



Staff Report

Subject: Vlasis Park Playground Sitework Contract

Department/Program: Parks and Recreation

Explanation:

The 2024 Capital Budget includes \$1,651,377 for improvements to the Vlasis Park Playground. Of that \$1.65 million, the City has received two Municipal Parks Grants to cover \$1.15 million of that cost. Previously the Board awarded a contract for the purchase of the new playground equipment. The other large component of this project is the contract for the sitework of the playground area. This includes items such as the ADA accessible ramps on the hillside, the concrete and subsurface for the new playground, the draining for re-activating the splash pad, and the stormwater detention basin as required by MSD. Approximately \$800,000 was budgeted for this portion of the project.

City staff recently solicited bids for the sitework. Bids were solicited by inviting a list of 14 general contractors directly, posting on Dodge Reports, the City's website and the St. Louis Business Journal. One bid from Ideal Landscape was received and read aloud on Thursday, March 26 at 10:00 AM. Two contractors claimed they were too busy to take on another project.

The bid came in over budget at \$1,191,000. Unforeseen expenses related to engineering, MSD and the splash pad have contributed to the increase in expenses from when this project was initially conceived two years ago.

Since then staff and the contractor have been looking at savings opportunities without jeopardizing the play value, aesthetics, and inclusive design elements/ADA accessibility of the project. We are also limited in what scope we can reduce due to the grant requirements. We have reduced the overall bid price through self performing some of the work such as demolition, landscaping and shrinking some of the concrete area included in the original scope. Through these efforts we have lowered the contract price down to \$992,279. Staff is encouraged with the progress that has been made through discussions with the contractor.

Staff, the City's contracted engineer, and the contractor are still working through some of these details in an attempt to balance a reduced cost with maintaining the viability of the project. However, time is of the essence as this work must be done in the warmer months. We had originally hoped to have the work completed this summer in time for Ballwin Days, however, the contractor has told us that is not feasible. They have indicated they can start the work soon but the contracted completion time is 210 days (7 months) which would mean completion in November. Therefore, any delay in awarding the contract and/or demolition of the current playground would push the project out further into the colder months which risks delays.



The project is over budget but we are obligated to move forward with the project due to the grant awards and the already purchased playground. While we will continue to seek cost savings opportunities any large reductions would result in a loss of play value and/or inclusive design elements/ADA accessibility to the project which would not be desirable. The City is in the process of receiving \$97,000 in underpaid sales taxes for 2023 from St. Louis County. It is staff's recommendation to use that money to cover part of the shortfall on this project. In addition, we will consider reducing or holding off on other items this year to help make up the remainder of the shortfall.

Ideal Landscape has had an outstanding working relationship with the city for the past ten years. Ideal performed the work at Ferris Park in 2014 and 2020, and in Holloway Park in 2023.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends awarding the contract to Ideal Landscape with a budget not to exceed \$992,279.

Submitted By: Chris Conway, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation

Date: April 8, 2024