

Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 2, 2026

Re: Revised Plan - Douglass Park Basketball Court Improvements

Impacted Ward: Ward 1

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting a resolution, setting a public hearing authorizing revisions to the Douglass Park basketball court improvement project. Staff is proposing to change the final design of the two basketball courts to highlight the Moonlight Hoops basketball program and Douglass Bulldogs. In addition to the theme and color changes to the courts, staff is also planning to install a water fountain adjacent to the basketball courts. All other proposed improvements, including scoreboard replacement, installation of new basketball goals, lighting installation and shelter construction, will remain the same as previously approved by City Council. Improvements at the basketball courts are expected to start after approval of the revised plan and must be completed by September 2026 to meet grant requirements.

Discussion

At the November 6, 2023 City Council meeting, members of the Council approved a capital improvement project at Douglass Park that included expansion of the skatepark, renovations to Douglass Family Aquatic Center and basketball court improvements. The plan for the basketball court renovations included the installation of new basketball goals, scoreboards, small shelter and court lighting. In addition to the infrastructure improvements, the basketball courts were planned to be refinished with a Mizzou theme including black and gold surface painting and the Mizzou Tiger head logo at center court on each basketball court. The court painted in black with gold striping was planned to include recognition for former University of Missouri women's basketball coach, Willie Cox.

As park staff prepared to move forward with the demolition portion of the construction project in February 2025, multiple citizens in the community expressed concern about the final theme of the basketball court project. At the February 17, 2025 City Council meeting, staff was asked to provide a report to the City Council about the basketball court improvement project at Douglass Park including an outline for additional public input and the possibility for revisions to the final plan for the theme of the courts. After discussing all options related to next steps for the revised project with citizens and the project funding donors, park staff made the decision to move forward with the public engagement process in May 2025.

Public Engagement Process:

Staff provided a report to the City Council outlining the plan for additional public engagement for Douglass Park at the May 5, 2025 City Council meeting. The plan for public

engagement included three meetings with the community. These meetings were held on the following dates and times:

- Meeting #1 took place at the Activity & Recreation Center (ARC), 701 W. Ash St. on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 from 6 to 8 pm.
- Meeting #2 took place in meeting rooms 1A/1B at Columbia City Hall, 701 E. Broadway on Wednesday, May 28 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Meeting #3 took place in meeting rooms 1A/1B at Columbia City Hall, 701 E. Broadway on Saturday, May 31 from 10 am to 12 pm.

Multiple staff members from the City of Columbia attended each meeting to gather citizen feedback and provide answers related to questions or concerns presented at the meetings. Citizens were encouraged to fill out questionnaires at the meeting to provide additional information about the basketball court project and Douglass Park. In addition to the questionnaires collected at the meetings, the City's Community Connectors and local citizens distributed and collected additional questionnaires from community members and park patrons. Meeting comments and questionnaires are included with this memo as additional information for City Council review.

Public Input Meetings:

After reviewing all comments provided from the public through the engagement process, park staff created a revised plan for the design of the basketball courts at Douglass Park. Park staff held a public input meeting on September 29, 2025 at Douglass Park from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Park staff met with citizens to discuss the proposed plans and gain feedback about the revisions to the basketball courts. In addition to the in-person meeting at the park, the public had an opportunity to provide comments about the project via beheard.como.gov. The feedback from the public input meeting and beheard.como.gov are included for City Council review.

Park staff introduced the revised plans for the basketball court improvements at Douglass Park to the Parks and Recreation Commission on January 15, 2026. After a public hearing to discuss the project, the commissioners voted to endorse the revised plans for the basketball court improvements and recommended that Council approve the revised plans as presented. After considering all citizen comments and the P&R Commission recommendation, staff believes that the revised plan for improvements at Douglass Park represents a consensus of park users and staff.

Proposed Basketball Court Plan Revisions:

1. Park staff is proposing to change the colors of the two courts to blue and gray with white court lines. Blue was the primary color mentioned the most by citizens when asked about potential colors for the revised courts. In addition to the color changes, staff is recommending the west court include "Douglass Bulldogs" on each baseline. The east court will include "Moonlight Hoops – Est. 1989" on each sideline. The theme of each

court represents the most popular ideas presented by citizens during the engagement meetings and public input meeting. The revised plan is included with this memo.

