

MEDFORD PARKS & RECREATION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council, via Bill Hoke – City Manager Pro Tem

FROM: Brian Sjothun, Parks & Recreation Director

RE: Urban Growth Boundary Impacts on Parks & Recreation Department

DATE: September 10, 2015

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PLANNING DEPT

The Medford Parks and Recreation Department was requested to provide information regarding potential development and operational impacts as a result of additional parks and trails through the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The analysis compiled identifies items associated with acquisition, construction and on-going maintenance for any proposed expansion of the current park system. All of these items are also relevant to the existing system as well.

Potential Positive Impacts

- Some of the proposals that have been presented to the Council feature plans for future parks and trails. Although it is not clear if the property is to be donated and/or constructed prior to coming to City ownership, these proposals seem to satisfy some of the needs for parks in these areas.
- There could be some potential partnerships which could utilize the current developer agreement system. This has been previously used for; Navigators Landing pathway, Summerfield Park and the soon to be developed park within the SE Area Plan. This is a proven mechanism which allows developers to provide a completed park or trail in exchange for Park System Development Charge credits and potential taxable donation to either the City or Medford Parks and Recreation Foundation.

Potential Park Development Impacts

- The current Park System Development Charge for residential and multi-family housing does not reflect today's true cost for land acquisition and construction of parks and trails. The department is currently beginning the process of updating the Leisure Services Plan along with SDC methodology. Council will have the opportunity in this process to provide direction to staff on addressing this issue.



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There is a fine balance between having “growth pay for growth” and a fee that is too high and could discourage development. In this case, there could be a need for additional funding through other sources in order to fully complete parks and trails.

Park Maintenance Impacts

The department currently provides maintenance to developed parks at a cost of just under \$3,500 per acre. This is far below the region, state and national average. In addition, there are a number of deferred maintenance items within the current park system that needs to be addressed over the next decade. All of these items are not eligible to be funded through Park SDC's. If additional parks and trails are constructed as a result of the UGB expansion the following items will need to be addressed:

- Funding support for on-going maintenance to new parks and trails that are constructed.
- Funding to replace items contained within these new parks as a result of normal use and vandalism.

There are opportunities to address on-going maintenance for new parks and trails through the following options:

- Increased property tax revenue as a result of growth. However, the department would have to compete with other public service needs provided by the City for this funding.
- The department currently collects \$.38 per month per billable unit for maintenance of rights-of-way and part-time park maintenance assistance through a Park Utility Fee. An expansion of this fee for the area where the new park or trail is to service could be expanded in order to cover the cost of maintenance.

Conclusion

There are many unknowns to the true costs and potential impacts as a result of the expansion to the UGB. The update to the Leisure Services Plan and Park System Development Charge methodology should provide a better framework in moving forward to determine costs for property acquisition, construction and on-going maintenance. But, these items we know:

- Park System Development Charges can be used to expand system capacity, which would be the result of an expanded UGB. These fees may not cover the entire costs associated with acquisition and development.
- Funding for on-going maintenance to new parks and trails should be identified and provided prior to construction in order to protect these new community assets.

Thank you,
Brian Sjothun, CPRP



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