

July 2025

## **Executive Summary**

### ***Leeds Parks Master Plan & Impact Fee Calculation (2025–2034)***

The Town of Leeds, Utah, has prepared this Parks Master Plan and Impact Fee Calculation to responsibly plan for the community’s projected growth and ensure new development contributes proportionally to park and recreational infrastructure. This plan, though not formally engineered due to the town’s population and fee revenue size (under Utah Code §11-36a-301(3)(a)(b)), aligns with state requirements and best practices.

#### **Community Background & Growth**

Leeds, settled in 1867, has maintained a rural, historical character while experiencing modest population growth. Population projections show an increase from 864 residents in 2025 to 1,138 by 2035. Housing units are expected to grow from 298 to 393 over the same period.

#### **Existing and Proposed Park Facilities**

Currently, the town maintains a single 1.1-acre public park with basic amenities. However, based on the adopted Level of Service (LOS) standard—1 acre of park space per 250 residents—Leeds already faces a deficit of 2.36 acres. By 2035, an additional 4.08 acres will be needed to meet total demand, but impact fees may only be used to fund the 1.10 acres attributable to new growth.

#### **Impact Fee Methodology and Calculation**

Using the LOS standard, the town estimates it needs 1.10 additional acres of developed park space for the projected 276 new residents. With park development costs ranging from \$250,000 to \$350,000 per acre, the cost attributable to growth is estimated between \$275,000 and \$385,000. Dividing this by the 95 projected new residential units results in a proposed 2025 impact fee of:

- **Low Estimate: \$2,895 per unit**
- **High Estimate: \$4,053 per unit**

These figures reflect the proportionate share for new development only, excluding costs to cure existing deficiencies, in accordance with Utah Code §11-36a-202(1)(a).

#### **Conclusion**

This plan ensures new development pays its fair share for needed parks infrastructure while maintaining legal compliance and fiscal responsibility. Leeds should seek alternative funding sources—such as grants or general fund allocations—to address current park land shortfalls, preserving community quality of life as it grows.

## **I. Short History of the Town of Leeds**

The Town of Leeds, located in Washington County, Utah, was first settled in 1867 by pioneers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The town was originally established to support agricultural production and provide a community for settlers relocating from nearby areas affected by flooding. Named after Leeds, England, the town grew along the historic route of the Old Spanish Trail and later the corridor of U.S. Highway 91, which brought increased connectivity and opportunities for commerce.

Leeds maintained its rural character throughout the 20th century, with agriculture, livestock, and later tourism playing central roles in the local economy. The town's proximity to natural and cultural landmarks—including Zion National Park and the ghost town of Silver Reef—has contributed to a modest but steady population growth and interest in heritage preservation.

Today, Leeds continues to balance its historical roots with a vision for thoughtful development that supports a high quality of life and the preservation of its unique landscape and character.

## II. Community Growth and Need for Expanded Park and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Leeds has experienced modest yet consistent growth in recent years. With its appealing rural setting, historic character, and proximity to regional recreational assets, the town continues to attract new residents seeking a high quality of life. As a result, increased residential development has begun to place additional demands on the town's existing public infrastructure, particularly in the area of parks, trails, and open space.

This growth has underscored the need for expanded park and recreational amenities to meet the expectations of current and future residents. Community input and planning efforts have identified a gap in available recreation facilities and trail connectivity, particularly as new subdivisions are developed and the population grows.

In response, this Capital Facilities and Impact Fee Plan outlines a reasoned and legally compliant approach to addressing these infrastructure needs. In accordance with Utah Code § 11-36a-301(3)(a)(b), because the Town of Leeds has a population of fewer than 5,000 residents and collects less than \$250,000 annually in impact fees, it is not required to produce a formally engineered impact fee facilities plan. However, this document is based on a reasonable and good-faith plan that aligns with the requirements of the Utah Impact Fees Act and relevant common law standards.

