

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	25-417	Meeting:	November 3, 2025
	Agenda Item:	24	Roll Call:	25-1486
	Submitted by:	Benjamin R. Page, Parks and Recreation Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving and authorizing the execution of agreement with Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program for Cheatom Park Playground Improvements Project.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval and authorization of IDNR Agreement No. 19-01410 for LWCF, between the City of Des Moines, the IDNR, and the National Park Service (NPS) for \$145,000 towards the Cheatom Park Playground Improvements project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$145,000 LWCF grant revenue toward an overall pre-engineering estimate of \$310,000.

Funding Source: Anticipated \$145,000 in LWCF funding from IDNR and NPS and remaining funding from: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 88, Park Playground Improvements, PK185, \$145,000, G.O. Bonds and Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST), and estimated \$20,000 off-set from value of volunteer installation of equipment

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The NPS LWCF is managed through the IDNR and supports cities with populations of 50,000 and up in seeking up to \$250,000 for the development and/or acquisition of land for natural resources and outdoor recreation.
- The Cheatom Park Playground Improvements Project has been recommended for a NPS LWCF grant award of \$145,000, which represents approximately 47% of the total pre-engineering project cost estimate of \$310,000.
- Approval by the City Council is required to authorize acceptance of the grant agreement. The City's acceptance of LWCF grant funding also requires the City to record notice of the grant agreement with the Polk County Recorder depicting the property and the grant funded project

boundary map, including a statement that the LWCF recipient property has been developed with LWCF assistance and cannot be converted from public outdoor recreation use without prior written approval of Secretary of Interior.

- Located within the Cheatom Park neighborhood, the 3.5-acre park serves over 2,600 residents within a 10-minute walk based on the current Trust for Public Land (TPL) ParkServe report.
- The park features beautiful mature trees, open lawn areas for active recreation, basketball court, futsal mini pitch court, open-air shelter, restrooms, playground, sidewalks, pathways, picnic tables, benches, charcoal grills, and a drinking fountain.
- Public input played a large role in the concept design development and layout of the new playground area, as well as selection of play equipment program, type and, aesthetics and color selection and included:
 - August 24, 2021: Back to school bash, held at Cheatom Park to gain overall insights on Cheatom Park, current use, desired use, and priorities.
 - October 25, 2021: Community event held at Cheatom Park to provide a report, and on the valuable insights gained and focus discussion on priorities identified.
 - January 14, 2025: Cheatom Park Neighborhood Association meeting, presentation to solicit feedback on the development of a preferred playground and site improvement plan which considered the prior community inputs, approved budget and funding opportunities.
 - September 9, 2025: Cheatom Park Neighborhood Association meeting, presentation to refine the preferred playground and site improvement plan, including color selection and announce an online questionnaire.
 - September 12-28, 2025: Online questionnaire with onsite signage to solicit input on the preferred playground and site improvement plan, including color selection.
- The proposed improvements at Cheatom Park will include: Removal of the existing playground equipment and surfacing, restoration of the existing area to turf grass, relocation of playground area in the park, excavation and grading, installation of concrete playground containment curbing, accessible walkway(s) and playground ramp, paved seating areas (picnic tables and/or benches), sidewalk concrete repairs, purchasing new playground equipment, blown-in engineered wood fiber mulch surfacing, hydro-mulch and seed for restoration, rental equipment need for volunteer playground build, benches and bike racks.
- Pending City Council approval and grant award, the project is anticipated to order construction in early 2026. Substantial completion of construction is anticipated later in 2026.
- The Parks and Recreation Department anticipates overseeing a volunteer playground build to install the play equipment. The program offers meaningful, well-organized volunteer experiences, supporting community pride, sense of ownership and project cost savings. The volunteer playground build would occur in fall 2026.



Cheatom Park Playground Improvements - Concept Plan



Cheatom Park Playground Improvements - Concept Rendering

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: July 15, 2024

Roll Call Number: [24-0976](#)

Action: [Ratification](#) of the NPS LWCF grant application by the Parks and Recreation Department seeking \$145,000 for Cheatom Park Playground Improvements Project. [\(Council Communication No. 24-281\)](#) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Coleman. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Anticipated future actions include ordering construction, public hearing, receive and file bids, designate lowest bidder, approval of contract and bond, partial payments to the contractor and final acceptance of work.

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