

Source

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Parks and Recreation

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** City Manager and Staff   
**DATE:** February 11, 2008  
**RE:** Garth Nature Area Additional Parking

**Summary:** At the November 19, 2007 Council meeting, Council requested a report in regards to what could be done to address the lack of available parking spaces at the Garth Nature Area. Staff is proposing that an additional 22 spaces be added to the existing 20 space parking lot at a cost of \$48,290 (see attached drawing). Due to ongoing construction projects, it will be either late summer or early fall before staff will be available to work on this project.

Fiscal Impact

YES

NO

If Council wishes to proceed with the parking lot expansion, one alternative would be to include the project in the FY09 budget using the FY-2009 Annual Roads and Parking Lot Improvements funds (Park Sales Tax). A second alternative, which would allow work to begin prior to October 1, 2008 if staff is available, would be to proceed with a public hearing and authorization of the project this budget year utilizing funding out of both the FY-08 (\$20,000) and FY-09 (\$28,290) budgets. In this scenario, staff would use \$20,000 out of the FY-08 Annual Roads and Parking Lot Improvement funds to construct the gravel portion of the parking lot and the adjacent wetland in late summer. Then after the October 1 beginning of the FY09 budget year, the City can award a contract to a paving company to complete the asphalt portion of the parking lot. The remaining tasks of the project (landscape, sidewalks and curbing) would be completed as weather and time allows. Staff is concerned that if work does not begin during the dry portion of the summer, it may not be possible to do the work until the summer of 2009. Staff is seeking direction on how to proceed with this project.

Other Info.

**Discussion:** At the November 19, 2007 Council meeting, Council requested that park staff provide a report in regards to what could be done to address the lack of available parking spaces at the Garth Nature Area. Due to the popularity of the leash free dog park, the existing 20 space parking lot reaches capacity multiple times throughout the week forcing park visitors to either park illegally, return at a later date, or simply postpone their visit indefinitely. Staff is proposing that an additional 22 spaces be added to the existing 20 space parking lot at a cost of \$48,290.

In designing the proposed parking lot expansion, staff looked at two options in addition to the recommended plan. The first option was placing the expansion between the existing lot and Garth. However, there is a large drain pipe in that area that goes under the road and handles a lot of water. Staff is continually fighting the erosion caused by the amount of water that comes out of this pipe and into the park.

The other concern is the steep grade in this area as the road is about 10-ft above the parking lot. The bottom of the pipe sets the grade and thus would likely require either more piping or a retaining wall, both of which would add significant cost to the project. The other location considered was to place the expansion further to the south so that as one turns into the drive, one could either turn right into the existing lot or left into the new parking lot. This alternative would require the removal of a wetland area that was built to capture the storm water that drains out of the previously mentioned pipe. This option would require considerable fill which would increase the project's cost. This pond has become popular with users and it was felt that draining it would cause some concern. Therefore, staff is recommending the layout as shown in the attached drawing. Many of the trees currently screening the existing parking lot will be relocated so that both lots are visible for security purposes. The intent of the proposed plan is to create parking areas that are visible from the road, but which are appropriately landscaped for aesthetic purposes.

A possible funding source for the project is the Annual Park Roads and Parking Lots Improvement account that is funded by the Park Sales Tax. The existing FY-2008 Annual Roads and Parking Lot Improvement funds are scheduled to be used to at the new Atkins Youth Athletic Field Complex (estimate \$110,000-\$130,000) and to overlay portions of the Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area (Cosmo Park) at a cost of \$10,000-\$20,000. There is approximately \$147,000 available in FY-08 funds and \$150,000 scheduled for FY-09.

One alternative for financing the project would be to fund the project out of the FY-09 Annual Roads and Parking Lot Improvement fund. Under this scenario, construction would not begin until after October 1. Due to commitments to existing construction projects, it appears that it will be either late summer or early fall before staff will be available to work on this project.

A second alternative, which would allow staff to begin work prior to October 1, 2008 if available, would be to proceed with a public hearing and authorization of the project during this budget year. Funding would need to come out of both the FY-08 and FY-09 budgets. In this scenario, staff would recommend using \$20,000 out of the FY-08 Annual Roads and Parking Lot Improvement funds to construct the gravel portion of the parking lot and adjacent wetlands in late summer or early fall. Then, following the October 1 start of the new budget year, award a contract to a paving company to complete the asphalt portion of the parking lot with FY 09 monies. The asphalt portion of this project could be bid as an alternate bid with the Department's other 08 asphalt projects and be ready for award once funding is available. The remaining tasks of the project (landscape, sidewalks and curbing) would be completed as weather and time allows. Staff is concerned that if work does not begin during the dry portion of the summer, it may not be possible to do the necessary earthwork until the summer of 2009. As a low lying area, the location of the parking lot expansion stays wet much of the year and has a very short window in which earthwork may be conducted.

If the current projects do not allow staff to work on the project prior to October 1, 2008, then staff will monitor the site and attempt to complete the grading and rock portion as the weather allows. The \$48,290 estimate is based on the heavy equipment earthwork being done by a contractor that already has the department's equipment operation bid. This is an hourly rate based on equipment used. The other option would be to bid out the heavy equipment operation, but experience has shown that process may increase the grading cost by anywhere between 50%-100%.

The cost estimate of \$48,289 for the parking lot expansion is based on the following line items:

1.	Lot Grading & Wetland Construction:	\$10,000
2.	Two feet of rock base:	\$10,000
3.	Asphalt:	\$11,400
4.	Concrete Curb: 560' linear feet:	\$ 6,000
5.	Landscaping, seed/straw:	\$ 4,000
6.	Sidewalk connector: 100' x 6':	\$ 2,500
7.	Contingency (10%)	<u>\$ 4,390</u>
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$48,290</b>

**Recommended Council Action:** if Council wishes to proceed with the parking lot expansion, Council should direct staff to proceed with one of the following options: (1). Authorize staff to schedule a public hearing and authorization of the project with funding to come out of both the FY-08 (\$20,000) and FY-09 (\$28,290) budgets; (2) Direct staff to include this project as part of the FY-09 CIP; or (3). Another option based on Council recommendations.

**PROPOSED PARKING LOT EXPANSION FOR GARTH NATURE AREA**  
CITY OF COLUMBIA, MO PARKS AND RECREATION 1-8-08

