



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: March 2, 2026

Re: Rothwell Park Improvements

Impacted Ward: Ward 4

Executive Summary

Public hearing for a capital improvement project at Rothwell Park. The Parks and Recreation Department is proposing improvements that include playground structure replacement, retaining wall replacement, installation of poured-in-place rubber safety surfacing, a single table shelter and trail improvements. The total project budget is \$200,000 and is funded by the Park Sales Tax. In addition to the approval of the project, staff is also requesting a \$40,000 appropriation of Park Sales Tax funding. Portions of the project will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department and will be completed using a combination of contract and force account labor. Contract labor will be used for the replacement of the playground, installation of poured-in-place surfacing and retaining wall construction. Park staff will complete all other proposed improvements. The improvements at Rothwell Park are scheduled to begin spring 2026, with an anticipated completion date of late spring 2027.

Discussion

Rothwell Park, located at 309 Rothwell Drive, was purchased from the Rothwell Heights Neighborhood Association in 1986. Use of this land was restricted to park purposes as part of the acquisition agreement. The 5-acre neighborhood park includes a playground and 0.3-mile walking trail. The park was first developed in 1999-2000.

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting approval of an ordinance authorizing the capital improvement project at Rothwell Park and appropriating \$40,000 in additional Park Sales Tax funding for the project. The proposed improvements include playground replacement, retaining wall replacement, poured-in-place rubber surfacing, a single table shelter and trail improvements.

After reviewing the proposed Rothwell Park improvements in the *2013 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, staff focused internal discussions on the replacement of the existing playground and replacement of the retaining walls constructed in 2000. Park staff held a public input meeting at the park on September 9, 2025 to meet with 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 an online survey at BeHeard.CoMo.gov from Aug. 27 to Oct. 15, 2025. All feedback from the public input meetings and online surveys are included with this Council memo and may also be found online at [Rothwell Park public input comments](#).

Park staff introduced the proposed Rothwell Park improvements to the Parks and Recreation Commission on Oct. 16, 2025. After discussion of the project, the commissioners voted to

endorse the proposed improvements and recommended that Council approve the plans as presented. After considering all citizen comments and the P&R Commission recommendation, staff believes the proposed improvements to the park represent a consensus of park users and staff.

The proposed improvements at Rothwell Park include the following:

1. Contract labor will be used to replace the existing playground structure with a new playground system designed for children ages 5 to 12 years old. The new ADA-compliant play structure will meet current ASTM safety guidelines. Contractors will also install a poured-in-place rubber surface in the playground area.
2. As part of the playground replacement at the park, contract labor will be used to replace the existing retaining wall located at the playground with a new retaining wall system.
3. Park staff will complete additional work at the park including trail improvements, clearing of invasive plant species and the addition of a single table shelter adjacent to the new playground. The trail improvements will include resurfacing and regrading the gravel trail, converting a 40-foot section of the trail to a concrete surface and improving water shed on other portions of the gravel trail.

The total project budget is \$200,000 and is funded by the Park Sales Tax. The project budget in the City's FY2026 Capital Improvement Program budget was listed at \$160,000. Staff is requesting an additional appropriation, totaling \$40,000, to supplement the cost for the playground with poured-in-place rubber surfacing. Portions of the project will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department and the scope of work will be completed using a combination of contract and force account labor. The improvements at Rothwell Park are scheduled to begin spring 2026, with an anticipated completion date of late spring 2027.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The total cost of the capital improvement project is \$200,000 and is funded by the Park Sales Tax.

Long-Term Impact: None

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

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



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Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Following the public hearing, approve the ordinance authorizing the capital improvement project at Rothwell Park and appropriating additional Park Sales Tax funding for the project.