Park Pride is honored to have worked with the community that calls N.H. Scott Park ‘their park.’ The enthusiasm of the Steering Committee, as representatives of the larger community, was inspiring. It was this group of leaders who kept this project moving forward, through cold winter evenings, holiday commitments, and other distractions, toward the vision they knew to be possible.

Acknowledgements

Diane Echols, Steering Committee Chair and mom to seven boys, somehow found time to organize the group, send out emails, make phone calls, get answers to questions, meet with officials and attend every meeting, festival and opportunity to tell the greater community about this shared dream for N.H. Scott Park. Always with a warm smile—she’s amazing. Thank you!

Thank you also to Corlan Beasley, director of the N.H. Scott Recreation Center, whose eyes shown with pride each time he imagined a park befitting everyone from the youngest tots, to seniors, to N.H. Scott’s award-winning athletes. Corlan’s dedication to the recreation center and the park is boundless.

Thank you to LaQuisha “Q” Coggins, lead teacher at N.H. Scott Recreation Center and parent, who shared her dreams of a community garden where children and adults can grow and share fresh food. She is planting the seeds of healthy lifestyles for all.

Thank you to Conrad Rogers, voice of the United Beacons Cricket Club, who relentlessly championed ‘The Cricket,’ pushing for regulation-size fields, bleachers and a field house where sports enthusiasts of all stripes could learn to play, compete, and excel at a range of sports—but especially cricket.

Thank you to Ranette ‘Rae Rae’ Clark, a lifelong instructor in the art of active living. She is an inspiration and historian rolled into one. Her stories shed light on N.H. Scott’s history as Mark Trail Park and on the potential of its future.

Thank you to Rodney Daniel, who mobilized his network of connections, his enthusiastic ideas, and his wealth of memories, of not just one baseball field but five, that had once thrived at the park.

Thank you to all the neighbors who pitched-in to distribute surveys, place yard signs, and spread the word to neighbors about the visioning process, including Tywanna Bailey, Jerrie Bason, Susie Davis, Antonio Daure, Annie Everhart, Jason Ferguson, Joseph A. Ivory, Justin Linder, Jennifer Murphy, Oral Simpson, LaDonna Williams, and Stephanie Zulueta. You were all invaluable.

Thank you for the support and enthusiasm of the DeKalb County Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs, especially Greenspace Planning Manager Revonda Cosby and Greenspace Assistant Victoria Burgos. We also appreciate the insight of Bernita Reese, Division Manager, Recreation Division, DeKalb County. Without the care and maintenance provided by the Parks & Recreation Division, the county’s recreation centers could not shine.

This park is fortunate to bridge two of DeKalb County’s Super Districts, garnering the attention of Super District Commissioners Kathie Gannon and Gregory Adams. N.H. Scott Park also falls into District 3 under Commissioner Larry Johnson’s leadership. The continuing support of DeKalb County’s commissioners is infinitely appreciated.

We also thank James L. “Jim” McMahan, Vice Chair of the DeKalb County School Board, for attending our public presentation of the preliminary conceptual plans.

Park Pride thanks you for all your efforts and the time you contributed to make this park a better place for everyone who visits. In your hands, the park is well on its way to fulfilling all your expectations.
### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Conditions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Concept Plan</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Concept</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects &amp; Budget</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bernita Reese, DeKalb
County Recreation Division
Manager, documents why this park matters!
Interested community members from around N.H. Scott Park applied to Park Pride's Park Visioning Program in 2016. The grant was awarded for 2017 and N.H. Scott Park became the first official Park Visioning completed in DeKalb County by Park Pride since 2012. Vision plans were completed in 2012 for Rutledge and Zonolite Parks as special projects. Over the course of seven months in 2017, the community worked with Park Pride to develop the Vision Plan contained in this document. The goal of the project was to develop a cohesive and comprehensive plan that supports and enhances the needs and desires of the community. This document, created under the guidance of Park Pride’s licensed landscape architect and landscape designer, will be a tool for the community to use in illustrating their goals, leveraging funding, and staying on course, as leadership within the community and the County evolves.

This document is a record of the outreach, engagement, activities, and decisions made throughout the park visioning process. This plan is intended to guide a phased approach to community-driven development of the park in the coming years. Although this plan is a tool for the community, it does not have weight of law, and should not be seen as a guarantee or promise. Each individual project will need to be legally permitted and vetted through the Dekalb County Parks Department and other applicable review committees.

