SAC Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2026
Fargo Parks Sports Center
Island Park Conference Room

Purpose / Context

- Continue refining the parks special assessment model and supporting documentation.
- Align values and methodology with City of Fargo while using more detailed, parks-specific assumptions.
- Prepare materials for the April 15 Planning Committee and ultimately the Park Board.

Key Discussion Points

- Overall Assessment Framework
    - Dominic compiled notes from prior meetings into a draft assessment document and used AI to help update it.
    - Goal: normalize benefits primarily per lot, ensuring apples-to-apples comparison with City of Fargo's approach.
    - Parks financial staff should review with an "accountant's eye" before advancing to the next committee.
- Tree Valuation
    - Initial placeholder of $1M per tree / 100x value identified as unrealistic and removed.
    - Revised structure:
        - Two tree categories (e.g., 1–12" caliper) with tangible purchasing cost ($420–$425 per caliper inch).
        - Intangible value set at about 3–4x the tangible value, leading up to $36,000 max in the 1–12" range.
    - Supporting sources:
        - USDA reference.
        - Arborist / i-Tree resources used by foresters.
    - Group wants:
        - Sam's review (using tree plotter, stormwater, and other data).
        - Clear citations in the document to defend values against tax concerns.
- Shelters / Pavilions (Open-Air vs. Enclosed / Multi-use)
    - Distinction between:
        - Open-air pavilions (typical 20x20, pre-built or in-house built).
        - Enclosed / multi-use structures (e.g., trailhead / warming house).
    - Enclosed structures:
        - Real-world examples (e.g., Covey) coming in at $425–$450 per sq ft.

        - Agreement to move the model to about $425/sq ft for multi-use buildings, with explanation tied to recent bids.
    - Open-air pavilions:
        - Typical total $50,000 once structure + concrete/footings are included.
        - Back-calculated to roughly $112–$150/sq ft; suggestion to use around $115/sq ft or similar, tied to recent builds and updated annually.
    - Emphasis that these values can be recalibrated annually based on real project data.
- Courts, Parking, and Other Amenities
    - Courts: Earlier calculation yielded $1,497 per unit, with some debate whether to round to $1,500; group is comfortable either way.
    - Landscape beds:
        - Using about $80/sq ft, but acknowledged as possibly light.
        - Plan to consult Sam and his team for more precise data (including irrigation and variability).
    - Parking stalls:
        - Updated to $4,000 per stall, supported by current estimator data from McGough.
    - All cost assumptions will be backed by current estimates in developer agreements and adjusted over time.
- Case Studies / Stress Testing the Model
    - Strong desire to test the table against real projects before finalizing:
        - Possible examples: Crafting Coves, Lost Creek, Madeline's Meadows, Deer Creek, and similar.
    - Purposes of the test:
        - Confirm that units (per lot, per sq ft, per acre) and amenity definitions are practical to apply.
        - Reveal if certain elements (e.g., landscape bed square footage) are too labor-intensive to measure, prompting a potential shift to more lump-sum / per-lot averages (without changing total value).
    - Consensus: the criteria should stand on their own, regardless of which case study is used; case studies are for validation, not back-fitting.
- Document Structure & Presentation
    - Dominic will:
        - Update tables and narrative to keep numbers consistent (e.g., courts, pavilions, trees).
        - Include citations and sources (USDA, i-Tree, Crompton, etc.) in a way that is robust but not overwhelming.
        - Provide:
            - The Word document (narrative + tables).
            - An Excel file with detailed calculations.
    - Parks staff agree:

        - The current draft is essentially the core "tool" document, similar to the City's, but with better sourcing.
        - A supplemental source list is helpful but not required in front of the Planning Committee, as long as it exists.
    - Recognized that this document will become the "Bible" / roadmap for applying special assessments to park projects going forward.

Timeline & Governance Path

- Immediate (by end of meeting day):
    - Dominic to:
        - Finalize updates (tree values, shelters, parking, corrections to narrative/table mismatches).
        - Circulate updated Word + Excel to Parks.
- Next few days (internal review):
    - Parks team (including Tyler's group) to:
        - Review for financial accuracy and practical application.
        - Run at least one to three case studies (e.g., Crafting Coves, Lost Creek, potentially a typical 7–10 acre neighborhood park).
        - Validate units (per lot, per sq ft, etc.) and workload (e.g., counting beds, trees).
- Internal approval & packet prep:
    - Board/committee members to review and explicitly "thumbs-up" via email so no last-minute edits appear after the deadline.
    - Planning Committee meeting: April 15, 8:15 a.m. (Wednesday).
        - Carmen to:
            - Send Dominic the meeting details and calendar invite.
            - Ensure the packet (memo + assessment document) is completed and distributed about a week in advance.
        - Dominic to attend, present the work, and answer questions as chair of the committee, reinforcing the committee's independent role.
    - Planning Committee can:
        - Recommend approval as is.
        - Suggest changes while still forwarding to the full board, depending on scale of revisions.
- Board & Implementation:
    - May 12 – target for Park Board approval of the tool.
    - May 20 – Planning Committee to move into the next phase:
        - Work with legal and bond counsel to create assessment districts, finalize resolutions, and align with city administrative functions.
    - June–July – expected window to:
        - Formally create assessment districts.
        - Apply the model to probable construction costs in developer agreements.
        - Use results to enable the board to approve project bidding and funding structure.

- Ongoing:
  - Work with the City on division of roles, especially where Parks is taking over functions the City formerly provided as part of their 5% administration fee, including revisiting cost splits with the City.
  - Clarify design, contingency, and bond counsel percentages (currently 8% design, 10% contingency, 5% bond).