Specifically, this plan provides:

- A projected 10-year timeline for needed parks and trails facilities to serve anticipated development;
- An estimate of the costs for those facilities, including land acquisition, design, and construction;
- A demonstration that the impact fees proposed are proportionate to the demand generated by new development;
- Compliance with the requirements of Utah Code § 11-36a-302 and § 11-36a-304, identifying existing levels of service, future needs, and funding mechanisms.

This plan ensures that new development contributes its fair share to the infrastructure needed to maintain an acceptable level of service, while preserving the community's quality of life. The Town of Leeds is committed to planning responsibly and lawfully to support its long-term vision.

### III. Historical and Projected Population Growth

The Town of Leeds has maintained a relatively stable, modest growth pattern over the past several decades, consistent with its rural character and development preferences. According to U.S. Census data included in the 2022 General Plan:

- In 2010, Leeds had a population of 820.
- By 2020, that number had increased to 864, representing a 5% increase over the decade<sup>1</sup>.

The housing stock during that period also grew, with total housing units increasing from 352 in 2010 to 401 in 2020—a 14% rise. Occupied housing units rose by 18%, suggesting that housing availability has slightly outpaced population growth, consistent with large-lot development patterns.<sup>1</sup>

The General Plan anticipates that, if Leeds follows Washington County’s broader growth trends, the town could potentially double in size by 2050. To achieve this, Leeds would need to grow at an average annual rate of approximately 2.81%. The following tables illustrate projected population and housing unit growth from 2025 to 2035, assuming this rate is sustained and using an average household size of 2.9 persons:

#### Projected Population & Housing Growth (2025–2035)

	Population Projection	Housing Projection
2026	888	306
2027	913	315
2028	939	324
2029	965	333
2030	992	342
2031	1,020	352
2032	1,048	362
2033	1,077	371
2034	1,107	382
2035	1,138	393

These projections help establish a data-driven foundation for capital planning. They provide a realistic estimate of future demand for public facilities—particularly parks and trails—and ensure that

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Leeds General Plan, May 2022. Prepared by Sunrise Engineering, Inc. Available from the Town of Leeds, Utah.

development impact fees are equitably aligned with anticipated growth. Over the 10-year period from 2025 to 2035, Leeds is projected to gain approximately 95 new residential housing units, reflecting the steady but manageable nature of anticipated growth.

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## IV. Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Leeds currently maintains a single public recreation facility: Leeds Town Park, located behind Town Hall on Main Street. This park serves as the primary recreation space for the community and is a central gathering place for residents.

Leeds Town Park encompasses approximately 1.1 acres and includes the following amenities:

- Open playing fields and grassy areas;
- A children's playground;
- Mature trees offering natural shade;
- A permanent restroom facility;
- The Peach-Pit Pavilion, a covered gathering area;
- On-site parking for residents and visitors.

This park was originally developed based on a unit of demand of one acre per 200 residents.<sup>2</sup> Given the 2020 population of approximately 864 residents, the existing facility generally aligns with that planning assumption. As the population grows, this ratio will be used to determine future park needs and to assess the proportional demand generated by new development.

The town is also surrounded by extensive natural public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), offering nearby access to hiking and ATV trails. However, there is currently no organized trail network within the town limits, and connectivity between neighborhoods and these regional assets remains a priority for future planning.

This plan recognizes the need to maintain and potentially expand the park system in order to keep pace with anticipated growth, in alignment with level-of-service standards and Utah Impact Fees Act

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<sup>2</sup> 1995 Leeds Parks Capital Facilities Plan

## **Section V: Proposed Unit of Demand – Parks and Open Space**

### **Level of Service Standard**

To support a consistent and equitable approach to park development while planning for future growth, the Town of Leeds proposes a Level of Service (LOS) standard of:

1.0 acre of developed park land per 250 residents

This standard serves as the unit of demand for estimating the park system improvements required to serve new development, consistent with the Utah Impact Fees Act (§ 11-36a-302).

