

Housing Narrative: City of Fitchburg

Most expensive development fees in Dane County

#15 out of 16
in Development Fee Cost

The City of Fitchburg has some of the most expensive development fees in Dane County, ranking 15th in overall fees out of the 16 municipalities that were examined in MABA's fee study. Fitchburg's current building fees are the most expensive compared to the other municipalities.

Permit starts have also not kept pace with demand. MTD data shows housing starts peaked at 145 starts in 2021 before beginning to fall in 2022. Since then permits have continued to decrease on a year to year basis. This data highlights how Fitchburg's fee structure may be discouraging new housing supply despite clear population growth and demand.

Fitchburg (C)

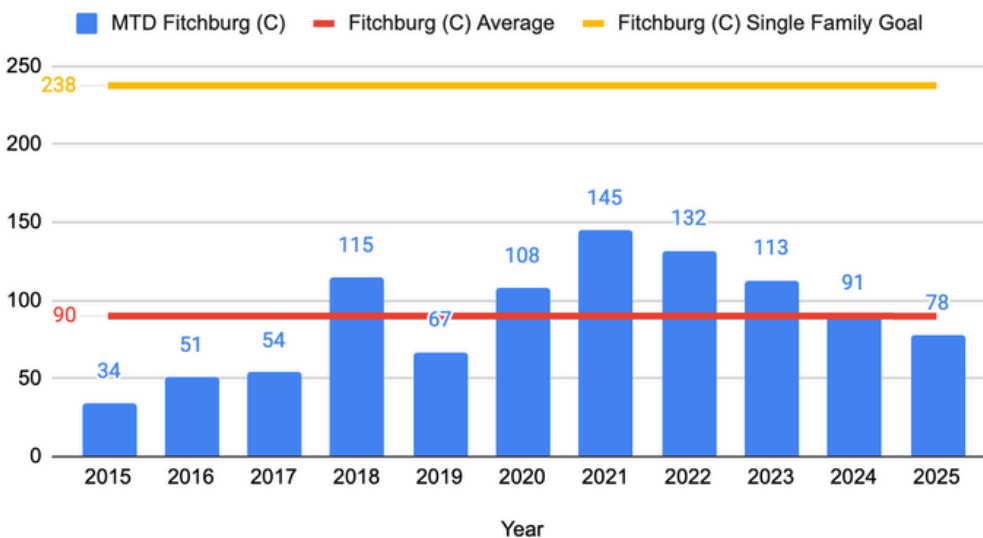


Table 1: Annual Single-Family Permit Starts and Regional Housing Strategy Targets

Chad Lawler Executive Director
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**Income Needed
to Afford New Home
\$172,601**

National Association of Home Builders

**Fitchburg
Local Mill Rate
0.005423617**

Dane County Treasury Department

**Fitchburg Mill Rate
Rank**

8 of 15

Dane County Treasury Department

**Fitchburg Parcel
Numbers
10,449**

Dane County Treasury Department

Municipal Fee Rank



Overall

15 of 16



Impact

12 of 16



Planning

11 of 16



Building

16 of 16



Engineer

14 of 16

* Fee Rankings (1-16 with 16 being highest cost and, 1 being lowest)

**Annual New Single Family
Housing Units Needed: 238**

**Annual Unit Starts (Avg.):
90**

**Housing Progress Report
Goal Not Met:**

Missing 160

Housing Units In 2025

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Possible Solution

To address these challenges, Fitchburg should explore reducing or restructuring building or engineering fees, which currently creates one of the largest barriers to new developments. Any consideration of increasing these fees would be counterproductive to housing growth. Additionally, the comprehensive plan should increase the amount of land available for development.

Approval of additional lots and growth in permits would provide a more robust and long-term economic impact that increases a net new construction tax base.

