

Park Views for Ashland Daily Tidings

January 2020

Capital Improvement Projects

By Tara Kiewel, Ashland Parks and Recreation Analyst

As we kick off this new year it is a very busy and exciting time at Ashland Parks and Recreation (APR). Developing a new park at the East Main Property, improving the Daniel Meyer Memorial Swimming Pool, redesigning the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park and adding new pickleball courts at the Oak Knoll Golf Course are just some of Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) happening in 2020 and 2021.

To best serve the community, APR is continually planning for the improvement and development of Ashland's parks, trails and recreation facilities. During the biennial budget process the CIP is reviewed and amended. Deciding which projects are built is a public process determined by Commission goals, staff and community input.

How do we fund projects? Grants and Food & Beverage Taxes are the primary venues for funding projects. APR receives 25% of Ashland's Food & Beverage Tax annually, which is typically used for capital projects. Generally, we can expect around \$750,000 each year. Capital funds are separate from operating or general funds and are set aside in order to improve the parks system for future generations. Another avenue for project funding is Revenue Bonds. A Revenue Bond is a low interest loan taken against our income.

Grant Funded Projects: The construction of the new Nature Play Area at North Mountain Park is almost complete. This project was funded entirely by grants and donations provided by charitable organizations and community members. Nature playgrounds provide simple structures and natural materials to inspire imagination and promote healthy child development – More information at NorthMountainPark.org. We hope you can join us for an Open House event on Wednesday, June 3, from 2 to 4 p.m., to celebrate the official opening of the Nature Play Area, 620 N Mountain Ave in Ashland.

Revenue Bond Funded Projects: Some of the projects completed via revenue bonds in recent years include...

- 2014 – Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink Cover, \$289,500
- 2014 – Calle Guanajuato Resurfacing, \$500,000
- 2015 – Ashland Creek Park Design, \$500,000
- 2016 – Garfield Park Water Play and Park Renovation, \$850,000
- 2016 – Hitt Road Open Space (45.79 acres), \$360,000
- 2017 – Mace Property Open Space (11 acres), \$380,000
- 2018 – Briscoe Park, \$500,000

Currently, we are leveraging Parks' portion of the Food & Beverage tax to complete three Revenue Bond projects, totaling \$2.9 million, in 2020: The Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool, pickleball courts at the Oak Knoll Golf Course and resurfacing the tennis courts in Hunter Park.

After a year of planning that included a community needs assessment, the Pool Ad-Hoc Committee made recommendations for the pool. The Commission and City Council approved the recommendations and a Revenue Bond to build a new pool at the existing site in Hunter Park. Currently, we are in the design phase and plan to break ground on a 25-yard by 25-meter pool in 2020.

Food & Beverage Funded Projects: The money you spend dining out in Ashland will help fund a new park on the southeast side of Ashland. We are beginning the design phase for a new park at the 2228 East Main Street property. This 5.52-acre open space parcel will provide a park and a much-desired second dog park in Ashland. A public input meeting on the East Main Property Project was held in October 2019. Approximately 60 citizens took part in the meeting. The group was divided into six working groups, each group was facilitated by an Ashland Parks and Recreation staff representative. The collaborative design concepts were summarized and the design and build of a new park at the East Main Street site will move forward in 2020.

We are very excited for 2020 and all of the planned improvements to our facilities. These important CIPs improve the Ashland Parks systems for future generations. To stay up-to-date on all the CIP projects, visit our project website at gis.ashland.or.us/parks/cip. For information on Ashland Parks and Recreation, visit AshlandParksandRec.org.