


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

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|  | Number: | 18-666 | Meeting: | December 17, 2018 |
| | Agenda Item: | 57 | Roll Call: | 18-2107 |
| | Submitted by: | Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director | | |

AGENDA HEADING:

Resolution approving the LiveDSM Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and adopting the Plan as an Element of and amendment to the PlanDSM: Creating our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

SYNOPSIS:

This action adopts LiveDSM, Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, amends the plan as an element of and amendment to the PlanDSM: Creating our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, and to approve an amendment to the Parks and Recreation Goal 2 Objective PR14 in PlanDSM to read “All residents should live within a safe, 10-minute walk of a park, trail or open space.”

FISCAL IMPACT:

Implementation of the plan will be funded through the City’s normal capital and operating budgets process, subject to annual City Council considerations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The City of Des Moines’ park and open space is an outwardly visible reflection of the quality of life that is attracting people, businesses and major events to the City. Facilities like Gray’s Lake, the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden, Principal Riverwalk, Cownie Sports Parks, Union Park and the Bill Riley Trail are icons of Des Moines, with annual uses in the millions by residents and visitors alike. These landmarks are responsible for direct and indirect economic benefits to the City through increased property tax values, attracting sports, music and cultural events that bring visitors to the City and development that is sited near park and trail facilities.
- The City’s park system is no accident -- it is the result of thoughtful planning articulating a shared vision of the City’s parks, trails and natural resources. This shared vision was last documented in 1995 in the comprehensive park plan known as *Parklands, A Celebration of Des Moines’ Community Spirit (Parklands)*. This 20-year old document successfully guided the City’s parks and recreation system through significant changes, contributing to Des Moines being recognized nationally as a special place to live, work, play and visit.
- On June 17, 2017, by Roll Call No. 17-0990, the City Council approved the hiring of RDG Planning and Design to undertake the completion of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, which will be the successor to *Parklands*.

- In order to be consistent with PlanDSM, this plan is being called LiveDSM and will serve as the City's comprehensive plan for parks and recreation over the next 20 years.
- Since Parklands was adopted, there have been many changes in the City, which have included:
 - A growing regional and City population
 - A more diverse demographic within the City of Des Moines
 - An enhanced need for paved walking and bicycling trails
 - The expressed need for quality parks, recreation facilities and program services
- The planning process sought to reflect these changes in Des Moines with over 2,000+ public contacts regarding the future of parks and recreation services. These contacts have been done through the following means:
 - Online questionnaire
 - Public open houses
 - Steering Committee meetings
 - Racial Equity Workshop and Evening Dialogue
 - Focus groups with neighborhood associations
 - Focus groups with Parks and Recreation Board citizen sub-committees
 - Pop up events at schools and community recreation centers
- The result of all this input from the public is a new vision for parks and recreation services in Des Moines in the form of the proposed plan for approval, LiveDSM.
- This vision for parks and recreation states that the parks and recreation system is, essentially, "everywhere" and a fundamental part of daily living for all residents and visitors. According to the feedback from the public, the system's success in delivering meaningful quality of life will be clear when:
 - Parks and Recreation leads in achieving equity goals for the community
 - Programming addresses goals of healthy living: active, reflective, social and educational
 - Trails connect in all ways - everyone is within a 10-minute walk (half-mile) of a park or trail
 - The park system excels in stewardship with nature always at hand
 - World-class facilities help set the City's national identity and character
 - Parks and trails use the latest technology
 - The system attracts and keeps new businesses and young adults here
 - Operational and maintenance needs sync with the system's funding
 - Neighborhood parks serve as the system's backbone
- The plan is organized around five (5) key goals that propose to bring well-resourced, best management practices to inform parks decisions – much as businesses would operate in the private sector. The plan recommends a commitment to cultural and organizational improvement. These changes are needed to achieve a world-class system that can stand the test of time – enriching/expanding partnerships while attaining new levels of effectiveness in operations and growing resources to keep pace with progress.