Educational Resources

- **Housing Supply Accelerator** - <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/state-and-local/housing-accelerator-playbook.pdf>
 - The Housing Supply Accelerator (HSA) Playbook is for local elected officials and community planners working to boost diverse, attainable, and equitable housing supply in communities nationwide.
- **Creating Housing for All Brochure** - <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/top-priorities/housing-affordability/nahb-attainable-housing-brochure-2019.pdf?rev=ad31433c972b451d80254c1cb8ca334d>
 - Quick overview of solutions for housing
- **Land Development Checklist** - <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/industry-issues/land-use-101/orientation/land-development-checklist>
 - This checklist outlines the typical process developers should go through. This resource will help both developers and public officials better understand the many steps in the land development process, the timeline, likely costs, and required due diligence associated with residential development.
- **Development Process Efficiency: Cutting Through the Red Tape** - <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/top-priorities/housing-affordability/development-process-efficiency.pdf>
 - This report focuses on the land development review and approval process, an arcane-sounding component of housing development, but one that impacts the cost of new housing at all price levels.
- **NAHB Impact Fee Primer** - <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/7AC7AA3E405D43C7A5C7D40B3760EB61.ashx>
 - Resource that breaks down what impact fees are, how they are typically calculated, the pros and cons to impact fees, and lists possible alternatives
- **NAHB Priced Out Portal** - <https://www.nahb.org/news-and-economics/housing-economics/housings-economic-impact/households-priced-out-by-higher-house-prices-and-interest-rates>
 - Increases in home prices, mortgage rates, and property taxes have a direct impact on housing affordability. These factors lead to many Americans being priced out of the housing market. NAHB's "priced-out" methodology calculates how many households would be affected by these changes.
- **DANE COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS, 2024 - 2028** - <https://rhs.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/DCRHS-SAPReport-FNL-web-STRATEGIC-ACTION-PLAN.pdf>
 - Regional Housing Strategy with 17 strategies on how to address housing crisis in Dane County
- **A Road Map to Solving Dane County's Housing Crisis: Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028** - <https://rhs.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/FactSheets/RHS-FactSheet-v3FINAL.pdf>
 - RHS Quick Fact sheet expanding on housing crisis
- **RHS BEST PRACTICES RESIDENTIAL ZONING CODE** - <https://rhs.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/Best-Practices-Residential-Zoning---11.5.25.pdf>
 - The Best Practices Residential Zoning Guide is a resource for Dane County communities to evaluate and identify regulatory barriers that limit housing supply and diversity, as well as regulations that increase the cost of housing.

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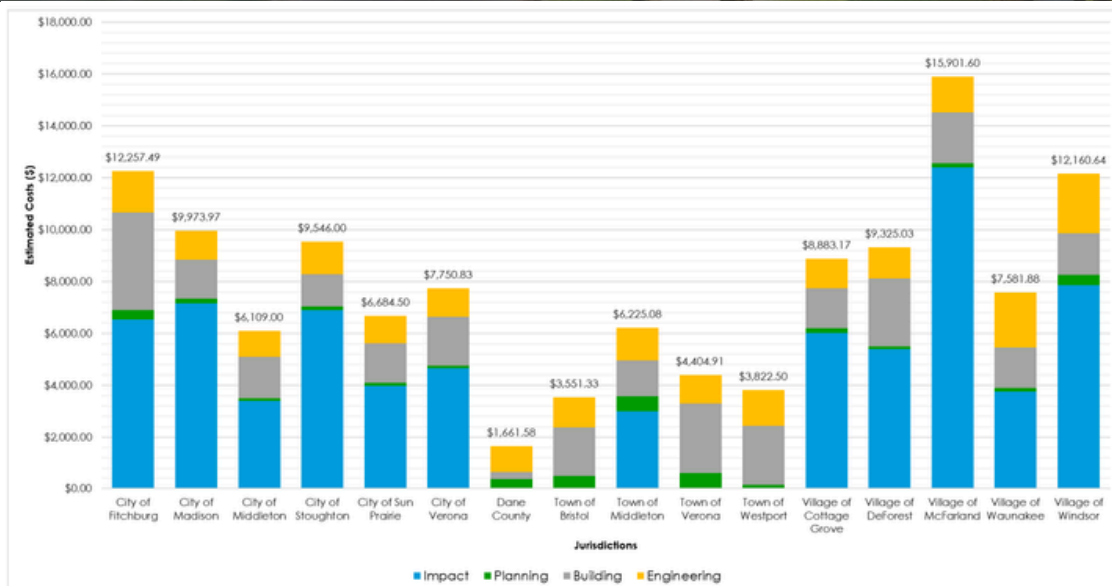


