



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: November 4, 2024

Re: Rainbow Softball Center Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application Approval

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting authorization to submit a grant application to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant for partial funding for park improvements at Rainbow Softball Complex, located at 1615 Business Loop 70 West. LWCF grants provide up to \$500,000 in funding and require a minimum 50% match from the agency applying for the grant. Total project cost is estimated at \$1,250,000. Park staff will submit a grant application requesting \$500,000 in LWCF funding, with \$750,000 in matching funds provided by the 2021 Park Sales Tax. If awarded, the proposed LWCF grant funding would provide partial funding for the replacement of all sports field lighting and concrete seating areas at each field. The LWCF grant application guidelines require a resolution authorizing the grant application and ensuring commitment to maintain public access to the project for a minimum of 25 years.

Discussion

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources is currently accepting applications for the 2025 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant cycle. The LWCF grant program provides up to \$500,000 in funding per project and requires a minimum 50% match from the agency applying for the funding. Parks and recreation staff have identified multiple capital improvement projects at Rainbow Softball Center and allocated funding, totaling \$750,000, as part of the 2021 Park Sales Tax ballot issue. Staff will use these funds as the grant match for the proposed project.

The LWCF is a competitive grant program and provides funding for a wide variety of outdoor recreation projects intended to help communities meet the recreation needs of their citizens. The grant will provide the necessary funding to replace the existing sports field lighting on each of the six fields at Rainbow Softball Center with state-of-the-art LED sports field lighting. In addition to the sports field lighting improvements, funds will be used to replace the concrete seating areas located between the dugouts of each field.

LWCF grant applicants are required to have City Council approval to apply for a grant. The department is requesting a resolution authorizing the grant application. If the City of Columbia is selected to receive the grant, staff will return to Council with an agreement to accept the grant and request approval for the proposed improvements at the sports complex.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: If the grant is awarded, the Parks and Recreation Department would appropriate the funds as part of the Council approval process for the Rainbow Softball Center capital improvement project. The portion of funding provided by the Park Sales Tax includes \$750,000 in 2021 PST funding. Total estimated cost for the project is \$1,250,000 and will be funded by a LWCF grant and Park Sales Tax.

Long-Term Impact: Park staff anticipates a decrease in annual utility expenses at the park once the proposed improvements are completed due to the conversion to LED lighting fixtures. Staff will provide an estimate for the utility cost savings when construction of the project goes through the City Council approval process.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

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

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Economic Development, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Approve the resolution authorizing City staff to apply for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for improvements at Rainbow Softball Center.