



**Council Agenda Item 25-\_\_\_\_R**

**MEETING DATE:** 08/11/2025

**SUBJECT/TITLE:** RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT OF \$350,000 FROM THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HILLSIDE SPORT COURT PARK PLAN.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Katie Bennett, Senior Parks Planner, Parks & Recreation

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve.

**BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:**

23-0617R – Authorized the approval and future implementation of the [Hillside Sport Court Park Plan](#).

24-0164R – Authorized application to the MN Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant Program for a grant of up to \$350,000 to support implementation of the Hillside Sport Court Park Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

Hillside Sport Court Park is located in the Central Hillside neighborhood at 408 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Duluth, MN 55805. A planning process was conducted between 2022-2023 to guide improvements at the park, culminating in the approval of the [Hillside Sport Court Park Plan](#). Improvements identified in the plan require additional funds to support full implementation.

This resolution authorizes acceptance of grant funds in an amount of \$350,000 from the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, to support implementation of the Hillside Sport Court Park Plan. The City will meet the required match of \$650,000 with funding from American Rescue Plan Act Revenue Replacement allocations and Parks Capital.

Full implementation of the adopted Hillside Sport Court Park Plan calls for improved accessibility throughout the park, removal of a dilapidated building, installation of a pavilion and picnic area, renewal the sport court, replacement of the playground, improved parking, improved neighborhood connectivity, tree removal and replacement, repair or replacement of other park assets such as fencing, signage, bicycle racks, retaining walls, stairs, etc., and maintaining a balance between open green space and space for a community garden. Completing improvements at Hillside Sport Court is consistent with action item C7 in the Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space Plan, which calls for the development of a Hillside Sport Court Park Plan and to seek funding to support the implementation of the plan's outcomes.

Additionally, implementing the Hillside Sport Court Park Plan will forward six goals identified in the Essential Spaces Plan:

- Goal A. Increase park funding, in line with industry standards, to create and maintain a high-quality, four-season park system, that will effectively enhance the health and well-being of our community.
- Goal B. Invest strategically to decrease routine and long-term maintenance requirements, leverage outside funding, and support community-based priorities.
- Goal C. Balance maintenance, reinvestment, consolidation, and new construction of park infrastructure to meet current and future system needs within a sustainable budget framework.
- Goal G. Promote inclusion in our park spaces, facilities, and programs ensuring that all persons have equitable and appropriate access to our park and recreation system.

- Goal H. Activate parks spaces to support local, social, cultural, and economic advancement.

Likewise, implementing improvements to Hillside Sport Court Park will support the Imagine Duluth 2035 comprehensive plan, specifically making progress in alignment with:

- Guiding Principle #10 – Take actions that enhance the environment, economic, and social well-being of the community.
- Open Space Policy #3 – Remove barriers to accessing parks and open space.

**BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:** The City is in the midst of preparing final design documents with allocated parks capital funds that are separate from the committed match associated with this grant. Acceptance of this grant will allow the project to proceed as planned with the grant and previously allocated parks and American Rescue Plan Act Revenue Replacement funds.

**OPTIONS:** Authorize acceptance of the \$350,000 grant to support full implementation of planned and designed improvements at Hillside Sport Court Park in 2026 or decline the grant funding to halt the project and require either additional City funding to complete the project or scale back the project and require redesign of possible improvements within the available City funding.

**NECESSARY ACTION:** Authorize acceptance of the \$350,000 grant.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Exhibit A – Grant Agreement.