

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: September 12, 2016
	Agenda Item No. 58 Roll Call No. <u>16-1535</u> Communication No. <u>16-490</u> Submitted by: Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of updated Gray’s Lake Park Master Plan, Areas A through G.

SYNOPSIS:

Staff recommends approval of updated Gray’s Lake Park Master Plan, Areas A through G

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The original master plan for Gray’s Lake Park was approved by the Des Moines City Council on August 16, 1999, by Resolution No. 99-365. This master plan has been the guiding document for the park since that time and set the stage for the popularity of the park as it is today.

On March 7, 2005, by Roll Call No. 05-609, the City Council approved a Memorandum Agreement between the City and the Gray’s Lake Park and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee (Committee) regarding future input from the committee on budgets and operations of both facilities.

Since that time, Parks and Recreation Department staff have periodically met with the Committee to discuss ongoing improvements, repairs and operations at Gray’s Lake Park and the Meredith Trail. In the summer of 2015 it was agreed upon that it would be a good time to update the approved master plan to help continue the success of Gray’s Lake Park.

The Committee contracted with Confluence Planning and Design to update the master plan. The goal of this master plan update was to continue the success that the park has seen over the last 15 years by providing a blueprint for repairs and improvements. Proposed elements within the plan will strike a balance between park safety and the natural environment of the park. This updated master plan will also provide an agreed upon vision for the Committee and the City to use when allocating limited City funding and for prioritizing what projects the Committee will privately fundraise.

After extensive reviews of the existing park elements, multiple meetings with the Committee, City staff and a public open house the updated master plan proposes the following elements in an updated master plan for the park. Additionally, the updated master plan has been presented to the Plan and Zoning Commission, Access Advisory Board and the Board’s Urban Conservation Advisory Committee.

These elements have been broken down into several areas around the park and include:

Area A: Northwest Corner

- Reconfigured parking to reduce size of pavement but increase the number of parking spaces.
- Re-route a portion of the trail to reduce trail and automobile conflicts.
- Emphasize cottonwood tree restoration areas.

Area B: Peninsula

- Existing playground area removed due to excessive flooding – new one in Area C.
- New trail connections to the end of the peninsula.
- Seating and viewing opportunities along the pathway.
- History Lesson Opportunity - talk about the silos and what they were.
- New flood resilient plantings near seating areas.
- Iconic Seating Opportunity (End of the Peninsula) Large wooden blocks anchored so that they float when flooded, but disappear into the landscape during low water conditions. They become artistic floating art pieces during a flood, but seating at the end of a path during low water.

Area C: Beach

- New playground location – near restrooms.
- New splash pad – near restrooms.
- Beach stabilization – series of walls and plants to help with erosion.
- Still plenty of beach area.
- Bridge connection to downtown Des Moines.
- Stream protection and levee improvements to Raccoon River side of trail.
- Close park road east of beach parking lot.
- Large lawn space/picnic area.

Area D: East Shore

- Remove roadway through this area and make the area more natural.

Area E: Southeast Corner

- Connect parking lot to Thomas Beck Road with a new park access.
- Add a permanent restroom facility near parking lot.
- Add additional parking areas on old railroad land south of park.

Area F: Wetland Walkway

- Convert old railroad land to a wetland area that would treat storm water from the watershed to the south of the park before it reaches Gray's Lake.
- Seeks to improve the water quality of the lake and enhance the desolate landscape and integrate with existing park.
- Land was purchased to a future road project called southwest connector, but an upcoming transportation master plan for the City will determine if such facility will be needed in the future. If needed, plans for this area will need to be amended.

Area G: SW Entry

- No new parking proposed.
- No major structures added, but will look at the opportunity to better use the existing structure.
- Improve dock access – expand rental areas as demand grows.

- Add an expanded upper events space – plants, plaza, shade, not structures.

Area H: Breezeway /Underpass

- Construct an underpass to connect Gray's Lake Park to Water Work Park proposed in this location.

Area H is not included in this Council Communication. Questions about the Breezeway/Underpass element of the master plan connecting Gray's Lake Park and Water Works Park posed by the Parks and Recreation Board during its August 23, 2016 meeting are awaiting response from the Des Moines Water Works Park Foundation. The Parks and Recreation Board approved elements A-G without conditions, then conditioned approval of Area H on receipt on answers to the following questions:

1. What is the total cost of the Breezeway/Underpass project? Are approaches included in this cost?
2. How will the Breezeway/Underpass project be funded? What are the specific sources?
3. How will the Breezeway/Underpass be maintained: What is the estimated cost to maintain this element? Who will be responsible for maintenance costs, including the approaches?
4. How will the Breezeway/Underpass influence hydrology during and after flood events? Who will pay for repairs to the approaches to the Breezeway/Underpass resulting from flood events?
5. Who will be the owner for purposes of liability claims?
6. What will be the impact to Gray's Lake (And Fleur Drive) during construction?

Additionally, the Board requested of the Des Moines Water Works Foundation, enhanced outreach efforts to parties directly affected by the improvement, including local neighborhood associations. Further consideration and inclusion of Area H in the Gray's Lake Master Plan by the Park and Recreation Board will be considered later. A future Council action to approve the addition of Area H would follow final action by the Board.

If the master plan is approved by the City Council, City staff will work with the Gray's Lake Park and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee to identify and prioritize projects for private fundraising and for City funding. The first priority for City funding will be stabilization of the Raccoon River shoreline along the north side of the park; the Committee will meet to prioritize and identify their top priority for private fundraising.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: March 7, 2005

Roll Call Number: 05-609

Action: Intergovernmental 28E Agreement with Meredith Corporation Foundation for acceptance of a charitable gift to be used for improvements to American Discovery Trail, Riverpoint Segment and Fleur Trail Connection. ([Council Communication No. 05-119](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 6-1. Nays: Brooks.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: August 23, 2016

Resolution Number: 16-065

Action: While the board approves the master plan, we make note of special concerns regarding the proposed tunnel from Water Works Park to Gray's Lake. The board requests that the Water Works Foundation, or committee where appropriate, enhance outreach efforts to parties directly impacted by the proposed tunnel, including local neighborhood associations. The board requests that the tunnel project be brought back to the Park and Recreation Board for further comment and approval at the appropriate time. Specific concerns include the following: 1) What is the total cost of the tunnel project? Are approaches included in this cost? 2) How will the tunnel project be funded? What are the specific sources? 3) How will it be maintained? What is the estimated cost? Who will be responsible for maintenance cost, including the approaches? 4) With the tunnel in place, how will that impact the hydrology during and after flood events? Who will pay for repairs to the approaches to the tunnel due to flood events? 5) Who will be the end owner for purposes of liability claims? 6) What will be the impact to the Gray's Lake (and Fleur Drive) during construction? Second by Davis. Motion carried.

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: July 26, 2016

Resolution Number: 16-056

Action: Receive and file Gray's Lake master plan.

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: June 28, 2016

Resolution Number: 16-049

Action: Receive and file Gray's Lake master plan presentation.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Prioritization of master plan elements and budgeting of improvements for the park through annual City Capital Improvements Planning process.

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