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Dayton wants to improve a dozen parks, but funding may fall short of plans



LOCAL NEWS

By [Cornelius Frolik](#), Staff Writer

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Dayton wants to upgrade about a dozen parks using federal COVID rescue funds, but officials say some desired improvements might not happen unless additional funding can be identified.

Dayton City Commission recently authorized spending more than \$577,000 to install two new shelters and demolish nine obsolete shelters and a restroom facility at Triangle Park.

The funds also will be used to install fitness equipment, picnic tables, a looped walking path and modular restrooms in the 61-acre park, which is located in north Dayton.

Triangle Park's shelters were likely built in the 1950s and are well beyond their useful lives and have safety issues, said Fred Stovall, Dayton's director of public works.

The new shelters will be open and canopy-style, he said.

Some existing enclosed shelters attract unsafe and unsavory activities, said Dayton City Manager Shelley Dickstein.

"We already did the dog park there," Dickstein said, referring to the dog park that relocated to Triangle Park earlier this year from the Deeds Point area. "We want to try to continue to elevate this park."

The city will make Triangle Park upgrades with some its federal COVID rescue funds, which were approved as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Additionally, the city wants to use about \$1.6 million of its rescue funds to make improvements at about 11 other parks.

In total, eight parks would be improved solely with ARPA money.

Four others would be upgraded with rescue funds and money from Issue 9, which is Dayton's temporary earnings tax hike.

The city proposes to install new playground equipment at [Liberation Park](#), [Madden Hills Park](#), McCabe Park, Bomberger Park, Residence Park, Pierce-Steele Park, Triangle Park and Gettysburg Park.

New shelters and restrooms are proposed for Liberation, McCabe, Mallory, Residence and Gettysburg parks.

The city said it also would like to replace basketball courts at Highview Hills, Residence and Gettysburg parks, plus install new parking lots at McIntosh, Burkham, Liberation, Residence and Gettysburg parks.

But Dayton said these projects could cost more than \$2.3 million — or about \$750,000 more than the city has set aside of its rescue funds for park improvements.

Stovall said the city will have to make some hard decisions and scale back its planned park improvements if it does not identify additional funding.

Still, Dayton also plans to use Issue 9 funding to make improvements to some other parks in the next two years, including Blommel, Walnut Hills and Burns Jackson.

Dayton also plans to install eight new spray parks across the city, more than doubling the size of its current network.

A consultant has evaluated the spray park system and is going to provide recommendations about where to put the new facilities.