

ITEM #: 23  
DATE: 02-27-24  
DEPT: P&R

### COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT:** MINI-PITCH COURT(S) AT LLOYD KURTZ PARK (3710 HYDE AVE.)

**BACKGROUND:**

City Council has directed staff to construct a Mini-Pitch within the park system. Mini-Pitch consists of a small, hard surfaced court, surrounded by rebound fencing, designed for futsal. Futsal is a version of soccer that is fast-paced, uses a smaller and heavier ball, and is played with 3-5 players per team.

Staff has explored locations throughout the park system to install a Mini-Pitch. Lloyd Kurtz Park, located at Bloomington Road and Hyde Avenue, has been chosen as the location for mini-pitch for a variety of reasons, as described below.

- **Accessibility:** The park is located on an arterial street, has CyRide bus stops at the intersections to the east and west, is connected to a path across the north end of the park from Hyde to Windfield, and there is a shared use path adjacent Bloomington Road at the south end of the park.
- **Green Space:** Lloyd Kurtz Park consists of four acres, with approximately three of those four acres serving as open green space available for mini-pitch on the south end of the park. The north end of the park has existing amenities which compliment a mini-pitch like a non-reservable shelter, playground equipment, swings, a basketball court with two adjustable hoops, a sand volleyball court, and drinking fountain. For reference, one court requires approximately 1/8 of an acre and two courts require 1/4 of an acre.
- **Amenities Throughout the Community:** Staff is committed to spreading park amenities to various sections of the City.
- **Visibility:** Since the park is located on an arterial street, the mini-pitch would be very visible which reduces vandalism, graffiti, and crime. The visibility also helps assist Police monitor park activities as they can be conducted via drive-bys.
- **Out of the Flood Plain:** This park is located outside the flood plain which aligns with staffs' intentions any time an amenity like this is being added to the park system as flood events can damage the amenity and require additional maintenance.
- **Off-Street Parking:** The City has had an agreement with Stonebrook Community Church since 1998 which allows park users to park in the church parking lot.

**AGREEMENTS:**

Conversations with two separate organizations have been ongoing regarding potential agreements as it relates to this mini-pitch project. One is with the church which owns the adjacent property to the park, and the second is with a potential fundraising entity. More information about the individual agreements are detailed below.

**Stonebrook Community Church -** As mentioned above, the City and Stonebrook Community Church have an existing agreement which allows park users to use the church parking lot. With the addition of mini-pitch to the park, staff has met with church leaders to develop a new agreement (Attachment A)

that continues to allow park goers to use the parking lot, as well as addresses components specifically related to the installation of the mini-pitch. Highlights of the updated agreement include the following:

- Use of the parking lot would be available for park users on all days except Sunday prior to 1:00 p.m. and during church related events or religious holidays.
- The City is to provide signage in the parking lot to outline the hours of park related use.
- The City will be responsible to install an accessible walkway between the parking lot and the mini-pitch and be responsible for maintenance of this walkway.
- If Stonebrook decides to expand it's parking lot to the west, they would be responsible for any connections or new walkways to the mini-pitch.
- Stonebrook would also have the option to rent the mini-pitch free of charge for up to 72 hours per calendar year for church related activities.

**Kick It Forward**- Staff has also been in communication with Kick It Forward (KIF), a non-profit organization that fundraises for mini-pitch projects across Iowa. **Depending on City Council direction, working with KIF may provide a potential avenue to fill the funding gap for one, or two, mini-pitch courts. However, KIF has informed staff that their timeline for fundraising is typically six to nine months.** Staff has developed a draft agreement between the City and KIF so that can be finalized quickly if that is the desired direction of City Council.

**COST AND FUNDING:**

The cost estimates shown below are for one and two mini-pitch courts.

<b>Item</b>	<b>One Court</b>	<b>Two Courts</b>
Design and Survey	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Concrete Pad	\$ 58,000	\$116,000
Path (parking lot to mini-pitch)	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Electrical Connections	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Mini-Pitch Components*	\$104,000	\$190,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$192,000</b>	<b>\$336,000</b>
Current City Funding	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>(\$42,000)</b>	<b>(\$186,000)</b>

\*The Mini-Pitch Components outlined above account for the above ground system, including but not limited to, enclosed fencing, surfacing, goals, lights, etc.

As shown above, the City has allocated \$150,000 toward this project, resulting in an anticipated funding gap of \$42,000 for one mini-pitch court and \$186,000 for two mini-pitch courts. Staff has discussed options on how close this funding gap and those possibilities are listed below.

