



City of North Port
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter D. Lear, City Manager

FROM: Sandy Pfundheller, Director *SP*
Tricia Wisner, Parks & Recreation Manager *Tw*

SUBJECT: Boundless Playground – Wheelchair Accessible Swing Research

DATE: January 30, 2018

During the 12/5/17 Commission meeting, staff presented a revised conceptual plan for the Boundless Playground at the Garden of Five Senses. While Commission approved the overall plan and proposed equipment, feedback received included direction to investigate options for the addition of security cameras, a drinking fountain and a wheelchair accessible swing.

Based on the cost for the recent installation of cameras at Blue Ridge and Highland Ridge Parks, Information Technology has estimated the cost to install cameras at the Boundless Playground at \$10,500. Installation of a drinking fountain is estimated at \$3,000.

In reference to wheelchair accessible swings, it should be noted that these swings require special consideration when placed into a playground environment. Due to the momentum and weight of the swing in motion, logic dictates that the unit be placed in an isolated area that would keep other children from crossing its path. As such, it is highly recommended that any wheel chair accessible swing be installed in a controlled location (fenced area) with secure access (locking gate) and constant adult supervision.

Based on product research and feedback solicited through the National Recreation & Park Association professional forum, staff identified three wheelchair accessible swing options:

- 1) the ADA Swing Platform with Frame,
- 2) the IP15 iSwing, and
- 3) the Liberty Swing.

1) ADA Swing Platform with Frame

Manufacturer: Sports Play Equipment – University City, Missouri



The ADA Swing Platform is the only commercial type model manufactured within the United States. The swing is available in both portable and permanent installations and has a more utilitarian-look than the other options proposed. Per the manufacturer operating instructions, two people (including at least one adult) must be present to get the platform into an operational position. Following use of the swing, two people will again be needed to remove the wheelchair from the platform. Additionally, the swing platform must be secured to the frame with some type of security latch or lock to avoid accidents or unsupervised use of the equipment. This swing allows a user with upper body mobility to pull the chains for swinging action. However, information is not available to determine if the chain design with the weight of the swing, chair and user is convenient design for a companion to push the swing. The estimated cost for this piece of equipment is \$2,000 plus approximately \$195 in shipping. Installation costs will need to be determined, but will include concrete to allow the swing to be anchored and safety surface.

2) IP15 iSwing

Manufacturer: Inclusive Play Limited – Edinburgh, Scotland



The IP15 iSwing is designed for use in supervised play areas for those with very little or no mobility who cannot easily move out of their wheelchair. The metal frame of the unit allows the swing to be pushed from behind or from the side. Additionally, users with upper body strength/manual dexterity can use the suspended pulleys to move the swing. Per the manufacturer, installation in an unsupervised area is only recommended if the space is fenced and there is an access gate, preferably with a radar key locking system, due to the weight of the swing in motion and to stop anyone running in front of the frame when it is moving. The photo above is from the first installation in the United States in Newberry, South Carolina (two units installed). Individuals that want to use the swings must contact the City of Newberry Parks & Recreation Department for an access key. The estimated cost for one IP15 swing is \$8,000 plus, approximately \$2,000 in shipping. Installation costs will need to be determined, but will include fencing, concrete base and safety surface.

3) Liberty Swing

Manufacturer: Jenway Industries – Sydney, Australia



The Liberty Swing is fully lockable and allows for maximum swing height. The Liberty Swing must be fenced at a minimum height of 36" with an access gate that is self-closing and fitted with a child-proof locking mechanism. Installation must include a sign placed on the gate that reads: RESTRICTED AREA, USERS AND CAREGIVERS ONLY AS REQUIRED IN THIS AREA. It is essential that users of the Liberty Swing lock the ramp back into position when finished with the swing to ensure public safety and deter misuse. The Liberty Swing is locked with a special key. The key is used to access the safety belt compartment, the gate, and also to release the ramp on the Liberty Swing. According to the manufacturer, it is the user's responsibility for ensuring the swing ramp is left in a locked position. This swing has been installed on a limited basis in the United States, the picture above is from an installation in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The estimated cost for this piece of equipment is \$17,000 plus approximately \$2,000 in shipping. Installation costs will need to be determined, but will include fencing, concrete base and safety surface.

While each of these options provide a fully accessible swing, the safety precautions result in the unit being separated from the rest of the equipment, and the individual using it does not directly benefit from the interaction and socialization with peers. Taking the safety concerns, fencing/locking requirements, and necessary supervision into consideration, staff has identified an alternative piece of equipment for consideration that provides a similar opportunity for wheelchair-bound users, better supports an inclusive play environment and meets current playground safety standards for public park sites without the additional safety precautions.

Additional Option - Sway Fun Glider

Manufacturer: Landscape Structures – Delano, Minnesota



The Sway Fun Glider pictured above is a wheelchair-accessible glider that rocks back and forth. To increase the inclusive play experience, the Sway Fun Glider has room for two wheelchairs, plus two large benches for other passengers and does not require installation in a separate fenced area or the additional locking measures. The estimated cost for this piece of equipment and the required ramp is \$26,000 plus approximately \$800 in shipping cost. Installation costs are approximately \$5,000 plus the cost for the safety surface.



Pictured left is the Sway Fun Glider at the Vale-Asche Foundation Playground at Memorial Park, River Oaks (Houston) TX. This was Houston's first "Playground without Limits" designed especially for children with disabilities.

Currently, there are two open grant opportunities which may provide funding assistance for this project. First is the "Meet Me At The Park" grant from National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Priority consideration for this one to one matching grant for up to \$30,000 is being given to inclusive play areas. Application are due by March 1, 2018. Awarded grants require the project show significant progress by August 1, 2018 and be completed by November 1, 2018. The second grant is offered by KaBoom for up to \$15,000. Awarded municipalities must spend a minimum of \$24,000 on playground equipment for the project. The grant application deadline is May 4 and the project must be completed within twelve months of award.

Staff believes the data presented is an important consideration in selecting the best option for this project. In order to move forward with conceptual plan revisions and pursue potential grant opportunities, additional direction is requested on the four equipment options provided. Thank you.

