



Land Use & Environment Committee

Artesian Commons - Immediate Actions and Long-Term Visioning Process

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Title

Artesian Commons - Immediate Actions and Long-Term Visioning Process

Recommended Action

City Manager Recommendation:

Recommend the actions outlined below to the full Council for approval.

Report

Issue:

Safety and security at the Artesian Commons Park

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Paul Simmons, Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation

Background and Analysis:

The Artesian Commons Park opened in May, 2014 and is a unique park located in a highly urbanized area in downtown Olympia. In response to several safety and security concerns, the Parks, Arts, and Recreation staff have designed the following process to implement immediate actions within the park while also developing a public process to create a long-term plan for managing the space.

▪ ***Recommended Immediate Actions***

There is consensus that the park should be safe and welcoming for all users. Below is a list of immediate actions that should be implemented with the intent of improving the safety and security of the park.

- Work with community partners, to implement 20 hours per week of structured programming between May-September. [see Outreach Workers League (OWL) attachment]
- Work with community partners to implement 8 special events between May-September.
- Increase routine maintenance on a daily basis between May-September and provide additional support to community events at the Artesian Commons Park.

- Install a 4-foot tall fence to establish clear park boundaries and allow for closure of the park during the hours it is not in operation. (see Fence Options attachment)
- Install the previously approved basketball hoop, in coordination with the fence.
- Install improved signage establishing park hours.
- Install lighting upgrades on the east side of the park.
- Install additional cameras to more clearly capture activities on the north side of the park.

▪ **Management Strategy for 2015**

The Artesian Commons Park is unlike any other park in Olympia, and has experienced increased levels of violence, vandalism, and illegal drug use. In order to respond to these growing behaviors, we would propose a new management strategy for 2015 that is designed to empower community stakeholders. This new strategy will also provide an ability to make changes and improvements to the park in a more timely fashion before smaller problems escalate into larger ongoing issues and behavior trends.

Artesian Commons Leadership Committee

In order to implement this new management strategy, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Director will form an Artesian Commons Leadership Committee (ACLC) to provide oversight on how the park is being managed, and provide guidance to staff regarding the implementation of future changes. This action will formalize a process that has been occurring informally for some time. The ACLC will meet on a monthly basis throughout the summer and will be comprised of representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- Parks, Arts, & Recreation Department
 - Olympia Police Department
 - Community Planning & Development Department
 - Parking & Business Improvement Area
 - Olympia Downtown Association
 - Downtown Ambassadors
 - Community Youth Services
 - Partners in Prevention Education (PIPE)
 - Youth Liaison through Community Youth Services
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- In addition, Council may wish to designate a Councilmember liaison to provide a broad policy perspective.

*Under this management strategy all major physical changes and major regulatory decisions will continue to be approved by the City Council.

Action Teams

In order for the Artesian Commons Park to be successful, the City needs to build the level of investment and sense of ownership from community partners. In fact, many local agencies have pledged increased levels of support in 2015 and are ready to be active partners. In order to coordinate this energy, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department would propose forming the following Action Teams:

- Programs, Partners, & Events
- Maintenance
- Safety and Security
- Evolving Design
- Public Outreach and Communications

These individual Action Teams would be open opportunities for park users, partner agencies and community stakeholders to help guide the management of the park. These community oriented groups would be facilitated by the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department and would work in support of the Artesian Commons Leadership Committee.

▪ ***Long-Term Visioning Process for 2016 and Beyond***

At the December 16th City Council meeting, many of the City Councilmembers and park advocates expressed a desire to develop a long-term plan for the Artesian Commons Park. This plan should be based on expansive community input from a broad base of stakeholders (including park users), with a focus on long-term outcomes and ongoing performance measures to identify success.

In order to complete this work, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department will collaborate with community stakeholders and partners to facilitate the process. The tentative scope and timeline for this work is outlined below:

February - April:

Summarize lessons learned in 2014

- Need for intent clarification
- Identify existing design challenges
- Evaluate relevant crime data
- Acknowledge need for additional programming
- Evaluate the impact the park has on neighboring businesses
- Evaluate feedback from the Youth Summit hosted in 2014
- Identify the need for a consistent positive presence
- Develop a focus beyond food vendors

May - August:

Public outreach regarding on the following topics

- Long-term vision and park intent
- Programs, partners and events
- Maintenance
- Safety and security
- Evolving design

August - October:

Develop Artesian Commons Long-Term Plan based on lessons learned from 2014-2015 and the public outreach processes. This plan will include a long-term management strategy, identify future capital improvements, and will establish key performance measures and evaluation criteria to inform future decisions.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Several people commented at the Council's December 16 meeting regarding Artesian Commons.

Financial Impact:

All immediate actions that are being recommended would utilize a combination of funds remaining from Phase I construction and a portion of the 2015 CFP funds.