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FEATURED

## City to renovate MJC Park

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MJC Park is adjacent to the Lancaster Police Department. Its playground is intended to be accessible to children of all abilities and ages.

Photos by Haley Jones

The Municipal Judicial Center (MJC) Park is looking to get a facelift.

Tripp Barrineau with Keck and Wood presented the firm's engineering mock-up for the park's renovation at the March 14 Lancaster City Council meeting.

The conceptual pre-construction cost is just over \$1.5 million.

Keck and Wood analyzed multiple ways to improve the park, but the most important was improving accessibility for all children, especially those with disabilities.

MJC Park is the home of the Wayne M. Fields All Children's Playground, provided by the city of Lancaster, the Springs Foundation and the J. Marion Sims Foundation (now known as the Arras Foundation).

“This playground is dedicated to former City Councilman Wayne M. Fields, who inspired the concept of a playground that is accessible to all ages and abilities,” the park’s entrance sign reads.

The largest and most pressing concern to council and the engineers is the “creek” that has formed in the park, as a result of a drainage pump eroding the grass and soil. It has created a large ditch that will continue to worsen with erosion.

Keck and Wood mapped out creating a new lower parking lot, an asphalt loop trail around the park’s perimeter, new defined play areas, picnic shelters, lawn space, sidewalk connections between areas, bench swings and picnic tables with concrete pads.

The park currently sits on a large slope, with the parking lot at the top and a steep asphalt trail down to the play area, which can be inaccessible for some.

“Some of the equipment is outdated and really declining and has some age on it,” Barrineau said. “There are several drainage issues onsite. You can see trails deteriorating. These aspects of the site increase trip hazards and are really hazardous for folks visiting the site.”

Possible avenues for funding would be through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the land and water conservation fund, trails grants, playground grants, S.C. Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD) or stormwater grants. The project is still in the conceptual phase.

City Council members voted to add the park renovation project to the list of prioritized community needs, in the No. 3 spot. That list determines the order in which projects are completed and funding is allocated.