



MEMORANDUM

TO: VICE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

FROM: SHANNON M. MARTIN, MAYOR *Smm*

SUBJECT: PARKS IMPACT FEE DISCUSSION

DATE: MAY 3, 2023

I'd like to address several points that were brought up at the April 24th Council meeting regarding this topic. In reflecting on this matter over the last several months, and particularly in the last few weeks, it is important to recognize how significant the Council's decision will be for the future of our city and to ensure that the right decision is made for the right reasons. In his remarks, last Monday evening, Councilman Bonna questioned both the accuracy and the methodology that was being used by our consultant to arrive at the results for determining the Parks Impact Fees.

It is important to reiterate that the Parks Impact Fee study done by Tischler-Bise, a highly regarded firm in the areas of planning and impact fees, used exactly the same methodology for the Law Enforcement and Public Building Impact Fee recommendations as they did for the Parks Impact study. Those two recommendations were unanimously approved based on the data presented and there was little to no opposition by the Development Review Taskforce. However, when it came to the Parks Impact Fee, it was stated that the increase or dollar amount was "too great". This clearly proves that the issue wasn't really about the data, the issue was about the particular dollar amount that was thought to be too high by certain parties. From a legal perspective, we were even reminded by our outside legal counsel, Susan Travarthen, Esq., who has extensive legal expertise in this field of law, that if we approved the methodology for the first two impact fees, then we should not be cherry picking the data used for the Parks Impact Fee. Doing so clearly undermines the legal defensibility of the fees that were already approved.

It should also be noted that all the projects that were used to determine the Parks Impact Fee were already approved by Council as part of the Parks Master Plan and any changes to that list of projects would require a change to the entire Master Plan and approval of those changes by Council. Why

would we do that? The plan was approved based on the needs of our city in the future. We already know that despite all our efforts to get ahead, we will always be operating at a deficit as it relates to ballfields and other park amenities due to the high cost of construction, which is what prevents us from getting our projects done sooner than we would like. In addition, our citizen surveys have shown that our residents want us to preserve city owned land and acquire more land for future park sites. Our city's strategic plan prioritizes the development of environmental land and park spaces to address residents' needs for recreation, water quality and green space. Recognizing the significance of parks to our resident's quality of life, in our 2022 annual citizen survey we asked our residents the following question: Rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City of Port St. Lucie to focus on allocating funding for land acquisition to meet these needs over the next 5 years. The results show that 84% believe that it is essential/very important to focus on this effort, and that is precisely why we have programmed funding into our 5-year CIP. Are we now choosing to go against our citizens' direction because some of us don't like a certain number?

Since one of our priorities is to improve our residents' quality of life, it would be counter-productive to actually reduce the amount of land we dedicate to parks, especially in light of the extraordinary growth that we have experienced and the lack of infrastructure. Therefore, if we accept that we, as a Council, are committed to following the Master Plan that we all agreed to, then the question becomes how do we fund it and whom does the burden of that funding fall upon?

I believe everyone agrees that the purpose of Impact Fees is to ensure that new developments, whether they be residential or commercial, should pay for the burden that they impose on our existing infrastructure and the need they create for new infrastructure. Those financial burdens should not fall disproportionately on our existing residents. It should also be recognized that the funds for the new infrastructure can come from only two sources. Either the new residents and businesses should pay to help offset costs, or the existing residents and businesses should pay for them. So, if the Tischler-Bise report shows that we should collect \$3,141 per new single-family home to fund our parks in the future and we accept Councilman Bonna's idea to "find a sweet spot" then all that means is that we will be transferring more of the financial burden onto our existing taxpayers. It should also be pointed out that even if we vote to accept the Tischler-Bise Parks Impact Fee study as presented, our taxpayers will still have to bear 72% of the future costs since growth doesn't pay for itself.

So, the next question to ask ourselves is "WHY?" Why should our current taxpayers have to be responsible for paying for infrastructure costs that are created by new residents or new businesses? Please also note that, even if we approve the \$3,141 increase for the Parks Fee, it will still result in our acres per 1,000 residents declining from 6.4 acres per 1,000 residents to 5.4 acres per 1,000 residents. Councilman Bonna referenced the City of Cape Coral with a population of 208,000 as an example because that city has lower fees, but he failed to mention that per that city's comprehensive plan, they also have a level of service target of almost 8.5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.

