

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	September 16, 2024
Action Required:	Approval of the proposed CDBG-funded Parks & Rec activity and the appropriation of associated funds to facilitate much-needed accessibility-related enhancements to a pedestrian trail along the Moore's Creek trail within Jordan Park, a major amendment to the CDBG PY24 Action Plan, in the amount of \$25,000
Presenter:	Anthony Warn, Grants Analyst, Alexander Ikefuna, Director, Office of Community Solutions , Chris Gensic, Park and Trail Planner
Staff Contacts:	Anthony Warn, Grants Analyst
Title:	Public Hearing and Resolution to approve the <i>2024 Parks & Recreation Accessibility Enhancements Project at Jordan Park</i> and to reprogram associated Community Development Block Grant funds, a major amendment, \$25,000 (1 of 2 readings)

Background

The City of Charlottesville is an Entitlement Community in the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program offered by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and, as such, is the recipient federal funds to support the city's ongoing community development and affordable housing activities.

Discussion

In July of 2024, the Department of Parks & Recreation completed construction of the city's newest addition to the Moores Creek trail network in the form of an ADA-compliant trail bridge that spans the Pollocks Branch of the Jordan Creek waterway. This new bridge provides new access for residents of the nearby Ridge Street and Belmont neighborhoods and visitors to the playground and other amenities offered by Jordan Park. Notably, it replaces a series of stones that had been placed in the creek over the years which, presumably, had been used by some to cross the creek to get to Jordan Park. The new bridge also builds a new connection between these greenspaces and the residents of current and planned affordable publicly supported housing to be constructed nearby. An additional benefit of the new trail bridge will be to connect local residents and visitors to Jordan Park to an expanding series of trails along the Rivanna River that will extend, at scale, from Jordan Park to Fifth Street Station.

Proposal

With the CDBG funds proposed here for reprogramming, the Department of Parks & Recreation will be able to remove a significant barrier to accessing park amenities. Specifically, Parks & Recreation proposes to replace an existing, narrow pathway within Jordan Park with a new, much longer and

wider paved pathway that will significantly enhance access to park amenities, the new bridge and trail network. Notably, there is an existing ADA-compliant curb ramp located at the Sixth Street entrance to Jordan Park, but this curb ramp does not connect to a wheelchair accessible pathway within the park itself. This proposal will solve this problem.

Additionally, there is not currently a paved, ADA-compliant pathway connecting the park to the trail network. Instead, there is a narrow pathway of cracked asphalt that runs approximately 128 feet from the Sixth Street Park entrance to a basketball court. Notably, this current path does not connect to either of the park's two existing playgrounds. With this new proposed funding, Parks & Recreation will remove this narrow path and replace it with a new, accessible paved pathway that spans approximately 425 feet and that will provide an uninterrupted connection from the accessible curb ramp at the park's Sixth Street entrance to the new trail bridge with new paved connections to the basketball court and both playgrounds.

While the new bridge already promises a great benefit to the community, the next steps for the expansion of the Moores Creek trail network involve the construction of a series of connected ADA-compliant pathways linking the various area amenities. This proposal would constitute a significant contribution to these efforts and bring additional and immediate benefits to this area.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This proposed accessibility-focused project is closely aligned to City Council's vision of the City of Charlottesville as a community where everyone thrives. This project aligns with the City of Charlottesville Strategic Plan Framework Outcome Areas of Partnerships and Recreation, Arts, Culture:

- Partnerships: This proposal strengthens the ongoing partnership between the City's Office of Community Solutions (OCS) and the Department of Parks and Recreation to remove barriers to accessing the city's public amenities, including its public parks.
- Recreation, Arts, Culture: This proposal strengthens the city's commitment to enhancing access to recreation and greenspaces for residents and visitors.

This proposal also complies with the Comprehensive Plan and 2023-2027 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan.

Community Engagement

This proposal benefits from a high degree of community engagement. This proposal, for example, grows out of work begun as part of the HUD-approved 1-Year Annual Action Plan for program year 2022-2023, which underwent a detailed process of public review, public comment and at least four public hearings. This process of public engagement continued through the development of the city's HUD-approved 2023-2027 5-Year Consolidated Plan. Additionally, this proposal will be advertised in local newspapers, made available online at charlottesville.gov, and presented for public review and comment at scheduled public hearings before the Charlottesville City Council.

Budgetary Impact

As the funds proposed here are federal funds allocated to the City by HUD to support community-benefit activities, and, as such, do not draw from the city's General Fund, no adverse impacts to the City's budget are anticipated. Rather, use of these funds to support this project will instead serve to

reduce barriers of access to public amenities, thereby addressing an important and pressing community need.

Recommendation

Based on the anticipated benefits of the current proposal to the Charlottesville community, specifically the removal of an existing barrier to access within Jordan Park, staff recommends that Council approve the proposed project.

Staff further recommends that Council authorize the reprogramming of existing CDBG funds in the amount of \$25,000 available within the CDBG Fund so as to fully implement the proposed program and related enhancements.

Suggested motion:

- **I move that Council approve the RESOLUTION now before us to approve the 2024 Parks & Recreation Accessibility Enhancements Project at Jordan Park and to reprogram \$25,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds as needed to implement the proposal presented here before us today.**

Alternatives

Given that significant public benefits anticipated from this project and that the proposed funds to be used are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development to the City of Charlottesville for the execution of meaningful community-benefit programs and, as such, are not drawn from the city's accounts, no alternative courses of action are considered.

Attachments

1. CDBG PY24+ Parks & Rec Accessibility @ Jordan Park \$25,000 Resolution
2. Parks & Rec ADA at Jordan Park 2024 Paved Trail Diagram
3. CDBG PY24+ Parks & Rec Accessibility at Jordan Park \$25,000 Scope of Work