

Chapter 5

Parks Facilities Master Plan

5.1 Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

The number of parks and size of parks, or park acres, that are required by a city is based largely on the population. Over the 10 year planning period the City's full time and secondary population is projected to increase to 10,159 people. During this period of time the number of park acres that the City will need to purchase and develop will also need to increase. This park facilities master plan consists of a plan to develop and improve some of the existing city parks with landscaping and public facilities, and to purchase new land for a proposed multi-purpose dual use park site. The criteria used in this study are summarized below:

- Park Ratio: 5 acres of park per 1,000 people

Recommended Park Impact Fee = \$1,000.00

Capital Improvements Plan

Midway City currently has approximately 19.3 acres of improved park space and 34.3 acres of total park acres. It is anticipated the total population of Midway City will grow to 10,159 people by the end of the 10 year planning period. The current total population of 6,735 people enjoy 34.3 acres of park. This is a ratio of roughly five acres of park per 1,000 people. Additionally, The National Recreation and Park Association in conjunction with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration has published the 1996, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. This guideline states that up to ten acres per 1,000 people is a commonly accepted standard used by a majority of communities. Because of the surrounding mountains and the existing Wasatch Mountain State Park, Midway City has adopted five acres of parks per 1,000 people as the standard for this parks facility master plan.

To achieve five acres of park per one-thousand people during the planning period, an additional 16.5 acres of parks will need to be purchased. Due to the need to improve existing park acreage, the purchase of additional land may have to be completed through bonding. Midway City already owns some unimproved park property that has the potential to be developed into city parks. The Valais Park is 25 acres; currently approximately 10 acres of the park have been improved.

In addition to improving parks throughout Midway City, bike and walking trails have been placed as a priority by the city. Additional information about the city wide trail system can be found in Chapter Four of the master plan.

Impact fees are necessary to maintain the current ratio of parks and recreation facilities to the number of residents of Midway City. The Park Impact Fee is assessed on new building permits to improve existing parks and provide new parks and recreation benefits to the new residents. The Park and Recreation Impact Fee is determined in part by the value of existing city parks.

Reasoning for Park Impact Fees

As the population of Midway City grows, there will be a need for the existing parks to be further improved and additional parks and recreational areas to be developed. The required amount of parks and recreation area is based on a predetermined amount of acreage per thousand residents. Midway City has established a standard of five acres of park per one thousand residents. To maintain this ratio throughout the planning period, Midway City must purchase new lands, improve existing parks, and improve existing lands to park status. Impact fees are charged for new residential developments in order to improve the existing parks and fund these new Midway City parks.

Contributors to Park Impact Fees

A park impact fee is the most reasonable method of obtaining funding for improving existing parks and developing new parks by obtaining the money from those who create the need. When population increases, so does the demand for residential housing. As residential developments fill with occupants, the new residents place a demand on the existing city infrastructure including parks and recreation areas. As the population density of a development increases, the demand for open spaces increases per capita. By levying fees on building permits, Midway City can fund the new demand on the infrastructure in a fair and rational method.

Commercial developments also impact Midway City's parks and recreation facilities. Parks can provide an area for employees to go during lunch and business hours for breaks or relaxation. Parks also furnish a place for people to rest who come from out of town to conduct business. However, to promote commercial growth and realizing many employees are currently residents of Midway who have previously paid a park impact fee, the city has decided not to impose an impact fee on businesses within the C2 and C3 zones of Midway.

Current Value of Existing Facilities and Acreage

The current acreage of improved city parks is approximately 19.3 acres and the estimated amount of unimproved potential city park is estimated at 15 acres. A short description of the existing city parks included in this study is given in the following paragraphs.

Town Square Park: The Town Square Park is located in the center of town adjacent to the City building and town hall. The park has an area of 2.5 acres. The park includes a tennis court and an ice skating rink with summer activities. The city wide trail system is planned to connect to this park. Proposed improvements will include additional trees and minor landscaping. This park is the center of Swiss Days.

