

1. Lions Sports Complex Update Page 55 and 56

B. ii. Lions Sports Complex

The Castroville Lion's Club donated two and a half city blocks to the City of Castroville in [year]. The Lion's Sports Complex was previously used as a football field for the St. Louis Catholic High School. The land was given to the city with the stipulation it be used in perpetuity for sporting activities and events.

This "L"-shaped 11.4-acre park is 2.5 city blocks located at the intersections of Houston St., Vienna St., Constantinople St., and Athens St. Parking for the park is along these streets consisting of gravel surfacing without curbs or parking control striping.

Castroville Elementary School is adjacent to this park, just across Houston St. to the south. The school has several playscapes and play areas, but they are not available to the public.

This is the only sports park north of US Highway 90 in the original part of the city. US Highway 90 is the major thoroughfare which splits Castroville and is difficult to cross due to the limited number of lighted pedestrian crossings. This limits safe foot and bike traffic to Castroville Regional Park from the north-side of the highway.

The only mobile home housing development inside the Castroville limits is adjacent to the west of this park on Athens St. Within three blocks of this park, there is an apartment complex that participates in the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) "Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program" as listed by the hellosection8.com website. From personal observation many children live in this area.

<https://hellosection8.com/narrow-down-section-8-rental-castroville-tx-1.html>

The 4-acre baseball/softball field complex on the east side of the park is enclosed with a fence with bleachers in one corner. This baseball field provides a venue for city adult softball league play and youth baseball practice, mostly on weekends and some weeknights. Other sports groups use the outfield for practice and bring their own rented lights.

In 2023, irrigation, a sports field, splashpad, trees, stone benches, parking, some lighting, and a new restroom were added. In 2024, new lights over the sports field to the north side of the complex were installed. The sports field is mainly used by a very active youth soccer club.

Lion's Sports Complex Recommendations

There is still space to take advantage of to give this neighborhood an excellent place to be active. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board along with the Parks Director evaluated the park in 2024 to provide maximum community impact.

Lions Park Mission Statement

To provide our community with well-maintained, multi-purpose sports fields and playscapes where residents of all ages and abilities can participate in recreational activities, develop athletic skills, and build lasting community connections, honoring our donor's commitment to accessible and inclusive neighborhood sports and play.

Equity in Park Distribution

This neighborhood park meets this standard. It is in a prime geographic location based on the demographics of the surrounding area.

Equity in Accessibility

This park does not meet this standard. The new splashpad and restroom are ADA compliant and inclusive, but there is still a noticeable lack of universally accessible park features, for children especially.

Equity in Functions

The recent additions have improved this aspect of the park bringing more balance among organized sports, passive and unstructured play. But the splashpad cannot operate the whole summer due to occasional droughts and is closed during the winter season. There is still room for improvement!

Top Priority Features to Be Considered for CIP

Parks Staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board ran a survey in August 2024 (see appendix) to help determine that the inclusive playground and shade were top priorities for citizens at Lions Sport Complex: 171 out of 369 surveyed prioritized the playground which is 46% of the participants.

To be good stewards of our water usage, City Staff recommend installing a water reuse system connected to the splashpad. The water reuse system, which includes underground tanks, will take the water from the splashpad and use it for irrigation in the park. This will help offset the fresh water used in the splashpad, especially when the area experiences drought conditions.

Overall Recommendations

The list below refers to features in the following two diagrams.

1. Inclusive playground including climbing structure and swings
2. Multiple shade pavilions
3. Multi-sport hard surface court including basketball, pickleball, four-square, etc.
4. Updated sports field and softball field with irrigation and fencing
5. Sports field lighting
6. Parking along perimeter of property
7. Additional bathroom
8. Seating (stone benches), picnic tables, walking trails, landscaping
9. Water reuse system for the splashpad