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Shawnee County Parks + Recreation plans \$1.3 million in park improvements

TOPEKA, KAN. – Shawnee County Parks + Recreation plans to make \$1.3 million worth of improvements to 18 local parks. Improvements range from new playground equipment and surfaces to park benches, concrete work, lighting and new signage.

The SCP+R Master Plan calls for identifying and improving eight to 12 parks per year. This year, additional parks are being improved thanks to the Board of County Commissioners allotting \$3 million in excess funding dollars for deferred maintenance in parks and recreation.

“There are 110 parks in Shawnee County and many of them have been around for a lot of years without any significant improvements,” said John Knight, SCP+R director. “We have an individual management plan process for parks in which we review each park’s condition and needs and devise an improvement plan accordingly.”

The plans are based on a standardized list of amenities that are appropriate for each park classification, from mini-parks to neighborhood parks to community and regional parks. The following is a list of the 18 parks and planned improvements beginning in 2018:

Aaron Douglas Art Park

Scope:

- Concrete work to improve curbing around signs and park features and an additional short walk connection for future memorial benches.
- Interpretive signage – update the worn and dated existing interpretive signage.
- Lighting – Upgrade lighting to more energy-efficient fixtures to reduce utility costs and increase safety and visibility throughout the park.
- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park sign to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.

Total Estimated Cost: \$9,500

Impact: The largest impact for the community is walkability and safety. Updating the signage and providing better lighting encourage the public to spend more time in the park, enjoying the features. It will also make the park better suited for events like the Aaron Douglas Art Fair.

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Austin Park

Scope:

- Resurface basketball court and replace goals with that meet design specification.
- Install one bench near basketball court.
- Install one bike rack near main walk.
- Install concrete pads to surface-mount amenities like benches, trash receptacles, picnic tables, portable toilet enclosures and signs.
- Install two main park signs at north and south ends of park.
- Replace three picnic tables to meet design specifications and ADA compliance.
- Replace existing play equipment with a composite play structure and pour-in-place safety surface.
- Install one portable toilet enclosure.

Total Estimated Cost: \$154,600

Impact: The largest impact for the community is encouragement to spend more time in the park with improved amenities. This park receives a fair amount of use, and the recommended updates are based on current use of the amenities. The updated seating should invite families and multiple generations to use the park as a gathering place.

Bentley Park

Scope:

- Replace two benches.
- Install concrete pads for benches and signage.
- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park sign to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.

Total Estimated Cost: \$4,000

Impact: The main impact for the community is improved amenities to enhance the user experience and make the park more inviting to the surrounding residents and other park users. Due to the duplication of services within the park's service radius, efforts were made when planning not to further duplicate services.

Betty Dunn Park

Scope:

- Concrete work to install pads for existing amenities (trash cans and benches), curbing/walkway around play structure and for sign mounting.
- Install pour-in-place safety surface around play structure.

Total Estimated Cost: \$23,500

Impact: The main impact for the community is safety while using the play structure and making it easier to get from amenity to amenity within the park. Having the amenities secured on concrete pads will give a cleaner look and help designate equipment locations.

Clarion Woods Park

Scope:

- Update signage along the dam to include Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism fishing regulations, Adopt-A-Park information and a trail map.
- Lighting – Update existing lighting to more energy-efficient fixtures to reduce utility costs and install additional fixtures along the parking lot to increase safety and visibility for park and trail patrons.
- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park sign to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park include KDWPT Community Fisheries Assistance Program.
- Design and implement a new parking area to accommodate City of Topeka road projects and provide additional parking in 2019. Temporarily move parking lot to the west as the COT temporary access road (Fairlawn Road) is currently under construction.

Total Estimated Cost: \$55,500

Impact: The main impacts for the community are accessibility, engagement and safety. This park has received grant-related updates around the pond in recent years and increased use. The updates would accommodate the additional users and further engage them to maximize the overall park experience.

Collins Park

Scope:

- Replace one bench, placed near playground equipment.
- Install one bike rack.
- Concrete to extend walk connections and curbing around play area and to mount amenities such as benches, picnic tables, trash cans, etc.
- Install one dog waste station.
- Lighting – Upgrade lighting to more energy-efficient fixtures to reduce utility costs and increase safety and visibility throughout the park.
- Main park signs – Replace the existing main park signs to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.
- Install one open-air shelter and four picnic tables for the events, gatherings and general use the park provides.
- Replace existing play equipment with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.
- Replace the existing basketball/volleyball court to meet design specifications.
- Install three trash receptacles.

Total Estimated Cost: \$209,850

Impact: This park sees a large amount of traffic, so the updates are designed to group like features, improve accessibility, walkability and provide amenities that accommodate its use both daily and during events such as the annual neighborhood Fourth of July parade. Planning should not duplicate nearby Randolph Elementary features.

Eastborough Park

Scope:

- Install two benches facing the playground.
- Concrete work to provide connectivity between park amenities, a connection to the trail and pads to secure both new and replacement amenities (benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, etc.).
- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park sign to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.
- Replace the existing picnic table and install an additional one to host additional park patrons.
- Replace existing play equipment with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.
- Install one trash receptacle to accommodate the park use and additional seating.

Total Estimated Cost: \$119,650

Impact: Eastborough Park serves the citizens near it without much duplication of services within the park's service radius. Enhancements to the park will provide the neighboring community with a better park experience and a connection to the Deer Creek Trail. With the service it provides the local community and planned extension to the trail, upgrades to this park will provide additional experiences for parks users across Shawnee County.

