COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

CITY OF DES MOINES CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	Number:	**26-077**	Meeting:	**March 9, 2026**
	Agenda Item:	**42**	Roll Call:	**26-0331**
	Submitted by:	**Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director, and Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer**		

AGENDA HEADING:

Hearing on Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements: Resolution approving plans, specifications, form of contract documents, engineer's estimate, receive and file bids, and designating lowest responsible bidder as Iowa Earth Works, LLC, Joseph Jensen, Owner, $3,656,716.25.

SYNOPSIS:

This is a public hearing to allow for public input on the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements and take the necessary actions as required by Iowa Code to authorize a contract for construction of the proposed project. The Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements project is the first of three (3) sub-phase projects that make up Phase 1 of the community and stakeholder driven Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan. This Phase 1A project includes elevating and realigning the Neal Smith Trail to reduce the frequency of closing due to flooding, a trail spur connection to 2nd Avenue and the Central Place Trail, two (2) open-air shelters with user amenities, three (3) dedicated fishing areas with two (2) being American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, ADA-compliant ingress and egress pathways, power boat ramp and associated parking, ADA-inclusive pier and courtesy dock, storm sewer, stormwater best management practices, natural resources improvements, and shoreline improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: $3,656,716.25 Construction Contract ($3,700,000 City Engineer's Estimate)

Funding Source: Various Funding sources, as follows:

- $200,000 – State Recreational Trail (SRT) Grant
- $108,000 – Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Water Quality Initiative (WQI) Cost-Share Grant
- $1,000,000 – Land Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Grant
- $150,000 – Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant
- $300,000 – Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grant
- $822,721.25 – Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST)
- $1,075,995 – FY 2025-2026 Adopted CIP, Page 90, Birdland Park and Marina, PK189, General Obligation Bonds

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- On January 26, 2026, under Roll Call No. 26-0096, the City Council received and filed plans, specifications, form of contract documents, and City Engineer's estimate for the construction of the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements. Before the City Council can enter into a contract, it must hold a public hearing and approve the proposed plans, specifications, and form of contract documents and engineer's estimate for the construction of the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements, Activity ID 11-2023-003. The improvements include the construction of a Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) parking lot, boat ramp and dock, fishing piers, two (2) open-air shelters, storm sewer pipe, storm sewer manholes, storm sewer intakes, bioretention cells, PCC sidewalks and trail, PCC driveways, grading, cast-in-place concrete walls, electrical work, erosion control, surface restoration and other incidental items, all in accordance with the contract documents including Plan File No. 674-278/359, located at Birdland Park between 6th Avenue and 2nd Avenue, south of Birdland Drive.

- Sealed bids for said improvement were submitted by the following bidders:
  - Iowa Earth Works, LLC, Huxley, IA - Low Bid
  - Cushman Excavation, LLC, Knoxville, IA
  - Reilly Construction Co., Inc., Ossian, IA

- The bids were received and opened at a public meeting presided over by the City Engineer in the City Council Chambers, 1st Floor, T.M. Franklin Cownie City Administration Building, 1200 Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa at 11:00 a.m. on February 10, 2026.

- The City Engineer has determined that the lowest responsive, responsible bid for the construction of said improvement was submitted by Iowa Earth Works, LLC (626 N Hwy 69, PO Box 112, Huxley, IA, 50124; Joseph Jensen, Owner) in the amount of $3,656,716.25, and said bid should be accepted. The Finance Director has determined that funds are available for said improvement as stated above.

- A master plan for Birdland Park and Marina was developed in 2021 and was approved by the Parks and Recreation Board and adopted by the City Council. The master plan outlines a logical, highest value approach to implementing multiple phases of proposed improvements. In total the project was estimated to cost $54.4 million in 2021 and implementation is planned to spread across five (5) recommended phases.