Centennial Park: The Centennial Park is between Center Street and 100 East adjacent to 100 North. The park has an area of 1.3 acres. The park provides a playground and a pavilion with barbecues and picnic tables. A small section of the park has a small stream and a trail system. The city wide trail system is planned to connect to this park.

Hamlet City Park: The Hamlet City Park is located on the east entrance of town adjacent to Main Street. The 3.5 acre park provides a playground, a small restroom, and two pavilions with barbecues and picnic tables. This park also accommodates a storm water retention pond. The city wide trail system is planned to connect to this park.

Valais Park: The Valais Park is located adjacent to Burgi Lane between Interlaken Road and the Valais development. The park has an area of 25 acres; however, approximately 10 acres have currently been improved. The park was donated to the City by the developer as part of the developments open space. The park includes a concrete tennis court with a basketball court. The Park also contains several areas of open space with wetlands and a trail system. A section of the city wide trail system is currently connected to this park. Proposed improvements will include landscaping, playground equipment, restrooms, a minor sports field, and additional trails.

Alpenhof City Park: The Alpenhof City Park is located in the west portion of the City in the southwest corner of the Alpenhof development. The 2 acre park provides a playground and a pavilion with barbecues and picnic tables.

The parks and recreation responsibilities in the Heber Valley have been shared by both Midway City and Wasatch County. The County has provided the large community-type recreation parks and Midway City provides the smaller, community-type parks within the city limits. The planning of city parks and recreation facilities should be in concert with the planning of the County's larger recreational facilities. Meetings between the two governing bodies should occur to ensure the recommended open space, trails, parks, and recreational facilities are being fulfilled.

Recommended Park Improvements

To accommodate the projected population, an additional 16.5 acres of park area will be needed. This will bring the total Midway City park acreage to approximately 50.8 acres. This additional acreage can be met by acquiring new property. It is possible that new property will need to be acquired through bonding, due to the large amount of money involved. It is recommended that

larger storm water detention basins be designed to serve as a dual use. A short description of the proposed city parks are given in the following paragraphs.

Tate Lane Park: The proposed Tate Lane Park will be located adjacent to Tate Lane. The park will have an area of approximately 25 acres. This area would provide a park at the southern entrance to Midway City. The park is proposed to be a nature park with trails designed to enhance natural bird and wetland observation, the scenic Deer Creek Reservoir and the majestic beauty of Timpanogos Mountain. As noted in Table 5-1, Midway City's estimated cost of park improvements, the facilities proposed for this park are, a pavilion and picnic area, restrooms, and trails. Also included near the pavilion is a small play area. It is proposed that benches and information stands would be constructed at several locations along the trail.

Midway Sports Park: The proposed Midway Sports south of the existing Midway Elementary School. The park will have an area of approximately 25 acres. The park would be centrally located with the main entrance off Michie Lane. The park is proposed to be a sports field providing baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and sand volleyball facilities. This park is also proposed to have picnic and pavilion facilities with restrooms. The estimated costs can be seen in Table 5-1, Midway City's estimated cost of park improvements.

Cities often experience difficulties with the land obtained for parks and recreation in lieu of impact fees. The land donated often is the least usable land within the development. Due to undesirable locations and geography, the parks are often not widely used by residents. Less viable property creates problems for the City in maintaining the grounds. It also falls on the City to improve the property to a suitable level of service for the community. Often times the expenses are excessive. It is recommended that the City impose the impact fee on developments in lieu of property being donated by developments. It thereby gives Midway City the opportunity to obtain suitable properties for parks and recreation purposes.

Although the total build-out will probably not come for many decades, proper planning to obtain adequate amounts of park space should occur now. The collection of impact fees for park development is one way to help plan for and benefit future generations.

Since population growth, property values, inflation, zoning, and other variables affecting park values change from year to year, it is recommended that Midway City periodically review the impact fee to determine if an adjustment is required. Changes to state and county codes may also affect how the City assesses impact fees. For these reasons, it is recommended that Midway City have a review performed on the parks impact fee periodically.