

March 15, 2019

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Civic Development, Public Assets and Native Communities Committee  
**From:** Lish Whitson, Council Central Staff  
**Subject:** Clerk File 314403: Council Land Use Action to allow installation of 7 athletic field light poles (three 70', three 80', and one 90' pole) at the Soundview playfields, and 8,000 cubic yards of grading for the removal of existing turf and installation of a new synthetic turf playfield (Project No. 3029885, Type V).

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On Wednesday, March 20, the Civic Development, Public Assets and Native Communities Committee (Committee) will hold a public hearing, discuss and may vote on [Clerk File 314403](#) (CF 314403). CF 314403 would allow the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) to install seven new lighting poles with heights between 70 feet and 90 feet at Soundview Playfield in Crown Hill. Parks has applied for Council approval to modify the height limit of the underlying zoning from 30 feet to allow the light poles up to 90 feet.

This memorandum provides background on the Soundview Playfield improvement project and the Land Use Code's criteria for modification of the relevant development standards.

Attached to this memorandum is a draft Findings, Conclusions and Decision (FC&D) document approving the light pole height under the condition that Parks submit an approved Construction Management Plan prior to receiving a demolition, excavation/shoring or construction permit. If the Committee agrees with this draft document, it should update the title of the Clerk file to better reflect the Council's action and move approval of the modification as conditioned.

### Background

Soundview Playfield is located at 1590 NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street, in the Crown Hill neighborhood in Council District 6. The playfield is a 10.5 acre park bounded on the south by NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street, on the east by 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, on the north by Whitman Middle School, and on the west by single-family homes. The playfield includes lawn areas and grass play fields with backstops, shade trees, picnic areas, tennis courts, and a playground. Parking is accessed off of NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Soundview Playfield improvement project includes installation of synthetic field surfacing, lighting, monument seating for game viewing, bleacher seating, a batting cage, seat walls, concrete retaining planters, an overlook lookout at the northeast corner of the site, ADA access, and site improvements, including enhanced landscaping. The improved playfield will accommodate baseball, T-ball, softball, soccer and football. The \$6.3 million project is funded through the Seattle Park District and Real Estate Excise Tax proceeds. One aspect of the project

is the installation of seven new light poles. Three poles would be 70 feet high, another three would be 80 feet high, and the last pole would be 90 feet high.

Soundview Playfield is located in a Single Family 7200 (SF 7200) zone, a zone that allows predominantly detached single family homes on 7,200 square foot lots with a height limit of 30 feet. Parks are a permitted use in the SF 7200 zone and are subject to the 30-foot height limit that generally applies in the SF 7200 zone.

Because it is a facility owned by the City of Seattle and is operated for public purposes, Soundview Playfield is a "City facility" under the land use code ([SMC 23.84A.006](#)). The land use code allows the Council to waive or modify development standards for City facilities as a legislative Type V Council land use decision ([SMC 23.75.036 C.4.](#) and [23.76.064.B.](#))

BCE Engineers, Inc. prepared a lighting design report for the playfield improvements, which found that "there will be no measurable impact to surrounding properties" from the field lighting. Lighting impacts would be controlled by directing light from the fixtures toward the center of the field, shielding the lights to reduce up-light, and buffers from adjacent properties provided by changes in the topography of the site. Substantial trees on the south, east, and west sides of the playfields further mitigate reflected light from the playfield.

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) received some correspondence about the planned park improvements. Comments were supportive of the proposed lighting plan. SDCI did receive some comments voicing concern regarding construction impacts of the project, particularly in relation to pedestrian traffic to the abutting middle school.

The Director of SDCI recommends that the Council grant conditional concept approval for the modification of the height limit as it relates to the light poles. The recommended condition reads as follows:

Prior to Issuance of a Demolition, Excavation/Shoring or Construction Permit, Parks shall provide a Construction Management Plan that has been approved by SDOT. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cmpl.htm>.

## Actions

If the Committee supports the proposed modification and the condition proposed by SDCI, it should take the following actions:

1. Update the title of the Clerk File from:

Council Land Use Action to allow installation of 7 athletic field light poles (three 70', three 80', and one 90' pole) at the Soundview playfields, and 8,000 cubic yards of

grading for the removal of existing turf and installation of a new synthetic turf playfield (Project No. 3029885, Type V).

To:

Council Land Use Action to modify development standards for a city facility to allow the installation of seven athletic field light poles at the Soundview playfield (Project No. 3029885, Type V).

The updated title better captures the scope of the Council's decision.

