

June 12, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

FR: Pattie Berg, City Council Liaison to Parks Advisory Committee

RE: Parks Advisory Committee Quarterly Report FY23-24 and 24-25 Strategic Plan Update

Committee Chair Tressa Blair is in the middle of a flurry of activities, including a family wedding, so I am 'pinch hitting' for the Parks Quarterly report. Please excuse any grammar or spelling issues!

I. BACKGROUND:

In April, 2024, the Parks Committee proposed a 2 year strategic plan with a goal of completing a majority of the parks deferred maintenance projects by June 30, 2025. In its FY24-25 budget, the Council approved what would about \$183,000 in parks improvements. This cost included all funds from grants, donations, and the CIP and general funds.

Status:

The following chart shows the status of the Committee's April, 2024 2-year strategic plan.

Project	Committee Priority	September 2024 Budget	Adjusted Budget as of 6/10/25	YTD Expenses *	% of Budget Remaining	Funding Sources/Status/Comments
Parking (ADA) at McStravick Park	1	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 2,182.50	\$ -	100%	HB355. Under contract. To be done this fall.
Springs Park Renovation	2	\$ 94,230.96	\$ 83,915.23	\$ 58,824.76	30%	Hopefully 75% complete. New Crew will begin work @6/15. Funding from Race, Lions, T-mobile, HB355, others
Radar Park Vaulted toilet	3	\$ 20,499.00	\$ 23,750.00	\$ -	100%	HB355 Under contract. Will be installed in FY25-26.
Smoke Stations * 2	n/a	\$ 101.00	\$ 105.60	\$ 105.60	0%	One for Rader Park; one for Springs Park
Bair Park	n/a	\$ 35,203.96	\$ 40,268.75	\$ 11,865.25	71%	Parks GF &/or CIP, T-Mobile Springs Park savings (\$13,843). Budget increase due to change in scope. 5% complete. Wtg on start date from installer.
CIP Project Costs	n/a	\$ 10,850.15	\$ 560.50	\$ -	100%	5/21/25 budget: anticipated cost overruns on ADA Parking at McStravick Park
CIP Match Costs	n/a	\$ 18,761.77	\$ 7,793.00	\$ 7,793.00	0%	Parks Master Plan awaiting Council review/public comment and adoption. Match for HB355 came from other sources
Total Cost of Strategic Plan Projects		\$183,346.84	\$ 158,575.58	\$78,588.61	50%	
Additional Projects:						
Rotary Grant Funds remaining	n/a		\$ 137.52	\$ 29.75	78%	\$137.52 remaining on 7/1/24
Hand Rail at Joanna's Park	n/a	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00		100%	Parks GF. Mayor is finding a welder.
Rotary Shelter Lighting/Electricity Upgrade	n/a					Facilities GF. Rotary is paying for @ 55% of this work. Wtg on contractor
Adjusted Totals		\$184,046.84	\$ 159,413.10	\$78,618.36	51%	

*YTD expenses are the best estimate. Clerk's reported figures plus known outstanding costs.

Comments: The City recently encountered a snag in our plan in that the playground installer we had been working with is no longer available. There is a new crew starting around June 15, and the City will have a good idea of the costs to finish Springs shortly thereafter. The new crew is associated with Landscape Structures, company we purchased the new play equipment from. While we would have preferred Landscape Structures to offer their crew when we first notified them of problems with the previous installer, and even though there may be

some additional costs, I am considering this change in plans a good thing, in that I am more confident the project will be done right, the first time.

Once we have a better understanding of the cost to finish Springs Park, the Committee intends to pursue the planned work at Bair Park, and will provide you with an updated plan.

II. FUNDING PICTURE

With the caveat that some of these figures are subject to change depending on what we learn in the next week about the cost to finish Springs, the following provides the projected fund balances for the various parks-related funds.

1. General Fund

In its strategic plan, the Committee projected a 6/30/25 parks general fund balance of \$25,000 (including operations and maintenance costs.) With the increased scope of work at Bair Park, the 6/30/25 Parks general fund balance is projected to be about \$11,000.

2. Capital Projects Fund

On July 1, 2024, the Parks Capital Projects fund balance was \$63,341.00; \$25,000 of which was reserved, leaving \$38,341 for project work. The FY24-25 budget included about \$10,850 for the required 25% HB355 match, and \$7,793 for a match required to obtain the CDBG grant for the Parks Master Plan. The Committee projected a 6/30/25 Parks CIP 'project' fund balance of about \$29,000.