### **Justification for Standard**

While national standards, such as those historically published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), suggest a range of 6 to 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, the Town of Leeds has adopted a more targeted and community-tailored approach. This standard reflects several key considerations:

- Abundant natural and public lands: Leeds is surrounded by extensive public and protected lands, including national and state parks, conservation areas, and open landscapes. These natural resources provide residents and visitors with a wide variety of recreational opportunities and access to trails and open space that go well beyond what many similar-sized communities can offer.
- Rural character and dispersed population: The town's low-density development pattern and rural setting lessen the demand for highly urbanized park facilities.
- Focused service enhancement: The LOS of 1 acre per 250 residents strikes a balanced approach—ensuring adequate and high-quality local park infrastructure while recognizing that many recreational needs are already met by the region's natural setting.
- Fiscal sustainability: This standard helps Leeds maintain a reasonable and defensible impact fee while ensuring new growth contributes equitably to the parks system without overburdening development.

By acknowledging the recreational value provided by nearby public lands, such as Zion National Park, the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area, and other state-managed lands, the Town can focus local investments on essential park amenities and improvements that complement, rather than duplicate, regional assets.

### **Application in Impact Fee Calculation**

This LOS standard of 1.0 acre per 250 residents will be used to determine the amount of additional park land and improvements needed to support projected growth. Impact fees will be calculated to cover the

proportionate share of these new facilities, ensuring that development pays for its impact without raising the level of service for existing residents, in compliance with Utah Code § 11-36a-202.

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## **Section VI: Current Level of Service Standard**

The Level of Service (LOS) standard is used to assess the adequacy of public park facilities in relation to the town's existing and future population. It establishes the benchmark for determining the amount of park land needed to serve residents and is a foundational element in calculating proportionate impact fees for new development.

### **LOS Standard**

The Town of Leeds has adopted a proposed LOS standard of 1 acre of park land per 250 residents. This standard reflects the town's small size and recognizes the abundance of surrounding natural open space.

### **Current Population and Park Acreage**

As of 2025, the estimated population of Leeds is 864 residents, and the town maintains 1.1 acres of developed public park space.

### **Required park space to Meet Current Standard**

To meet the proposed LOS standard at the current population level:

$$\text{Required park space} = 864 \text{ residents} / 250 = 3.46 \text{ acres}$$

With only 1.1 acres currently available, the town has an existing deficit of:

$$3.46 \text{ acres (required)} - 1.1 \text{ acres (existing)} = 2.36 \text{ acres}$$

### **Future park space by 2035**

By 2035, the population is projected to increase to 1,296 residents. Applying the same LOS standard, the town will require:

$$\text{Required park space} = 1,296 \text{ residents} / 250 = 5.18 \text{ acres}$$

To meet this demand, Leeds would need an additional:

$$5.18 \text{ acres (required)} - 1.1 \text{ acres (existing)} = 4.08 \text{ additional acres}$$

However, it is important to note that this total includes both the existing deficit (2.36 acres) and the new demand generated by population growth (1.72 acres). In accordance with the Utah Impact Fees Act, impact fees may only be used to fund improvements related to new development and cannot be used to remedy existing deficiencies.

### **Funding Strategy for Existing Deficit**

To maintain fairness and legal compliance, the town should pursue alternative funding sources, such as general fund appropriations, state and federal grants, or public-private partnerships, to cover the existing 2.36-acre deficit. This ensures that future residents are not unfairly burdened with the cost of facilities needed to serve current residents.

## VII. Anticipated Park Space Needs and Costs (2025–2035)

In accordance with the Utah Impact Fees Act, the Town of Leeds has determined that impact fees shall not be used to address existing deficiencies in park space. Instead, this impact fee calculation reflects only the cost of system improvements required to maintain the adopted level of service (LOS) for new growth between 2025 and 2035.

### Projected Growth and LOS Standard

Leeds has adopted a LOS of 1 acre of park space per 250 residents. The town is projected to grow from 298 housing units in 2025 to 393 by 2035, representing a 95-unit increase in residential units. Assuming an average household size of 2.9 persons per household, this translates to 276 new residents over the 10-year period.