2. Park staff will also install a water fountain with bottle filler on the east side of the basketball courts adjacent to the main walkway. This water fountain will be in operation from April through October each year.

The improvements at the basketball courts are expected to start after approval of the revised plan and must be completed by September 2026 to meet the ARPA grant requirements. The proposed improvements to the basketball courts will be completed using a combination of contract and staff labor. All necessary materials for the improvements are ready for installation except for the basketball court lighting. The lighting systems are currently out for bid through the Purchasing Department.

Additional Action Items:

During the engagement process for Douglass Park, the community provided extensive feedback about the basketball courts to provide the necessary information to make the proposed changes to the courts. Citizens also provided feedback to city staff about the history of Douglass Park, ideas for park improvements, ways to improve maintenance practices, park safety and the need for recreational programming. City staff has discussed how to continue to have conversations about the park with the community and will initiate three separate engagement groups in 2026 focused on:

1. The history of Douglass Park was discussed by many members of the community during each of the engagement meetings. Discussions centered around individuals, families and organizations that positively impacted the park and patrons in a variety of ways. In an effort to capture the history of the park and provide the necessary recognition, city staff will facilitate multiple meetings to collect the history of Douglass Park and determine how it should be represented within the park. City staff will work with community members to organize and compile historical archives and methods to share the history. Staff anticipates utilizing public art as a potential method to display the history and honor the individuals, families and organizations. Once the engagement process is completed, staff will update the community and City Council in regards to the next steps related to the public art display about Douglass Park.
2. The second engagement group for Douglass Park will focus on the park environment and infrastructure needs. The discussion will focus on current maintenance practices at the park, future capital improvement projects and park safety. The goal for these meetings will be to identify the short-term and long-term needs at the park related to park use and infrastructure. City staff will gather all comments, concerns and suggestions at the meetings and address them with different timelines ranging from immediate repairs to long-term infrastructure planning. For example, staff will immediately address any needs such as a broken water fountain. A request to install additional playground equipment as a capital improvement project would be included in the 2027 update to the Parks,

Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and staff would discuss it as a future Park Sales Tax improvement project.

3. The third engagement meeting with the community will focus on recreational programming at the park and central area of Columbia. There were multiple comments at the May engagement meetings focused on new programming at the park and to bring back recreational programming, such as Moonlight Hoops, that historically occurred at Douglass Park. The meetings will allow the public to provide suggestions and comments about current programming, potential new programs and opportunities for collaboration with community groups. Recreation staff will gather all feedback and determine potential changes to existing programming and how to implement new programs at the park.

The Parks and Recreation Department has also met with the funding donors multiple times over the past year related to the potential changes to the basketball courts at Douglass Park. City staff and project donors have a desire to add a Mizzou-themed basketball court honoring Coach Willie Cox in an alternate park location in the Columbia community. Park staff will start discussions about potential locations after City Council makes a decision regarding the revised plans for the Douglass Park basketball courts. Park staff will go through the public input process and hold a public hearing at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting before returning to City Council to discuss an alternate location for the project.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: The addition of the water fountain at the basketball courts will require an appropriation of \$10,000 in Park Sales Tax funding for the purchase of the fountain and installation of the water line. Staff will appropriate these funds at a later date.

Long-Term Impact: None

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Safe Community, Tertiary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

5/5/2025	REP24-25: Basketball court improvements and public input process associated with the Douglass Park improvement project. REP24-25
11/6/2023	B252-23: Authorizing construction of improvements at Douglass Park to include Phase II construction of a skate park, basketball court improvements and renovations to the aquatic center; calling for bids for a portion of the project

6/20/2023	through the Purchasing Division; authorizing an agreement with The Curators of the University of Missouri for the limited use of a trademark. B352-23 B134-23: Authorizing a grant agreement with the Missouri Department of Economic Development associated with the Missouri ARPA Community Revitalization Grant Program for the Douglass Park improvement project; amending the FY 2023 Annual Budget by appropriating funds. B134-23
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Suggested Council Action

Approve the resolution setting a public hearing for the construction of a revised plan for the Douglass Park basketball court capital improvement project.