



## Legislation Text

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Ordinance No. 17-9 authorizing a Supplemental Appropriation for the John Venezia Community Park in the Amount of \$800,000

**Presenter:**

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**Summary:**

The John Venezia Community Park, located at the southwest corner of Briargate Parkway and Union Boulevard, has been on the Parks Master Plan since the 80's. Development of this new community park will provide much needed multi-use sport fields in the north part of our community. Currently families have to travel to the southern portion of the community to participate in team sports. Due to this, many families do not participate in team sports because they do not have the time or ability to travel across town. This park will also provide pavilions for both small and larger scale requests. Currently Palmer Park is the furthest north that houses larger scale pavilions.

The community park will also be home to the City's second Universally Accessible Playground and Sprayground. The first Universally Accessible Playground and Sprayground is also located within the southern portion of town, which prohibits many families from partaking in these amenities. The new Children's Hospital will be constructed across the street from the Venezia Community Park. With the new Universally Accessible Playground, children attending therapy sessions or children visiting loved ones in the Children's Hospital or Memorial Hospital can burn some energy as they run around the park. Doctors and nurses have already expressed their excitement to be able to utilize this park with their patients.

In addition, the tennis and pickleball courts will be the furthest north within our community. With pickleball being the fastest growing sport, at this time, the pickleball community has strongly advocated for courts within the park. When the master plan process was revisited in 2013, one of the revisions made, due to the request of the community, was to add pickleball courts to the park's design. They had not been previously requested during the design of the park in 2006.

Completion of the John Venezia Park will be in July 2017. It is anticipated that revenue generated from the pavilions and multi-use fields will be close to off-setting the maintenance costs.

**Previous Council Action:**

City Council has approved a resolution supporting the Great Outdoors Colorado Grant (GOCO) for the Universally Accessible Playground at John Venezia Community Park.

**Background:**

The Parks Department began engaging the community in the design of the John Venezia Community Park in 2006. After working for two years on the financing and design of the park, the City had worked out a financial plan that would fund the construction of the community park. However, within two weeks of the park going out for a public bid, the economy declined and the financial institution financing the construction would no longer finance municipalities. As a result the construction of the park was put on hold.

Since 2010, the Parks Department has not been able to construct additional neighborhood parks, due to the cost of on-going maintenance. This slowdown in development of neighborhood parks, allowed the Parks Department to slowly build the fund balances up within the TOPS (Trails, Open Space and Parks) Program, within the Parks Category in the PLDO (Public Space and Development) Fund. In 2014, the Parks Department was able to pull together enough funding from these two funds to construct the first phase of the community park.

In addition to the funding sources growing, the agreement between the Parks Department and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) expired for the use of the 4-Diamonds Sports Complex. The closure of this sports complex allowed the Parks Department to move the maintenance crew that took care of the 4-Diamonds Complex, to the Venezia Community Park. This move allowed the Parks Department the ability to add this new community park into the system without the need to increase staff.

Over the past two years the Parks Department has completed appropriations within the yearly City budget, has applied for grants and attempted to develop partnerships. The Parks Department applied for a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Grant in the fall of 2016. The selected projects will be announced in March of 2017. The Parks Department also attempted to work out a partnership between Lifetime Fitness, to fund and operate the tennis and pickleball facilities. The Parks Department worked through an agreement with Lifetime Fitness and a representative from the organization came and spoke to City Council in March of 2016 to express how excited they were to enter into this agreement with the Parks Department. After City Council approved the agreement, management of Lifetime Fitness changed at the corporate level and the new management did not support the agreement that was crafted by their staff and the Parks Department. After several attempts to reach out to the corporate level, in August of 2016 the Parks Department finally received an email stating they were willing to financially contribute to half of the cost of the tennis and pickleball facilities; however, they would operate it as a private business totally disregarding the agreement that was previous reached by the Parks Department and Lifetime Fitness representatives. The Parks Department countered with our original agreement, stating the park is a public facility thus the amenities had to be made available to the public. The Parks Department has not heard from Lifetime Fitness since August.

This item supports the City's strategic goal relating to investing in infrastructure by completing the planned amenities within John Venezia Community Park.

**Financial Implications:**

The cost to construct the John Venezia Community Park is \$13 million. Prior to 2017, the Parks Department had appropriated \$10.8 million for construction of the park. In the 2017 budget, the Parks Department requested \$822,000 from the PLDO account and \$62,000 from the TOPS Trails Category, to complete the Briargate Trail along Briargate Parkway. The funding from the trails category will be coupled with \$62,000 from the missing sidewalk fund. The GOCO grant is pending

at \$350,000. This supplemental appropriation for \$800,000 will allow the Parks Department the ability to construct the tennis courts and pickleball courts, as well as a small shade shelter to support the use of the courts. Due to 2016 projected revenue exceeding budget by approximately \$940,000, the 2016 ending available fund balance is estimated at \$1 million. Therefore, there is sufficient available fund balance for the supplemental appropriation for the John Venezia Community Park.

The PLDO funding comes from development of residential housing within our community. With end of year accounts reconciliations, developers pushing final plats through the system before the end of the year and looking forward to the projections for 2017, the Parks Department is confident this appropriation will complete the construction of the John Venezia Community Park.

**Board/Commission Recommendation:**

This proposal has been presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on January 12, 2017 and was approved by the Board.

**Stakeholder Process:**

The Parks Department has engaged the public in several community meetings, in 2006 and again in 2013. The Parks Department engaged the community again in 2015 to help design and develop the Universally Accessible Playground to ensure it meets the needs of all children.

**Alternatives:**

Council could deny the supplemental appropriation. If denied the Parks Department will complete construction of Phase 1 and the tennis and pickleball courts will be placed on the Unfunded List and await future funding.

**Proposed Motion:**

Move approval of the supplemental appropriation for the John Venezia Community Park in the amount of \$800,000, with PLDO funds.

This supplemental appropriation for \$800,000, funded through PLDO, will allow the Parks Department the ability to construct the tennis courts and pickleball courts, as well as a small shade shelter to support the use of the courts, within John Venezia Community Park.