



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Parks and Recreation
To: City Council
From: City Manager & Staff
Council Meeting Date: April 17, 2023
Re: Whitegate Park Property Development

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting a resolution setting a public hearing for the proposed park plan for the Whitegate Park property and authorizing the construction of improvements at the park. Staff is also requesting the City Council to approve "Whitegate Park" as the official park name. The proposed improvements at the park include a new playground, shelter, basketball court, handball court, youth activity court, open playfield, sidewalks, lighting and tree plantings. The total project budget is \$400,000 and is funded by the 2021 Park Sales Tax and a donation from the JBS Hometown Strong initiative. Staff is requesting City Council authorization for the City Manager to sign a donation agreement with Swift Prepared Foods and appropriate \$200,000 in donated funds to the capital improvement project. Portions of the project will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department, and the proposed improvements will be completed using a combination of contract and force account labor. Contract labor will be used for site grading, sidewalk installation, playground installation and court surfacing. Park staff will complete all other work at the park. Improvements at the park are scheduled to begin summer 2023, with an anticipated completion date of spring 2025.

Discussion

On January 2, 2018, City Council approved the acquisition of 2.24 acres of land located at the corner of Towne Drive and Whitegate Drive. The property was owned by the Columbia Insurance Group and is located in a primary park acquisition service area in the 2013 Neighborhood Parks Plan. The plan is included in the City's *2013 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*, which evaluated future needs for neighborhood park land acquisitions. The purchase of the property would allow for the development of a neighborhood park for citizens living in this area of Columbia. As part of the 2021 Park Sales Tax renewal, staff included \$200,000 for the development of the neighborhood park.

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting approval of a resolution that would set a public hearing adopting the proposed park plan for the Whitegate Park property and authorizing the construction of improvements at the park. Staff is also requesting the City Council to approve "Whitegate Park" as the official park name. In addition to these actions, staff is requesting City Council authorization for the City Manager to sign a donation agreement with Swift Prepared Foods and appropriate \$200,000 in donated funds to the capital improvement project. The proposed improvements at the park include a new playground, shelter, basketball court, handball court, youth activity court, open playfield, sidewalks, lighting and tree plantings.



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Staff met at the park property multiple times throughout the last year to discuss potential improvements to the park to create a neighborhood park that would serve all types of park users. Staff created the proposed park plan based on neighborhood needs, typical neighborhood park amenities and the need for open greenspace in this area of Columbia. Staff held an interested parties meeting at the park property on November 1, 2022. Park staff met with approximately 20 citizens to discuss the proposed plans and gain feedback about the proposed improvements. The public had an additional opportunity to provide comments about the project via [beheard.como.gov](https://www.como.gov). In addition to the normal public input process for a park project, staff also sent the park plans directly to representatives from United Community Builders, Rainbow House, Columbia Insurance Group, Galaxy of Stars Daycare and the Reentry Opportunity Center. Each of these organizations are neighbors to the park property so providing them with additional information was important for the park development project. All feedback from the public input meeting and [beheard.como.gov](https://www.como.gov) are included with this Council memo and can also be found online at:

https://www.como.gov/webapps/cipweb/display_project.php?project_id=2086

During the public input process for the project, park staff also had discussions about the development of the Whitegate Park property with representatives from Swift Prepared Foods and JBS USA about a potential donation through the JBS Hometown Strong program. With the opening of the Principe Foods Italian meat processing plant in Columbia, the development of the park was one project considered for a donation through the Hometown Strong initiative. The program provides financial assistance for community improvements and, after multiple discussions with program representatives, the City was notified that the JBS Hometown Strong program would be donating \$200,000 toward the park development project. As part of the agreement, park staff will recognize JBS, Swift Prepared Foods and Principe Foods with plaques located on the park benches and at the shelter.