The visioning process kicked off in April of 2017 and concluded in October of the same year. Four public meetings were convened to solicit input from community members on the program and form of proposed park improvements. A Steering Committee, composed of community members and recreation center staff, managed the project and acted as representatives of the larger community.

For N.H. Scott Park, the Visioning process was a necessary first big step to beginning the park’s revitalization. The biggest need identified by the community was the restoration and reopening of the community pool, which has been closed since 2008. This plan proposes the replacement of the deteriorating outdoor pool with a facility that can be used year-round. This new aquatic center will complement the beloved and successful existing N.H. Scott Recreation Center by offering an even greater variety of programming for the community.

Other improvements identified in the plan include pedestrian entrances, an updated multi-use field with track, a community garden, walking and bicycle trails, updated playgrounds and adult fitness areas, a dog park, and an expanded picnic area with shade structures.

This plan will be archived, along with all Park Pride’s Vision Plans, at the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center.
N.H. Scott Park sits within the Candler-McAfee neighborhood of Dekalb County, about ten miles east of Downtown Atlanta. The 46-acre property is located within District 3, currently served by Commissioner Larry Johnson. The park is across the street from McNair Middle School, a part of the Dekalb County School System, and roughly bounded to the north by Pinewood Drive, to the west by Mark Trail, to the south by Tilson Road, and to the east by Tilson Circle.

After land was acquired in 1962, the park opened in 1965 as Mark Trail Park – thought to be named after the famous comic strip created here in Atlanta. The Mark Trail comic strip, started by native Georgian, Ed Dodd, centers around an environmentalist whose mission is to preserve the American wilderness, water, and wildlife for future generations. Some of the topics covered in the comic are littering, vandalism, wildlife poaching, and respecting the environment.

The characters are nature lovers as well as advocates for the importance of greenspaces in a time of commercialism. The N.H. Scott Park is an epitome of what Mark Trail represented, conservation and preservation of the natural environment. Large, mature trees are plentiful throughout the property and Doolittle Creek, a tributary to South River, runs from northwest to southeast through the forested area of the park, making it home to a variety of wildlife.

In 2003, Mark Trail Park was renamed N.H. Scott Park in honor of Nathaniel Herbert Scott, III. Mr. Scott was a key member of the Mark Trail Community Leisure Citizens Advisory Board and actively involved in fundraising for numerous park improvements, including the swimming pool. Today, the Friends of N.H. Scott group, established in 2016, works in the spirit of Nathaniel Herbert Scott to ensure that the park remains beautiful for residents to enjoy for many years to come.
NH Scott Park sits within the Candler-McAfee neighborhood of Dekalb County, about ten miles east of Downtown Atlanta. The 46-acre property is located within District 3, currently served by Commissioner Larry Johnson. The park is across the street from McNair Middle School, a part of the Dekalb County School System, and roughly bounded to the north by Pinewood Drive, to the west by Mark Trail, to the south by Tilson Road, and to the east by Tilson Circle. After land was acquired in 1962, the park opened in 1965 as Mark Trail Park – thought to be named after the famous comic strip created here in Atlanta.

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The park has always had a focus on sports and active recreation from its first days. Historical aerials photos reveal 3 baseball fields and the recreation center as the park’s earliest features. Today the park houses numerous sports facilities.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

N.H. SCOTT PARK VISION PLAN

and programs. Although it occupies a large amount of land, it only has about 2,000 feet of street frontage along Tilson Road. Much of this street frontage is heavily wooded, which makes the park somewhat difficult to find unless you’re looking for it.

Vehicles enter the park from a single ungated main entrance. The ease of access into the park after dark has led to safety concerns and the perception that the park hosts criminal activities at night. The rest of the perimeter of the park, with few exceptions, adjoins the backyards of 60 single-family lots along Mark Trail, Tilson Circle, Lullwood Trail, and Pinewood Drive. There is no formal pedestrian entry to the park aside from the main entrance off Tilson Road. A natural gas easement also cuts diagonally across the park. The particular features of the park may best be described by dividing it into six main parts: the pool complex, court sports area, picnic area, the Recreation Center, the multi-use field, and the woods.