1. **Project Savings** - Staff anticipates project savings from the Inis Grove Stair Project and Furman Aquatic Center Pool Basin Painting Project. These projects will result in a total cost savings of approximately \$55,000. This would fully cover the funding gap for one mini-pitch court, and decrease the funding gap for two mini-pitch to \$131,000. The cost savings from these projects have resulted from staff performing work instead of hiring a contractor or bids coming in lower than anticipated.
2. **Kick It Forward (KIF) Fundraising** - It is unknown at this time how much KIF is willing to

fundraise. KIF has mentioned to staff that fundraising climates are difficult to predict as they are different in each community. The maximum KIF traditionally fundraises for is \$125,000. Staff also has considered cost savings from other projects to cover the funding difference for one or two courts.

3. **Council Contingency** - Council has \$96,660 of unallocated contingency funds available that could be used on this project to close the funding gap. Use of council contingency funds could allow staff to use the project costs savings from other projects as mentioned above to cover other project costs that come in over budget. Council contingency funds could also contribute to lowering the total fundraising amount for KIF if two mini-pitch courts are desired.

Council could choose to use one, two, or all three of the fundraising options above to move the mini-pitch project forward.

### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

A public input meeting was held on Monday, February 5, 2024, at Stonebrook Community Church and there were approximately 40 individuals in attendance. Prior to the meeting, staff mailed postcards to 384 homes and businesses near Llyod Kurtz Park, distributed a press release, did radio spots, provided information to the Ames Soccer Club for distribution, promoted on social media, and included information in the Parks and Recreation weekly e-newsletter that is distributed to over 12,000 individuals. The opportunity was also provided to those who were unable to attend the meeting to contact staff by phone or email to provide input or ask questions.

Comments and questions from this meeting, along with several emails staff received, are included in Attachment B. The comments and questions can be split into three categories, 1) traffic, parking and safety; 2) Mini-Pitch related items; and 3) Other park related items.

To summarize Category 1, the neighborhood has genuine concerns about the current traffic and safety on Hyde Avenue, and to a lesser degree, on Eisenhower. The safety of park users, especially children, focused on how difficult it can be trying to cross Hyde Avenue to get to Lloyd Kurtz Park. Additionally, on-street parking on Hyde is on the west side of the street, so individuals driving to the park have to cross Hyde when they get out of their vehicles. Suggestions included adding a traffic signal at Hyde and Bloomington, do not allow parking on Hyde from Wellbeck to Bloomington, educate users to park in the church parking lot, add traffic signal at Hyde & Bloomington and Hyde & Eisenhower, reduce speed limit on Hyde, and more.

Category 2 comments were mostly in favor of adding Mini-Pitch to Lloyd Kurtz Park, with many liking to see two courts instead of one. If funding was a concern, one court is acceptable. If two courts are installed, there was support for dedicating one court for soccer only and having the second court being multi-sport (soccer, basketball, pickleball). Basketball was not favored as much since a basketball court already exists in the park. Increased noise was mentioned as a concern for some, especially if pickleball is allowed. Conducting leagues and/or tournaments is not much of a concern, so long as there are days and times left open for neighborhood drop-in play. Lights on the mini-pitch generated some discussion, specifically that drop-in users should be able to turn on the lights when needed and possibly have different hours for light usage during the school year versus the summer.

Park related items discussed in Category 3 included playground equipment concerns, a path connecting the church parking lot to the shelter, a sidewalk in the park along Hyde, and portable restroom concerns. Staff mentioned new playground equipment has been ordered and is planned to be installed this spring. Other items could be addressed through operations while others would need to be prioritized with other

capital improvement projects.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

A staff report summarizing the Mini-Pitch project and public input was shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission at its regular scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 15, 2024. Commission members were in unanimous support of installing Mini-Pitch at Lloyd Kurtz Park. Commission provided the following direction to City Council.

1. To move forward with the installation of Mini-Pitch at Lloyd Kurtz Park.
2. Pursue the installation of two mini-pitch courts if funding is available due to the cost savings advantage of two courts over one. Would still like to see at least one installed if that is all that can be funded at this time.
3. Enter into an agreement with Stonebrook Community Church.
4. Enter into an agreement with Kick It Forward to fundraise for the project.
5. Commission desired for Council to refer to public works staff about traffic and parking concerns that were mentioned by the neighborhood. With traffic and parking being a high priority issue discussed at the public input meeting, Commission expressed that they would like to see plans accelerated for any traffic or parking improvements for this area. Staff indicated that this is outside the purview of the Commission but would provide to Council for informational purpose.
6. Include clear signage about parking in the church parking lot for park users.
7. Commission expressed excitement about the involvement of the park and the potential to add a walking path around the park in the future.

