use does not exceed 2 years.

The proposed measure would prevent the sale or trade of lands acquired for parks or acquired for natural areas unless the sale or trade is approved in advance by a vote of the people.

The proposed amendment would also require approval by a vote of the people before park lands or natural area lands could be converted to any use that reduces the ability of the public to use the land for the purposes for which the land was originally purchased, donated or otherwise acquired. Some City-owned lands are comprised of both a developed park and a natural area. Park areas that are developed will be treated as a developed park and the Park area that is a natural area will be treated as a natural area (an example is Martin Luther King, Jr. Park).

As examples, conversion of parks land from a playground to a ballfield would not reduce the ability of the public to use the land for parks purposes, and would not require a vote. Conversion of public parks space into administrative office space would require a vote. Conversion of a natural area to a developed park use would require a vote. Parking for public access to a park or natural area is a park or natural area use, and would not require a vote.

The temporary use of a park that does not exceed two years and that is compatible with park uses would not require a vote. The temporary use of a natural area that does not exceed two years and that is compatible with natural area uses would not require a vote. This measure would not require a vote to approve concessions, short-term rentals, facility or area reservations, festivals, tournaments, and other park uses currently allowed in city-owned parks.

Utility or construction work that does not interfere with park or natural area use for more than two years is considered temporary.