



Memorandum

To: Vail Town Council
From: Department of Public Works
Date: May 19, 2020
Subject: Stephens Park Play Area Renovation

I. PURPOSE

Construction of the Stephens Park Play Area Renovation project was put on hold in February due to high construction costs and limited contractor availability. COVID-19 related changes to contractor schedules have resulted in an opportunity to construct the project at a significantly reduced cost. The purpose of this Memorandum is to request direction from the Council as to whether to move the Stephens Park project forward based on this new opportunity.

II. BACKGROUND

The Concept Plan for the Stephens Park Play Area Renovation was approved by the Town Council in June of 2019. A full description of the project concept and components are provided as Appendix A.

The project was released for public bid in January of 2020. R.A. Nelson, a local contractor who has constructed numerous projects for the Town of Vail, was the sole bidder. The bid, combined with other project components, significantly exceeded the project's \$300,000 budget. Staff was working with R.A. Nelson to reduce the cost when the first Stay-at-Home orders were issued in March.

Over the past two months, some of R.A. Nelson's private projects have been postponed or canceled, creating openings in their schedule. They have re-evaluated their original Stephens Park bid, resulting in significant cost reductions. In addition, town staff has found opportunities to reduce the scope of the project resulting in further savings.

III. PROJECT REVISIONS

The following is a list of reductions and alterations that would allow the town to take advantage of reduced construction costs to renovate the Stephens Park play area during 2020. It would require increasing the project budget by re-appropriating funds from an existing RETT project budget.

Project Reductions

- General cost reductions due to open schedule and available subcontractors
- Elimination of concrete sidewalks (leave existing pea gravel walks)
- Elimination of roof on 2-5 structure
- Elimination of two planter areas and several site boulders
- Construct tot swing from existing wood beams instead of new steel
- Reuse more existing play equipment (original design had several add'l new pieces)
- TOV crews to perform some parts of the work (surfacing installation, steel fabrication and placement of climbing feature)

Postponement

- Delay the installation of the artwork until 2021. The artist is supportive of this approach due to ongoing commitments. The concrete footings for the art would be installed now to simplify installation at the appropriate time. Funding is included in the budget adjustment shown below.
- Delay the replacement of shingles on 5-12 structure

IV. BUDGET AND FUNDING

Item	February Bid	Revised Cost	Savings
R.A. Nelson bid	\$ 469,700	\$ 286,000	\$ 183,700
Purchased Play Equipment	\$ 57,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 22,000
Custom Climbing Feature	\$ 64,000	\$ 62,000	\$ 2,000
Artistic element – “Horsetails”	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 0
Town of Vail performed work	\$ 0	\$ 17,000	<\$ 17,000>
Contingency (5%)	\$ 31,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 10,000
Project Total	\$ 651,700	\$ 451,000	\$ 200,700

Even with a savings of \$200,000, the revised cost is still over-budget. To move forward, the project budget of \$300,000 will need to be increased by \$161,000, although \$30,000 would be spent in 2021 for fabrication and installation of the art elements.

Staff suggests re-allocating savings from the East Vail Interchange Landscape project to provide adequate funding. Funds for the East Vail project were held to ensure that the new project “over-wintered” well. The most pressing costs for that project will be replacement/ addition of trees, ensuring erosion control is adequate as vegetation grows in, reseeding as needed and irrigation adjustments. Those enhancements are underway, and there will be adequate funding to ensure the project’s success.

East Vail Interchange Landscape

\$ 449,000 2020 East Vail Landscape budget
- \$ 161,000 Transfer to Stephens Park
\$ 288,000 remaining East Vail Landscape budget to ensure completion

Recommended Stephens Park Funding

\$ 290,000 Current remaining budget (approx. \$10K spent on design/engineering)
+ \$ 161,000 East Vail Interchange Landscape
\$ 451,000 Revised 2020 Budget

V. PROJECT BENEFIT

The Town of Vail has always designed and installed unique and whimsical play areas for residents and guests. Artistic elements have been included in play area renovations in the form of individual play components, as site elements and even as entire play areas such as at Pirateship, Red Sandstone and Sunbird Parks.

For the Stephens Park renovation, designers took the approach to reuse as much of the existing play area as possible while still updating worn-out equipment, improving play value and bringing the play area into compliance with current playground safety guidelines. During the design process it was thought that reusing existing components would reduce project costs.

While reusing components reduces cost, and waste, it did not produce the savings anticipated. That said, the revised cost to renovate Stephens Park is comparable to other recent Town of Vail playground projects. Three most recent play area projects have ranged in cost from about \$375,000 in 2012 to \$490,000 in 2016.

