



# Papillion makes recreation a priority

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host indoor athletic practices and games, an expansion of lighted softball and baseball fields, a natural play area and a dog park.

In addition to advising the City Council, the resident committee may spearhead the effort to create a dedicated funding source for these park and recreation improvements, specifically a local option sales tax. This fall, the City Council may vote to put a .05 percent sales tax increase on the ballot in May 2016. Their choice to do so will be based on guidance and direction from the resident committee.

In 2012, the Nebraska Legislature passed a law authorizing local elected officials to increase local option sales taxes by 0.5 percent with a vote of the public. By law, funds generated must be used for a dedicated and specific use. In this case, it would be to fund parks and recreation facilities.

Sales taxes are paid on goods and services sold within a community. The 0.5 percent increase would apply to those goods and services sold in Papillion. It would be paid by any purchaser, whether they reside in Papillion or not.

The amount of funds generated will depend on the amount of taxable sales in Papillion. For example, if taxable sales increase by 3 percent, \$2 million would be generated annually. In this example, \$40 million would be generated over 20 years.

If approved by a vote of the people, the City would pass bonds to fund the building of the community center and recreation complex, then dedicated sales tax revenues would be used to make bond payments. Additional funds generated can be used to enhance additional recreation projects and priorities such as Papio Bay improvements, development of Veterans Park or additional park and trail space.



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# Papillion makes recreation a priority

## Committee formed to inform parks and recreation plan

The Papillion City Council is making recreation a priority for residents, and it wants to find a way to fund park and recreation improvements without raising property taxes.

Last month, a citizen committee was formed to examine and find ways to implement recommendations made in the 2011 Master Parks Plan. The committee members include Jeff and Lisa Strohmyer, Sue McCalman, Tera Henrich, Jeff Knipping, Paul Bohn, Mary Gawecki, Kim Ahlers, Gene Pfahl, Harlan Metschke, Jim Mathison, Connor Kalthorn, Trent Albers and Ray Keller.

"We've known our park and recreation needs for some time, as they are clearly spelled out in the parks plan," said Mayor David Black. "Our City Council has made improving parks and recreation in Papillion a priority, and been working diligently on the right options. Now, the members of this recre-

ation committee will help connect with and engage the public in the process."

The committee's charge is to consider projects and needs identified in the Master Parks Plan. The plan identifies more than a dozen priorities, including but not limited to a new community center, enhanced sports complex, improvements to Papio Bay Aquatic Center, and space for seniors. Many of the top needs in the plan can be addressed by the development of a community center and recreation complex, located along Lincoln Road near 96th Street.

The City is partnering with Alley Poyner Machietto Architecture to develop the community center and recreation complex. Options for the facility include a community center, indoor aquatics, gymnasium space, an athletic field house to

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City of Papillion  
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# Community Center and Recreation Complex will address variety of needs

The City of Papillion Master Parks Plan spells out the community's park and recreation needs in detail. A proposed community center and recreation complex would address several of those needs at once.

The City is partnering with Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture to design a potential center and complex, located along Lincoln Road near 96th Street. It would offer a community center and expanded sports complex as well as natural play spaces and a dog park, all outlined as high priorities by the park plan.

The recreation complex would be contiguous with the city's existing soccer field complex, and expand the number of sports fields offered, especially baseball and softball.

"There is tremendous demand for more field space in our community, especially lighted softball and baseball fields," said Parks Director Tony Gowan. "This would be heavily used during the week and for tournaments."

The community center would feature spaces for a number of groups to use, from sen-

iors and youths seeking space for arts or aquatic recreation in the pool, to sports teams that want to use the proposed indoor field house for practice. The center would be programmed to address needs and work with existing facilities and groups.

"I'm really excited because this center would provide the spaces our residents need, and not overlap what others groups are doing," said Recreation Director Lori Hansen. "We're working directly with the YMCA, so we have the right solutions in place for everyone. As we program this space, we are also keeping our schools, sports organizations and even the region in mind. There will be something for everyone to use."

Possible construction of the community center and complex depends on the public passage of a 0.5 percent increase in local option sales tax. The revenues from those sales taxes would be the dedicated funding source for parks and recreation in Papillion. Those funds also could be used to fund additional park features or recreational options such as Papio Bay improvements, new trails, splash pads, or developing Veterans Park.



## Recreation Committee Covers Spectrum of Perspectives

Papillion's recreational needs are clearly spelled out in the City's Master Parks Plan. The City Council has identified parks and recreation as priorities for the community. Now, they are turning to a diverse group of residents to help engage the community in solutions and investigate the dedicated funding source for recreation.