Park staff introduced the proposed park plans and partnership with the JBS Hometown Strong program to the Parks and Recreation Commission on March 16, 2023. After discussion of the project and additional funding opportunity, the commissioners voted to endorse the proposed plans for the park development and recommended that Council approve the plans as presented. The Commission also recommended naming the park "Whitegate Park" as part of the motion. After considering all citizen comments and the P&R Commission recommendation, staff believes that the master plan, phase one improvements and park name represent a consensus of park users and staff.

The proposed improvements to the park will include the following:

1. Contract labor will be used to install new playground equipment at the park including a playground for 2 to 5 year olds, swing set, independent climbing feature and a playground for 5 to 12 year olds. The new ADA compliant play structure will meet current ASTM safety guidelines, and park staff will install wood fiber mulch throughout the designated playground area. The additional donated funds from the JBS Hometown Strong initiative will allow the department to install separate playgrounds for the different age groups and add the independent climbing feature.



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2. Park staff will install a 24 foot by 24 foot prefabricated metal shelter near the center of the park. The shelter will have four picnic tables and available electric for reservations and special events. Park staff will also install a water fountain and bike racks adjacent to the shelter.
3. Contract labor will be used to construct a one-wall handball court on the east side of the park. The addition of the handball court was made by citizens at the public input meeting and will be the first handball court in the park system inventory. The design and placement of the court will allow for the addition of a second court in the future if needed.
4. A combination of park staff and contract labor will be used to construct two additional courts at the park. A basketball court will be constructed on the southeast side of the shelter and will include three regulation basketball goals, two player benches and painted court surface. The additional funds from the JBS Hometown Strong program will also allow the Department to add LED lighting to the basketball court. These lights will be programmed to work from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm each day by a manual switch at the courts. Along with the standard basketball court, park staff will utilize contract labor to construct a youth activity court on the north side of the shelter. This space will include two to three basketball goals with A-Z letter painting and 1-9 number painting on the surface of the court to create basketball shooting games among participants. In addition, contract labor will be used to add four square and hopscotch on the courts.
5. A combination of contract labor and park staff will be used to complete the remaining items related to the neighborhood park development. Contract labor will be used to install internal walkways and a new sidewalk along Towne Drive. Park staff will install LED park lighting along the internal walkways and a new park sign on Whitegate Drive. Staff will also install a disc golf basket and soccer goal in the open playfield, park benches, complete all turf establishment after the installation of park amenities is completed and plant 16 to 20 new trees in the park.

The \$400,000 improvement project is funded by the 2021 Park Sales Tax and a donation from the JBS Hometown Strong program. The project is included in the City's FY2023 Capital Improvement Program budget. Portions of the project will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department, and the proposed improvements will be completed using a combination of contract and force account labor. Contract labor will be used for site grading, sidewalk installation, playground installation and court construction and surfacing. Park staff will complete all other work at the park. Improvements at the park are scheduled to begin summer 2023, with an anticipated completion date of spring 2025.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The total project cost is \$400,000 and is funded by the 2021 Park Sales Tax and a donation from the JBS Hometown Strong initiative. The funding includes \$200,000 in Park Sales Tax funding and \$200,000 in donated funds.

Long-Term Impact: Park staff estimates an annual increase in expenses between \$4,000 and \$6,000 for the maintenance of the park. This will include mowing, cleaning, trash removal, mulching and general park maintenance.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Safe Neighborhoods, Tertiary Impact: Inclusive Community

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
1/2/2018	B396-17: Authorizing a contract for sale of real estate with Columbia Mutual Insurance Company for the purchase of property located on the northeast corner of the White Gate Drive and Towne Drive intersection. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3294841&GUID=9398D677-2715-4B27-96A9-3FBFC1D17BF4&Options=&Search=

Suggested Council Action

Approve the resolution setting a public hearing for the adoption of the Whitegate Park property park plan, authorizing the construction of improvements, adopting "Whitegate Park" as the official park name, authorizing the City Manager to sign a donation agreement with Swift Foods and appropriating the donated funds.