

Town Of Brunswick

Open Space Impact Fee Methodology

This methodology establishes the impact fee that should be paid by residential development to expand the supply of publicly owned open space. In developing the fee, we looked at the need to provide adequate open space accessible to the public for a growing population and the potential costs of those facilities.

- 1. Current Supply of Open Space** – As of the spring of 2004, the Town of Brunswick had a total of approximately 485 acres of Town owned open space including the Water Tower Nature Area that is formally owned by the Water District but under Town management. This includes 10 sites including the Town Commons, the Greater Commons, Cox Pinnacle, the Great Island chain, and a number of smaller parcels. A tabular summary is attached.

- 2. Adequacy of Current Open Space** – There are no state or national standards for the amount of open space that should be available in a community. The need for preserved public open space increases as more and more of the land within the community is developed and the supply of private open space decreases. The current supply of 485 acres of Town owned open space is adequate for the community's current needs but will need to be increased as development occurs and the population grows. With a current household population of approximately 19,100 residents, the current supply translates into approximately 0.0254 acres of Town owned open space per capita or 25.4 acres per 1,000 residents.

- 3. The Need for Expanded Facilities** – The need for publicly owned open space is a function of the size of the community's population and the supply of private open space. As the community grows and develops, it needs more preserved open space that is available to the public. The Town's adopted *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* identifies the need to expand the supply of open space to serve a growing population. The action plan proposes creating a Land For Brunswick's Future program that would acquire and preserve open space and that would be funded in part with an impact fee.

The current supply of approximately 25 acres of open space per thousand residents is adequate for current needs. As the Town grows, this ratio of open space per capita should be maintained and serve as the basis for the open space impact fee.

- 4. The Estimated Cost for Expanded Open Space** – The cost of acquiring additional open space is a function of the quality of the land and its development potential as well as the motivations of the sellers. Recent purchases of open space in Brunswick have ranged from a low of \$2,411 per acre to a high of \$8,444 per acre for a working farm. The average cost per acre has been about \$5,300 but this is skewed by the one large purchase of the farm property. For the purposes of the impact fee, a typical cost is approximately \$5,000 per acre.

Applying the cost per acre for expanded open space (\$5,000/acre) to the need of 0.0254 acres per capita, results in a base cost for additional open space of \$127 per capita. This figure should serve as the basis for the open space impact fee.

[Note: A similar methodology under taken by Saco arrived at a figure of \$156 per capita. This number will vary by town and region.]

- 5. The Share of Need Attributable to Growth** – The population residing in the existing housing stock dropped significantly during the 90s as a result of decreased household size. During this decade, declines in the population in the existing housing essentially offset the population increase resulting from new housing development. The trend to smaller household sizes is projected to continue but the decline will be at a smaller rate. As a result, the population living in the existing housing stock will continue to decrease but at a slower rate than experienced over the past two decades. This decrease will continue to reduce the impact of new residential development on household population growth and thus, the need for expanded recreational facilities.

Population projections prepared for the update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan estimate that the Town will experience the construction of an average of approximately 100 new dwelling units per year over the next decade. This new development is projected to increase the household population by approximately 1,700 residents or 1.7 additional residents per additional housing unit. Based upon the mix of housing anticipated to be built in the Town and current occupancy rates, these 1000 new units will likely be occupied by approximately 2,600 residents or 2.6 people per household. Therefore, the open space impact fee should be established at 65% (1,700/2,600) of the fee that would apply using the per capita basis and estimated costs, or \$82.50 per capita.

[Note: Other towns such as Saco have not factored in this decline in home occupancy as used by Brunswick. Saco simply assesses a \$156 per capita fee multiplied by 1.2 for a single bedroom unit, and multiplied by the actual number of bedrooms for other unit types.]

- 6. Who Should Pay The Fee** – Any residential development activity should pay this impact fee based upon the expected population of the project considering typical occupancy rates. This includes single-family homes that are not part of a subdivision, conversions of non-residential buildings to residential use, and modifications to existing buildings that increase the number of dwelling units.
- 7. Calculation of the Fee** – The open space impact fee should be the adjusted per capita cost of providing additional open space facilities (\$82.50) multiplied by the anticipated number of residents in the unit. Based upon national studies of occupancy levels of various types of housing in the northeast and the [Maine State Planning Office's Impact Fee Handbook](#), the following occupancy factors are

applied to determine the impact fee per unit. This results in the following open space impact fee based upon the type of unit and the typical occupancy of that type of unit:

Type of Housing	Occupancy	Impact Fee
<i>Single-Family Home</i>		
- 2 or less bedrooms	1.58 per/du	\$130
- 3 bedrooms	2.57 per/du	\$212
- 4 or more bedrooms	3.02 per/du	\$249
<i>Attached or Multifamily Housing</i>		
- 1 bedroom	1.17 per/du	\$97
- 2 bedrooms	1.85 per/du	\$153
- 3 or more bedrooms	2.14 per/du	\$177
<i>Mobile Homes in a MH Park</i>		
- 1 bedroom	1.39 per/du	\$115
- 2 bedrooms	1.93 per/du	\$159
- 3 or more bedrooms	3.29 per/du	\$271
<i>Age Restricted Housing including Elderly Housing, Assisted Living, and Retirement Communities</i>		
- 1 bedroom	1.05 per/du	\$87
- 2 or more bedrooms	1.50 per/du	\$124