2. Grant approval of CF 314403 as conditioned

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director  
Aly Pennucci, Supervising Analyst

Attachments:

1. Schematic plan and site sections
2. Recommendation of the Director of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
2. Draft Findings, Conclusions, and Decision



LEGEND

-  EXISTING TREES
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
-  PROPOSED TREES
-  NEW CONCRETE PAVING
-  SYNTHETIC FIELD TURF
-  NEW LANDSCAPE
-  PROPOSED FIELD LIGHTING



# Site Sections



SECTION A: EAST-WEST

0' 10' 20'  
 Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



SECTION B: NORTH-SOUTH

0' 10' 20'  
 Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



**CITY OF SEATTLE  
RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION AND INSPECTIONS**

**Project Number:** 3029885-LU  
**Council File Number:** CF #314403  
**Applicant Name:** Jay Rood  
**Address of Proposal:** 1590 NW 90<sup>th</sup> St

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

Council Land Use Action to allow improvements to Soundview Playfield and install 7 athletic field light poles (3, 70 ft.; 3, 80 ft.; and a 90 ft. pole). Review includes 8,000 cubic yards of grading for the removal of existing field turf and installation of a new synthetic turf playfield. A Determination of Non-Significance has been prepared by Seattle Parks & Recreation.

The following approval is required:

**Council Land Use Action** – Council Concept Approval to waive or modify development standards for a City facility (installation of light poles and fixtures). SMC 23.44.036, 23.76.036.C.4, and 23.76.064; to allow additional height for structures in a single-family zone (maximum allowed, 30 feet; proposed, 80 feet, SMC 23.44.012A)

**BACKGROUND**

City of Seattle Parks and Recreation acted as SEPA lead agency and issued a Determination of Non-Significance on July 30, 2018, which was published on August 13, 2018. The appeal period for the DNS ended on September 4, 2018.

The proposal was reviewed by SDCI Geotechnical reviewer for consideration of an exemption from steep slope environmentally critical area development standards (6699354-EX), with the following determination: *“We require Environmentally Critical Area (ECA) review for the subsequent building permit application. Further, we require a geotechnical engineering report and topographic survey as part of the subsequent building permit application. The project is described as a public project consisting renovation of natural turf playfield to synthetic turf with lights as well as ADA pathway and site amenity improvements. Based on a review of the submitted information and the City GIS system, we conclude that the development does not qualify for criteria established in the Critical Areas Regulations (CARs), SMC 25.09.045.I or any subsection of this section (ECA exemption). However, the steep slope area appears to qualify for the criteria established in the CARs, SMC 25.09.180.B2b. Specifically, the City GIS system and the submitted information for the exemption application demonstrated that the steep slope appeared to have been created by previous legal grading activities associated with site development. For this reason, we will waive the required ECA Steep Slope Variance associated with the subsequent building permit application. This approval is conditioned upon the approval of a building permit application that includes a design that demonstrates that the proposed development will be completely stabilized in*

*accordance with the recommendations presented in the geotechnical report and provisions of the ECA Code and Grading Code. All other ECA Submittal, General, and Landslide-Hazard, and development standards still apply for this development.”*

### Site and Vicinity

Site Zone: Single Family 7200 (SF 7200)

Zoning Pattern: North: SF 7200  
South: Lowrise 2 (LR2)  
East: LR2 and Commercial (C1-40)  
West: SF 7200

Environmental Critical Areas: mapped as Steep Slope Environmentally Critical Area

Site and Vicinity: Soundview Playfield is a rectangular site bounded by NW 90<sup>th</sup> St on the south, 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW on the east, Whitman Middle School to the north, and single family detached housing to the west. The site slopes toward the middle, with higher elevations at the east and west property lines. A parking area is located along the southern boundary. The park includes turf playing surfaces, walking trails, a tennis court at the northwest corner, and a spray park at the west edge. The site includes several mature trees and 10 Exceptional trees. The adjacent uses are primarily residential, transitioning to commercial uses to the southeast, with Marcus Whitman Middle School immediately to the north.

### Public Comment:

The public comment period ended on 9/24/2018. Public comments received by SDCI are summarized in the analysis below.

## **I. ANALYSIS – Council Land Use Decision to Waive or Modify Development Standards for City Facilities**

Public parks are City facilities permitted outright in SF 7200 zones. The Seattle Land Use Code sets a base height limit for structures in single family zones at 30’ (SMC 23.44.012). The Seattle Parks Department seeks a Council Land Use Approval under SMC 23.76.064 that includes modification of the height development standards of the single family zone.

