

'We need everybody to make

Recreation complex could cost \$40M+

BY ANDREA KELLEY
THE JOURNAL

WESTMINSTER — Westminster's proposed Hall Road recreation complex could come at a price tag upward of \$40 million.

Around 50 parents, children and community members gathered at the MD Cleveland Civic Center on Wednesday for a public input meeting about the project.

City administrator Kevin Bronson led a presen-

tation put together by the Westminster Recreation Planning Committee detailing the updated conceptual design, construction costs and budget for operations before opening the floor for questions.

Committee member Chester Lee said the new complex would be for "everyone," but also would

give the city a place "for kids to practice, play, have fun and interact with each other."

He listed off activities planned at the complex — pickleball courts,

walking paths and baseball fields, to name a few — and highlighted how it would bring people to the community.



OUR VIEW

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By the numbers

Projected costs for Hall Road rec complex

Phase 1 **\$8.4M**

Phase 2 **\$29.5M**

Phase 3 **\$2.5M**

"This will help our kids, and this will help us grow," Lee said. "Please

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this happen'



CALEB GILBERT | THE JOURNAL

Westminster city administrator Kevin Bronson talks about a conceptual design for the city's proposed Hall Road recreation complex at a meeting Wednesday evening.

COMPLEX: 'We want you guys to have the best of the best'

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support it, because we're going to need it."

Midway through the presentation, recreation director Herb Poole took the microphone.

He invited audience members representing each sport to come up front, then explained how the complex would benefit their sport specifically.

"If you think about all the municipalities, all the cities that have recreation, basketball, volleyball, they all have more than one gym," he said. "Our goal is to have more than one gym."

Poole later explained why he brought the players and coaches up front with him.

"I want everybody to understand this project is not about me, and it's not about Kevin, it's not about the committee. It's about the people in the city," he said. "We want you guys to have the best of the best — these guys are working hard, our city council, they're working hard, our city employees are working hard. ... It's a team effort, and we need everybody to make this happen."

THE PHASES

The committee proposed a three-phase construction

plan "primarily so that we can afford to do it," Bronson said.

The first phase, priced just less than \$8.5 million, would include four baseball fields, batting cages, parking lots, a playground and splash pad, trails and a picnic shelter.

Phase two comes in at \$29.5 million and consists of an 80,000-square-foot gym and accompanying parking lot, sand volleyball and pickleball courts and an observation tower.

Phase three encompasses the southern arm of the property and includes a stage and amphitheater, nature trail, disc golf course and pedestrian bridge at a cost of nearly \$2.5 million.

FUNDING

Bronson presented a detailed funding plan for each construction phase.

"Phase one, we could go get next week if that's what we want to do," he said. "These are funding sources that are out there. ... We are utilizing state and federal money that is out there that everyone else that builds this type of facility, that they use."

Options included tax credits, construction grants, a trails grant and \$750,000 in hospitality tax (HTAX) revenue bonds for a total of \$3.5 million,

leaving a discrepancy of just less than \$5 million.

Calling himself a "pretty conservative financial guy," Bronson said he estimated low on the revenue side and high on the expense side.

"(As the numbers) get closer and closer to reality, the revenue numbers ultimately go up and the expenditure numbers ultimately come down," he explained. "So, when you look at this, I'm shooting on the high side. I did not put in a funding source that is beyond our ability to go after and get."

Phase two used similar options with a funding gap of more than \$21.5 million, and phase three had a gap of just more than \$2 million.

The committee said no money from the city's utility fund or property taxes would be used to pay for the complex, and a portion

of HTAX money would be budgeted each year to help fund operations.

A separate projected operations budget for each phase included salaries for program managers, facilities staff and part-time event staff. Those totaled almost \$875,000 for all three phases combined.

TIMELINE

During the question-and-answer session, an audience member asked what the turnaround time would be.

The committee will present the plan to Westminster City Council at its meeting Tuesday, and council will decide if and how to pursue the project.

If council signs off, Bronson said it would be about two years before the first phase was ready for construction.

The project is only in the conceptual design stage,

so the first step is having an engineering firm lay out the final design.

"That takes me about 30 to 120 days to get one of those agencies to come in and do it. From that point that they start, it takes about 18 months for them to actually design this," Bronson explained. "If the city council were to tell me next Tuesday, 'Go get this started for us,' it's

two years before we have a design ready to go to construction.

"It's likely 12 to 18 months after that before it's constructed," he added. "So, I got you all jazzed up here today just to say OK, three, four years from now, if everything works smoothly, you can have this facility."

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