Staff suggests that performing the work now would have several benefits:

1. Availability of contractors: benefit from the opportunity that contractors are available. During the original bid process, R.A. Nelson was unable to find subcontractors for some parts of the work, resulting in high bid numbers for many tasks.
2. Economic boost: R.A. Nelson is a local company that employs local labor. Much of their work would be "self-performed" for this project, meaning it would put locals to work who are otherwise furloughed. R.A. Nelson has successfully completed numerous projects for the Town of Vail and has always performed high-caliber work with the best interest of the town in mind. And, they submitted a bid for this work when others did not.
3. Re-appropriated funding: the project can be completed with 2020 fund savings
4. Project completion: this is a necessary project that can now be completed at a more reasonable cost. Scope reductions are to the site work while retaining the improved play value envisioned in the design.

VI. SCHEDULE

If approved, work on this project could begin as soon as June 1, 2020. The bulk of the project could be completed in 8 weeks. The custom climbing feature would be installed in late fall or early next spring. The art would be installed in 2021.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff suggests that this is a good opportunity to complete a necessary project at a reduced cost while simultaneously providing stimulus to the local labor force. If the Council is supportive of moving forward with the project, staff recommends the following:

- 1) Re-allocate funds as noted in Section IV to fund the project.
- 2) Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with R.A. Nelson in an amount not to exceed \$ 286,000

- 3) Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with ID Sculpture in an amount not to exceed \$ 61,000.

VIII. ACTION REQUESTED BY COUNCIL

Staff requests that the Council:

- 1) Re-allocate funds as noted in Section IV to fund the project.
- 2) Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with R.A. Nelson in an amount not to exceed \$ 286,000
- 3) Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with ID Sculpture in an amount not to exceed \$ 61,000.

Attachments:

Appendix A	Project Components and Concept
Appendix B	Concept Site Plan

Appendix A

Project Components and Concept

BACKGROUND

The play area in Stephens Park consists of two wooden play structures and a set of swings. One structure and half the swing set are designed for ages 2-5 (Tot) and the larger structure and other half of swing set are designed for ages 5-12 (School-age), consistent with current playground safety guidelines.

The components were constructed by Town of Vail crews in the mid-1990's after a fire destroyed the original structures. They are typical of Vail's 1970-90's custom play areas in that they are wooden, post and platform structures with steel/plastic climbers and slides purchased from a catalog. The structures were retrofitted in 2004 to generally meet current playground safety guidelines. However, the structures and play area are deficient in several areas:

- The play area does not meet ADA standards
- There is limited play value to the structures and equipment
- At nearly 25 years old, the slides and climbers are reaching the end of their useful life and should be replaced

Additionally, over the past 20 years, the town has worked to integrate art into its playgrounds. This program has resulted in unique, whimsical play areas that have become the signature of Vail's parks. The Stephens Park plat area does not currently include artistic elements.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

School-age structure

- Renovate the School-age structure to improve play value, access and circulation
- Improve structural integrity of the structure
- Reuse existing structure components to the extent possible (posts, roof, etc)
- Replace all most play components (slides, climbers, etc)
- Reuse some climbers and stand alone features
- Ensure ADA accessibility
- Add ground-level play components to the School-age area

Tot structure

- Ensure structural integrity of the existing structure
- Reuse existing slides, purchase one new climber
- Rebuild tot-swing using existing wood swing parts
- Evaluate potential for improved play function
- Ensure ADA accessibility
- Add ground-level play components to the Tot area

Site Work

- Improve circulation routes to ensure ADA accessibility
- Enlarge play area “use zones”
- Reuse about ½ the surfacing, replace decomposed surfacing
- Minor landscaping/irrigation and some site furnishings.

