

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	26-059	Meeting:	February 23, 2026
	Agenda Item:	6b	Roll Call:	26-0221
	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 1B Improvements – Receiving bids, (3-24-26), and Setting date of hearing, (4-20-26). (Construction Estimate - \$7,400,000).

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 1B project is the second of three (3) sub-phase projects that make up Phase 1 of the community and stakeholder driven Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan. This project includes a new Portland Concrete Cement (PCC) parking lot, open green space, new playground area, skate ribbon, restroom and concessions building, sidewalks and trail along with other amenities. The project also includes native and diverse plantings, including prairie and savanna vegetation to broadly support water quality and wildlife habitat.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$7,400,000 City Engineer's Estimate

Funding Source: Various Funding sources, as follows:

- \$2,979,465 - Land Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Grant
- \$350,000 - Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant
- \$2,796,530- Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST)
- \$1,274,005 - Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (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 1B Improvements, Activity ID 11-2025-004. The improvements include the construction of a Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) parking lot, PCC skate ribbon, playground area, restroom and concessions building, boardwalks, playground surfacing, storm sewer pipe, storm sewer manholes, storm sewer

intakes, bioretention cells and plantings, granular subbase, PCC sidewalks and trail, grading, electrical work, pavement markings, erosion control, surface restoration and other incidental items, all in accordance with the contract documents including Plan File No. 671-184/297, located at Birdland Park, west of Saylor Road.

- The estimated construction cost for Phase 1B is \$7,400,000. 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 master 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 1B Project Improvements Summary:
 - Rehabilitated and right-sized parking lot with lighting, stormwater management biocell with native plantings, and one-way circulation for improved pedestrian safety.
 - Great lawn community gathering space with boardwalk overlook.
 - Destination quality, nature themed playground with unitary tile surfacing to support enhanced ADA accessibility.
 - Multi-functional skating ribbon to support year-round skating usage and seasonal Traffic Safety Garden programming where park users can learn to safely navigate the urban environment on a bicycle.
 - Flood-proofed restroom and concessions building to be open year-round.
 - Improvements to the Birdland Park Trail spur off the Neal Smith Trail.
 - Lagoon overlook deck on the Ding Darling Enclosed Shelter to expand capacity for the most popular rental shelter in the park system.
 - Multiple plazas, seating areas, and other park user amenities to best support longer visits and the diverse recreational offerings in the park more broadly.
 - Multiple naturalized drainage areas and diverse native plantings through the park.

- The Birdland Phase 1B project includes over \$4 million in external grant funding from the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the National Park Service via the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Up to \$200,000 in additional external grant funding is potentially pending from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship’s Water Quality Initiative Program (up to \$150,000) and the Wright Foundation (up to \$50,000).
- 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.
- 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.
- This Phase 1B project is anticipated to begin in spring 2026 and be completed in summer 2027.
- Bids for the Phase 1A Improvements Project were previously received on February 10, 2026. A public hearing regarding the resolution for approving plans, specifications, form of contract documents, engineer’s estimate, receive and file bids, and designating lowest responsible bidder for that project is currently planned to be presented to Council at its March 9, 2026 meeting.

Plan Rendering of the Birdland Park Improvements Phase 1B Site



PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: December 22, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-1689](#)

Action: [Negotiation](#) and Execution of subrecipient agreements with Iowa Confluence Water Trails for ICON water trail improvements at Birdland Park. Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

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: June 30, 2025

Roll Call Number: [25-0888](#)

Action: [Approving](#) and authorizing the execution of agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program for Birdland Park Improvements Project, and authorizing City Manager to negotiate subrecipient agreement. ([Council Communication No. 25-254](#)) 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 execution of additional grant agreement(s), 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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