Eastgate Park

Scope:

- Replace the basketball goal and extend the existing court for full-court play.
- Install one bench near the court's half-court line, facing the court.
- Concrete work to provide connectivity between park amenities and pads to secure amenities.
- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park sign to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.
- Replace existing stand-alone playground equipment with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.
- Install one trash receptacle to accommodate park use.

Total Estimated Cost: \$76,350

Impact: The main impacts for this project are improved amenities, user experience and engagement. This park serves the surrounding neighborhood as a focal point for recreational opportunities and should be addressed as such.

Hughes Park

Scope:

- Replace six benches.
- Install one bike rack.
- Install one dog waste station.
- Replace one drinking fountain and convert to a surface-mount unit.
- Replace fencing around pickleball courts in compliance with design specifications.
- Replace one grill.

- Main park sign – Replace the existing main park signs along SW 7th and SW 8th to meet current branding and design specifications. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.
- Replace six picnic tables both under the shelter and throughout the park.
- Replace existing play equipment with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.
- Install two portable toilet enclosures.
- Replace five trash receptacles throughout to accommodate the park use.

Total Estimated Cost: \$132,350

Impact: The main impact for the community is accommodating the diversity of this park's use. Hughes Park serves multiple generations and populations with heavy use. As the city's first accessible park, the department would like to maintain and update the park's offerings. Installation of pickleball courts has brought the park additional patrons throughout Shawnee County, while still addressing the recreational need for adaptive recreation, multi-generation and event opportunities.

Huntoon Park

Scope:

- Install main park sign per design standards.

Total Estimated Cost: \$1,500

Impact: This project should help identify this parcel of parkland in this high traffic area.

Lindbloom Park

Scope: Natural Area

Total Estimated Cost: \$0

Impact: Based on the park classification and current status of the property, staff determined that this park needs further assessment pertaining to access, purpose, and potential. Overall community impact is minimal at this time due to accessing the property in the current natural state. Neighboring properties and easements need explored as well.

Major Palm Park

Scope:

- Install one new bench and replace an existing second bench.
- Install one bike rack.
- Concrete connections and curbing around play area, underneath amenities such as benches, picnic tables, trash cans.
- Replace picnic tables and trash receptacles.
- Lighting – upgrade lighting to more energy-efficient fixtures to reduce utility costs and increase safety and visibility.
- Replace the existing main park sign.
- Replace existing play equipment with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.

Total Estimated Cost: \$78,600

Impact: The project focus in this park is to improve amenities, passive and active user experiences and engage the surrounding neighborhood. The park should serve as a focal point for healthy recreational opportunities.

Matthews Park

Scope: Natural Area

Total Estimated Cost: \$0

Impact: Based on the park classification and current status of the property, staff determined that this park needs further assessment pertaining to access, purpose, and potential. Overall community impact is minimal at this time due to accessing the property in the current natural state. Neighboring properties and easements need explored as well.

Meadowood Park

Scope:

- Install picnic table, trash receptacle and bench.
- Concrete work to provide connectivity between park amenities and pads to secure amenities along with curbing around play structure.
- Replace the existing main park sign. This will be more inviting to patrons and allow them to more easily identify it as a Shawnee County Parks + Recreation park.
- Replacement of existing play structure with a composite structure and pour-in-place safety surfacing.

Total Estimated Cost: \$95,000

Impact: The main impacts for this project are improved amenities, provide children an active experience and engage the surrounding neighborhood through park layout. This park serves the surrounding neighborhood as a focal point for recreational opportunities and should serve as a focal point for healthy recreational opportunities.

Potwin Circles

Scope:

- Install benches per design standards in select traffic islands.
- Provide irrigation and plant material replacement throughout the traffic islands.

Total Estimated Cost: \$44,500

Impact: The main impact for this project is to visually improve plantings and operational maintenance for those plantings. These parcels serve the neighborhood through visual passive opportunities.

Robinson Park

Scope:

- Design and implement the installation of a parking lot with safety lighting.
- Installation of a new main park sign and interpretive signage.

Total Estimated Cost: \$162,750

Impact: The project focus is to engage visitors and the surrounding neighborhood by providing improved access and an inviting area which is safe for all ages to experience passive and active recreation opportunities.

Terra Heights Park

Scope:

- Install main park sign.

Total Estimated Cost: \$1,500

Impact: This project should help identify the area as parkland.

Willow Park

Scope:

- Replace play structure including safety surfacing and curbing allowing for bench placement.
- Improve amenities (benches, trash receptacle, picnic tables) per design standards.
- Non-compliant trail connections need addressed through resurfacing and layout. Doing so will allow for connectivity through the park and encourage use by nearby visitors and the neighborhood.

Total Estimated Cost: \$87,300

Impact: The main impacts for this project are to improve park connectivity, encourage visitation, and operational maintenance while reducing safety issues and unwanted park use. This parcel serves the community by its highly visual and medium impact opportunities. Improvements will afford nearby neighborhoods, hospital visitors and employees opportunities for healthy recreation while also providing a safe clean site for passive recreation.

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About Shawnee County Parks + Recreation

Shawnee County Parks + Recreation includes nearly 60 miles of trails, 2,625 acres of parks and 320 annual days of sporting activities. In addition, the department offers recreation programs, educational programs and golf. A combination of tax dollars, user fees and private donations enables Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to offer parks, sporting and aquatic facilities with state-of-the-art features, and beautiful, nationally recognized gardens.