Table 2: Estimated Single-Family Development Fees

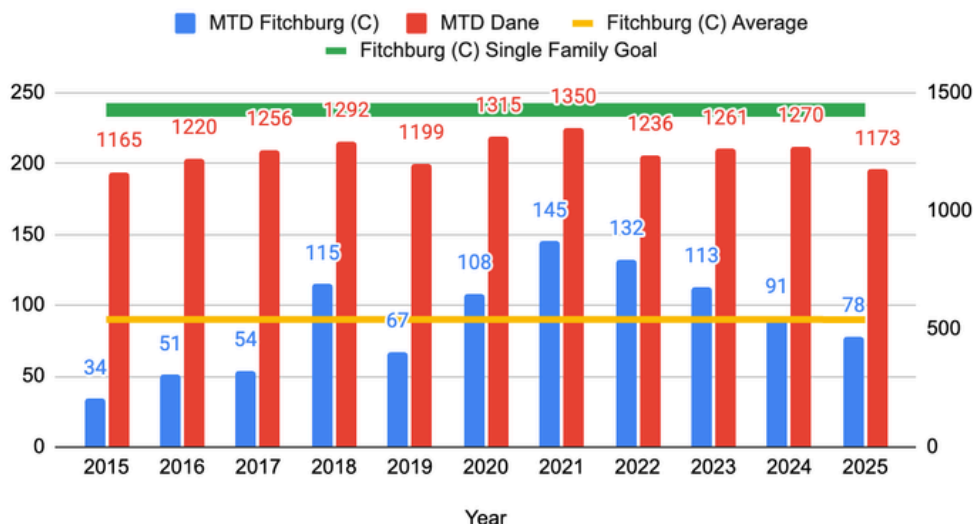


Table 3: Single-Family Permit Trends Compared to Dane County and Regional Housing Goals