The pool complex is located just inside the main entrance to the park on the west side of the access road. It is comprised of a small parking lot, outdoor pool and associated mechanical equipment, as well as a bathhouse with concessions and changing rooms. At the time of this writing, the pool complex has been closed for the last ten years due to a leaking pool liner and numerous failed repair attempts. Unfortunately, the complex is in an advanced state of decline from years of disuse. Weed trees have grown up amongst the fence surrounding the pool, paint is peeling, wood is rotting, and the entire facility has a patina of neglect. Its location near the entrance to the park causes some park visitors to mistake this structure for the Recreation Center, which is located further inside the park.

The court sports area is located just inside the main entrance on the east side of the access road. It includes a small parking lot, two small shade shelters, three tennis courts, and four basketball hoops. This area boasts the newest improvement to NH Scott Park – the newly refurbished basketball courts funded by the Atlanta Hawks in the summer of 2017. Likewise, the tennis courts are in good shape, having been recently resurfaced. The annual Back-to-School event at NH Scott is hosted in this area, and it is well-used by park enthusiasts year-round.

The picnic area is located just north of the pool complex on the west side of the road. It boasts the largest picnic shelter in DeKalb County perched atop a small hill in a grassy setting. Just to the west of this structure, the second entrance to the park intersects with Mark Trail. This second entrance is gated and is used for maintenance access only.

The Recreation Center is at the literal and figurative “heart” of the park. Located in the park’s center, the Recreation Center houses many popular programs, including youth sports, senior programs, classes, after-school care, games, fitness, and special events. The Recreation Center includes a large gym facility with wooden floors, basketball hoops, and bleachers, restrooms, storage space, three flexible classrooms, a kitchen, a reception area, and a small office. The interior of the Recreation Center underwent renovations in recent years, and the current staff takes great pride in the quality of programs offered there. Outside the building there is a large parking area, a sizeable playground, picnic tables under a wooden pergola, and two concrete pads that used to be used as basketball courts. The
EXISTING CONDITIONS

PARK PRIDE  2017

PARK PRIDE  2017

NH Scott Park

South River Trail

Potential multi-use connector trail along Doolittle Creek

Potential multi-use connector trail along Doolittle Creek

Preliminary map showing the potential multi-use trail that would follow along Doolittle Creek and connect N.H. Scott Park with PATH’s South River Trail.
**Community Engagement**

**Park Pride’s mission** is to engage the community to activate the power of parks! In service of this mission, two vision plans are offered to Dekalb County parks every year through a competitive application process. The visioning program offers professional design services to community groups free-of-charge. A vision plan comprises a community engagement process that results in a conceptual master plan for the park. The plan can then be used by community groups to fundraise and advocate for improvements in their park.

In Spring of 2017, the Friends of N.H. Scott Park & Recreation Center were awarded a park visioning. The group was newly-formed, but extremely motivated to make positive changes happen in their park. The chair of the Friends group, Diane Echols, told a story of her childhood in Washington, DC where she had access to a large park and recreation center. This park and recreation center was the heart of her community. She was committed to providing that same experience for her own children here in Atlanta.

**Steering Committee**

The visioning process was led by a volunteer Steering Committee of dedicated park users, park staff, neighbors, and sports enthusiasts assembled by general invitation extended to users of the Recreation Center. The Steering Committee achieved broad representation of skills and interests across the park. Members were all passionate about the power of N.H. Scott Park and its ability to bring the community together.

Between April and November of 2017, the steering committee met monthly, guiding the process, reviewing community input, preparing materials, and vetting results. They were charged with representing their constituencies and the voices of the broader communities surrounding the park.

Park visioning kicked off on April 18th with the first Steering Committee meeting, which was attended by ten community members and leaders. The park visioning scope was discussed at this meeting, and the project schedule was developed, which included four public meetings.
In preparation for the public meetings, and to raise awareness of the visioning process, the Steering Committee created a survey to collect data from the community on potential park improvements. The survey was posted online, and hard copies were distributed at the recreation center and delivered door-to-door to each house that backs onto the park.

Park Pride also developed a logo for N.H. Scott Park based on their mascot of an eagle and their colors of burgundy and gold. Every effort was made to use these colors and the logo consistently in the materials generated for this project so as to create an easily recognizable “brand.”

Survey Results

In all, 70 people responded to the N.H. Scott Park survey. Though not statistically significant, this survey did provide some basic feedback on park uses and neighborhood priorities.

When asked what type of park N.H. Scott Park should be, 65% of survey respondents stated “a place for community gatherings, festivals, and holiday events.” Other popular choices included “a place for active sports” and “a place for individual/family fitness.”

Swimming ranked number one in response to the question “What sport(s) do you currently play or wish you could play at the park.” The neighbors’ desire to see the swimming pool restored and reopened resurfaced consistently in all of our outreach. This is not surprising considering the high visibility of the closed swimming pool facility and the strong desire among residents to see it open and available for public use.
The second most popular answer was cricket. This park, along with several others in the DeKalb County parks system, hosts practices and games for adult cricket leagues. These players are passionate about their sport, which is popular among West Indian and South Asian communities in DeKalb. Other popular sports included soccer, football and basketball. It should be noted here that the most ardent users of the sports facilities are the youth who play organized sports through programming at the Recreation Center. Very few survey responses came from youth under the age of 18, which resulted in underrepresentation of their preferences.

Many survey respondents also listed “watching from the bleachers” as a way in which they interact with sports programs at the park. This suggests that careful consideration needs to be given to sports spectators in providing them with comfortable places to sit.

In response to the question about top priorities for the park, renovation of the pool with a splashpad play area was far and away the most popular choice. Other priorities that emerged included dedicated sports fields, better seating for watching sports, running and walking trails, and more public restrooms.

Respondents were also asked to rank concerns about the park. The perception of safety ranked highest among areas of concern, followed by maintenance and repair. Anecdotally, feelings of insecurity seem to be most pressing at night, when the park is technically closed, but remains open to vehicular traffic. Concerns over maintenance and repair seem centered on the closed pool facility, but extend to smaller features as well, including broken drinking fountains, lights, aging site furnishings, and general appearance of the park.

The survey also asked the question of whether respondents would be more likely to walk to the park if more neighborhood pedestrian entrances were added. Currently, the main road is the only route into and out of the park, so even though over 60 homes back onto the park, there are no easy ways in from the surrounding neighborhood. Almost 60% of respondents replied affirmatively that they would walk if pedestrian entrances were available.
At the first public meeting, community members brainstormed about what they would like the park to be.

**Public Meeting 1: Big Ideas**

The first public meeting in the Park Visioning process is where big ideas are explored. At this stage the sky is the limit! Community members are encouraged to dream big about the sort of park they want in their neighborhood, rather than focusing on maintenance issues or current conditions. It’s important that a big idea be formed and embraced by community members who will be driving the achievement of their goals for the park with public officials and potential funding sources.

The first public meeting for Visioning for N.H. Scott Park was held at the Recreation Center on June 27th, 2017. Approximately 20 community members, including a number of children, were present and gave preliminary input on the large goals and guiding principles for the park.

Posters were placed throughout the meeting room, each addressing a different focus group: Fitness & Wellness, Team Sports, Park Events, Games & Social, Teens, Kids & Pre-Teens, and Seniors. All ideas were recorded on these posters. Participants were also encouraged to draw pictures of their ideas and dreams.

Several ideas came out of this meeting. One key point of consensus was the role that active recreation and team sports play in bringing people together as a community. Meeting attendees most commonly listed active recreation and team sports as their top park activity. The recreation center already supports many youth and adult leagues for a variety of sports, such as cricket, soccer, football, track and field, basketball and dance. Renovating and reopening the pool area was the number one priority for a majority of participants.
Public Meeting 2: Design Workshop

The second opportunity for public input in the Visioning Process is a Design Workshop. This is where community members have a chance to think about how their big ideas might look. Park Pride’s landscape architects are on hand to give advice and help translate ideas into sketches and diagrams.

On July 29th, 2017, a Visioning Design Workshop was held at the Back-to-School event at N.H. Scott Park. This meeting was structured as an open house with a series of preference exercises and an open design workshop to begin developing ideas from the first meeting and putting them into conceptual form.

Approximately 20 people participated in the Design Workshop. Several key findings emerged from the workshop, most notably, that there was a strong preference to not simply reopen the pool, but to create a place that could be used year-round.

