



## **City of Westwood Receives Petition Challenging New Feature Park Project**

*Validity of Petition being Reviewed*

WESTWOOD, KS – (Dec. 22, 2023) – The City of Westwood is assessing the legality, validity, and sufficiency of a petition filed seeking to prevent the City's pending sale of City property to Karbank, the City's pending acquisition of the former Westwood View Elementary School from the Shawnee Mission School District, and the development of a new expanded City park with a complementary adjacent mixed-use development. The petition, which was delivered to the City of Westwood on Dec. 12, demands that a new public vote be held.

The petition comes two months after the Westwood City Council, by a super-majority vote, approved the development plan for City-owned properties on Rainbow Blvd. and on the former Westwood View Elementary School site. The proposed plan provides 4.2 acres for a mixed-use development featuring office and retail and 3.8 acres for a public park. The new park will be designed by the Westwood community through an open engagement process led by professional planners and architects. The new City park would be over four times larger than the City's currently-provided amenities. More information about the development can be found [here](#).

The development agreement between the City and Karbank provides for full funding by Karbank of the City's purchase of the School property as well as the demolition expense to prepare the property for use as the new City park. The development agreement further allows for the City to capture the value created by the Karbank mixed-use development to fund the future park improvements through a tax increment financing (TIF) district, effectively requiring no additional taxpayer funding for the City to build a much larger and modern park, one that would be closely connected to the new Westwood View Elementary School and further away from busy Rainbow Blvd./Highway 169. Karbank will receive no portion of the TIF money.

Since consideration of this proposal began over nine months ago, the City received significant public input in multiple forums, and community ideas were reflected in the final iteration of the plan. The approvals by the City's Planning Commission and City Council also aligned with the community's vision as established in multiple community-led planning initiatives over the last several years (more information can be found [here](#)).

The petition circulated by residents of Westwood and Westwood Hills is an attempt to require the City to hold a new public election on the sale of portions of the proposed project, despite the City's adherence to the required public review and approval processes for the sale and redevelopment of this property. The Kansas statute cited by the petitioners is not applicable to this property or project.

As information becomes available, we will share on the City's [project page](#). To sign up for the City's e-newsletter, click [here](#).

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