The proposed light poles are between 70’ and 90’ tall. The proposed backstops will be 30’ tall, and the fencing will be 4’ to 6’ tall. No other structures are proposed. Grading work will be done to replace the natural grass with synthetic turf, intended to be more durable for sports use during the wet winter months. Some trees will be removed and replaced with new trees. All the Exceptional Trees will be retained and protected during construction.

SMC 23.76.036.C.4 and 23.76.064 include provisions for the City Council to waive or modify applicable development standards for City facilities.

SMC 23.76.050 requires the SDCI Director to draft a written report on Type V decisions, which includes the following analysis and information:

- 1. The written recommendations or comments of any affected City departments and other governmental agencies having an interest in the application;***

Seattle Parks and Recreation issued a Determination of Non-Significance on July 30, 2018, which was published on August 13, 2018. The appeal period for the DNS ended on September 4, 2018. The DNS analyzed the probable impacts of the proposal and determined that none of the impacts were significant or warranted additional conditions.

***2. Responses to written comments submitted by interested citizens;***

SDCI received public comments with the following topics:

- a. Supported additional lighting and ADA access
- b. Objected to replacing sod with artificial turf
- c. Concerned with existing graffiti and vandalism
- d. Parking: Requested additional parking on site, signage designating lots for Park users, and increase parking enforcement
- e. Construction Impacts: Concerned with construction impacts to parking and traffic, related to pedestrian safety for students at the adjacent school
- f. Traffic:
  - Requested traffic control person during large events at the park, primarily on weekends
  - Concerned with additional traffic resulting from extended park hours with the new lighting
  - Concerned with additional traffic safety and existing difficult sight lines (especially at the crest of the hill on NW 90<sup>th</sup> St and at the intersection of NW 90<sup>th</sup> St and 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW)
  - Suggested eliminating on-street parking on one side of NW 90<sup>th</sup> St to improve circulation

SDCI response to public comments:

- a. Objection to artificial turf: Seattle Parks and Recreation stated they chose this material as it is more durable during wet winter months and saves water during dry summer months since it doesn't require irrigation.
- b. Graffiti and vandalism are not expected to increase as a result of the proposal. The additional lighting in evening hours would be expected to reduce graffiti and vandalism.
- c. Parking: Seattle Parks and Recreation provided a Transportation Analysis to identify the expected parking demand (Soundview Playfields Renovation Transportation Analysis by Tilghman dated May 2018). The analysis was reviewed by the SDCI Transportation Planner who determined that the proposal is not expected to increase existing parking demand and therefore the proposal doesn't warrant additional conditions.
- d. Construction Impacts: SDCI recommends a construction management plan as a condition of approval, due to the following factors:
  - The size of the site in a single-family zone
  - Hours of construction noise permitted in single family zones (7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends and legal holidays)
  - Amount of proposed grading (8,000 cubic yards) and subsequent truck trips
  - Limited access to nearby arterials
  - Public concerns of construction traffic impacts
  - Public concerns of potential public safety impacts of construction traffic on the adjacent school



- e. Traffic: Seattle Parks and Recreation provided a Transportation Analysis to identify the expected vehicle trips generated by the proposal (Soundview Playfields Renovation Transportation Analysis by Tilghman dated May 2018). The analysis was reviewed by the SDCI Transportation Planner who determined that the proposal is not expected to increase peak hour vehicle trips, but may increase daily vehicle trips during winter months, due to extended hours from the additional lighting. The Transportation Planner determined that the proposal and limited additional traffic impacts don't warrant additional conditions.

**3. *An evaluation of the proposal based on the standards and criteria for the approval sought and consistency with applicable City policies;***

**SMC 23.44** includes standards and criteria for proposed development in Single Family zones. Public parks are a permitted use in this zone.

**SMC 23.44.008.H** includes development standards for uses permitted outright. "Exterior lighting shall be shielded and directed away from residentially zoned lots. The Director may require that the intensity of illumination be limited and that the location of the lighting be changed."

Seattle Parks Department has designed the proposed light poles to minimize light and glare to adjacent properties and streets, as demonstrated in the following studies:

- Lighting Design Report by BCE, July 13, 2018
- Site Sections, by BCRA, July 13, 2018

**SMC 23.44.012** lists Height Limits. Seattle Parks and Recreation has requested a maximum light pole height of 90 feet. Thirty feet is the maximum permitted height in this zone.

**SMC 23.44.014** lists Yard requirements. The proposal complies with these development standards.

**SMC 25.05.675** includes SEPA policies for the proposed development. These policies were addressed through Seattle Parks and Recreation's DNS dated July 30, 2018.

**The Seattle Comprehensive Plan** applicable policies include:

**P 2.7** Provide athletic fields that can serve as places where people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and interests can engage in a variety of sports.

**P 3.2** Maintain the long-term viability of park and recreation facilities by regularly addressing major maintenance needs.

**P 3.3** Look for innovative ways to approach construction and major maintenance activities to limit water and energy use and to maximize environmental sustainability.

**LU 3.2** Allow public facilities and small institutions to depart from development standards, if necessary, to meet their particular functional requirements, while maintaining general design compatibility with the surrounding area's scale and character...

**LU 5.4** Use maximum height limits to maintain the desired scale relationship between new structures, existing development, and the street environment; address varied topographic conditions; and limit public view blockage. In certain Downtown zones and in industrial zones, heights for certain types of development uniquely suited to those zones may be unlimited.

**LU 5.14** Establish controls on the placement, direction, and maximum height of lighting and on the glare from reflective materials used on the exterior of structures in order to limit impacts on surrounding uses, enhance the character of the city, and encourage energy conservation.

The Land Use Code has been developed in accordance with Comprehensive Plan policies. The proposed renovation of the playfield addresses necessary maintenance, allows sports use of the field during the wet winter months, and minimizes irrigation during dry summer months. The additional lighting will make the park usable for more people and activities. Seattle Parks Department has designed the proposed light poles to minimize light and glare to adjacent residences and streets, as demonstrated in Soundview Playfield Renovation Synthetic Turf Replacement Lighting Design Report by BCE, dated July 13, 2018 and associated light fixture information by BCRA.

***4. All environmental documentation, including any checklist, EIS or DNS;***

Environmental documentation provided to SDCI included:

- City of Seattle Parks and Recreation SEPA DNS, dated July 30, 2018
- City of Seattle Parks and Recreation SEPA Checklist, dated July 31, 2018
- Soundview Playfields Renovation Transportation Analysis by Tilghman dated May 2018
- Geotechnical Engineering Services, Soundview Playfield Renovation for City of Seattle Parks and Recreation, by GeoEngineers, July 6, 2018
- Soundview Playfield Arborist Report by Deborah Brown McGarry, Arboriculturist, dated July 12, 2018
- Drainage Report Soundview Playfield Synthetic Turf by BCRA dated June 2018
- Soundview Playfield Renovation Synthetic Turf Replacement Lighting Design Report by BCE, dated July 13, 2018 and associated light fixture information by BCRA

***5. The Director's recommendation to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a proposal.***

Based on the development standards, criteria, and applicable policies, it appears that the proposed development would meet all requirements with the exception of height. Seattle Parks and Recreation has demonstrated that the proposed light pole height is necessary to light the playfield sufficiently, and the height of the poles will reduce light spillage and glare. Seattle Parks and Recreation has demonstrated that light spillage and glare to adjacent residential properties will be further mitigated by shielded light fixtures and existing mature trees.

SDCI recommends a condition of approval to obtain a Construction Management Plan approval from Seattle Department of Transportation, to address construction impacts related to construction traffic, parking, and noise.

**SDCI RECOMMENDATIONS - COUNCIL LAND USE DECISION**

SDCI recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the proposal with the requested modification to development standard of height as shown in the Master Use Permit plans for 3029885-LU.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) – COUNCIL LAND USE ACTION TO WAIVE OR MODIFY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR CITY FACILITIES**

*Prior to Issuance of Demolition, Excavation/Shoring, or Construction Permit*

1. Provide a Construction Management Plan that has been approved by SDOT. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website at: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cmp.htm>.

Shelley Bolser for Carly Guillory, Senior Land Use Planner Date: February 14, 2019  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

SB/CG:rgc  
3029885-LU decision.docx

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT**

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance”. (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance” on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner’s decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered “approved for issuance” following the Council’s decision.

The “approved for issuance” date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by SDCI within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at [prc@seattle.gov](mailto:prc@seattle.gov) or to our message line at 206-684-8467.

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND DECISION  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE**

Council Land Use Action to modify	)	C.F. 314403
development standards for a city facility to	)	Application #3029885
allow the installation of seven athletic field	)	
light poles at the Soundview playfield	)	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS
(Project No. 3029885, Type V).	)	AND DECISION

**Background**

The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) proposes to renovate Soundview Playfield located at 1590 NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street in the Crown Hill neighborhood in north Seattle. Renovations include regrading the field, replacing grass turf with synthetic turf, and installing 7 athletic field light poles. The height of the proposed poles is 70 feet for three poles, 80 feet for three poles, and 90 feet for one pole.