At the second public meeting, maps were laid out and the design process began.

N.H. Scott Park’s Back-to-School event in August, helps students get what they need for the coming school year, including haircuts!
The preliminary conceptual plan for the park was presented for review and comment at the N.H. Scott Recreation Center on August 29th, 2017.

Feedback from community members was largely positive, but some concerns were raised over the location of the dog park being more of a nuisance than an amenity.

Public Meeting 3:
Presentation of the Preliminary Concept

Park Pride and the Steering Committee took these comments seriously and created more distance between the dogpark and the pool. An alternative location, off the current park site, was also discussed in order to meet community needs. With land acquisition, a vacant parcel adjacent to the southeastern section of the park could be another location for a dog park.
NH Scott PARK
Preliminary Image Board

August 29th, 2017
The final public meeting was once again held at the N.H. Scott Recreation Center at their annual Halloween Fest. On Friday, October 27th, the final version of the plan was presented, and comments were invited from the public. Community members stopped at the Park Pride booth to discuss future steps and priorities for the park.

In order to help determine which aspects of the park vision plan were top priority for the community, participants weighed-in with a prioritization exercise. Each person was given a sheet of “money” dots representing a total budget. Projects were listed according to the proportional amount each would cost. Community members could decide which projects to ‘fund’ using their money dots. See the results in the sidebar on the following page. A detailed list of projects and projected costs follows in the next chapter.

**Public Meeting 4:**
**Presentation of the Final Conceptual Plan**

Above: Andrew White (in costume) of Park Pride, and Steering Committee members Rodney Daniel and Conrad Rogers are happy with the community’s enthusiastic response.
List of priorities determined by the community at Public Meeting 4 of the Visioning Process.

**PRIORITY LIST**

1. Natatorium
2. Multiuse Field with concessions and public restrooms
3. Picnic area and Mark Trail Entrance
4. Multiuse walking and bicycling trails throughout park
5. Repairing and adding drinking fountains throughout park
6. Toddler playground expansion
7. Baseball Field
8. Community Garden
9. Adult Fitness area
10. Dog Parks
11. New pedestrian entrances
12. Wayfinding signage throughout park
Key features

Sports:
- Natatorium complex with competition-size swimming pool
- New multiuse field with artificial turf big enough for cricket, football or soccer
- New six lane 1/4 mile track with 6 lanes
- New baseball field
- New sand volleyball courts near picnic pavilions
- Maintain existing tennis and basketball courts

Health & Fitness:
- Adult fitness equipment adjacent to Recreation Center with shade structure
- New 1.5 mile bicycle and walking trail
- New community garden near Recreation Center
- Potential connection to PATH South River Trail along Doolittle Creek

Play and Recreation:
- New toddler playground next to existing playground with parent shade structure between
- New splashpad associated with beach volleyball
- Two new 1-acre dog parks for both small and large dogs with shade shelter & agility equipment

Events and Comfort:
- New concession/restroom building near sports fields
- New restroom building near picnic pavilions
- Gated and locked gates around sports fields
- Additional shade structures near basketball courts and playgrounds
- Two additional picnic pavilions

Parking and Access:
- New gated vehicular entrance off Mark Trail to access picnic pavilions
- New pedestrian entrances on Mark Trail, Tilson Road, and Scooty Circle
- Approximately 150 new parking spaces
- Vehicle loading zone for picnic pavilions
- New directional and entrance signage

Multiuse field
- Bicycle trail around park

Concession building with bathrooms
- Pedestrian entrances

Existing shelter
- Existing children's playground

Reconstituted baseball field
- Existing tennis courts
- Existing basketball courts

Paved parking lot
- Small dog park
- Large dog park

Waste enclosure
- Drainsage around field

Doolittle Creek
- Potential future acquisition & potential alternate location for dog park

County-owned land
- Potential PATH connection to South River Trail via Doolittle Creek

McNair Middle School
- Improved entry sign

Cricket (300' diameter)
Football (120 yds x 53.3 yds)
Soccer (100 yds x 50 yds)
1/4 mi track with 6 lanes
This vision plan for N.H. Scott Park is intended to guide community-based development of the park, likely in a phased approach. At the final community meeting, attendees were asked to rank projects in order of priority to guide funding efforts and order of implementation.
The list of projects and a brief description in order of priority is given below:

**Natatorium with Competition-size Pool**
Survey results and prioritization exercises conducted in the community consistently find that the main priority for N.H. Scott Park is to reopen the pool. This project proposes building a natatorium, so residents can enjoy the pool all year round. The pool will be of competition size to support swim meets and practices. Other amenities within the renovated and revamped pool area include a splash pad and public restrooms. The parking lot will also be expanded to support the area.