- Informed by LiveDSM, the Parks and Recreation Department’s comprehensive plan, the Birdland master planning project has been community and stakeholder driven. To facilitate project feedback and achieve community support from the neighborhood and everyday park users, three (3) public meetings were held at different phases of the project’s development. The meetings garnered over 200 attendees and generated 350 plus follow-up survey responses. Additional public engagement for Phase 1 projects was ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 with all master plan stakeholders and in-person presentations to Union Park, River Bend, Highland Park/Oak Park, and Capitol Park Neighborhood Associations. The overarching sentiment was appreciation that the approved and adopted master plan is being implemented and realized.

- Given the complexity and scale of the master plan, intentional sequencing or phasing is recommended to support improvements functioning on their own and are not contingent upon a subsequent phase.

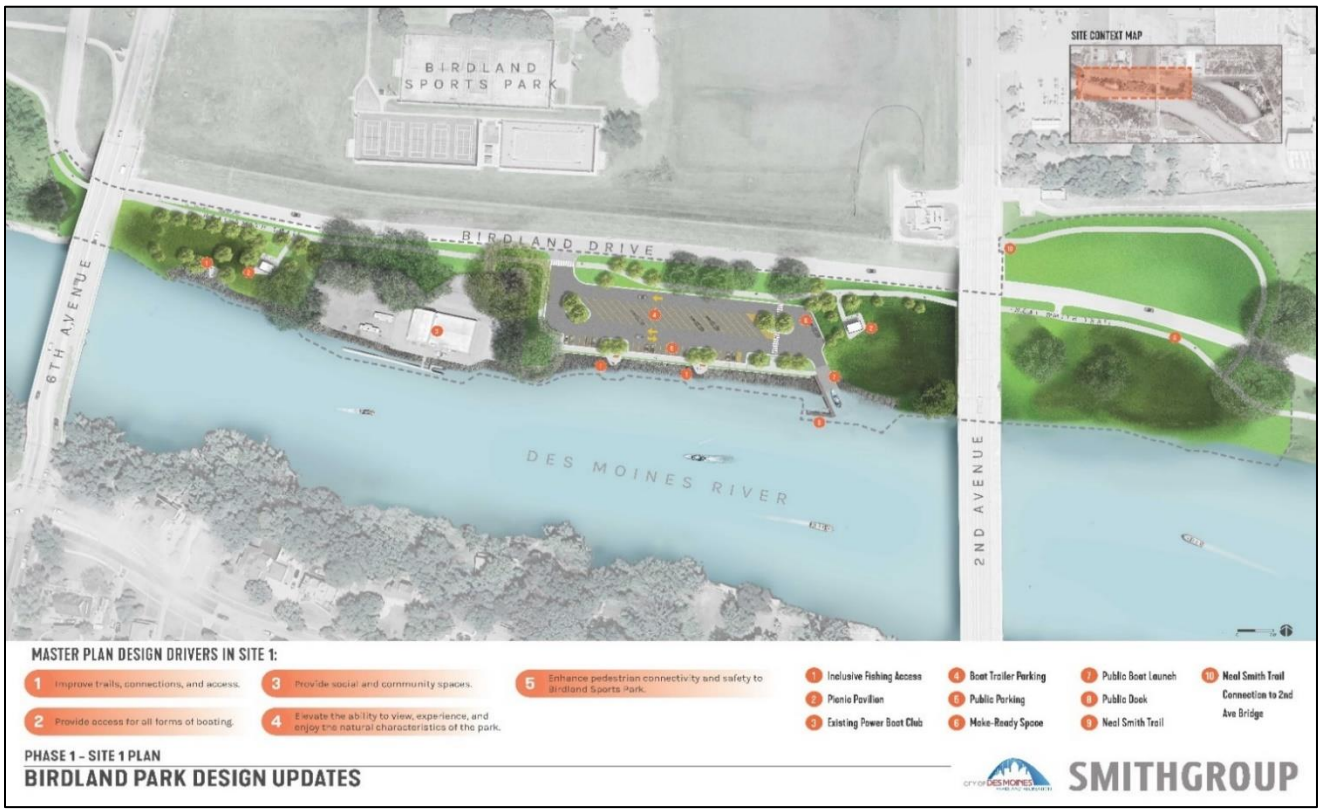
- Birdland Park and Marina Master Plan - Phase 1A Project Improvements Summary:
    - Realign, elevate, and reconstruct the flood-prone segment of the Neal Smith Trail (approximately 0.4 miles)
        - Over 160,000 trail uses were recorded in 2024 by a nearby infrared counter
    - Develop a trail spur connection to 2nd Avenue Bridge and Central Place Trail (approximately 600 linear feet)
    - Develop two (2) open-air shelters with electrical service, bike racks, grill pits, and seating
    - Develop three (3) fishing locations (two (2) ADA-accessible, one (1) hike-in)
    - Develop a new powerboat ramp and associated parking area with:
        - Ideal ingress/egress launching and docking approach angle
        - ADA-accessible floating courtesy dock
        - Parking with tree plantings, stormwater BMPs, and LED lighting
        - 23 standard stalls, two (2) ADA stalls, 20 standard trailer stalls, and one (1) ADA trailer stall
    - Planting over 100 native and diverse trees and shrubs, and approximately 3.5 acres of prairie and savanna vegetation to broadly support water quality and wildlife habitat
    - Install approximately 1,800 feet of shoreline improvements to limit erosion and enhance flood resilience