Soundview Playfield is located west of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, north of NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street, and south of Whitman Middle School. The 10.5-acre Parks property, zoned Single-family 7200 (SF 7200), is surrounded by single family residences to the south, east, and west. Whitman Middle School abuts the playfield to the north. Commercial uses are found along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW at the southeast corner of the playfield. The proposed height of the poles exceeds the 30-foot maximum permitted structure height in the SF 7200 zone. The City Council may waive or modify that height limit pursuant to SMC 23.76.064 B.

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) reviewed the proposal and issued its Analysis and Recommendation on February 14, 2019. SDCI recommends approval of the project, subject to a condition that Parks obtain approval of a Construction Management Plan from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). SDCI’s report included a review of potential environmental impacts of the proposal, based on Parks’ SEPA Determination of Non-significance (DNS) dated August 13, 2018.

On March 20, 2019, the City Council’s Civic Development, Public Assets, and Native Communities Committee was briefed on the project, held a public hearing to accept comments on the project and SDCI’s recommendation, and made its recommendation to the full City Council.

**Findings of Fact**

The City Council hereby adopts the following Findings of Fact:

1. Soundview Playfield is a City facility located at 1590 NW 90<sup>th</sup> Street within the SF 7200 zone.
2. Parks submitted a Master Use Permit application (Project No. 3029885) for improvements to Soundview Playfield, which include: 8,000 cubic yards of grading, the removal of existing

field turf and installation of a new synthetic turf playfield, the replacement of some existing trees with new trees, retention and protection of the 10 Exceptional Trees on site, an ADA pathway and site amenity improvements. The project also includes the installation of seven light poles with heights at 70 feet (three poles), 80 feet (three poles) and 90 feet (one pole).

3. The Seattle Land Use Code sets a base height limit for structures in Single-family Zones of thirty feet (SMC 23.44.012).
4. Pursuant to SMC 23.76.064 B, the City Council may waive or modify development standards for City facilities.
5. Parks seeks a City Council modification of the height development standard of the Single-family Zone to permit the proposed light poles.
6. SMC 23.44.008.H is applicable to the site and provides: “Exterior lighting shall be shielded and directed away from residentially zoned lots. The Director may require that the intensity of illumination be limited and that the location of the lighting be changed.”
7. Parks has designed the proposed light poles to minimize light and glare to adjacent properties and streets, as demonstrated in the following studies:
  - 1) Lighting Design Report prepared by BCE, dated July 13, 2018
  - 2) Site Sections, prepared by BCRA, July 13, 2018
8. SDCI received public comments on multiple topics related to the project. The only comments received related to lighting were in support of the lighting proposal. Comments were also concerned with construction impacts to parking and traffic, related to pedestrian safety for students at the abutting school. In response to these comments, SDCI recommends that a construction management plan be approved by SDOT as a condition of approval.
9. SMC 23.76.050 requires that the SDCI Director draft an evaluation of the proposal based on the standards and criteria for the approval sought and consistency with applicable City policies.
10. Parks issued a Determination of Non-significance for this proposal on August 13, 2018 and imposed no SEPA conditions.
11. SDCI reviewed the proposed project and issued its Analysis and Recommendation on February 14, 2019. SDCI recommended that the City Council grant the proposed modification of development standards to allow light poles 70 to 90 feet in height on condition that Parks obtain approval of a Construction Management Plan from SDOT.

## Conclusions

The City Council hereby adopts the following Conclusions:

1. The proposed facility is a City facility as defined by SMC 23.84A.006.
2. The City Council has authority to waive or modify a development standard for a City facility under SMC 23.76.064 B.
3. Parks has demonstrated that the proposed light pole height is necessary to light the playfield sufficiently, and that the height of the poles will reduce light spillage and glare. Parks has demonstrated that light spillage and glare to adjacent residential properties will be further mitigated by shielded light fixtures and existing mature trees.
4. A Construction Management Plan approved by the Seattle Department of Transportation would address construction impacts related to construction traffic, parking, and noise.

## Decision

Subject to the condition described below, the City Council grants the following modifications of development standards for the proposed improvements at Soundview Playfield.

<b>Code Section</b>	<b>Development Standard</b>	<b>Approved Modification</b>
SMC 23.44.012 Structure Height	30 foot maximum structure height	90 foot maximum height for seven light poles and LED fixtures for the lighting of playfields as described in proposal

The City Council imposes the following SEPA condition to mitigate potential construction impacts on adjacent residential properties, pursuant to SMC 25.02.665:

Prior to SDCI's issuance of Demolition, Excavation/Shoring or Construction Permits, Parks shall provide a Construction Management Plan to SDCI that has been approved by SDOT. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cmpl.htm>.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Council President