



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & MARINE

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August 16, 2005

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HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the development of universally accessible playgrounds. (Citywide)

## DISCUSSION

In September 2004, the City Council requested that the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine examine the feasibility of developing universally accessible playgrounds in new parks and incorporate elements of universally accessible playgrounds into projects currently under design or planned for the future. The staff reported back to the City Council, on November 9, 2004, and the City Council referred the issue to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities (CACOD).

The Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission held five meetings in January 2005 to obtain public input on universally accessible playgrounds. The meetings were held at Houghton Park, Bixby Park, Silverado Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and El Dorado Park, respectively. Thirty-six adults and six children attended one or more of the meetings.

On March 14, 2005, Parks, Recreation and Marine Department staff met with Brad Thornton and Tiffany Harris of "Shane's Inspiration" to gain insight into the development and fundraising processes for universally accessible playgrounds. Shane's Inspiration is a recognized expert in designing and fundraising for universally accessible playgrounds. On April 1, 2005, the CIP Committee met with the CACOD's Youth Committee and staff to formulate recommendations for presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

## Need for Universally Accessible Playgrounds

By the conclusion of the current fiscal year, all 44 of the playgrounds in the City's parks will be compliant with the standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, ADA compliance does not ensure that the playgrounds are totally accessible and fully integrated for disabled children. There are currently 7,600 disabled students enrolled in the Long Beach Unified School District. Parents are driving to Los Angeles and other cities to provide their children the opportunity to play on universally accessible playground equipment.

Commission Recommendations

On April 21, 2005, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously adopted the recommendations of the CIP Committee and CACOD's Youth Committee. They are as follows:

1. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine should pursue the development of universally accessible playgrounds that are well distributed across the City (see Attachment 1). Potential sites include:

- El Dorado Park West
- Admiral Kidd Park
- Martin Luther King Jr. Park
- Stearns Champions Park
- Scherer Park
- 55<sup>th</sup> Way Park Expansion
- Drake-Chavez Greenbelt
- Bixby (Junipero) Beach

2. The first universally accessible playground should be located in El Dorado Park West, near the duck pond and bandshell, and adjacent to Studebaker Road. (See Attachment 2.) This is the preferred site of those who attended the public meetings. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the first playground constructed in the City would be a regional draw, and therefore must be able to accommodate a large number of patrons and vehicles. Specifically, the selection of El Dorado Park West as the first site is supported by the following factors:

- Easily accessible to freeways and public transportation.
- Good access from the parking places to the playgrounds.
- Adequate parking capacity for cars and buses.
- Easily accessible restrooms.
- The playground location is removed from most active areas of the park.
- The playground, in combination with the duck pond, bandshell and picnic areas, creates a "destination" site for family outings and group trips.

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3. All future neighborhood, community, regional parks and park expansion projects (e.g., Drake-Chavez Greenbelt, Davenport Park (formerly 55<sup>th</sup> Way Park Expansion)) should be evaluated as potential sites for universally accessible playgrounds.
4. All parks slated for major renovations (e.g., Admiral Kidd Park) should be evaluated as potential sites for universally accessible playgrounds, or as sites for playgrounds with universally accessible playground elements.
5. All playgrounds identified for future upgrades, or still in the queue for ADA upgrades (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., Stearns, Scherer), should be evaluated as potential universally accessible playgrounds, or as playgrounds with universally accessible playground elements.
6. The Department should pursue grants, sponsorships, private-sector support, and evaluate the potential for the use of Community Development Block Grant funds and Park Impact Fee funds.
7. The Department should provide the CIP Committee and CACOD's Youth Committee with regular updates regarding the status of fundraising efforts and playground development.

### Funding

Mr. Thornton and Ms. Harris of Shane's Inspiration recommended that the Department's first step be to secure "start-up" funding for design and fundraising efforts, which is approximately 20 percent of the project cost. They said that it had been their experience that the funding for the playground would follow once the "vision" was created.

A universally accessible playground was designed for El Dorado Park in 1996. The cost of the playground was projected to be nearly \$1,000,000, and funding was not available for construction at that time. Using the previous project cost as a benchmark, staff is estimating that \$200,000 (20 percent) is required for design and fundraising efforts for this first playground. This design will provide staff with detailed cost estimates for future playgrounds. It should be noted that the previously prepared design for the El Dorado Park playground is now obsolete in light of current design trends and equipment options.

The City Manager's proposed Capital Improvement Program Budget for Fiscal Year 2006 has allocated \$220,000 for the start-up costs associated with the first universally accessible playground.

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Implementation

Once the required start-up funding becomes available, Department staff will begin the design process, which will include opportunities for public input. Staff will also secure the services of a professional fundraiser to seek corporate sponsorships and private donations for the project. Furthermore, staff will actively pursue grant opportunities for the funding of additional universally accessible playgrounds and/or the inclusion of universally accessible equipment in existing and new playgrounds.

This letter was reviewed by Senior Deputy City Attorney Donna Gwin on August 8, 2005, and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on August 8, 2005.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is not time critical.


FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Should outside assistance be required to augment staff efforts during the design phase, a separate request will be made for any related contracts.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



PHIL T. HESTER  
DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE

PTH:GH  
Attachments

APPROVED:

  
GERALD R. MILLER  
CITY MANAGER