



**PLEASURE DRIVEWAY  
AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA**

**PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61604**

Administration 682-1200 Recreation 688-3667  
Parks 682-6684 Planning 686-3386

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Emily Cahill

**DATE:** September 9, 2021  
**FROM:** Becky Fredrickson  
Superintendent of Planning  
**SUBJECT:** Glen Oak Park Improvements

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the last 20 years, numerous improvements have taken place and millions of dollars have been invested in Glen Oak Park. There has been the development of the Africa Exhibit at the zoo, the construction of the Australian Walk-About Exhibit in the zoo along with the new Barton Pavilion entry, the construction of the Adventure Grove play area, the renovation of the Glen Oak Pavilion into the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum, improvements to the green houses at Luthy, complete re-build of the lesson tennis courts, and the addition of eight new pickleball courts. There has also been curb and gutter and sidewalk replacement throughout the park.

As the neighborhood and city continues to change, staff knows that the park must both remain the positive anchor it has always been, and must change to accommodate the new needs of the community. This understanding, along with the knowledge that the much-loved Tri-Centennial Playground was nearing end of its life, lead staff to look at the area of the park normally fenced off for special events to be more versatile and open to the community for daily use.

After two public input sessions held at the Glen Oak Park Amphitheatre near the lagoon, dedicated solely to the potential Glen Oak Park improvements, along with numerous other Talk About it Tuesday and Thursday events and written comments from neighbors and the community, staff has put together a conceptual list of items with potential locations for the Board to approve, allowing staff to continue along the path of design and development.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the following improvements to Glen Oak Park.

1. Remove the fence and barbed wire around the amphitheatre space. Once this has been taken down, staff will remove less desirable vegetation on the hillsides to allow for better visibility into the bowl and lagoon. As staff lays out the new elements in the park, staff will determine best practice for adding new fence or barriers as needed for safety of users.
2. Remove and replace the existing wooden Tri-Centennial Playground with an all-inclusive playground in the same general area. This playground will have the poured in place rubber surfacing and playground elements for all ability children. Somewhere near the new playground will be a sign honoring the Tri-Centennial Playground and the pride and love so many have/had for it.
3. Remove and replace the restroom building near the Tri-Centennial Playground. Replace this structure with a more modern fully accessible restroom.
4. Add two new picnic shelters as part of these improvements. Assuming space allows, one shelter will be located up near the new playground, while the other shelter will be located down in the bowl to allow families space to picnic and use the lagoon.
5. Remove the existing band shell and replace it with a more modern/versatile style in the general northeast quadrant of the lower bowl. This will allow for performing arts programming to remain in the bowl and

provide for a picnic space when the band shell is not in use. The exact location will be determined once additional information is acquired (amphitheatre type, size, access for users, topography limitations, etc.). The direction of the new amphitheatre will be directed out toward the bowl (facing southwest direction). It is hoped that a retractable projection screen can be incorporated into the new band shell for other programming opportunities. Somewhere near the new amphitheatre will be a sign honoring the 1959 bandshell and the joy it brought over the years.

6. Add three new half-court basketball courts to Glen Oak Park. Basketball is a needed element based on the increased number of kids in the area. With limited access to other public basketball courts in the East Bluff, this element could be highly used. Staff has proposed two different spots (one along Prospect in the open green space and the other by the tennis and pickleball courts). The final spot is not currently known.