

# City of Star Internal Stakeholders Summary



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## City of Star Internal Stakeholders Executive Summary

Clearwater Financial conducted interviews with ten elected officials and department heads at the City of Star to provide updates to the City's Parks impact fees and support the development of new impact fees and capital improvement plans for Police and Pathways.

Across all departments, stakeholders expressed strong support for impact fees as a critical tool to manage the rapid growth experienced by the City and to ensure that new development contributes its fair share to the cost of public infrastructure. Many noted that the City's current Park fee structures have not kept pace with population growth and development trends since the last update in 2013.

Interviewees consistently highlighted the growing pressure on parks, public safety services, and pathways. Facilities that were once sufficient are now overcrowded or functionally outdated, with many operating out of temporary, shared, or leased spaces. Staff described turning away recreation participants due to limited space, struggling to keep up with police service demands, and encountering delays in expanding the City's trail network due to permitting and land access challenges.

At the same time, there is a forward-looking mindset among City leaders and staff. When funding is available, especially through impact fees, projects are moving forward. Several interviewees emphasized that, when feasible, the City has fully funded major projects using impact fees alone.

As the City of Star continues to grow, this summary highlights both departmental priorities and system-wide challenges that must be addressed to ensure a strategic, transparent, and community-supported approach to capital planning and impact fee implementation.

## Capital Improvements & Impact Fees for Police, Parks, Pathways

### Police

The City of Star has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, creating an urgent need to expand police facilities and operational capacity. The current station—leased from and shared with the fire department, sized at approximately 3,600 square feet, no longer adequate to support the department's growing personnel, equipment, and service demands. The Department has limited secure storage, insufficient room for patrol and administrative functions, and a lack of private meeting areas outside of interview rooms. The facility currently houses 21.09 positions including 10 patrol officers, 2 sergeants, 3 traffic control (including 1 K9), 3 detectives, 1 admin sergeant, 1 SRO (funded .25 for summer coverage City, .75 estimated West Ada School District (WASD)), 1 administrative assistant and the Department's Chief. Staffing is expected to grow further with the addition of a full-time code enforcement officer, additional detectives, and a goal of 1 SRO for each school.

To relieve pressure on the existing station, the City has begun discussions to establish a dedicated patrol facility near a planned elementary school. Officials are exploring a potential partnership to secure land adjacent to the school district's proposed site off Pollard Road. While this facility would represent important progress, it is expected to meet needs for only 7 to 10 years. In the longer term, additional substations in the northern and western parts of the City are being considered to support localized service. Staff also noted the possibility of co-locating police presence within the new school facility—an early-stage concept reflecting a broader strategy to embed public safety infrastructure into emerging growth areas. Separately, a dedicated police training facility has been identified as a priority to reduce reliance on regional centers in Boise and minimize coverage gaps caused by officer travel.

The police department currently operates with a staffing ratio of 1.02 officers per 1,000 residents. As growth continues, the need to increase ratios will become more important. Relevant benchmarks include the City of Boise, which just increased their coverage to 1.5 officers per 1,000 residents recently, the northwest industry's best practice of 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents and the national benchmark is 2.7 officers per 1,000 residents.

Maintaining the current ratio will require the City to add officers annually, which in turn increases the demand for space, vehicles, and specialized equipment. In addition to standard patrol gear, officers require personal protective equipment, one patrol vehicle per officer shift, and evolving public safety technologies such as drones. If the City were able to provide one vehicle per officer, each vehicle's expected lifecycle would increase to an estimated 10–12-year lifecycle, up significantly from the current 5–7-year life cycle. This would significantly influence long-term fleet planning and impact fee projections. Interviewees also noted that future facilities may require technological

upgrades—such as security and communications systems—before they can become fully operational. Planning these foundational systems in tandem with facility expansion was identified as a key consideration.

The department is also expanding its equipment capabilities to meet emerging needs. This includes bulletproof chest guards, drones and potentially a second police K9 unit—both of which require additional vehicle modifications and specialized training. While current service levels and response times are generally viewed as strong, City leaders expressed concern about the ability to sustain this level of coverage without expanded facilities and resources as growth accelerates.

To help meet immediate needs, the City currently contracts with the Ada County Sheriff's Office for some services and equipment support. However, this arrangement may become insufficient as Star's population and public safety expectations continue to grow. Notably, the City does not currently have a formal contingency plan in place should key police infrastructure projects be delayed or fall through, posing a potential risk to long-term service continuity.