The recreation committee members cover a spectrum of groups in Papillion to help ensure a variety of recreational needs can be met. Residents Jeff and Lisa Strohmeyer will serve on the committee. Dr. Strohmeyer is the city physician, and will keep the emphasis on overall wellness. Complimentary service and partner organizations will be represented by Sue McCalman, a small business owner and member of the Sump Memorial Library Board; Tera Henrich from the Sarpy YMCA; Jeff Knipping from the Papillion Recreation Organization (PRO); and Paul Bohn from the Papillion-La Vista School District.

Local foundations are represented by Ann Ames from the Papillion Community Foundation and Mary Gawecki from the Midlands Community

Foundation.

Prominent local business owners Kim Ahlers (Kajoma's Boutique) and Gene Pfahl (Gene's Auto) will represent business interest in the committee's work, along with Harlan Metschke, a member of the Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce.

All ages will be considered in the committee's work. Jim Mathison serves on the Papillion Senior Center Board and Connor Kalhorn is a member of the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council. A neighborhood perspective will be provided by Trent Albers and Ray Keller, both of whom reside near where park and recreation projects are likely to take place. Keller also serves on the Papillion Planning Commission.

"Collectively, this group is capable of seeing and understanding a wide range of needs as well as connecting with nearly any resident," said Papillion Mayor David Black.

City	Year Adopted	Designated Use
Alma	2012	Swimming pool
David City	2014	Water mains
Fairbury	2014	Streets
La Vista	2014	Redevelopment
Minden	2014	Water Infrastructure
Nebraska City	2014	Swimming pool
Lincoln (.25%)	2015	Streets
Norfolk	2014	Library renovation
Sidney	2012	Street improvements, swimming pool, golf course irrigation, park improvements, storm water management
Waterloo	2012	Street overlay
York	2014	Baseball and softball complex, park improvements, railroad 'quiet zone'

### City Matters

is a quarterly publication from the City of Papillion, Nebraska, provided to its residents to keep them informed about their city. City Matters contact: Darren Carlson, 402-597-2031, and [darren@papillion.org](mailto:darren@papillion.org).



## City seeks to fund parks and recreation without raising property taxes

Improving parks and recreation is a priority for the Papillion City Council. It is a priority in need of funding. Papillion residents may have the choice to vote for a funding source next May that does not involve raising property taxes.

A ballot initiative in May 2016 might ask Papillion residents to vote on a 0.5 percent increase in local option sales taxes.

In 2012, the Nebraska Legislature passed a law authorizing residents to increase local option sales taxes by 0.5 percent with a public vote. By law, funds generated must be used for a dedicated and specific use. In this case, it would be to fund Papillion's parks and recreation facilities.

Sales taxes are paid on goods and services sold within a community. The 0.5 percent increase would apply to those goods and services sold in Papillion. It would be paid by any purchaser, whether they reside in Papillion or not.

"It's critical that these improvements to parks and recreation facilities not come at the expense of property owners," said Mayor David Black. "We have a long track record of low

municipal property tax rates in Papillion, and that is not going to change. The local option sales tax provides a funding source."

The amount of funds generated will depend on the amount of taxable sales in Papillion. For example, if taxable sales increase by 3 percent, \$2 million would be generated annually. In this example, \$40 million would be generated over 20 years. A 3 percent increase in sales tax is a conservative estimate, considering Papillion has averaged 5.4 percent increases in sales tax annually during the last five years.

The community's park and recreational needs are defined in the city's Master Parks Plan. The top need outlined in the plan is a community center and recreational complex.

"Net sales in Papillion have increased consistently," said Black. "We also anticipate the recreation complex to be a draw for regional events and tournaments. Those visitors can help increase sales in the community, so the complex can help fund itself."

## Local Option Sales Tax a Proven Tool Statewide

Since written in to law by the Nebraska Legislature in 2012, the 0.5 percent local option sales tax has proven to be a popular and effective option for many communities. Eleven different communities have passed local option sales tax increases, while only one city's bond issue failed.

The designated uses for the funds raised in each community vary from street improvements, utilities, pools, recreation and library improvements. In Papillion, the possibility exists to use a 0.5 percent local option sales tax increase to create a dedicated fund for the

city's parks and recreation projects.

The choice of the local option sales taxes as the funding source keeps the costs off of Papillion property owners, according to Mayor David Black.

"We have the lowest property tax levy in the metro area, and have a strong history of keeping our municipal property tax rate low. Using the local option 0.5 percent as the source of funds also makes sense because a new recreation complex and community center could be a regional draw, and attract spending to our community."