

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**May 19, 2015**

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**SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUNDS AND MIRACLE FIELD UPDATE**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to provide a background and update on playgrounds and playground equipment for persons with special needs at City parks (Staff Action Tracking Item #6, May 5, 2015 Pre Council Meeting).

Accessibility

There are 187 playgrounds within the current park inventory of 270 parks. *All playgrounds meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in place at the time of installation.* In order to ensure that all new park improvements, including playgrounds, meet ADA requirements, all project plans that include pedestrian mobility components and are estimated to be in excess of \$50,000 are submitted to a Registered Accessibility Specialist for plan review and subsequent inspection. The independent Registered Accessibility Specialist reviews plans for compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards; after construction is completed, the Accessibility Specialist inspects the final product. If any deficiencies are found, they are corrected and a final report is filed with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, the state's regulatory accessibility agency.

From a long range strategic planning perspective, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (adopted by City Council on January 27, 2015, Resolution Number 4399-01-2015), recommends the installation of five Universal Playgrounds, one in each Park Planning District. These 15-20,000 SF facilities incorporate a greater variety of play elements on a much larger scope and scale. In order to accommodate a higher level of use, more robust support facilities are necessary to adequately address traffic and parking, increased patronage (both in quantity and average length of stay), etc. to realize a successful project. Moreover, there are additional park and facility considerations necessary in order to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for both playground and surrounding park users.

In addition to the forty (40) playgrounds recommended for replacement in the Department's Five Year Capital Needs list, four (4) universal playgrounds were included at an estimated cost of \$500,000 each. Although funding for these additional universal playgrounds was not included in the 2014 Bond Program, \$400,000 was allocated in the Bond Program for the replacement of the 22 year old Patricia LeBlanc Park universal playground.

Patricia LeBlanc Park Universal Playground Replacement

The City's first universal playground was built at Patricia LeBlanc Park in 1992 and funded by a private donation. The project included parking lot improvements funded by the City (1986 bond funds). As noted above, the 2014 Bond Program included \$400,000 for replacement of this playground (the original playground sponsors are contributing an estimated additional \$68,000 from the playground trust).

The original 21,000 SF playground will be completely removed and replaced. The playground surface will be a combination of Poured in Place (PIP) surfacing and engineered wood fiber surfacing. Construction started in January 2015, and is anticipated to be complete in July 2015.

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**SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUNDS AND MIRACLE FIELD UPDATE**Dream Park Universal Playground in Trinity Park

As reported to the City Council in an April 8, 2014 memorandum, staff is working with Fort Worth Dream Park, Inc., a private non-profit organization, on a universal playground to be centrally located in Fort Worth. Dream Park, Inc., and City staff considered a number of possible locations ultimately determining that Trinity Park would be the most suitable site for this playground. The project fundraising goal identified by Dream Park, Inc. is \$1,000,000 and a determination on the playground size is pending final design.

In order to accommodate the anticipated increased use and length of stay, additional parking will be required. While the impetus for the additional parking is the universal playground, an increase in off-street parking will benefit year-round park users as well as special events such as Mayfest and the multitude of school groups which schedule outings at the park. Gas well bonus funds received as the result of the mineral lease for Trinity Park are available for the necessary parking improvements.

An M&C to authorize a license agreement with Dream Park, Inc. for the design and construction of the proposed universal playground in Trinity Park is scheduled for the June 16, 2015 City Council agenda. The schedule for construction of the universal playground will be dependent upon the completion of the fundraising campaign by Dream Park, Inc.

Miracle League Field Cooperative

The locally established unit of this international non-profit organization, with the mission of raising funds to build athletic fields that meet the accessibility needs of all children who wish to engage in group sports, approached the City about assisting with the identification of a location where uniquely designed accessible athletic fields could be developed when sufficient funds have been raised.

On October 9, 2014, City staff facilitated an onsite meeting with representatives from the Miracle League and Fort Worth Independent School District at the FWISD Clarke Field Softball Complex to review the existing conditions of the facility and to explore the opportunity of repurposing a portion of the Complex to meet the needs of the organization. Further discussions are pending individual internal follow up consultation amongst the Miracle League organization leadership and the school district administration.

On October 14, 2014, the City Council approved M&C G-18337, which allocated \$100,000 from Proposition Two of the 2014 Bond Program for additional athletic fields on City parkland. The allocated funds will remain designated for this project pending the outcome of the Miracle League and school district discussions.

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SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUNDS AND MIRACLE FIELD UPDATE**Northside Community Park Playground Replacement**

Northside Community Park was included in the 2014 Bond Program (\$145,200) for the replacement of the existing playground. Additionally, gas revenue (\$127,357) and 2004 CIP Council District Discretionary Funding (\$20,000) had been allocated for this park for a total project budget of \$292,557. Staff held two public meetings, and the consensus of the group was to utilize Poured in Place (PIP) surfacing for this playground instead of engineered wood fiber surfacing. The primary interest group is conducting a fund raising campaign to augment the project with additional playground apparatus. Construction of the replacement playground and other park improvements are scheduled for August 2015 through February 2016.

Should you have any questions regarding this Informal Report please contact Parks and Community Services Director Richard Zavala or Assistant City Manager Susan Alanis.

**David Cooke
City Manager**