



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 16, 2021

Re: Re: 2021 Park Sales Tax Renewal – Supplemental Memo - Proposed Project List

Executive Summary

This is a supplemental memo to the renewal of the Parks Sales Tax and no Council action is required at this time. Staff will return to Council at their August 16 meeting with a Resolution to review and approve the attached list of projects to be funded by the extension of the 1/8-cent Park Sales Tax. This allows Council and the public additional time to review the proposed project list.

The list of projects is based on recommendations from citizen surveys, multiple city commissions, meetings with P&R partner agencies/organizations and city staff. In a companion ordinance, Council will consider extending the Park Sales Tax for ten years, which will generate a total of approximately \$30.9 million over this time frame. Staff has also included a list of Priority Two projects that could be considered for funding if Council would like to move them into the ballot project list or additional funds are made available for future projects.

Based on the input from the public, user groups, city commissions and city staff, park staff is recommending that the funding be used for existing park maintenance and improvements (55%), new park development (20%), trails and greenbelts (14%), land acquisition/preservation (7%) and annual funding for equipment replacement and program scholarships (4%).

Discussion

The P&R Department solicits significant public input regarding how the Park Sales Tax funds will be used. In addition to the 2021 Columbia Parks & Recreation Department Survey (549 surveys), park staff utilizes the 2013 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* as the guiding document for all capital improvement projects. Together, this results in 2,413 citizen contacts representing 58 park user/partner organizations. Staff also met with numerous City Commissions including Parks and Recreation; Disabilities; Planning and Zoning; Sports, Climate & Environment; and Bike and Pedestrian Commissions. Each commission was in favor of the proposed list of projects. Staff believes that the projects identified represent the priorities of citizens, user groups, commissions, and staff.

The majority of the projects fall into the **Maintenance and Improvements to Existing Parks and Facilities** category, with nearly 55% of the project funding in this category. It is important to the citizens and park user groups that existing parks and facilities undergo periodic renovation and additions to keep pace with new codes, quality and use standards and recreation participation trends. This category also includes annual funding for the following:



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- Roads and Parking Improvements - \$1,500,000: Annual funding for the maintenance and care for the park system roads and parking lots.
- Major Maintenance - \$1,500,000: Annual funding for miscellaneous projects or repairs that become a priority or those projects that exceed operating budgets, but are generally under \$50,000 and can be processed through the Administrative Public Improvement process (example: resurface a tennis court complex at \$35,000).
- City/School Projects - \$200,000: Continue the partnership for improvements to the school system playgrounds and recreation facilities allowing for public access after school hours.
- ADA Compliance - \$250,000: Complete necessary improvements to comply with the American with Disabilities Act.

Improvements to existing parks and facilities include renovation projects at multiple parks and facilities that have exceeded 25 years in age. Staff is proposing major renovation projects at Rainbow Softball Center, Rock Quarry Park, Twin Lakes Recreation Area, Lake of the Woods Recreation Area, and Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area (Cosmo Park), along with improvements at a number of neighborhood parks and sports facilities. This funding category also includes the phase two construction of the Columbia Sports Fieldhouse. Phase two construction will include four additional hardwood courts and additional meeting rooms and restrooms.

New Facility/Park Development represents 20% of the project funding. This category includes the development of four neighborhood parks, two nature areas, development of a joint city/school project, and development of a new downtown park. The funding also includes the phase one development of Northeast Regional Park. The master plan for the property, formerly known as the Boone County Fairgrounds, will include four multipurpose synthetic turf sports fields, eight-lane track with multipurpose synthetic turf sports field, four-field synthetic turf baseball complex and renovations to two of the buildings on site. The improvements to the park will also include utility installation, parking, lighting and restroom and concession facilities. Staff will go through extensive public input before proceeding with the phase one improvements. It is anticipated that the proposed funding amount included in the 2021 Park Sales Tax will only allow for construction of two of the major facilities, plus necessary infrastructure.

In 2014, the Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau contracted with Aquarius-Victus Advisors to conduct a Columbia Sports Community Assessment study to assess the current state of Columbia amateur sports and to identify opportunities to increase the market. The study recommended an investment in competitive infrastructure to support growing local demand for sports and to generate economic benefits for the community through competitive regional events. They recommended three primary facilities: 1. Competitive Sports Field Complex with Artificial Turf, 2. Multi-Sport Indoor Fieldhouse, and 3. Aquatics Center. To fund these amenities, the study recommended an increase in the local hotel/motel tax. However, staff utilized funding from the 2015 Park Sales Tax for the first phase of the eight-court indoor Sports Fieldhouse and is proposing to use funds from the 2021 Park Sales Tax to



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fund the additional four courts at the Columbia Sports Fieldhouse and phase one improvements at Northeast Regional Park.