**Multiuse Field**
After the pool reopening, the next biggest priority, as found over the course of this study, is to make sure that the park supports active recreation and team sports. The recreation center hosts adult and youth leagues for cricket, football, and soccer, but the current multiuse field is not adequate for these activities. This plan proposes an artificial turf field big enough to host all three sports: cricket, football and soccer, plus baseball. A six-lane 1/4 mile track is proposed to surround the field in order to support track meets and practices. Other desired amenities include a concessions building with public restrooms, bleachers for spectators, and drinking fountains. The parking lot should also be paved and expanded to support the area and minimize erosion.

**Picnic Area with Neighborhood Entrance**
Currently, there is only one entrance into the park. This plan proposes a second gated entrance on the west side of the park, off Mark Trail, to allow residents easier access into the park. Expansion of the picnic area is proposed in this area, complete with two new pavilions, sand volleyball courts, a small playground, and public restrooms. A paved parking lot is added for access to this specific area as well.

**Bicycle Trail throughout Park**
This project provides a more scenic and natural way for park-goers to get exercise. The 1.5-mile paved trail will be wide enough for both bicyclists and pedestrians to experience nature. The trail follows and even crosses Doolittle Creek in multiple sections. There is also a boardwalk section of the trail that takes trail users through the floodplain of Doolittle Creek.

**Playground Expansion**
This plan proposes enlarging the size of the current playground area to accommodate younger-aged children plus a growing number of children in general. A new toddler area with toddler specific play equipment is needed. Shade structures are needed for both the play equipment and parents areas. A shade shelter, is proposed between the two play areas to serve these purposes. Keeping the playground in close proximity to the recreation center provides convenient parking and easy access to restroom facilities and indoor recreation opportunities.

**Baseball Field**
Historical images of N.H. Scott Park show the existence of a baseball field in the northwestern corner of the park. This project includes reconstituting the baseball field in order to allow the recreation center to support adult and youth baseball, softball, kickball, and wiffleball leagues.
Bleachers will also be added to allow for comfortable spectating. The proposed fields is in close proximity to the multi-use field, so concessions, restrooms, and parking could be shared.

Community Garden
Installation of a community garden in the park could provide both a place for individuals to garden if they don’t have space at their homes, and a teaching place where kids could learn about growing (and eating!) fresh fruits and vegetables. Expenses for a community garden include initial bed construction materials, soil and soil amendments such as compost, and plants. Fencing is typically installed and a water source is key to maintaining plants. Community gardens require seasonal maintenance, and regular watering and weeding during the growing season.

Adult Fitness Area
This project would supplement the recreation center by creating an adjacent outdoor adult fitness area fully stocked with new equipment. A large shade structure is recommended to provide sun protection for users and equipment.

Large and Small Dog Parks
Currently people are using the multi-use field as a dog park, which can cause problems when smelly surprises are left for athletes to step in. A dog park project would create two 1-acre fenced areas, one designated for small dogs and one for large dogs. Shade structures, benches, and agility equipment are scattered throughout both areas to create a more enjoyable experience for both the human and the canine. Waste receptacles and combined human/dog water fountains should be located near the entrances to the fenced areas.

In total, all of these improvements can be expected to cost about $25.2M, using 2017 prices as a guide. These opinions of probable cost were not developed with the benefit of full construction documentation or a survey, and Park Pride makes no warranty as to their accuracy.

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<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COST</th>
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<td>Natatorium and competition-size pool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiuse field and track/bleachers/concession/restrooms</td>
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<td>Picnic Shelters with new entrance off Mark Trail</td>
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<td>Bicycle trail throughout park</td>
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<td>Playground expansion (tot-lot)/shade structure</td>
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<td>Baseball field (t-ball)</td>
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<td>Community garden with fence/water</td>
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<td>Adult fitness zone with shade structure</td>
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<td>Dog parks (large and small)</td>
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