Dane County Average
Home Price
\$556,556

MTD Marketing Services of Wisconsin

Fitchburg Weighted Avg.
Mill Rate
0.017360422

Dane County Treasury Department

Estimated annual
property taxes
\$9,662.05

Fitchburg New Average
Home Price
\$475,404

MTD Marketing Services of Wisconsin

Fitchburg Weighted Avg.
Mill Rate
0.017360422

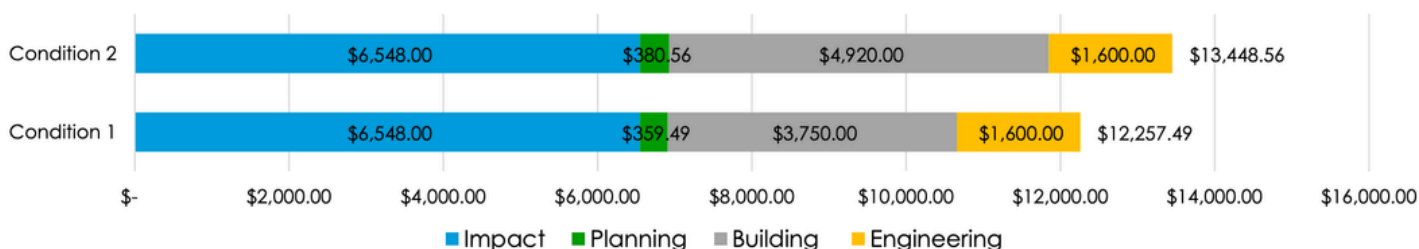
Dane County Treasury Department

Estimated annual
property taxes
\$8,253.21

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2.1 City of Fitchburg

City of Fitchburg Per-Home Fee Amounts



City of Fitchburg Housing Affordability Analysis	Below Average Median Income (AMI)		Average Median Income (AMI)	Above Average Median Income (AMI)		
	Workforce Housing Range					
	Owner-Occupied Housing Units					
Owner-Occupied Affordability	60% AMI	80%AMI	100%AMI	120% AMI	150%AMI	180% AMI
City of Fitchburg Median Income*	\$51,252	\$68,336	\$85,420	\$102,504	\$128,130	\$153,756
Median Single-Family Home Value**	\$474,900	\$474,900	\$474,900	\$474,900	\$474,900	\$474,900
Affordable Mortgage (2.5 x income)	\$128,130	\$170,840	\$213,550	\$256,260	\$320,325	\$384,390
Affordability Gap - Owner Occupied	-\$346,770	-\$304,060	-\$261,350	-\$218,640	-\$154,575	-\$90,510
	Renter-Occupied Housing Units					
Renter-Occupied Affordability	60% AMI	80%AMI	100%AMI	120% AMI	150%AMI	180% AMI
City of Fitchburg Median Income*	\$51,252	\$68,336	\$85,420	\$102,504	\$128,130	\$153,756
Median Annual Rent*** (\$1,302 x 12)	\$15,624	\$15,624	\$15,624	\$15,624	\$15,624	\$15,624
Affordable Rent (30% of income)	\$15,376	\$20,501	\$25,626	\$30,751	\$38,439	\$46,127
Affordability Gap - Renter Occupied	-\$248	\$4,877	\$10,002	\$15,127	\$22,815	\$30,503

Sources: American Community Survey 2023 5-yr estimates, and Vierbicher.

* Median Income per 2023 ACS 5-yr estimates - [\\$1903 Median Income in Past 12 Months \(in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars\)](#)

** 2024 Median SF Sale Price Sold, per MLS as proxy for Median Single-Family Home Value. Sample size: 291 single-family homes sold out of 314 homes listed. Data collected by Vierbicher staff April 7, 2025.

*** Median Annual Rent from 2023 ACS 5-yr estimates - [DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics](#)

Median Sale Price vs. Total Estimated Fee Costs Per Home

	City of						Dane County*	Town of				Village of				
	Fitchburg	Madison	Middleton	Stoughton	Sun Prairie	Verona		Bristol	Middleton	Verona	Westport	Cottage Grove	DeForest	McFarland	Waunakee	Windsor
2024 Median Sale Price Sold	\$474,900.00	\$449,900.00	\$569,250.00	\$402,000.00	\$445,000.00	\$561,924.00	\$475,000.00	\$585,000.00	\$825,000.00	\$649,000.00	\$685,000.00	\$485,000.00	\$469,900.00	\$491,000.00	\$610,000.00	\$550,000.00
Total Fee Costs per 2,500 sq. ft. home (Condition 1 - 60 lots)	\$12,257.49	\$10,367.30	\$6,109.00	\$9,546.00	\$6,684.50	\$7,750.83	\$1,661.58	\$3,551.33	\$6,225.08	\$4,404.91	\$3,822.50	\$8,883.17	\$9,325.03	\$15,901.60	\$7,581.88	\$12,160.64
Fee Costs as percentage of 2024 Median Sale Price	2.58%	2.30%	1.07%	2.37%	1.50%	1.38%	0.35%	0.61%	0.75%	0.68%	0.56%	1.83%	1.98%	3.24%	1.24%	2.21%

Lowest value
Highest value
*Dane County contains numerous Towns and Townships' whose fees may vary and therefore have not been included. This lowers the reported Fee Costs for Dane County.