The absence of a dedicated public safety impact fee was widely viewed as a critical gap, particularly considering growing demands for patrol coverage, facility expansion, and specialized equipment. Interviewees expressed strong support for introducing such a fee to help the City maintain service levels and plan more effectively for long-term police infrastructure. Currently, there is no formal process in place to prioritize police-related capital projects; decisions are often guided by available resources or time-sensitive opportunities rather than a structured plan. While resource availability remains a key driver, staff also consider public feedback and the goal of providing complete, contiguous service coverage when identifying and advancing projects. There was broad agreement on the need to plan for both facilities and staffing in tandem, recognizing that infrastructure alone is not enough to meet the community's evolving public safety needs. 100% of property taxes fund approximately \$2MM of the police department's current \$3.5MM budget. The remaining budget is paid with a portion of building permit fees, specifically mitigation fees.

## **Identified Police Priorities and Capital Projects**

### **Police Facilities:**

- Land acquisition for police facilities
- Future main station development is a long-term goal to accommodate full operational independence.
- Patrol substations may be co-located with future school sites; site planning and funding timing remain under review.
- Short-term: patrol facility near the new school (Pollard Road)
- Long-term: substations planned in northern and western Star
- Police training facility to reduce reliance on regional centers.

- Contingent on land acquisition and subject to regulatory approval and interagency coordination.
- Secure equipment storage for safety gear, such as bulletproof vests, 40-millimeter rounds, body cameras and radios, K9 units
- Gun vault at each station (currently all stored at the Ada County Sheriff's office)
- Security and communications technology infrastructure
- Drone program for surveillance and emergency response
- 1:1 vehicle-per-officer goal to extend fleet lifecycle to 10–12 years
- Staffing:
- Expand existing K9 unit program and integrate new training resources for canine operations.
- Over time and as population growth continues, increase officer ratio from 1.02 to 1.2 and eventually, .5 officer(s) per 1,000 residents.
- Contingency planning in case major police infrastructure is delayed

## **Parks**

The existing parks system in Star is under considerable strain due to high levels of usage and limited capacity. Freedom Park, the City's primary recreational facility, lacks sufficient sports infrastructure to meet both current and projected demand. Other parks, including Hunters Creek Sports Complex and Boot Hill (open sports fields), are also heavily utilized, leading to consistent field shortages and accelerated wear. Recreational programs are often at capacity, and the City is regularly turning away local sports leagues and participants due to lack of space. Parking limitations were also highlighted as a recurring challenge, with overflow areas frequently full and visitors parking along the streets. Interviewees suggested this has become a barrier to parking usability during peak hours and events.

This pressure has been intensified by growing interest in park utilization from both Star residents and surrounding communities. Because the City relies heavily on school gyms for recreational programming, availability is limited—particularly during evenings, weekends, and summer months. Most programs take place outdoors, but even those are increasingly oversubscribed.

The absence of indoor recreation space was consistently identified as a major service gap. Staff described the need for a dedicated indoor recreation center as a top priority, with proposed amenities including basketball courts, turf fields, a running track, a kitchen and multipurpose rooms for classes and community events. Interviewees emphasized that such a facility would not only meet growing demand but also improve year-round programming by alleviating space and scheduling challenges.

To support equitable access, staff identified the need for additional transportation capacity—such as a second shuttle bus—for youth programming. As parks and programs expand, physical access to distributed facilities will become more important.

Additional Park development is needed to accommodate population growth and provide equitable citywide access. National benchmarks recommend one park per 2,386 residents and 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Star has five (5) existing City-owned parks:

1. [Hunter's Creek Sports Complex](#) (includes the [Tom Erlebach Skate Park](#) and the [Waggin' Tails Dog Park](#))
2. [Pavilion](#)/Pavilion Lake
3. [Riverwalk](#),
4. [West Pointe](#)
5. [Blake Haven](#)

[Freedom Park](#) is near completion, and two additional sites—Boot Hill (located adjacent to Boot Hill Cemetery) and Roselands (located off [New Hope Rd.](#) in front of the Roselands Subdivision)—are under lease or in early design, but not City-owned. In total, the City parks have approximately 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The City's Comprehensive Plan targets 5 acres per 1,000 residents, meaning Star requires 101.7 acres total, leaving a current deficit of 50.27 acres.

Several new or ongoing projects were highlighted during interviews. [Freedom Park](#) is currently undergoing phased development, including additional field space and future amenities such as an event barn that would offer concessions, tube rentals, and a dedicated police presence. Some interviewees noted this facility could also include a warming kitchen or multipurpose room. However, the timeline for completion remains uncertain due to delays in the property transfer from the developer to the City.

