



Source: Parks and Recreation *MT*  
Police

Agenda Item No: REP 111-12

To: City Council  
From: City Manager and Staff *MM*

**Council Meeting Date:** Jul 16, 2012

**Re:** Security Improvements to Douglass Park

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Parks & Recreation Department and the Columbia Police Department are proposing to replace the existing two security cameras in Douglass Park with two cameras similar to those located in the downtown area. Depending on available funds, other improvements such as additional lights may also be added. Estimated cost for these improvements is \$30,000 with funding coming from the 2010 Park Sales Tax. Work will be done by a combination of contract and force account labor.

**DISCUSSION:**

On December 2, 2011, staff from the P&R Department, Douglass High School and the Douglass Park Neighborhood Association met to discuss security issues in Douglass Park. Douglass High School currently has 165 students and is expected to grow to 200 students in the following year. Additionally, a summer school program may be implemented. Students currently use the Douglass Park facilities and when doing so, have been solicited for drugs and alcohol while in the park and on school grounds. Potential solutions generated from the meeting included closing the parking lot, adding security cameras, increasing police patrols, additional lights, adding various park development features (skate boarding areas, more shelters, etc) and joint recreation programs were discussed. Following this meeting, the P&R Department elected to add the Douglass Park parking lot to the list of parks where the parking lots are closed for the winter (Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, Cosmo-Antimi fields, Atkins, Kiwanis, and Nifong Parks). The lots were closed in mid-December and were scheduled to re-open March 24, 2012. The parks remained open for public use—only the parking lot was closed.

Unfortunately, many park users thought that the park was closed for the winter and many others felt that closing the Douglass parking lot was unfair. On January 18, 2012 a follow-up meeting was held at Douglass High School with approximately 65 people in attendance. At this meeting, P&R Director Mike Hood presented a management plan based on best management practices currently used in other cities to deter crime in parks. These practices include the following:

1. Improve park facilities and keep them well maintained.
2. Increase lighting to improve visibility.
3. Alter landscaping to remove obstructions and increase visibility.
4. Alter access routes and/or restrict parking.
5. Install and monitor surveillance cameras.

Police Lieutenant Christopher Kelley was available for questions and provided the following crime statistics regarding the top three parks with the most police service calls:

<b>Calls for Police Service (arrests noted in parenthesis)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
1. Cosmo Park (533 acres)	463 (13)	400 (24)	480 (18)
2. Stephens Lake (110 acres)	283 (8)	374 (6)	283 (14)
3. Douglass Park (8 acres)	276 (14)	225 (13)	236 (12)

Following a lengthy discussion, the group developed the following proposed 12 action items:

1. Increase daily foot patrol of the park by local law enforcement.
2. Increased measures by law enforcement to make arrests for illicit activities in Douglass Park.
3. Program additional family activities in the park with effective marketing venues for African American

community.

4. Install security cameras in the park.
5. Identify or construct a downtown facility to serve as a youth community center.
6. Work with the City of Columbia as the lead agency in acquiring the "vision" of Douglass Park.
7. Encourage community neighbors to take the lead in communicating and educating residents - young and old - on the "vision" of Douglass Park.
8. Engage community youth to be involved in finding and implementing solutions to deterring crime at Douglass Park.
9. Implement a safety patrol program at Douglass Park with police cadets or DHS student groups.
10. Implement a community campaign to eliminate the "snitch" mentality related to assisting with police investigations.
11. Provide year-round restroom facilities at Douglass Park.
12. Provide more access to existing resources such as Douglass High School and the CHA's Blind Boone Community Center

The Parks & Recreation Department also agreed to open the Douglass Park parking lot at the conclusion of the meeting.

On April 4, 2012, the Columbia Police Department conducted a Central Columbia Stakeholders meeting at the Blind Boone Center. Approximately 15 people were in attendance including representatives from churches, community organizations and the Douglass Park Ambassadors. The installation of surveillance cameras in Douglass Park was identified as a crime deterrent and was supported by the Douglass Park Ambassadors.

On April 25, 2012 the P&R and Police Department held a Douglass Park meeting at the Douglass High School with approximately 30 people in attendance. At this meeting the two departments discussed the various programs and actions they were taking regarding the 12 issues that were identified on January 18. A survey was handed out to all attendees with questions that asked about safety improvements, recreation programs, special events and possible park development options. Additionally, the survey asked if they supported the addition of security cameras in the park. Eleven responded with a "yes," one "no" and five were "undecided."

After conducting four public input meetings the Parks & Recreation and the Columbia Police Departments recommend that the existing the Douglass Park cameras be upgraded to the new standards currently used in the downtown area. The Parks and Recreation Department currently has 47 cameras in the park system as detailed below:

1. Activity & Recreation Center: 11 (all cameras are in the interior of building)
2. Albert-Oakland Family Aquatic Center: 5 (3 cameras on pool deck & 2 cameras inside)
3. Douglass Park and Pool: 2 (one camera aimed at pool deck and one at basketball court)
4. LA Nickell Golf Course Clubhouse: 3 (all in the interior of building)
5. Lake of the Woods Golf Course Clubhouse: 4 (all in the interior of building)
6. Armory: 16 (14 cameras throughout interior of building and 2 exterior cameras)
7. Park Management Center: 5 (2 cameras interior of building and 3 cameras on outside compound)

In addition to the above, the Rangers use one portable camera to place at areas where periodic problems such as graffiti or illegal dumping occur. All of the P&R cameras are record only and do not have 24 hour monitoring capability.

The P&R and Police Departments are proposing to replace the existing two cameras in Douglass Park with cameras similar to those located in the downtown area. These cameras are provided by an existing city contract with ISG Technologies.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Parks and Recreation Department has \$30,000 budgeted in the FY2012 CIP for security improvements to Douglass Park. Estimated cost for the cameras including installation is \$25,000 with P&R providing assistance with the installation of poles and electrical connections. Additional funds will be used for additional park lighting and other safety improvements as needed. The annual maintenance cost for these two cameras is \$2,700.

**VISION IMPACT:**

<http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Meefings/visionimpact.php>

3. Vision Statement: High level, comprehensive, responsive services—from library, to police, emergency, substance abuse, and public works— keep the city clean, safe, and beautiful, and citizens informed and knowledgeable; provide equitable treatment to all, incorporate input from citizens, and support the high quality of life of the community.

3.3 Goal: Community members will be safe and secure.

3.3.1 Strategy: Reduce crime and substance abuse.

**SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:**

**If Council concurs with the recommendation of the Park and Police Departments to install the new security cameras in Douglass Park , pass a motion directing staff to proceed with such action.**

FISCAL and VISION NOTES:					
City Fiscal Impact Enter all that apply		Program Impact		Mandates	
City's current net FY cost	\$30,000.00	New Program/ Agency?		Federal or State mandated?	
Amount of funds already appropriated	\$30,000.00	Duplicates/Epands an existing program?		<b>Vision Implementation impact</b>	
Amount of budget amendment needed	\$0.00	Fiscal Impact on any local political subdivision?		Enter all that apply: Refer to Web site	
Estimated 2 year net costs:		<b>Resources Required</b>		Vision Impact?	Yes
One Time	\$30,000.00	Requires add'l FTE Personnel?	No	Primary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	3
Operating/ Ongoing	\$2,700.00	Requires add'l facilities?	No	Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	3.3, 3.3.1
		Requires add'l capital equipment?	No	Fiscal year implementation Task #	36