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CITY OF FITCHBURG

SOURCE	FEE TYPES Investigated	City of Fitchburg 2024 Fees	Condition 1 (60 SF homes; 2500 sq ft)		Condition 2 (35 SF homes; 3500 sq ft)	
	Impact Fees	Duration/Per Unit	Cost per home	Cost for development	Cost per home	Cost for development
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9508/Planning?bidId=	Parkland (fee in lieu of land dedication)	\$ 4,330.00	\$ 4,330.00	\$ 259,800.00	\$ 4,330.00	\$ 151,550.00
	Park Improvement Single-Family Residential	\$ 670.00	\$ 670.00	\$ 40,200.00	\$ 670.00	\$ 23,450.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9501/Building-Inspection?bidId=	Fire Protection Impact Fee	\$ 622.00	\$ 622.00	\$ 37,320.00	\$ 622.00	\$ 21,770.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9507/Public-Works?bidId=	Water Impact Fee	\$ 926.00	\$ 926.00	\$ 55,560.00	\$ 926.00	\$ 32,410.00
	Planning Fees					
	Architectural Design Review	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Conditional Use Permit (CUP)	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Certified Survey Maps (CSM)	\$590.00 + \$160.00/parcel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9508/Planning?bidId=	Preliminary Plat	\$575.00 + \$180.00/parcel	\$ 189.58	\$ 11,375.00	\$ 196.42	\$ 6,875.00
	Final Plat	\$575.00 + \$120.00/parcel	\$ 129.58	\$ 7,775.00	\$ 136.43	\$ 4,775.00
	Rezoning	\$ 620.00	\$ 10.33	\$ 620.00	\$ 17.71	\$ 620.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9501/Building-Inspection?bidId=	Variance	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9500/Administration?bidId=	Recording Fees (Register of Deeds)	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 1,050.00
	Subdivider to pay all legal/consulting fees incurred?	Yes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Building Permit Fees					
	Zoning Permit	\$50.00 + \$0.90/sq. ft	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 138,000.00	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 112,000.00
	Wisconsin Uniform Building Permit Seal	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 2,625.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9501/Building-Inspection?bidId=	Building Permit	Min. \$100.00; \$0.090/sq. ft	\$ 225.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 315.00	\$ 11,025.00
	Electrical	Min. \$100.00; \$0.060/sq. ft	\$ 150.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 7,350.00
	Plumbing	Min. \$100.00; \$0.060/sq. ft	\$ 150.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 7,350.00
	HVAC	Min. \$100.00; \$0.060/sq. ft	\$ 150.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 7,350.00
	Residential Plan Review (for single-family)	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 10,500.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9507/Public-Works?bidId=	Driveway or Access Permit	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 2,800.00
	Water Connection Fee	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 3,500.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9501/Building-Inspection?bidId=	Construction Water Service Charge	\$ 45.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 1,575.00
	Permit to Start Construction	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 3,500.00
	Occupancy Permit	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 2,625.00
	Engineering Fees					
	Staking	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9507/Public-Works?bidId=	Erosion Control	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 7,000.00
	Stormwater Management	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 14,000.00

Special Impact Fees:

- Fire Protection Impact Fee (\$622 per unit)
- Water Impact Fee (\$926 per unit)

5Sec. 22-647. - Park fee requirements.

The following fees shall be required as a condition for any rezoning, conditional use permit or design review for any residential unit receiving such approval within the city, unless provision of fee, land or street frontage for the proposed development has been applied previously to the real estate subject to the application. This section is not applicable to the SmartCode District under chapter 23.

1. Fee in lieu of dedication.

- a. Chapter 24, land division, requires a park land dedication of 2,900 square feet per dwelling unit. Where the park commission, in its sole discretion, determines that there is no suitable land for a park, or parks, within the proposed development, the dedication of land is not feasible, or the dedication would not be compatible with the comprehensive plan, or the park commission determines that a cash contribution would better serve the public interest, the parks commission shall then require a fee in lieu of making a land dedication.
- b. The fee to be imposed under subsection (1)a of this section shall be a per dwelling unit fee as set forth in the annual budget appendix fee schedule. In calculating the fee, the typical cost of land sold for residential subdivisions or development shall be considered. This fee shall be collected and paid in lump sum, prior to any land division being executed by the city, or prior to any zoning permit or building permit being issued if a land division is not required.
- c. The park commission may, in its sole discretion, permit the developer to satisfy the requirement of subsection (1)a of this section by combining a land dedication with a fee payment.
- d. The city shall place any fee collected pursuant to the provisions of this section in a separate account to be used for land acquisition and development of adequate park, playground, recreation and open space to meet the needs created by the proposed development.

2. Park improvement fee. - The developer shall pay, prior to issuance of a zoning permit or building permit a per dwelling unit park improvement fee (a separate fee for single-family units, two-family units and multifamily units) as set forth in the annual budget appendix fee schedule. The collected fees shall be utilized to construct park facilities for the plat, survey or development. The park commission shall give priority to establishing the proper neighborhood park facilities according to the plan for parks and open spaces and the generally accepted standards prior to expenditure for facilities in area or community parks. The collected fee shall go into special segregated funds. The fee, per unit, relates to the cost of improvements for a neighborhood park.

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Sec. 24-2. - General provisions.

(Dedication and reservation of land.

