

Administration Dept.

To: Park, Recreation and Forestry Commission Members and Members of the Common Council

From: Mayor McFarland

Date: August 16, 2024

Subject: Inclusive Park

Background

On January 15, 2024, I came before the Park, Recreation and Forestry Commission on behalf of the stakeholder group that worked to prepare the schematic renderings of the city's first fully inclusive recreational area. Through a grant provided by the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, the schematic design is now complete, and through the efforts of our stakeholder group we are pleased to announce the beginning of our fundraising efforts.

The goal remains to build the city's first fully inclusive recreational area with no tax dollars; we are committed to fundraising the entire \$1.7 million required for the project. The stakeholder group has prepared the fundraising plan, and we are set to begin.

The timeline for the fundraising is as follows:

- August-December: fundraising
- January: bidding of construction contract
- February-March: city meeting approvals of the contract
- April 2025: construction contract signed
- May: construction preparation and meetings occur
- Summer-Fall: construction

For your reference, I have included the press release that will go out, the marketing document, and a few renderings. More renderings can be found on the website that is now live:

https://cms4.revize.com/revize/watertownwi/departments/park_recreation_forestry/riverside_park_inclusive_recreational_area/index.php

The video linked on the website really gives a wonderful visual of the intended efforts to ensure that everyone has a safe space to gather, connect and play. From the moment people step out of

their vehicle or approach the space, it will be accessible for all. This “inclusive completeness” is rare in our area, and we believe that it will not only serve our residents, but visitors and prospective residents as well.

I would like to thank the commission for their support of this project, as well as the dedicated group of stakeholders that have been working on this for over a year. They have been methodical about the design, have prepared a great plan to fundraise the necessary dollars and are very committed to seeing this through. Kristine Butteris and Lisa Famularo from the city team have done a tremendous job of providing insight and preparing communication documents.

Our community deserves a space where individuals, families, friends and strangers can connect without the worry of if they can maneuver through the entirety of the space- we’re committed to giving them just that.

Budget Goal

This project aligns with the following 2024 Budget Goals:

1. Proactively maintains and improves our parks and infrastructure in an effort to ensure quality, safety and compliance
2. Promotes and fosters innovative approaches for community development and growth
3. Maintains a safe and healthy community, and expands community education on safety and health

Financial Impact

An account has been created for donations and grant money at the city and at the Watertown Community Foundation; there is no operational budget impact expected.

Recommendation

No action is required; this is an update only.