### **PROS AND CONS:**

There are advantages and disadvantages to consider when determining whether to install one or two mini-pitch courts. Below summarizes these factors.

#### **One Mini-Pitch Court**

Pros:

- Smaller funding gap.
- City could fund the entire project if Council reallocates cost savings from other projects.
- Eliminates potential delays to design and installation if fundraising is required prior to beginning the project.
- Fundraising efforts through KIF could still be utilized and may be a more achievable fundraising amount.
- Option to add a second court at Lloyd Kurtz Park or different park in the future.
- Minimize the park volume addressing parking and traffic concerns that this could draw to the park.
- Preserve more green space.

Cons:

- Less court space to accommodate drop-in use during high volume activities such as leagues, tournament, or private rentals.
- Less options for additional amenities (basketball, pickleball, etc.).
- If popular, adding another court at Lloyd Kurtz Park in the future may result in higher costs and temporary closure of the existing court during construction.

## Two Mini-Pitch Courts

### Pros:

- During leagues and/or tournaments, more teams could be accommodated or one court could remain open for drop-in use
- Option to have one court dedicated to futsal (soccer) and the other court for multi-use.
- City would be able to install two courts with a combination of City funds, project cost savings, and fundraising efforts through KIF.

### Cons:

- Larger funding gap.
- Larger amount for KIF to fundraise, which may be intimidating.
- Project may not be able to begin as expediently while funding is being secured.
- Although the space requirements for mini-pitch is minimal, two courts would eliminate more green space.
- Court space may not be as heavily utilized as anticipated.

## **TIMELINE:**

If Council directs staff to install one mini-pitch court and covers the funding gap with project savings or council contingency funds, staff believes the project can be completed within the 2024 calendar year. If direction is to go with two mini-pitch courts and have KIF cover the funding gap through fundraising, the project would not likely be completed until 2025.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

### 1. City Council can:

- a. Direct to install one mini-pitch court at Lloyd Kurtz Park dedicated for futsal (soccer).
- b. Reallocate project savings from Inis Grove Stair Project and Furman Aquatic Center Pool Basin Painting Project so the City can fully fund one pitch.
- c. Approve the agreement with Stonebrook Community Church.

### 2. City Council can:

- a. Direct staff to install two mini-pitch courts at Lloyd Kurtz Park dedicated for futsal (soccer) and do not add any additional amenities at this time.
- b. Reallocate project savings from Inis Grove Stair Project and Furman Aquatic Center Pool Basin Painting Project which brings the City's total funding to \$205,000.
- c. Approve the agreement with Stonebrook Community Church.
- d. Direct staff to finalize agreement with Kick It Forward (KIF) to raise the remaining funds (approximately \$131,000).

3. Do not install Mini-Pitch at Lloyd Kurtz Park.

4. Refer back to staff.

## **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The City desires to offer diverse recreational opportunities throughout the community and Mini-Pitch at Lloyd Kurtz Park will be a new, unique, amenity within the park system. Based on public input, two

mini-pitch courts are desired, if funding is available. One mini-pitch court was desired if two could not be installed.

**Working with Kick It Forward will result in leveraging City funding to gain two facilities, rather than the one that is budgeted. However, because of the time needed for Kick It Forward to successfully complete a donation drive, the project could be delayed for another six to nine months.**

**Given the fact that the City Council recently adopted a goal to finish previously approved capital improvement projects (of which the pitch is one) as soon as possible, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1 stated above.**

**The next question is, for what activities can this new facility be used?** With the existing basketball court at Lloyd Kurtz Park, there does not appear to be a need for an additional court within the mini-pitch system.

Noise was also expressed as a potential concern, especially if pickleball was included on the mini-pitch. With newly dedicated pickleball courts at Emma McCarthy Lee Park, and ability to play pickleball at Inis Grove and Brookside Park, staff does not recommend installing pickleball within the mini-pitch system.

**Therefore, at least initially, staff believes the new pitch should be prioritized for to soccer. However, after observing its use over an appropriate period of time, the Council can decide if a second pitch is needed, where a second pitch should be located, and if additional activities should be encourage in a pitch.**

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Attachment A\\_City and Stonebrook Church Agreement .pdf](#)

[Attachment B\\_Mini-Pitch Public Input Summary.pdf](#)