To maintain the proposed LOS for these new residents:

$276 \text{ residents} \div 250 \text{ residents per acre} = 1.10 \text{ acres of park space needed}$

### Proportionate Cost of New Park Space

The cost of acquiring and developing park space, including amenities such as playgrounds, splash pads, pavilions, and landscaping, is estimated to be between \$250,000 and \$350,000 per acre in 2025 dollars.<sup>3</sup> For 1.10 acres, the proportional cost of park space in 2025 needed for new growth is:

- Low estimate:  $1.10 \text{ acres} \times \$250,000 = \$275,000$

- High estimate:  $1.10 \text{ acres} \times \$350,000 = \$385,000$

### Future Park Construction Costs

This table presents the estimated inflation-adjusted park facility costs over 10 years for the Town of Leeds. A standard annual inflation rate of 3% has been applied to the base estimates of \$235,400 (low) and \$385,000 (high).

Year	Inflated Low Cost (\$)	Inflated High Cost (\$)
2025	275,000.00	385,000.00
2026	283,250.00	396,550.00
2027	291,747.50	408,446.50
2028	300,499.92	420,699.90
2029	309,514.92	433,320.89
2030	318,800.37	446,320.52
2031	328,364.38	459,710.13
2032	338,215.31	473,501.44
2033	348,361.77	487,706.48
2034	358,812.63	502,337.68

<sup>3</sup> Jones & DeMille cost estimate based on park projects in St. George, Utah (2025).

### **Impact Fee Per Residential Unit**

To determine a proportionate and legally justifiable fee, the total cost attributable to new development in the proposed year of development is divided by the projected 95 new residential units:

- Low estimate per unit:  $\$275,000 \div 95 = \$2,895^4$
- High estimate per unit:  $\$385,000 \div 95 = \$4,053$

### **Summary**

Leeds may adopt a parks and recreation impact fee between \$2,895 and \$4,053 per residential unit. This range reflects the fair share cost of park facilities needed to maintain the established level of service for new residents. It does not include costs to remedy existing park acreage shortfalls, consistent with Utah Code §11-36a-202(1)(a)(i) and best practices demonstrated in other Utah communities.

This approach ensures that the impact fee meets the statutory requirement of being proportionate and reasonably related to the demand created by new development, without placing the burden of existing deficiencies on future residents.

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<sup>4</sup> These estimates are in 2025 dollars. Actual impact fee should be calculated on estimated costs in the year of projected construction.

## VIII. Administrative Appeal

In accordance with Utah Code §§ 11-36a-701 through 703, the Town provides an administrative appeal process for any person or entity who has paid an impact fee and wishes to challenge its validity, calculation, or application.

### Eligibility and Standing

Under Utah Code § 11-36a-701(1), a person or entity who resides in, owns property within the service area, or who has paid an impact fee, may initiate a challenge to the impact fee or its imposition.

### Filing an Administrative Challenge

Pursuant to Utah Code § 11-36a-703(1), a person or entity may file a written challenge to the impact fee with the Town Clerk. The written challenge must include:

- The basis for the challenge;
- A request for review under this administrative process; and
- Any supporting documentation the challenger wishes to provide.

The written challenge must be filed within the applicable time limitations set forth in Utah Code § 11-36a-702:

- **30 days** after payment, if challenging the notice procedures (§ 701(3)(a)(i)(A));
- **180 days** after payment, if challenging other procedural requirements (§ 701(3)(a)(i)(B));
- **One year** after payment, if challenging the calculation of the fee (§ 701(3)(a)(ii)).

### Town Review and Response

The Town shall, in accordance with Utah Code § 11-36a-703(1)(b), issue a written decision on the administrative appeal **within 30 days** after the date the challenge is filed.

### Remedy

If the Town finds that the impact fee was not correctly calculated or imposed, the remedy shall be a **refund of the difference** between the amount paid and the amount that should have been charged, as provided in Utah Code § 11-36a-701(3)(c).