

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



	Number: 26-020	Meeting: January 26, 2026
	Agenda Item: 9a	Roll Call: 26-0096
	Submitted by: Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director, and Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer	

AGENDA HEADING:

Ordering construction of the following: Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements - Receiving bids, (2-10-26), and Setting date of hearing, (3-9-26). (Construction Estimate - \$3,700,000).

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend the City Council order construction of the improvement and set dates to receive bids and hold a public hearing, as required by Iowa Code, utilizing the method of financing referenced below. The Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements project is the first of three (3) sub-phase projects that make up Phase 1 of the community and stakeholder driven Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan. This Phase 1A project includes elevating and realigning the Neal Smith Trail to reduce the frequency of closing due to flooding, a trail spur connection to 2nd Avenue and the Central Place Trail, two (2) open-air shelters with user amenities, three (3) dedicated fishing areas with two (2) being American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, ADA-compliant ingress and egress pathways, power boat ramp and associated parking, ADA-inclusive pier and courtesy dock, storm sewer, stormwater best management practices, natural resources improvements, and shoreline improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$3,700,000 City Engineer's Estimate

Funding Source: Various Funding sources, as follows:

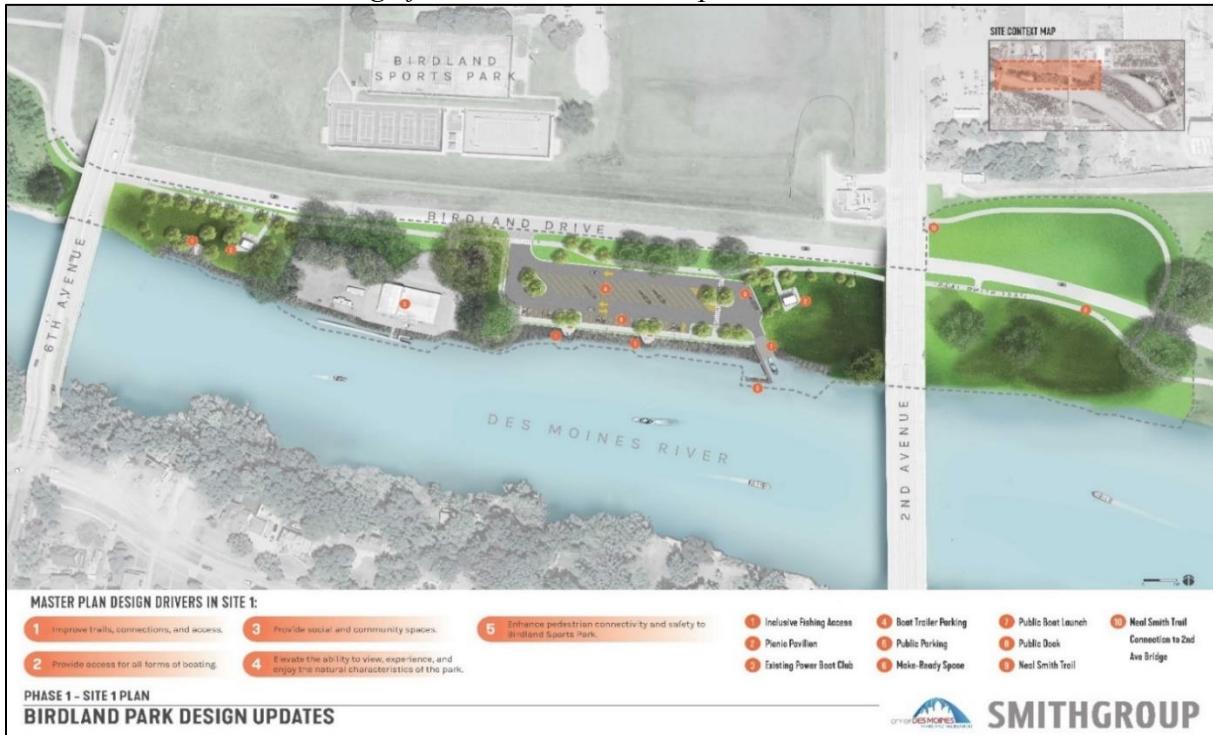
- \$200,000 - State Recreational Trail (SRT) Grant
- \$108,000 - Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Water Quality Initiative (WQI) Cost-Share Grant
- \$300,000 - Land Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Grant
- \$150,000 - Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant
- \$300,000 - Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grant
- \$1,566,005 - Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST)
- \$1,075,995 - Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Adopted CIP, Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, General Obligation Bonds

