

A REPRESENTATIVE VIEW

INC Believes Mayor Is Way Wide Of The Mark On Parks

by Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation
Parks and Recreation Committee

rational and essential respite from the hustle and bustle of city life.”

However, it's not a question of the importance of parks to the city and its citizens. Criticism has stemmed from ignoring public process, disregarding the intent of the city charter, and by ignoring zoning put in place to create adequate

open space and parkland for Denver's projected population increase.

The current round of our city park designations came about because of citizens' outcry that the city had abused the language of our city charter and swapped land within a public park/designated natural area without the vote of the people. City Council and certainly the mayor have a responsibility as elected officials to uphold the charter and its intent to protect our parkland. Regardless of the mayor's rationale for the land swap, the decision should have gone to the vote of the people. Mayor Hancock abused his power when he made the decision to swap parkland without the vote of the people.

The city's parkland – previously undesignated and now being designated – is happening because the mayor abused his power. Designation is occurring because citizens, Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs), and pressure from the press are insisting on protection of our parks. The newly designated parks that were previously undesignated – and vulnerable for many years – were used by the current administration and previous administrations as an ace in their pocket to wheel and deal in development.

The city's plan to acquire additional parkland is to be applauded, and is a necessary step for the projected substantial population increase in Denver. We also support a focus to increase parkland in our city areas with little or no parkland. What is missing in Mayor Hancock's *Representative View* is the urgent need of finding new open space and parkland for new high-density population developments. Park/open space is not being addressed through zoning and will become a crisis if not faced

now. The Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) with planned high density have little to no open space in the zoned areas for the large number of apartments and residents. Finding parkland in another part of the city to offset a lack of adequate open space in high-density developments does not meet open space needs.

What is missing in Mayor Hancock's *Representative View* is the urgent need of finding new open space and parkland for new high-density population developments.

Now is the time to address open space/parkland issues, as high-density developments are being planned and zoned. In some areas these developments are going up very quickly. Without a change in the city's code, the increased pressure on our already overused parks will become a tipping point of conflict and dissatisfaction in our communities.

Is Mayor Hancock willing to stand up to developers and insist on an immediate change in the zoning code for more open space in high-density development? Does his newly appointed Community Planning and Development Executive Director, Brad Buchanan hold a vision for adequate open space in proposed development areas?

Actions speak much louder than words and the mayor's actions so far haven't reflected his stated commitment to open space and parks for Denver citizens.

(Editor's note: learn more about INC PARC at denverinc.org.)

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