In an effort to get to a place of "YES", staff was asked to come up with options based on the accepted methodology and have one-on-one meetings with City Council prior to the second reading of the

ordinance on May 8th. Prior to my meeting I asked a series of questions and asked for the responses to be provided in preparation of this memorandum. The questions and responses were provided to the City Council; however, the three most pertinent questions were as follows:

- Q1. What is the total impact fee now to build on a lot?
- Q2. Please itemize the different impact fees and provide totals.
- Q3. What was the total before the change to mobility fees?

The chart, as attached, confirmed what I already knew - that the overall fees recommended by the study were still a REDUCTION in total impact fees collected prior to the change to mobility fees. Specifically, to PSL, the total city fee after the change to mobility fees is \$6,054.

After DECREASING the Public Building Impact fee by \$1,711 and increasing the Parks fee by \$2,359 the total proposed city fee is \$6,863.

$\$6,863 - \$6,054 = \$809$ is the OVERALL INCREASE IN CITY FEES, NOT A TOTAL INCREASE OF \$3,141.

The fees prior to the change to mobility fees for City and County totaled \$19,560.

The Proposed Fees (with the Parks Fee at \$3,141) total \$19,273.

$\$19,560 - \$19,273 = \$287$ this is an OVERALL TOTAL CITY AND COUNTY DECREASE OF \$287.

This demonstrates that we are not really increasing the fees, but rather reallocating them to better reflect our future priorities.

When looking at Impact Fees, the reality is that developers and businesses don't care about how those fees are allocated, they look at one thing, the TOTAL AMOUNT. Is the overall reduction of \$287 going to lower the price of a home in PSL? Of course not, because the market sets the price based on supply and demand, not small changes in costs.

I highly respect and appreciate our community partners. I enjoy working with each and every group and every individual on a regular basis to make our city better. However, based on the data, the very idea of finding a "sweet spot" or "lower number" than what is currently proposed is unsettling. I cannot sit on the dais in City Council Chambers at a public meeting and make a decision based a "sweet spot" number when the data clearly shows that the proposed amount, based on the approved and accepted methodology is reasonable. Especially given the fact that the proposed amount actually results in a decrease in total fees. Determining a dollar amount other than what has been proposed would be a huge disservice to our community and a slap in the face to all of our taxpayers who will still bear the majority of the burden of the new impacts created by the additional growth that we cannot prevent.

I was elected to serve this community and swore an oath to make decisions in the best interest of our city and our residents. So, my last question is: What kind of a message does it send to the residents of PSL if our City Council decides to put the interests of a few ahead of what is in the best interests of the majority of the residents of our community?

I truly hope that the City Council, as a whole, makes the right decision next Monday night in the best interests of the citizens we serve now, as well as the citizens we will serve in the future.

Please note that I will be reading these comments into the record at the May 8th City Council meeting.

Thank you.

CC: Jesus Merejo, City Manager
James Stokes, City Attorney
Theresa Lamar-Sarno, Deputy City Manager
Mary Savage-Dunham, Director, Planning & Zoning
Margaret Carland, Deputy City Attorney
Terissa Aronson, President, SLC Chamber of Commerce
Maddie Williams, Executive Director, Treasure Coast Builders Association
Wes McCurry, EDC, Senior Vice President
Ciera Smith, Realtors Government Affairs Director
Nate Parsons, Realtors Vice President of Advocacy & Legislative Strategy
Jennifer DuBey, EDC, Director, Business Development
Maureen Saltzer, EDC, Director, Communications & Outreach

Attachment: Fees Comparison Chart
Mayor's Follow-Up Questions

City	
Road	\$1,169
Parks	\$782
Public Buildings	\$2,227
Law Enforcement	\$205
Subtotal, City	\$4,383
County	
Road	\$5,130
School	\$6,786
Parks	\$1,707
Library	\$276
Public Buildings	\$365
Fire/EMS	\$667
Law Enforcement	\$246
Subtotal, County	\$15,177
Total	\$19,560

City	
Mobility ¹	\$2,840
Parks	\$782
Public Buildings	\$2,227
Law Enforcement	\$205
Subtotal, City	\$6,054
County	
Mobility	\$2,060
School	\$6,786
Parks	\$1,920
Library	\$306
Public Buildings	\$411
Fire/EMS	\$650
Law Enforcement	\$277
Subtotal, County	\$12,410
Total	\$18,464