Nearby, the leased [River House](#) facility is used for events and gatherings, with plans for additional amenities such as a veteran's garden. Additional Park efforts include pursuing land donations during subdivision negotiations, the conversion of open cemetery land for leased recreational use and identifying locations for a future indoor recreation center. In addition to traditional parks and athletic fields, several interviewees noted the potential to develop a 50-acre foothills site into a multi-use trail system and archery range.

The City Parks and Rec Department lacks dedicated storage and currently relies on a shed behind the police station. The City is also working to support the growing demand for water-based recreation. Plans are underway to open paddle board and river tube rentals as seasonal amenities near the River House that would complement the broader Park system programming.

Several park initiatives depend on long-term leases or agreements with developers, which—while cost-effective—can introduce legal uncertainty and delay implementation. For instance, Boot Hill Park is located on leased cemetery land, and Roselands Park is

leased from the school district, limiting the City's long-term control and investment options.

Geographic coverage of parks is also a growing concern. As new neighborhoods emerge in the west, northwest, and potentially south of the Boise River, timely investment in park infrastructure will be needed to prevent future service gaps. Staff also noted the importance of expanding trails and passive recreation areas as part of a balanced, accessible park system.

Finally, staff emphasized that parks play a central role in the community's identity and quality of life. Future Park improvements should align with shifting recreational preferences and demographic changes. Interviewees also highlighted the value of engaging residents in amenity planning—such as splash pads, skate parks, and open green space—to ensure capital investments reflect community needs and priorities.

### **Identified Parks Priorities and Capital Projects**

- Acquire additional acreage to meet comprehensive plan targets of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The current shortage is ~51 acres (05.30.25).
  - Focus acquisition in the in the west, northwest and south of the Boise River
  - Monitor future acquisition status for the following park sites:
    - Boot Hill (MOU-based access)
    - Roselands (Initial lease agreement completed. Pending potential purchase agreement)
    - [Terramore](#) (10-acre future dedication) (Hwy 44 between Kingsbury and Blessinger roads in northwest Star near the Middleton border)
    - Quail Ridge / Point Park (59 acres, conceptual, tied to future developer subdivision)
  - Plan for dedication status for the following park sites:
    - Boot Hill (MOU-based access)
    - Roselands (pending agreement)
    - Terramore (10-acre future dedication - near Kingsbury)
    - Quail Ridge / Point Park (59 acres, conceptual, tied to future developer subdivision)
  - Increase number of baseball and soccer fields citywide.
- Future planning for "Quail Ridge" 59-acre parcel
- Construct an event barn for programming and holiday storage at Freedom Park
  - Concessions/warming kitchen (not commercial kitchen)
  - Paddle board/ tube rentals
  - Multipurpose room
  - Police substation – 2 SRO on site
- Develop a regional scale "Home Court" indoor/outdoor sports complex for high-volume sports programming including:
  - Basketball courts

- Swimming pool
- Indoor soccer and multipurpose turf field
- Running track
- Multipurpose classrooms for fitness and community education
- Kitchen for cooking classes and snack prep for kids during City programs
- Construct maintenance sheds and equipment storage at each major park.
- Expand Park maintenance fleet (tractors, mowers, utility carts) for daily operations.
- Acquire an additional shuttle bus for youth programs
- Integrate long-range plans for red-designated areas south of the Boise River, as noted in the Comprehensive Plan, [Future Land Use Map](#) and P&Z files.

## Pathways

City staff view pathways not only as recreational features, but also as essential components of a safe and connected transportation network. The recent adoption of a [Pathways Master and Capital Improvement Plan](#) was seen as a major step toward building an integrated trail system that connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas across Star.

Multiple interviewees noted environmental and regulatory considerations near floodplain areas that complicate trail development, particularly near the Boise River. In these areas, projects may require raised boardwalks or pedestrian bridges. Trail segments adjacent to cemeteries and along river corridors often require easements or interagency coordination with BLM, FEMA, IDWR, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These permitting and regulatory challenges can significantly impact timelines and feasibility.

- Pathway segments in floodplain areas may require raised boardwalks or elevated crossings.
- Future connectivity is contingent on:
  - Easement acquisitions from private landowners
  - Coordination with canal companies and ditch authorities
  - Timing of adjacent roadway or development infrastructure
- Specific dependencies include:
  - Completion of bridges and pedestrian overpasses
  - Legal right-of-way acquisition for trail continuity
- Delays are most likely where federal permitting and water control agencies have overlapping jurisdiction.

While demand for new connections is high, implementation is constrained by land ownership and funding availability. Several staff emphasized that grant eligibility for trail construction is contingent on the City owning the land—long-term leases or memoranda of understanding typically do not qualify. Grant funding remains a key resource, but the

City will need to continue prioritizing acquisitions and easements to unlock additional opportunities.

Interviewees expressed a strong preference for prioritizing connections between residential areas and destinations like schools, parks, and commercial centers. There was also interest in integrating Star's trail network with regional systems for broader connectivity. Several pathway projects are being designed in coordination with the school district to support safe walking and biking access to schools.

### **Identified Pathways Priorities and Capital Projects**

- Grant-funded pathway segment along Floating Feather Road improving access to the middle school (complete) Related amenities (lighting, signage, seating, maps, etc.) to be completed.
- Planned pathway projects include the construction of a pedestrian bridge and raised boardwalks near the Boise River to navigate flood plain considerations
- New connections north of the city and across the river using an existing bridge
- Development of a 59-acre foothills trail system
- Trail extensions in the Trident Ridge and Wing Street areas
- Additional investments will support lighting, signage, seating, digital trail maps, and improved public wayfinding
- Several projects—such as a bridge crossing near the River House—will enable greater emergency access and complete existing gaps in the system

## **Themes and Procedural Considerations**

### Project Prioritization:

Most departments describe prioritization as Mayor-led or based on opportunity, rather than following a formal process. Many interviewees also noted that capital projects are frequently implemented opportunistically—based on the availability of donated land or grants—rather than as part of a long-term forecasted financial strategy. While cost-effective in some cases, this reactive approach limits the City's ability to proactively shape service delivery.

- To supplement this summary, a matrix of capital needs by department is being developed based on interview data and Mayor-led priorities.
- Impact Fee Tracking: Many interviewees were unclear on how impact fees are tracked, what projects they fund, and how the public can view these allocations.
- Committee Engagement: Interviewees noted that the Parks Impact Fee Advisory Committee had not met regularly in recent years, which limited stakeholder understanding and transparency. Annual engagement is strongly recommended to build institutional memory and public trust.

- Legal Limitations: Staff expressed concern about the legal inability to use impact fees for maintenance or staffing, especially considering new capital burdens.
- Contingency Planning: Several interviewees acknowledged that if major projects are delayed, there is often no formal contingency plan in place—projects are simply deferred. This approach poses long-term service risks as growth continues.

## Considerations for City Hall and Other Future Projects

City Hall was consistently described by staff as undersized and functionally inadequate for current operations. Several departments, including Planning, Building, and Administration, operate from cramped offices, with some staff working out of repurposed closets. There is limited space for private meetings, and only one conference room is available for internal coordination. For larger public meetings such as Planning & Zoning or Council workshops, the City must rent outside facilities multiple times a year, typically at a local church. The City currently has a new addition under design for meeting and office space expansion. The planned expansion will address several of the issues raised by staff, including:

- New conference/meeting room adjacent to the Council Chambers
- Additional storage capacity
- Office reconfiguration for Planning and Admin teams
- Potential inclusion of staff amenities (e.g., shower facilities)

Beyond spatial challenges, interviewees noted ongoing issues with storage capacity, limited parking, and a lack of modern infrastructure to support growth in permitting, records management, and day-to-day administration. While recent upgrades to HVAC, lighting, and interior finishes have extended the building's usability, the facility is no longer adequate to meet the City's evolving operational demands.

Although not currently included in the impact fee analysis, a new or expanded City Hall—along with additional administrative facilities—should be considered as part of future capital improvement planning.

Importantly, staff also identified the absence of a long-term facilities master plan as a growing concern, particularly as Star's population expands and internal staffing continues to scale.

## Conclusion

The City's current comprehensive and capital plans were developed using moderate growth assumptions; however, actual growth has exceeded projections in recent years. As a result, several interviewees recommended reviewing and updating these assumptions more frequently to ensure the City's infrastructure plans remain both responsive and accurate.

Enhancing internal systems for project tracking, committee engagement, and revenue forecasting will further support the City's ability to plan proactively and deliver public infrastructure that keeps pace with demand.

The interviews revealed a proactive mindset among City leadership and staff, grounded in a shared commitment to equitable growth, strategic investment, and fiscal responsibility.

While optimism about Star's future was a consistent theme, interviewees also identified several procedural challenges, including gaps in formal project prioritization, impact fee tracking, and financial transparency. Addressing these underlying issues will be critical to aligning stakeholder expectations, building community trust, and maintaining legal compliance throughout the next impact fee cycle.