



AGENDA MEMORANDUM
City Council Meeting of November 1, 2022

DATE: November 1, 2022

TO: Peter Zanoni, City Manager

FROM: Robert Dodd, Director of Parks and Recreation Department
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Resolution adopting Labonte Park Master Plan and Cole Park Master Plan

CAPTION:

Resolution adopting the specific park Master Plans for Labonte Park and Cole Park.

SUMMARY:

Beginning in March 2022, two Master Plan studies were undertaken to assess the Labonte Park and Cole Park systems respectively by identifying existing amenities and deficiencies in the respective parks' systems. As a result of the study, two respective Master Plans (one for Labonte Park and one for Cole Park) will be used as guides to develop future Capital Improvement Projects within the two parks. This item is a Resolution to approve the Labonte Park Master Plan (District 1) and the Cole Park Master (District 2).

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The Parks and Recreation Department and the Engineering Department both worked with Levy Dykema for the development of the two Master Plans. If approved, the two Master Plans will guide the growth of the two parks. This will be achieved through prioritized investments, programs, policies, and practices.

Through these two Master Plans, the Parks and Recreation Department will be able to better provide enhancements to community health, conservation practices, and access to benefits for the entire community of Corpus Christi. Additionally, these two Master Plans support the mission of the City of Corpus Christi's Parks and Recreation Department and will enhance the City's opportunity to qualify and compete for state funding through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The Parks & Recreation Department will maintain accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Labonte Park, originally called Nueces River Park, is located along the Nueces River in the Northwest area known as Calallen. Labonte Park was annexed in 1962 and was initially located on a ten-acre parcel, which later expanded to approximately 68 acres after the closing of the Cunningham Water Treatment Plant, making it the largest park in Corpus Christi. The first official

park improvements, near former Highway 9, were initiated in early 1965 and included a 3,000-foot loop shell roadway, along with the addition of picnic tables and barbecue grills to enhance the natural park area. To date, minor improvements were made to Labonte Park with public and private funds. In 2001, City Council approved Labonte Park as the official name to honor Corpus Christi natives and NASCAR racers, Terry and Bobby Labonte (brothers). The two Master Plans are conceptual rendering of how the two parks can be developed. Funding to construct the proposed improvements will be taken to the City Council for consideration during budget cycles.

The conceptual renderings for Labonte Park detail several additional improvements to the north and south portions of the park. For the south portion, a campground is proposed to include recreational vehicle sites and a restroom facility. For the north amenity zone, various improvements include a kayak launch, a boardwalk, a waterfront trail and gathering pavilion. Other additional amenities include play areas, grove trails, a picnic grove, and an elevated overlook trail. The proposed trees for Labonte Park are a mix of different types of Oak Trees.

The land for Cole Park was donated by E. B. Cole. In 1935, Cole Park was initially located on a six-acre parcel. In 1966, Cole Park was later expanded to twenty-acres, by building a seawall and by filling in the area between the park and the shore with dredge material. Since then, several improvements were made to Cole Park which included the fishing pier, parking lots and playground. More recent improvements to Cole Park include the resurfacing of the skate park, the design of a splash pad, and the Cole Park Pier which was opened to the public in December 2021. The splash pad will be advertised for bids in early November 2022.

The conceptual renderings for Cole Park detail several additional improvements such as park trails and improvements to the beach area located on the northern portion of park. Various improvements to existing amenities include the amphitheater and the promenade. Renovation to the roof structure of the amphitheater is proposed, along with additional formal seating and a park trail located behind the berm seating area. Improvements to the north promenade include enhanced paving, and a planted buffer and custom lighting along the entirety of the promenade. The rendering conveys that the promenade be extended down to the north beach area. A plaza also is proposed for the beach area located on the northern portion of the park to include a large shade structure and stepped, concrete seating in the sandy area of the beach. The proposed trees for Cole Park are Sabal Palms. The proximity of the park to the water and strong winds does not support trees that are found further inland, such as oaks or cedars.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) held discussions and gave feedback on both Master Plans during the October 12, 2022, regular meeting. The comments were positive, and members favored the renderings. PRAC's feedback for Cole Park included more trees and parking areas. PRAC did recommend keeping the open space at Oleander Point at Cole Park for wind surf launching and retaining the rinsing pad.

For Labonte Park, PRAC recommended adding more trees there as well. PRAC supports the proposed sign, pump track, kayak launch, and RV dump station at Labonte Park.

Near the end of the October 12 meeting, PRAC made a motion approving the renderings and supporting the City's effort to enhance the Parks.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternatives are that the City Council can modify or reject both or either of the two proposed Master Plans.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. The Master Plans will be used as a guide to develop future Capital Improvement Projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the resolution, as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Resolution
Presentation