

## COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



Number:	26-023	Meeting:	January 26, 2026
Agenda Item:	9c	Roll Call:	26-0098
Submitted by:	<b>Benjamin R. Page, Parks and Recreation Director</b>		

### AGENDA HEADING:

Approving and authorizing the execution of an Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant agreement for the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements.

### SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of the IDNR Grant Agreement Number 26-R4-NR for \$300,000 in REAP funding for the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements project.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$3,700,000 in estimated total Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements project costs

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 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, General Obligation Bonds

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- A master plan for Birdland Park and Marina was developed in 2021 and was approved by the Parks and Recreation Board in February 2021 and adopted by the City Council on March 22, 2021 by Roll Call No 21-0465. The master plan outlines a logical, highest value approach to implementing multiple phases of proposed improvements. In total, implementation of the full project was estimated to cost \$54.4 million in 2021 and 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 was to be 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 by the Numbers:
  - 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] will be ADA-accessible, one [1] will be 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
  - Plant 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. It can be found on the City's website under Parks and Recreation Department by navigating to current planning projects.
- In late 2022, a professional service agreement was completed with SmithGroup, Inc. to provide engineering design for two (2) sites within Birdland Park, Phase 1A and Phase 1B. To date, the design of Phase 1A is 100% complete and the design of Phase 1B is approximately 95% complete.

- On August 18, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-1125, City Council ratified submittal of the Iowa IDNR REAP grant application seeking \$300,000 for Birdland Park Master Plan Phase 1A Improvements. This application requires that the City Council provide certain authorizations and certifications when submitting the application. This includes the responsibility for project completion as outlined in the project proposal and any additional requirements which may be included in the subsequent grant agreement should a funding award be offered.
- The Parks and Recreation operating budget supports the on-going maintenance and operation of the proposed park and trail facilities by operations staff dedicated to these important tasks. The approved CIP sheet for Birdland Park and Marina (PK189) specifically calls out this project and has funding dedicated to it.
- This project was presented to the Polk County REAP Committee on July 30, 2025. Following this public presentation and committee discussion, the REAP application was approved by Polk County (REAP Chair, Adam Fendrick).
- Pending City Council approval, both the Phase 1A and Phase 1B projects are expected to bid winter 2025/2026 or early spring 2026 for substantial construction in calendar year 2026 and close out in 2027 following the completion of all site restoration and landscaping.

*Plan Rendering of the Birdland Park Improvements Phase 1A Site*



**MASTER PLAN DESIGN DRIVERS IN SITE 1:**

1 Improve trails, connections, and access.

3 Provide social and community spaces.

5 Enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety to Birdland Sports Park.

2 Provide access for all forms of boating.

4 Elevate the ability to view, experience, and enjoy the natural characteristics of the park.

1 Inclusive Fishing Access

2 Picnic Pavilion

3 Existing Power Boat Club

4 Boat Trailer Parking

5 Public Parking

6 Make-Ready Space

7 Public Boat Launch

8 Public Dock

9 Neal Smith Trail

10 Neal Smith Trail Connection to 2nd Ave Bridge

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: September 8, 2025

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

Action: [Community](#) Attraction and Tourism (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 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.

## 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 ordering construction, 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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