1. **Dedication of public ways.** - Whenever a tract of land being divided or subdivided embraces all or any part of street, drainageway or other public way which has been designated in the comprehensive plan, comprehensive park, open space, and recreation plan, or the official city map, said public way shall be made a part of the plat or survey map and dedicated by the subdivider in the locations and dimensions indicated on said plan or map.
2. **Dedication of parks, playgrounds, recreation and open spaces.**
 - a. The subdivider/developer shall dedicate sufficient land area to provide adequate park, playground, recreation and open space to meet the needs to be created by and to be provided for the land development, land division or subdivision. At least 2,900 square feet of land shall be dedicated for each proposed residential dwelling unit within the land development, division, subdivision or comprehensive development. Where a definite commitment is made to the city of the subdivider/developer with respect to the number of dwelling units to be constructed on any parcel of land which has a zoning classification that permits multifamily use, the dedication shall be based on that number. Where no such commitment exists, the dedication shall be based upon the maximum number of dwelling units which the zoning classification of the parcel will permit. Park dedication requirements for land development, land division or subdivision, developments or projects using the SmartCode zoning district in chapter 23, shall provide the following required park dedication requirements: T-3 designated and special district lands: 2,900 square feet of land per dwelling unit; T-4 designated land shall be calculated taking the total net lot area within T-4 at six dwelling units per acre multiplied by 1,900 square feet per dwelling unit; T-5 designated land shall be calculated taking the total net lot area within T-5 at 12 dwelling units per acre multiplied by 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit.
 - b. Where, in the sole discretion of the park commission, there is no land suitable for parks within the proposed development area, land division or subdivision, the dedication of land required by subsection (d)(2)a of this section is not feasible, the dedication of land would not be compatible with the city comprehensive plan, or the park commission determines that a cash contribution will better serve the public interest, the park commission may require the subdivider/developer to pay a fee-in-lieu of making the required land dedication.
 - c. The city at its sole discretion may, acting upon a recommendation by the parks commission, identify lands outside of the development which it would accept as part of the parkland dedication requirements replacing all or part of the total dedication or fee-in-lieu of land dedication requirement. The city and subdivider may, by mutual consent, agree to an acre-to-acre or other equivalent basis.
 - d. Land zoned SmartCode under chapter 23 shall provide civic spaces as required through that chapter, and additional park land dedication as may be required by the parks commission as allowed under chapter 23. Where the total dedicated park acreage is less than that required in subsection (d)(2)a of this section, a fee-in-lieu of dedication for the difference shall be required pursuant to the city's adopted fee schedule.
 - e. The amount of any fee imposed pursuant to this subsection (d)(2) shall be a per-dwelling-unit fee as set forth in the annual budget appendix fee schedule. A fee shall be provided as noted in the annual budget appendix fee schedule for areas zoned SmartCode under chapter 23.
 - f. The park commission may, in its sole discretion, permit the subdivider/developer to satisfy the requirement of subsection (d)(2)a of this section by combining a land dedication with a fee payment.
 - g. The city shall place any fee collected pursuant to the provisions of this section in a separate account to be used for land acquisition and development of adequate park, playground, recreation and open space to meet the needs created by the land development, land division or subdivision.
 - h. Payment of land dedication fees shall be in a lump sum prior to the recording of a final plat or certified survey map or prior to the issuance of any building permit for a development where no plat or certified survey map is involved. Where no land division is involved the park commission may permit the developer to substitute land dedication for fees. However, where land outside the development is anticipated under section 24-2(d)(2)c, the subdivider may be allowed up to two years from the date of council action on the approving resolution to dedicate the land, provided that an acceptable security is posted to cover the estimated fee-in-lieu of dedication payment for the parkland deficit to be covered by land dedication outside of the development. If the land outside development is not or only partially provided, a fee-in-lieu of dedication payment shall be made at the level in effect for the year payment is made.
3. **Reservation of public sites and open spaces.** - In designing a land division, subdivision or comprehensive development, due consideration shall be given to the reservation of suitable sites of adequate area for future schools, parks, playgrounds, drainageways, and other public purposes. In the location of such, consideration shall be given to the preservation of scenic and historic sites, stands for fine trees, marshes, lakes and ponds, watercourses, watersheds, and ravines. The subdivider may be required to reserve such school, park, recreation and public use areas for a period not to exceed five years for acquisition by the city, or in the case of school areas by the school district, at undeveloped land costs.