



SarasotaPatch

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Sarasota Park Impact Fees to Stay

Sarasota City Commissioner Shannon Snyder wanted the county to stop collecting park impact fees if the city would stop charging, but the county disagreed on the proposal.

By [Charles Schelle](#) | [Email the author](#) | 12:00pm

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Since the city is continuing to collect park impact fees, what types of parks would you like to see in Sarasota? What improvements would you make to your park? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



Commissioner Shannon Snyder had hoped his county counterparts would agree to stop collecting park impact fees from the [City of Sarasota](#), but the message from the [Sarasota County](#) Commission was it wouldn't happen today.

"I don't think you have a lot of warm feelings at the moment. Maybe later?" [County Commissioner Chairwoman Nora Patterson](#) said Tuesday at a joint city and county commissions meeting at the [County Administration Building](#).

In July, Sarasota City Commissioners, on the suggestion of Snyder, took a closer month at halting park impact fee collection and continued the [park impact fee analysis](#) earlier this month.

The park impact fees are a one-time fee levied to new residential developments to fund park construction and improvements. [The county collects revenue from the City of Sarasota, which issues the fee, and redistributes the money.](#)

- According to county documents, since 1999, [Sarasota city collected \\$1 million in park fees.](#) During the same time, the county spent \$1.2 million on park projects in the city.
- Also since 1999, the county collected \$7 million in North County park revenues, and spent \$8.1 million during the same time on North County parks.

The thought behind ending the fee was housing growth slowed to the point where the fee isn't needed, Snyder said.

The city has lost 1.5 percent of its population in the last 10 years, down to 51,917 residents, according to the [Census](#).

The \$18,600 and \$15,000 the city collected in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 represents less than 10 new housing units each, said Clarke Davis, Sarasota County general manager of public works financial planning.

"We're having a collection on an impact that technically doesn't exist," Snyder said, but county commissioners wanted more proof.

"If the city can demonstrate us through [Capital Improvement Plan] or comprehensive planning that there is not a need through new residents to provide for additional park capacity and that is unlawful to collect for a park impact fee then we'll stop," County Commissioner Jon Thaxton said.

However, two lines of Sarasota city park impact revenues were questioned by both commissions. Fiscal 2010 shows no revenue while fiscal 2011 has a \$203,517 impact fee collection. Staff didn't have a clear response why the fees increased dramatically last year.

Patterson added that the demands for service is changing, keying in on the Hispanic community's support and use of parks and soccer fields, and more soccer fields need to be built in North County.

County Commissioner Joe Barbetta wonders what the city would say about itself if no fees were collected.

"I be concerned with the message that you think the city won't grow," he said. "I certainly would hope with a true sustainable growth agenda coupled with your existing population demanding more services, we keep this in tact."

It shouldn't be a total surprise to the city that the proposal might not be accepted.

Earlier this month, City Attorney Robert Fournier told the commissioners it might be best to keep with the program, and there's not a lot the city could do.

"It really makes sense to stay in this. It's mutually beneficial," Fournier said this month.

The city decided in July to [suspended water and sewer impact fees for 10 years](#).

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