Trails and Greenbelts represent 14% of the project funding, as 81% of the 2021 ETC Institute survey respondents indicated that they have used walking, hiking, and biking trails over the past 12 months. The survey also identified that 71% of respondents or 34,214 households indicated a need for walking and biking trails. Staff is proposing two trail projects that meet the goal of a 30-mile loop around Columbia. The first is the Perche Creek Trail Phase II, which will continue the construction of the trail from Gillespie Bridge Road to Smith Drive. The second major trail project is the Hinkson Creek Trail from Clark Lane to the roundabout at Vandiver Road. Park staff is also proposing replacement of three existing bridges on the MKT Trail, Grindstone Nature Area trailhead improvements, Stephens Lake Park trailhead improvements, and improvements to the Cosmo Park fitness trail.

Parks and Recreation staff is aware of a citizen movement to include more trail projects as part of this ballot issue, specifically the COLT Railroad, Bear Creek Trail: Blue Ridge to Brown Station and the Hinkson Creek Trail: Brown Station to COLT. Staff's reasoning for ranking these trail projects on the Priority Two list result in concerns about easement acquisition and the future of the COLT Railroad.

Acquisition and Land Preservation represent 7% of the project funding. This is the only dedicated source of funding the City has for parks and protected public lands. Research shows that parks are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together. Staff is strategic with all land acquisition opportunities and utilizes the 2013 Neighborhood Park Master Plan as a tool to determine need for park space in Columbia. In many cases, staff will have property donated to the Department or work with a willing seller to agree to a donation/sale of property. For example, Gates Nature Area, Creek Ridge neighborhood park and Silver Mill neighborhood park properties were acquired using this type of donation/sale acquisition.

Annual Funding represents 4% of the total funding amount. This fund is used for the replacement of equipment and program scholarships. Funding, totaling \$80,000 each year, will be used for additional equipment or replacement for items that relate to the expansion of the park system. For example, as sports fields are added, there is a need for additional mowers, tractors, drag mats, etc. This category also includes \$50,000 in annual funding for the department's recreation scholarship fund. The scholarship fund provides the opportunity for any Columbia citizen to utilize a program or facility such as swimming lessons, an ARC membership, or Parks and Recreation classes or camps.

Finally, staff is proposing \$750,000 to be set aside for Contingency purposes.



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2021 PARK SALES TAX CATEGORIES	10 Year Total	Percentage
Acquisition/Land Preservation	\$2,075,000	7%
Maintenance/Improvements to Existing Parks and Facilities	\$16,740,000	55%
Annual Funding (Maintenance Equipment & Annual Scholarship)	\$1,295,000	4%
New Facility/Park Development	\$5,875,000	20%
Trails and Greenbelts	\$4,165,000	14%
TOTAL PROJECTS	\$30,150,000	100%
Contingency	\$750,000	
TOTAL 10 YEAR PARK SALES TAX FUNDING	\$30,900,000	

Along with the list of projects for the 2021 Park Sales Tax, staff has also included a list of Priority Two projects for review by Council. These projects are included as they were identified by staff, public and users groups as potential projects for the Park Sales Tax list of projects. The projects were not included on the list due to a variety of reasons ranging from cost, to feasibility of the project, to current condition of the facility. The renovation of Hickman Pool is a desirable and needed project, but one that requires multi-jurisdictional funding and support. The Hickman Pool project and an indoor ice facility may require other funding sources or separate tax initiative.

This list is being included as part of the resolution as staff has presented a conservative estimate of the potential revenue being generated and understands that if the City passes a Use Tax in the future, the annual sale tax revenue will increase as well. For example, staff will budget annual Park Sales Tax (PST) revenue at \$3 million for FY23, but if the actual revenue is \$3.25 million, the additional \$250,000 goes into the PST reserves. As the reserves build up, this additional revenue may be used to fund the projects as shown on the Priority Two list.

Should the voters approve the extension of the Park Sales Tax on November 2, 2021, staff will return to Council with an implementation plan that establishes a construction schedule based on projected cash flow.

All of the projects identified in this resolution will undergo the standard public improvement process as outlined for any project in the City's capital improvement program. Park planning staff will conduct interested party meetings for each project, staff will request a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission for each project and then return to City Council for a public hearing and final approval. This provides an opportunity for residents and user groups to provide final input on each of the individual projects.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: No impact is required of this action. Informational purposes only.

Long-Term Impact: No impact is required of this action. Informational purposes only.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Resilient Economy, Tertiary Impact: Inclusive Community

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Economic Development

Legislative History

Date	Action
5/3/21	(R73-21) Directing the City Manager to proceed with the development of a capital improvement project list to be funded by the proposed extension of the one-eighth of one percent local parks sales tax for a period of ten (10) years. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4928167&GUID=F620DA5-961A-45EE-A1C6-A620CD818B43&Options=&Search=
8/17/15	(R135-15) Specifying how the City Council intends to use funds that would be generated by the proposed extension of the one-eighth of one percent local parks sales tax. https://www.como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=18568

Suggested Council Action

No action is required of this memo. Council will take action at their August 16, 2021 meeting.