



MEMO

PUBLIC BUILDING ANALYSIS

Project description

There is one proposed public project that is within the NW 62nd Avenue Urban Renewal Area. The project involves the creation of a community park in a blighted area that used to serve as a wastewater treatment lagoon. The lagoon was abandoned in the mid 1990's and has remained dormant and has become overgrown with scrub trees and other vegetation. The property has a negative impact on the surrounding residential properties and businesses in its current condition. The proposed redevelopment project will eliminate the blighted condition by creating a regional park and education center that will serve the neighborhood, the adjacent business community and the region by the interconnected recreation trail system.

The park improvements include a lake, fishing pier, three open shelters, rest rooms, parking lots, playground area, wetlands and recreation trails. Also proposed is the addition of an educational wing to the Crown Point Community Center which is located on adjacent property and is also owned by the city. Crown Point Community Center is the focal point for many of the senior citizen activities and is where Polk County operates a senior citizen congregate meal site. The center is also available for use by the public for a variety of activities including business meetings, retirement parties, wedding receptions, scouting activities, etc.

This project is in close proximity to many Johnston businesses and will be an inviting place for employees to relax and recreate while providing a location for businesses to conduct social functions (picnics), employee training and team building activities. The education component will provide students the opportunity to learn about nature and conservation. Childserve, an organization that provides medical and therapy services to children with disabilities, is located within a couple of blocks and will have direct trail access to the park. The playground area, fishing pier and shelters will be accessible. The park will also serve as a trail head and destination for the regional trail system.

Project funding

The city plans to conduct an extensive fund raising campaign and apply for grants to various private businesses and public entities to fund the estimated \$5,448,200 project cost. Additional funding would come from the general fund property tax levy of the city and the possible use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fill any funding gaps. Although all property tax payers will provide funding support through the general fund property tax levy, many park users and organizations that will benefit directly from this project are non-tax paying entities (i.e. the Johnston Community School District, ChildServe, Polk County, visitors to the community). Using TIF provides a funding alternative to utilize incremental taxes from the significant commercial growth that has occurred within the NW 62nd Avenue Urban Renewal Area.

Justification

Johnston has experienced significant residential and commercial growth throughout the community (the population increased by nearly 100% between 2000 and 2010). Specifically there has been significant commercial growth within the NW 62nd Avenue Urban Renewal Area. As our community has grown, providing facilities that improve the quality of life for our expanding number of citizens and the increased employees of our businesses is challenging.

Creating a community recreation facility from a blighted former wastewater lagoon will retain and attract residents and businesses which will ensure the area will remain economically viable. Residents will be attracted to the area by the amenities that provide a good quality of life for their families. They will purchase and invest in their properties which will improve the neighborhood and add to the property tax base. Businesses will benefit due to the strong residential base and the amenities the project will provide for their employees. The regional trail system, community activities and educational programs will attract many visitors that will benefit local businesses including restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations and hotels. A strong residential and commercial economic base will generate investment in properties which benefits the city, schools and the county through increased property taxes.