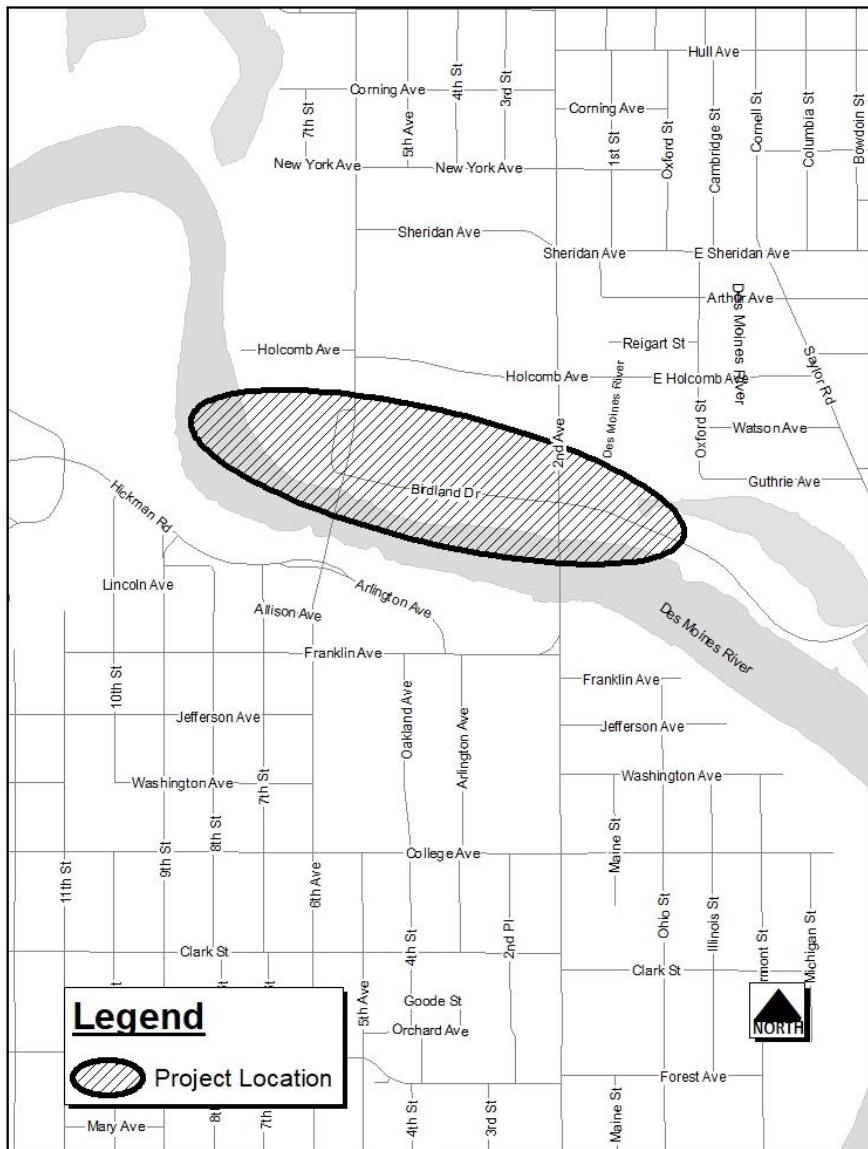
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Engineering Department has prepared plans, specifications, form of contract documents, and City Engineer's estimate for the construction of the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements, Activity ID 11-2023-003. The improvements include the construction of a Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) parking lot, boat ramp and dock, fishing piers, two (2) open-air shelters, storm sewer pipe, storm sewer manholes, storm sewer intakes, bioretention cells, PCC sidewalks and trail, PCC driveways, grading, cast-in-place concrete walls, electrical work, erosion control, surface restoration and other incidental items, all in accordance with the contract documents including Plan File No. 674-278/359, located at Birdland Park between 6th Avenue and 2nd Avenue, south of Birdland Drive.
- The estimated construction cost is \$3,700,000. The proposed plans, specifications, and form of contract documents are available for public inspection in the Des Moines City Engineer's Office.
- A master plan for Birdland Park and Marina was developed in 2021 and was approved by the Parks and Recreation Board and adopted by the City Council. The master plan outlines a logical, highest value approach to implementing multiple phases of proposed improvements. In total the project was estimated to cost \$54.4 million in 2021, and implementation is planned to spread across five (5) recommended phases.
- Informed by LiveDSM, the Parks and Recreation Department's comprehensive plan, the Birdland master planning project has been community and stakeholder driven. To facilitate project feedback and achieve community support from the neighborhood and everyday park users, three (3) public meetings were held at different phases of the project's development. The meetings garnered over 200 attendees and generated 350 plus follow-up survey responses. Additional public engagement for Phase 1 projects was ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 with all master plan stakeholders and in-person presentations to Union Park, River Bend, Highland Park/Oak Park, and Capitol Park Neighborhood Associations. The overarching sentiment was appreciation that the approved and adopted master plan is being implemented and realized.
- Given the complexity and scale of the plan, intentional sequencing or phasing is recommended to support improvements functioning on their own and are not contingent upon a subsequent phase.
- Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan - Phase 1A Project Improvements Summary:
 - Realign, elevate, and reconstruct the flood-prone segment of the Neal Smith Trail (approximately 0.4 miles)
 - Over 160,000 trail uses were recorded in 2024 by a nearby infrared counter
 - Develop a trail spur connection to 2nd Avenue Bridge and Central Place Trail (approximately 600 linear feet)
 - Develop two (2) open-air shelters with electrical service, bike racks, grill pits, and seating
 - Develop three (3) fishing locations two (2) ADA-accessible, one (1) hike-in)
 - Develop a new powerboat ramp and associated parking area with:
 - Ideal ingress/egress launching and docking approach angle
 - ADA-accessible floating courtesy dock