City	
Mobility ¹	\$2,840
Parks	\$782
Public Buildings	\$406
Law Enforcement	\$205
Subtotal, City	\$4,233
County	
Mobility	\$2,060
School	\$6,786
Parks	\$1,920
Library	\$306
Public Buildings	\$411
Fire/EMS	\$650
Law Enforcement	\$277
Subtotal, County	\$12,410
Total	\$16,643

City	
Mobility ¹	\$2,840
Parks	\$3,141
Public Buildings	\$516
Law Enforcement	\$366
Subtotal, City	\$6,863
County	
Mobility	\$2,060
School	\$6,786
Parks	\$1,920
Library	\$306
Public Buildings	\$411
Fire/EMS	\$650
Law Enforcement	\$277
Subtotal, County	\$12,410
Total	\$19,273

1. Assumes 2,000 square feet in northwest mobility fee assessment area. Single-family mobility fees by mobility fee assessment area: east is \$1.60 per square foot, southwest is \$1.13 per square foot, northwest is \$1.42 per square foot.

CITY
 \$6,054
 - 1,711 Public Buildings
 + 2,359 Parks
\$4,863

\$19,560
 - 19,273 OVERALL
\$287 REDUCTION IN TOTAL CITY & COUNTY MOBILITY IMPACT FEES

\$6,863
 - 6,054
\$809 OVERALL INCREASE IN CITY FEES

The Mayor's Follow-Up Questions

May 2, 2023

1. What is the total impact fee cost now to build on a lot?

- **Total: \$16,643**
 - Subtotal, City: \$4,233
 - Subtotal, County: \$12,410

2. Please itemize different impact fees & provide the total.

Current Fees

City	
Mobility ¹	\$2,840
Parks	\$782
Public Buildings	\$406
Law Enforcement	\$205
Subtotal, City	\$4,233
County	
Mobility	\$2,060
School	\$6,786
Parks	\$1,920
Library	\$306
Public Buildings	\$411
Fire/EMS	\$650
Law Enforcement	\$277
Subtotal, County	\$12,410
Total	\$16,643

3. What was it before the change to mobility fees?

- **Total: \$19,560**
 - Subtotal, City: \$4,383
 - Subtotal, County: \$15,177

4. What is Cape Coral's population?

- BEBR's April 1, 2022 population estimates:
 - **Cape Coral: 208,053**
 - Port St. Lucie: 224,916

5. Cape Coral Parks – 8.4 acres per 1,000? Please confirm.

- The City's Comprehensive Plan establishes a total LOS target of 8.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This target LOS is spread across the four park classifications that the City uses. Figure 2.10 illustrates these targets per park classification.
 - All Parks – 8.5 acres per 1,000 residents
 - Regional park – 4 acres per 1,000 residents
 - Community park – 2 acres per 1,000 residents
 - Neighborhood park – 2 acres per 1,000 residents
 - Specialty parks* – ½ acres per 1,000 residents

** Includes athletic fields, environmental parks, aquatic facilities, and golf courses.*

The Mayor's Follow-Up Questions
May 2, 2023

6. Growth projections

a. Building permits since 2006, year to year, including percentage increase year to year.

Year	# SF Permits Issued	Percentage Change
2023	3822*	-1.5%
2022	3881	-26%
2021	5271	38%
2020	3824	40%
2019	2730	25%
2018	2189	43%
2017	1526	28%
2016	1190	53%
2015	778	49%
2014	523	2%
2013	512	181%
2012	182	-3%
2011	188	11%
2010	169	-13%
2009	194	-58%
2008	463	-62%
2007	1163	-69%
2006	3693	-47%

*Project is based on 1,274 permits issued from January to April.

b. Population since 2006, year to year, including percentage increase year to year.

Year	Population	Percentage Increase
2022	224,916	4.8%
2021	214,514	5.7%
2020	202,914	5.7%
2019	191,903	3.2%
2018	185,843	2.5%
2017	181,284	1.7%
2016	178,091	2.2%
2015	174,132	2.4%
2014	169,888	1.1%
2013	167,914	0.3%
2012	167,252	0.5%
2011	166,316*	1%
2010	164,603	6.2%
2009	154,884*	0.2%
2008	154,471*	2.3%
2007	150,871*	6.19%
2006	142,074	9.6%
2005	129,545**	10.2%
2004	117,456**	12%

The Mayor's Follow-Up Questions

May 2, 2023

Population data was extracted from BEBR with the exception of certain years due to availability.

** www2.census.gov*

***www.datacommons.org*