Each goal has a short vision statement, and articulates an approach to accomplishing the goal. Each goal and approach are articulated below:

- Goal 1: Attraction – Support programs that attract people to parks
 - Approach to accomplish goal:

- Establish a series of guidelines and policies that standardizes fees and evaluation tools for programming
 - Establish a Recreation Committee to understand the recreation needs of the community
 - Start a pop-up park initiative to deliver programs where the system has gaps
 - Start a community activities guide that is sent out at least once per year to all Des Moines households
 - Create winter-season program options emphasizing outdoor play and engagement
- Goal 2: Heart – Make Parks and Trails the Heart of the Community
 - Approach to accomplish goal:
 - Identify system gaps—missing parks or trail connections, areas in need of enhancement and areas that need more activation to ensure all citizens are within a safe 10-minute walk to a high-quality park or trail
 - Consistently provide a sense of safety and security
 - Prioritize areas where equity needs are highest
- Goal 3: Nature – Improve Natural Systems
 - Approach to accomplish goal:
 - Create a system-wide plan that guides natural resource management priorities and methods on land and water; monitoring and reporting; and how volunteers and other resources are used
 - Educate people to understand and engage with nature in parks without harming wildlife or sensitive natural features
 - Describe healthy, resilient natural systems in parks and their benefit to Des Moines for citizens and elected officials
 - Develop a Natural Resources Management Plan for one (1) park
- Goal 4: Equity – Deliver Equitable Facilities and Programs
 - Approach to accomplish goal:
 - Continually expand the definition of a park to align with how people in Des Moines need and use parks and public spaces
 - Establish a baseline and begin to measure progress
 - Continue dialogue on equity in parks and recreation
 - Develop and adopt a series of policies regarding equity and its impact to parks and recreation
 - Establish “Parks for New Des Moines Program” to work with City leaders and partners to design relevant programs accessible to people of color, immigrants, refugees and persons of all abilities
- Goal 5: Innovation – Launch New Approaches to Parks and Recreation
 - Approach to accomplish goal:
 - Expand successful partnerships that have allowed the department to leverage allocated capital and operating funds
 - Leverage best practices from other park systems (city, county, state and federal)
 - Evaluate existing processes and decision criteria for driving partnerships, programs and projects to identify gaps in Best Management Practices (BMP)
 - Maintain a culture of creativity and innovation
 - Establish data-driven analytical processes, methods and tools to drive decisions
 - Benchmark success through parks/trails inventory

- The plan also includes a chapter regarding implementation and how to use the plan, so that staff, citizens, and elected and appointed officials can ensure that the plan is successful. Staff will use these sections of the plan to identify which specific objectives should be addressed upon adoption of the plan.
- On November 15, 2018 the Plan and Zoning Commission made a unanimous recommendation to the City Council regarding amendment to the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow, City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan, to adopt the LiveDSM Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan as an element of PlanDSM and to approve an amendment to the Parks and Recreation Goal 2 Objective PR14 in PlanDSM to read “All residents should live within a safe, 10-minute walk of a park, trail or open space.”
- Staff recommends that City Council approve LiveDSM, the Parks and Recreation Department’s Comprehensive Plan, and recommend that the City Council adopt the plan as a component of PlanDSM, the City’s Comprehensive Plan. LiveDSM gives the Parks and Recreation Department the vision, mission and goals to improve parks and recreation services in the City of Des Moines and allows for the flexibility of a changing community with changing parks and recreation needs over the next 20 years.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: June 12, 2017

Roll Call Number: [17-0990](#)

Action: [Proposal](#) from RDG Planning and Design for professional consultant services for the development of a Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, \$249,638. ([Council Communication No. 17-458](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: November 27, 2018

Resolution Number: 18-078

Action: Motion by Potter to approve LiveDSM comprehensive plan. Second by Woodard. Motion carried 14-0.

Board: Plan and Zoning Commission

Date: November 15, 2018

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on November 15, 2018, the members voted 11-0 to approve the LiveDSM Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan as an element of the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, as shown in the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendation, and to approve an amendment to the Parks and Recreation Goal 2 Objective PR14 in PlanDSM to read “All residents should live within a safe, 10-minute walk of a park, trail or open space”.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Implementation of the plan will be funded through the City’s normal capital and operating budgets process, subject to annual City Council considerations.

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