- Parking with tree plantings, stormwater BMPs, and LED lighting
- 23 standard stalls, two (2) ADA stalls, 20 standard trailer stalls, and one (1) ADA trailer stall
- Planting over 100 native and diverse trees and shrubs, and approximately 3.5 acres of prairie and savanna vegetation to broadly support water quality and wildlife habitat
- Install approximately 1,800 feet of shoreline improvements to limit erosion and enhance flood resilience
- A dedicated project [webpage](#) offers a repository of project information including links to digital public meetings, video recordings from prior meetings, downloadable exhibits such as the presentations slides from public meetings and the master plan concept, and updates on the plan adoption process. The project [webpage](#) can be found on the City's website under Parks and Recreation Department by navigating to current planning projects.
- Public engagement on the Phase 1 projects was ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 with engagement being provided to all master plan stakeholders and in-person presentations to all surrounding area neighborhood associations including Union Park Neighborhood Association (NA), River Bend NA, Highland Park/Oak Park NA, and Capitol Park NA. The overarching sentiment was appreciation that the approved and adopted master plan is being implemented and realized.
- In late 2022, a professional service agreement was completed with SmithGroup, Inc. to provide engineering design for two sites within Birdland Park, Phase 1A and Phase 1B. Phase 1B is approximately 95% complete with design and is expected to bid early spring 2026 pending City Council approval.
- This Phase 1A project is anticipated to begin in spring 2026 and be completed in late spring 2027.

Plan Rendering of the Birdland Park Improvements Phase 1A Site



**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: September 8, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-1224](#)

Action: [CAT](#) Grant Agreement with Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and ICON Water Trails for the Birdland Park Master Plan Improvements - Phase 1 Project in the amount of \$1,000,000. ([Council Communication No. 25-343](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: August 18, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-1125](#)

Action: [Ratification](#) of Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) REAP grant funding application seeking \$300,000 for Birdland Park Master Plan Phase 1A Improvements. ([Council Communication No. 25-314](#)) Moved by Voss to adopt. Second by Simonson. Motion Carried 6-0. Absent: Gatto.

Date: June 30, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-0887](#)

Action: [Approval](#) of IDOT SRT Grant Application for the Birdland Park Improvements Phase 1A-Reconstruction of the Neal Smith Trail Project, \$200,000. ([Council Communication No. 25-253](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Zoning Board of Adjustment

Date: November 20, 2024

Resolution Number: ZBOA-2024-000055

Action: Appeal for requested Conditional Use for a “Public Recreation Area” use in an “F” District. Decision and Order conditionally granting the appeal was adopted by a vote of 7-0 with all Board Members present voting in favor thereof.

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: February 23, 2021

Resolution Number: 21-011

Action: Motion by Facto to approve the Birdland Park Master Plan. Second by Woodard. Motion carried.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

- Anticipated actions include public hearing, receive and file bids, designate lowest bidder, and approve contract and bond; also partial payments to the contractor and final acceptance of work.

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