Capital Project Fund	Plan	Projected
Final budget 23-24	\$ 63,341.00	\$ 63,341.00
Less Reserve for Bair Park	\$(10,000.00)	\$(10,000.00)
Less reserve for Parks/AC Truck	\$(15,000.00)	\$(15,000.00)
Available July 1, 2024	\$ 38,341.00	\$ 38,341.00
Less CDBG Match (Master Plan)	\$(7,793.00)	\$(7,793.00)
Less HB355 Match	\$(10,850.15)	\$ -
Less Project Cost over runs		\$ 1,200.00
Plus: Bair Park Reserve	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Funds Remaining 6/30/25	\$ 29,697.85	\$ 41,748.00

Status: The State of Montana accepted as HB355 match the funds provided by T-Mobile, the Race for this Place, and the Lions; a significant cost savings. It is projected that the 6/30/25 Parks' Capital Projects fund balance (less the existing \$15,000 reserved for a Parks/ACO vehicle) will be \$41,748.

3. T-Mobile Grant

The City received \$50,300 in funds from the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program. This included \$50,000 to renovate Springs Park, and \$300 to throw a party announcing the receipt of the grant. As is usually the case with corporate grants, no matching funds were required. The T-Mobile Budget for the Springs Park Renovation as of 6/5/25 was \$38,485.23, with to date expenditures of \$23,266.27.

In December 2024, the then-playground installer, Steve Burgener, reduced his initial bid on work for Springs Park by about \$13,000, with the stipulation that the savings be used to purchase playground equipment. With careful shopping on the Committee's part, this cost savings made it possible to the purchase a new "Los Arbolos" play structure, which will replace the old wooden structure at Bair Park. Both the structure and the non-displacement mats were paid for using T-Mobile Funds.

Despite our best efforts, progress on this grant has been frustrating slow, but we are keeping our "eyes on the prize" of a new, safe and accessible playground at Springs Park, and a 'bonus' improvement to Bair Park. The Committee expects to fully expend all available T-Mobile funds.

Barring any big surprises from the new installation team, the Committee is confident the Springs Park renovation project will be completed under, or very close to, budget and is planning a fun grand reopening celebration which will likely occur on July 3, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. Please attend if you are available.

4. HB-355 Grant

Parks projects received \$46,830 in HB355 funds. It appears the City is on track to complete all HB355 projects on budget. Once Springs Park is done, the two remaining projects – ADA access at McStravick Park and the installation of the vault toilet at Rader Park -- will be completed this fall.

Shared Costs

The HB355 grant required a 25% match (25 cents on each dollar awarded.) When all is said and done, it is projected that the state will see a 76% match: more than 3 times more than was required under the law. This is an incredible return on the investment made by Montana's taxpayers, via the Legislature.

HB355 Match Calculation	
HB355 Funds	\$ 46,830.00
HB355 Project Totals	\$ 192,658.02
Matching Funds	\$ 145,828.02
Match	76%

In FY24-25 the Parks Committee members logged an average of 3.36 volunteers 'man hours' each month (not including time spent preparing for the meetings) plus all the hours Committee members volunteered on tasks related to the Race for this Place and the Master Planning Process (providing information to Great West Engineering, conducting PR activities for the community survey, staffing survey events, touring the City's park, etc.)

In summary while we have encountered a "bump in the road" on the Committee's 2-year strategic plan, the work of the Parks Committee and their partners has led to significant progress in being able to mark a long "To Do" list of deferred maintenance issues "Done". The Committee can now begin planning for the future.

I am beyond appreciative of the Parks Committee members – Tressa, Jen, Jordan, Kelly, and Emma for all the work they've done to make it possible for the City to have parks the citizens can be proud of, and can safely use. Sadly, Kelly has decided to step away from the Committee. We will miss her and appreciate the many contributions she has made to the Committee's success. If you see her, please thank her for her service.

Also, thanks to the Council for supporting the implementation of the plan (big shout out to Ron Coleman for his performing 'acting mayor' duties on short notice) and to the Mayor for stepping in to get the Springs Park renovation back on track after it became critical to find a solution to the installer issue. It truly does 'take a village'!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

PB/pb