



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 02/05/2026

**REQUESTER:** James Briggs, Park Development Manager

**PRESENTER:** Jason Olsen, Director of Parks & Recreation

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE PROPOSED PLAYGROUND DESIGNS FOR FOUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

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### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, Norman voters approved funding for the NORMAN FORWARD program of capital projects focused on quality-of-life improvements. One of the program's projects was to renovate our existing neighborhood parks at varying levels of detail (trails, playgrounds, sports courts, tree planting, etc.), as evaluated by staff. Another project was focused on funding the construction of five new neighborhood parks, based on survey responses from the residents around these park sites.

Since the program started, we have completed renovations in several parks (Oakhurst, Rotary, Prairie Creek, and Sonoma Park, among others) and have completed several small projects to improve park furnishings, signage, trails, and other amenities in many parks. Not all parks were budgeted for playground replacements in the original NORMAN FORWARD program that was presented to voters. However, in the ten years since the program started, all our parks have aged to the point that any future funding requests will include replacing the remaining playgrounds in town in a "worst-to-best" order, as is being done with the current project for renovations.

### **DISCUSSION:**

We recently let for bid for our following three playground replacement projects at Eagle Cliff, Northeast Lions, and Sutton Place Parks, along with a bid for new playground equipment as part of the development of our next new neighborhood park—Bluestem Park. We received over a dozen proposals for each playground project in December. We evaluated each proposal to ensure it met the criteria in the Bid Request and to determine which would best fit the park/neighborhood being upgraded. The budget varied by project, based on the site's size and the population served by that park. Bidders were instructed to use all available funds for each proposal and to include synthetic turf safety surfacing and a shade structure over a large portion of the new equipment.

At Northeast Lions Park, the new equipment will be located in the newly incorporated part of that park that used to be called "High Meadows Park", before the conjoining of those two parks with the land the city gained from the Norman Public Schools east of Eisenhower Elementary last year to make one large park property (now collectively called Northeast Lions Park). This is being done to help address the main problem with the old Northeast Lions Park play equipment: it was the most vandalized and damaged playground in the park system, and it was isolated entirely from view at night by the pond in Northeast Lions, behind a large group of trees with no lights. The playground in that park in 2025 was missing many parts (slides, tunnels, spring riders, etc.) that had been damaged and were no longer available for purchase as replacements.

There were two old, separate playgrounds at Eagle Cliff, which will now be replaced with one large new play area, allowing parents to stay in one location with their children as they use the park. We also recently paved the old gravel walking trail at Eagle Cliff and are planning to add several more trees along the trail and in the old, wooded area in the middle of that park as part of its renovation.

The playground in Sutton Place was also at the end of its usable life, with replacement parts becoming harder to secure. Sutton Place has also received several minor upgrades since 2015, including new park furnishings, several tree plantings, a new half-court basketball court, and the addition of a soccer practice goal.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board of Park Commissioners recommend approval of the proposed playground designs for Bluestem, Eagle Cliff, Northeast Lions, and Sutton Place Park Playgrounds.