

COMMUNICATION
URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA
JANUARY 16, 2024 MEETING

Subject:	Recommendation:	Prepared by:
GRAY'S LAKE PARK DOCKS, DECK, AND FLATWORK PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW	X APPROVE DISAPPROVE NO ACTION OTHER	KATIE HERNANDEZ, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT COORDINATOR 515-283-4016
Attachment Listing: https://www.dsm.city/udrb_meeting_schedule.php		

Summary:

The City of Des Moines' Parks and Recreation Department has proposed an improvement project at Gray's Lake Park, which includes three major components: the Paddlecraft Marina; the Upland and Lowland Trail Adjustments and Site Work; and Entry Drive and Parking Renovation. The proposed improvements support some of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Iowa, including fishing, multi-modal trail use, paddling, and birdwatching/wildlife viewing.

The overall project's estimated cost is \$2,110,000, with 62% of the cost representing the paddling marina improvements.

The project design team includes park planners and professional landscape architects from the Parks and Recreation Department, a civil engineer from the Engineering Department, a structural engineer from consulting firm Shuck Britson, and coastal engineers from the consulting firm SmithGroup.

The project will be substantially complete by October 31, 2025, with two interim completion dates and partial closings and openings within that schedule.

Scope of Review – Board to make recommendation to City Council on:

- ☒ Design review of renovation /remodeling/new construction for City-owned or leased project.
- ☐ Design review for urban renewal project with specific development requirements.
- ☐ Whether a proposed urban renewal project qualifies for funding from tax increment.
- ☐ Whether the level of financial assistance funded from tax increment revenues proposed for a specific individual project are reasonable and appropriate.
- ☐ The selection of urban renewal sites for clearance or rehabilitation and problems relating to acquisition, clearance or rehabilitation of property, relocation of displaced persons and disposition of acquired property.
- ☐ Skywalk System
- ☐ Other

Urban Design Review Board Action: The Board is asked to make its recommendation to City Council on the design of the project.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the design, subject to the Board's comments.

Background:

The timing of this project at Gray's Lake Park has been driven by the need to replace the existing paddlecraft facility, which was severely damaged by an environmental event.

Located on the southwest lake shoreline immediately down slope from the Terrace Building at Gray's Lake Park, this proposed project includes three major components: the Paddlecraft Marina; the Upland and Lowland Trail Adjustments and Site Work; and Entry Drive and Parking Renovation. The proposed improvements support some of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Iowa, including fishing, multi-modal trail use, paddling, and birdwatching/wildlife viewing.

- 1) **The Paddlecraft Marina** | The paddlecraft marina generally includes all project work from the water up to the trail down slope from the Terrace Building. The construction components include, but are not limited to, shoreline excavation for the marina, metal fabricated marina dockage (~16 slips/spots + universal kayak launch) anchored with a high-performance elastic mooring system, an 80 foot metal fabricated gangway, two concrete stairwells, two metal fabricated stairwells, a watercraft roller system with hand winch, ~150 linear feet of 8-foot-wide switchback ramps with associated retaining walls and hand rails, a pier structure connecting switchback ramps to the gangway, a ~1,800 square-foot upland viewing deck with associated retaining walls and hand rails, and ~1,800 square feet of securable under deck storage.
- 2) **Upland & Lowland Trail Adjustments and Site Work** | This component includes, but is not limited to, the construction of ~650 linear feet of 10-foot-wide concrete paved upland bypass trail, removal of the existing marina, ~700 linear feet of 12-foot-wide hot mix asphalt trail reconstruction with grade adjustments, ~200 linear feet of shoreline reshaping and waterline fieldstone armoring, native seeding, removal of industrial rubble debris remnants on the east side of the park to provide compensatory flood storage volume, Terrace Building south wall waterproofing, and the construction of a new door penetration for Terrace Building.
- 3) **Entry Drive and Parking Renovation** | This project component includes the replacement of damaged or degraded concrete panels and restriping of the parking area.

In order to get this popular facility back online, the project has needed to move at a rapid pace, leveraging input provided through past planning efforts and internal staff's deep knowledge of the facilities and its users in lieu of traditional public input processes, which can be challenging for large regional parks.

The 2017 Gray's Lake Master Plan, which included public input processes, calls for some of the proposed project elements, including the upland trail bypass and improved use of the Terrace Building. Completing this project also sets up the Terrace Building to host a high-quality food concessionaire on the west side of the building, should that be desired by the public and the department in the future.

Park planning and development staff interviewed staff from the Recreation Division and the Parks Management Division to leverage their deep knowledge of the marina facility and its users as they operate these spaces and features, and hear from and see users experience them daily. These conversations yielded detailed feedback that was addressed in the project's design. Example feedback from the Recreation Division included an emphasis on the inclusion of a universal kayak launch, a request for floodable storage along the shoreline, communication and safety challenges when the marina is not directly adjacent to where rentals occur, and concern for working condition inequities where dock attendant staff experience prolonged intense summer heat. Example feedback from the Parks Management Division included adding the upland bypass for detours during marina maintenance, water access at the under-deck storage area for post-flood cleanup, and the watercraft roller system to support moving watercraft prior to opening and following the closing of the rental season.

The overall project's estimated construction cost is \$2,110,000, with 62% of the cost representing construction of the paddling marina.

The project includes multiple interim completion dates to ensure paddling rentals and the trail can stay open and operating during the project. Interim #1 may start after Labor Day once concessions close, 9/3/2024. As soon as Interim #1 is complete, they may move on to Interim #2 which must be substantially complete and operable by 5/1/2025 when concessions reopen. As soon as Interim #2 is complete, they may move on to Interim #3 which must be substantially complete by 10/31/2025.

Project location:



Scope of work:

