

**PARKS FOR ALL  
POSITION ON MILLAGE PROPOSAL  
DECEMBER 4, 2018**

Summary Position

Parks For All supports a general parks millage for Orleans Parish *but opposes the specific reallocation of existing park and recreation millages under consideration in the resolution currently before City Council.* Notwithstanding Parks For All's genuine enthusiasm for the concept of a shared parks millage and for increased cooperation among the various parks and recreation jurisdictions in New Orleans, we are opposed to any millage proposition unless and until (1) a citywide parks master plan has been prepared with the assistance of an outside consultant as specified below; (2) an advisory body, which includes representatives of the park systems and parks advocacy groups, is established and is charged with, among other responsibilities, assisting the city government in selecting the master-plan consultant and recommending standards for determining the allocation of the proceeds of the millage proposition to be presented to the City's voters; and (3) an appropriate allocation of the funds generated by a proposed millage is determined based on the findings of the parks master plan and the relative needs of the various entities.

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In the recent City Master planning process, Parks For All proposed that the revised Master Plan recommend the passage of a millage to support citywide parks and recreation. We therefore applaud the recent collaboration of NORD, Parks and Parkways, Audubon, and City Park, because we see their mutual cooperation as a first step towards a better integrated parks system that takes account of the needs and priorities of the whole community.

However, the current draft millage proposal puts the cart before the horse: it does not ensure a process of fair allocation among all park jurisdictions. Any allocation of dollars among the park jurisdictions should follow three critical steps:

- (1) A comprehensive citywide parks master plan (“Parks Master Plan”) should be authorized by the City Council and conducted in an open, public process.

*The need for a Parks Master Plan is set out in the City of New Orleans Master Plan, which provides as a Recommended Strategy in Chapter 7, 12.C to “Prepare and update a city wide parks, green/ open space and recreation master plan and regional park master plans regularly.”*

- (2) The Parks Master Plan process should be led by an independent planning / landscape architectural firm with demonstrated national experience in municipal parks master planning, parks management, and community engagement (the “Consultant”).
- (3) An oversight committee should be formed that would include representatives of the park jurisdictions, City Council members, and parks advocates, who together would arrive at consensus recommendations for the Administration and City Council. The City’s park advocates -- groups like Parks For All -- should have a role in the planning process, both in the selection of the Consultant and in the crafting of the millage proposal that will be submitted to the voters.

*The City’s Master Plan, Chapter 7, Goal 12, calls for “Neighborhood participation in decision making about parks and recreation,” which must be achieved by involving advocacy groups in the actual decision process.*

Parks For All does not believe that it is in the City’s interest to rush an incomplete proposal to the voting public. We have adequate time before the expiration of the existing millages to conduct a thoughtful process with the added benefit of engaging the public in a meaningful way and creating a solid foundation for decision-making.

We believe that in the absence of a more thoughtful approach, the widespread public opposition to the last parks millage proposal will reassert itself and possibly defeat the funding parks proposed in the park administrators’ current efforts.