STEPHENS PARK RENOVATION CONCEPT

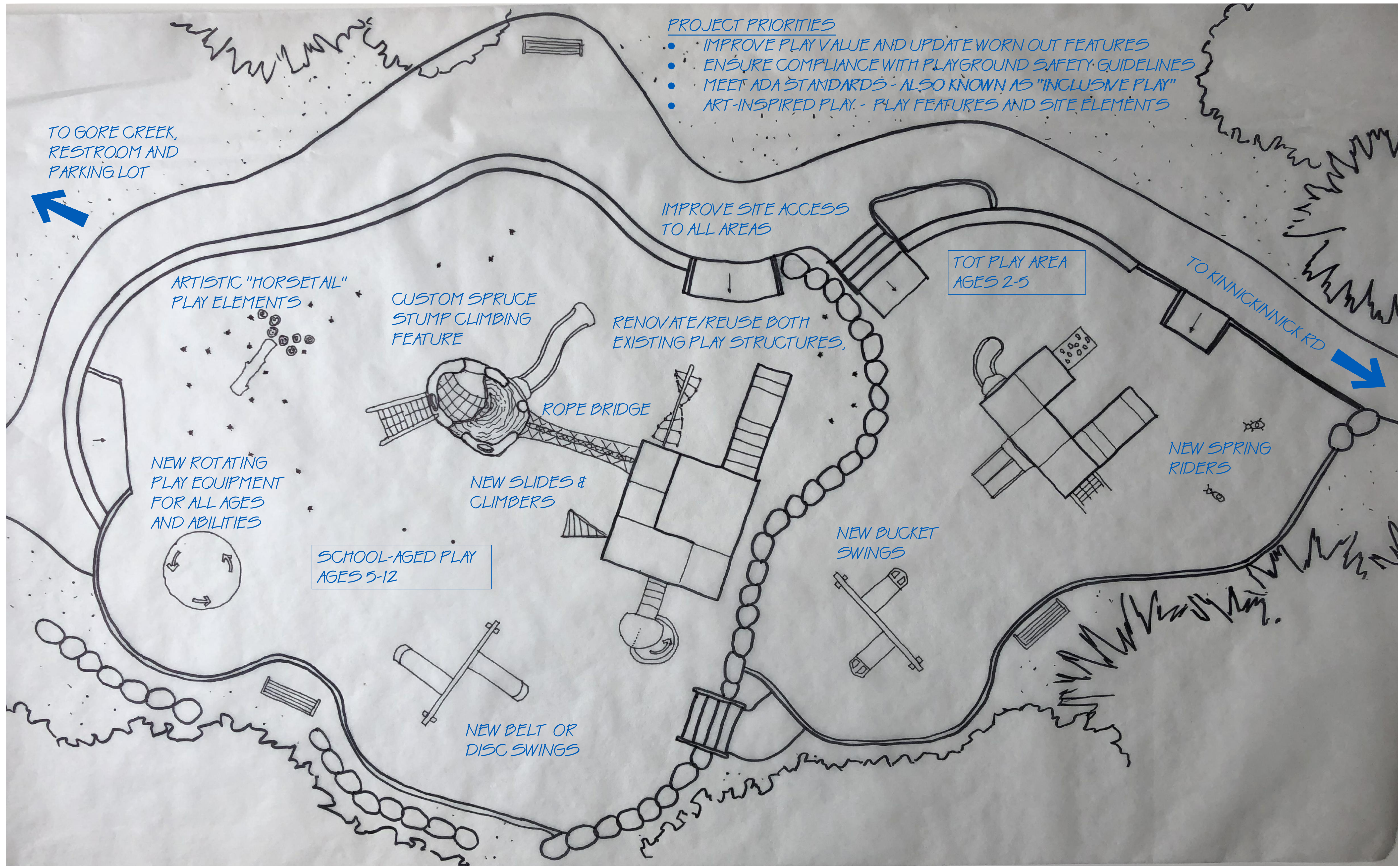
Healthy riparian corridors perform many functions. They provide habitat, filter pollutants, reduce erosion and slow storm runoff. And, they can be a lot of fun to explore. Crawling through vegetation, climbing over fallen logs and finding evidence of the critters that inhabit the area can be a fun way to spend a day.

With this in mind, the design incorporates elements found along a stream corridor to create a jumbo-sized play environment complete with a large spruce stump climbing feature, bug-shaped spring animals, a log balance beam and new slides, climbers and a rope bridge to tie it all together.

The main art component is envisioned as a forest of up to twenty oversized “horsetails” (also known as *Equisetum*), a prehistoric plant found along waterways throughout Colorado. While the real plants are typically less than 24” in height, the artistic version for Stephens Park will be 12 to 16 feet tall, where park users can wander through the plants as they enter the play area.

The existing wooden play structures for both the tot and school-aged areas will be renovated and largely reused. Parts that are slated for removal will be repurposed to the extent possible as stairs, decks and posts required to provide ADA access.

The size of the proposed play area will be approximately 1/3 larger than the current play area. The increased space allows for the separation of the bucket swings and belt swings, which currently do not meet playground safety “use-zone” requirements. The space also provides for the addition of surface-level play components, which is a requirement of the ADA standards. Overall, there is improved age-group separation throughout the play area.



PROJECT PRIORITIES

- IMPROVE PLAY VALUE AND UPDATE WORN OUT FEATURES
- ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH PLAYGROUND SAFETY GUIDELINES
- MEET ADA STANDARDS - ALSO KNOWN AS "INCLUSIVE PLAY"
- ART-INSPIRED PLAY - PLAY FEATURES AND SITE ELEMENTS

TO GORE CREEK,
RESTROOM AND
PARKING LOT



IMPROVE SITE ACCESS
TO ALL AREAS

TOT PLAY AREA
AGES 2-5

TO KINNICKINNICK RD



ARTISTIC "HORSETAIL"
PLAY ELEMENTS

CUSTOM SPRUCE
STUMP CLIMBING
FEATURE

RENOVATE/REUSE BOTH
EXISTING PLAY STRUCTURES,

ROPE BRIDGE

NEW ROTATING
PLAY EQUIPMENT
FOR ALL AGES
AND ABILITIES

NEW SLIDES &
CLIMBERS

NEW SPRING
RIDERS

SCHOOL-AGED PLAY
AGES 5-12

NEW BUCKET
SWINGS

NEW BELT OR
DISC SWINGS