- A dedicated project webpage offers a repository of project information including links to digital public meetings, video recordings from prior meetings, downloadable exhibits such as the presentations slides from public meetings and the master plan concept, and updates on the plan adoption process. The project webpage can be found on the City's website under Parks and Recreation Department by navigating to current planning projects.

- In late 2022, a professional service agreement was completed with SmithGroup, Inc. to provide engineering design for two sites within Birdland Park, Phase 1A and Phase 1B. Phase 1B is approximately 95% complete with design and is expected to bid early spring 2026 pending City Council approval.

- This Phase 1A project is anticipated to begin in spring 2026 and be completed in late spring 2027.

Plan Rendering of the Birdland Park Improvements Phase 1A Site



PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: January 26, 2026

Roll Call Number: 26-0096, 26-0097 & 26-0098

Action: Items regarding Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements:

(A) Ordering construction of Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements and fixing date for receiving bids, (2-10-26) and setting date of hearing on (3-9-26); Engineer's estimate is $3,700,000. (Council Communication No. 26-020) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

(B) Approving and authorizing the execution of the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) agreement for the reconstruction of Neal Smith Trail as part of the Birdland Park Phase 1A Improvements project. (Council Communication No. 26-022) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

(C) Approving and authorizing execution of Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant agreement for the Birdland Park Master Plan - Phase 1A Improvements. (Council Communication No. 26-023) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: December 22, 2025

Roll Call Number: 25-1689

Action: Negotiation and Execution of subrecipient agreements with Iowa Confluence Water Trails for ICON water trail improvements at Birdland Park. Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Voss. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Access Advisory Board

Date: January 21, 2026

Board Action Number: 26-04

Action: The unanimous consensus of the board members in attendance was to approve the project as designed with no recommended alterations.

Board: Zoning Board of Adjustment

Date: November 20, 2024

Resolution Number: ZBOA-2024-000055

Action: Appeal for requested Conditional Use for a "Public Recreation Area" use in an "F" District. Decision and Order conditionally granting the appeal was adopted by a vote of 7-0 with all Board Members present voting in favor thereof.

Board: Parks and Recreation Board

Date: February 23, 2021

Resolution Number: 21-011

Action: Motion by Facto to approve the Birdland Park Master Plan. Second by Woodard. Motion carried.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

- Partial payments to the contractor and final acceptance of work.

For more information on this and other agenda items, please call the City Clerk's Office at 515-283-4209 or visit the Clerk's Office on the second floor of T.M. Franklin Cownie City Administration Building, 1200 Locust Street. Council agendas are available to the public at the City Clerk's Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday's Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk's Office or sending their request via email to cityclerk@dmgov.org.