

UNLOCK: 'We don't have the 86.4 percent to make things happen'

(Continued from page 1)
The larger pot of money is that collected since April 2009, about \$793,000. The problem is that those fees can only be used to improve parks, not for maintenance or repair. On top of that, SDC fees can only be used to cover 13.6 percent of the costs of any improvement. For example, say city officials approve the installment of a new \$100,000 play structure at your neighborhood park. SDC funds could only pay for \$13,600 of the cost. The remaining \$86,400 would have to come out of other parts of the city budget or through grants or sponsor-

ships, which would also take staff time to track down and apply for – at a time when the budget is still stretched fairly thin on Keizer's low property tax rate. One of the most recent uses of new SDC money was \$50,000 to "sweeten the proposal" for a grant application to upgrade surfaces at Keizer Rapids Park Big Toy and to build the first restrooms with flushing toilets in any city park. The percentage permitted for use on new projects is set by state law. Given all that, a dedicated parks fund is seen as the key to unlock to door on using the money that's already been

collected. "We have 13.6 available, but we don't have the 86.4 percent to make things happen," said parks board member Donna Bradley. The board is considering adding the dedicated parks fee to utility bills. It would be collected per Keizer dwelling. No amount has been set, but a \$2 month fee (\$4 per billing cycle) would amount to an extra \$355,200 in annual dedicated parks funding. At that amount, it would still take more than 16 years to unlock all of the existing \$793,000 in new SDC funds. Parks board members wrestled with the phrasing of questions on a survey they plan to send to residents for input on the issue.

Citing the last time the city tried to enact a utility fee – on cell phones in 2011, the proposal went down in flames – board member, and former city councilor, Jim Taylor opposed using any funds collected on park improvements.

"I am adamant that this be maintenance only because people want it to be specific about how it's going to help them. We've been down this road before," Taylor said. "We need a 'have to' list not a 'want to' list. The maintenance is very, very difficult to get funding for and if we can take care of the maintenance, then we can go out and look for other projects."

Parks board member JT Hager disagreed with that stance.

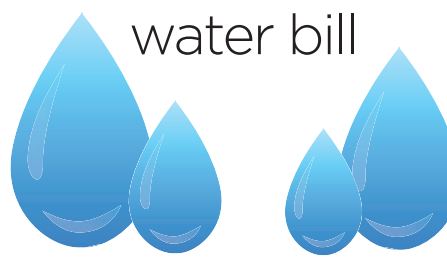
"We are already being frustrated with restrictions and we need the latitude to look at the funds and what needs doing," Hager said. "I don't think you're giving enough credit to the intelligence on the (parks) board. I haven't seen any indication or suggestion that anything (we've approved) wasn't needed or wasn't an improvement."

BY THE NUMBERS

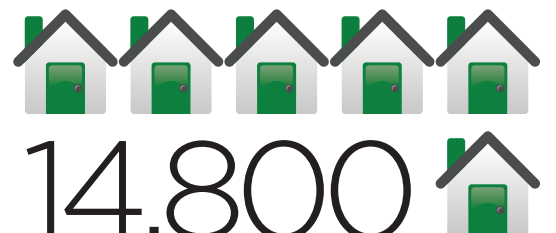
Keizer collects system development charges (SDCs) when new homes and apartments are built. SDCs collected since April 2009 can only be applied to 13.6 percent of any new project.

The Keizer Parks Advisory Board is trying to unlock that money to improve parks throughout Keizer by creating a dedicated parks fund with a fee added to utility bills. The fee below is hypothetical, but shows how long it would take to spend the fees already collected.

\$2 potential fee added to water bill



14,800 approximate number of dwellings in Keizer



\$355,200 parks funds collected in one year of potential fee

\$42,800 amount of SDC funds freed up with one year of dedicated parks fee

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2027	2028	2029	2030	2031

HOW LONG it would take to spend down SDC funds already collected

16 YEARS

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