

City of Van Meter Open Forum Q&A

September 21, 2026

Parks and Recreation Open Forum Responses

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Important context The Park System Plan is a long-range planning document. It identifies recommendations and estimated planning horizons, but it does not approve, fund, design, or schedule any individual project. Every recommendation would still require further evaluation, a defined scope, available funding, budgeting, and City Council approval.

Questions and Staff Responses

What progress has been made on the 2025 Park System Plan?

Answer: The plan provides the City with a roadmap for future park and recreation improvements. The first recommended system-wide step is to develop a five-year Parks and Recreation budget and Capital Improvement Plan. The City is planning to begin a goal-setting and strategic-planning process in October, which is expected to take approximately four to six months to complete. As part of that process, the Park System Plan will be considered along with other projects rated by the City Council and staff. The goal will be to establish realistic priorities for the next two to four years and identify how those projects may be financed. The plan itself does not mean that every recommendation has been approved or that construction has begun.

Plan reference: How to Use the Plan, page 9; Park System Improvement Matrix, pages 72-77.

Has the City acquired land for a new recreation complex?

Answer: No land acquisition has been finalized. The plan recommends that the City consider acquiring land for a future recreation complex within the 0-5 year planning horizon, but the location and estimated cost are listed as undetermined. Any potential acquisition would require property evaluation, negotiations, identification of funding, and formal City Council action.

Plan reference: Priority 6, acquire land for a new recreation complex, estimated timing 0-5 years and cost listed as TBD, page 72.

Is there a plan to improve the roadway at the existing recreation complex?

Answer: Resurfacing the facility roadway is included as a long-term recommendation. The plan places it in the 10+ year planning horizon and does not provide an estimated cost. It is not currently a finalized or scheduled construction project. Before moving forward, the City would need to evaluate the roadway condition, develop a scope and cost estimate, and identify funding.

Plan reference: Priority 41, resurface facility roadway, estimated timing 10+ years and cost listed as TBD, page 76.

Does the plan address accessible parking, loading areas, or walkways to the fields?

Answer: Yes. The plan recommends creating accessible parking options with connections to the fields and spectator areas. It places that recommendation in the 5-10 year planning horizon, with the cost still to be determined. The plan also recommends a citywide sidewalk-gap and walkability assessment and accessible sidewalk connections into City parks. These are recommendations for future evaluation and have not yet been designed, funded, or scheduled.

Plan reference: Priorities 3 and 10, page 72; Priority 24, accessible parking and connections at the Recreation Complex, page 74.

Does the plan include landscaping south of the complex near the concrete disposal area?

Answer: The improvement matrix does not specifically identify a landscaping project for that location. The concern can still be documented and evaluated by Parks and Recreation and Public Works as part of future site planning, maintenance, or a larger improvement project. Because it is not a specific recommendation in the plan, staff should first review the site, ownership, current use, drainage, and potential cost before recommending next steps.

Plan reference: Park System Improvement Matrix, pages 72-77.

What is the status of the restroom and drinking-water improvements identified in the plan?

Answer: These are future recommendations and have not been finalized as construction projects. The plan recommends replacing or upgrading the restroom building at the ballfields in the 5-10 year planning horizon, with a planning-level estimate of \$200,000. It also recommends a permanent restroom at the soccer fields in the 5-10 year horizon, with a planning-level estimate of \$200,000. Drinking fountains are recommended at the soccer

fields in the 5-10 year horizon and at the ballfields in the 10+ year horizon, each with a planning-level estimate of \$7,000. These estimates are for planning purposes and would need to be updated through design and bidding before any project could move forward.

Plan reference: Priorities 23 and 27, page 74; Priority 34, page 76; Priority 36, page 76.

Are there other near-term recommendations for the existing recreation complex?

Answer: The plan identifies two Recreation Complex recommendations within the 0-5 year planning horizon: an annual athletic-field turfgrass maintenance program, with a planning estimate of \$15,000, and updates to the ballfields so they can function as more flexible, multi-purpose fields, with a planning estimate of \$130,000. These remain recommendations and would still need to be reviewed against other City priorities and available funding before they are approved.

Plan reference: Priorities 2 and 12, page 72.

Summary

The plan gives the City a useful roadmap, but it is not a promise that every item will be completed within the timeframe shown. The City is planning to begin a goal-setting and strategic-planning process in October, which is expected to take approximately four to six months to complete. The Park System Plan will be reviewed along with other projects rated by the City Council and staff to determine realistic priorities for the next two to four years and how those projects may be financed. Priorities will be based on need, available funding, staffing, maintenance responsibilities, and Council direction. As individual projects become defined and approved, we also need to do a better job keeping the public updated.

City Meetings and Public Communication

Why are City meetings not being livestreamed?

Answer: The city plans to begin livestreaming Council meetings after the municipal building is remodeled and funding is available.

Data Center Development

Why was the 340th Trail data center project approved without public input?

Answer: The project has not been approved. COPT shared preliminary ideas about a year ago, but no formal proposal has been submitted to the City, and no additional information has been received since then.

Are there any updates on the Microsoft building?

Answer: Microsoft plans to begin construction in summer 2027.

How much water will Microsoft use?

Answer: Microsoft plans to use a closed-loop system that is primarily air-cooled. The only water really being used will be for bathrooms and such for the employees of the building.

Water Capacity and New Construction

Is the City still issuing permits for new construction while residents are being asked to conserve water?

Answer: The City is not formally rationing water. Residents are being asked to use water mindfully, but there are no mandatory irrigation schedules. Booster-station improvements are underway, pumps are operating, and a new well is planned. The City currently has sufficient capacity to serve new homes.

Roads, Roundabout, and Truck Traffic

Are there plans to repair the streets?

Answer: Yes. Street repairs are being planned, although long-standing maintenance needs must be balanced with other significant budget priorities.

Follow-up: Why was the Richland Trail approved before street repairs?

Answer: The trail was funded through grants and other funding sources designated for projects of that type.

Why is a roundabout being considered for 360th Street?

Answer: Studies indicate that roundabouts can improve safety and traffic flow. With anticipated Microsoft-related development and current traffic volumes of approximately 4,000 vehicles, a roundabout may be safer and more efficient during peak periods. The City is conducting a study to evaluate its effectiveness.

Follow-up: Will the roundabout accommodate semi-trucks?

Answer: The studies are still underway. Similar roads and roundabouts in Adel have successfully accommodated large semi-trucks, and we plan to do the same.

When the roundabout is built, is there a plan to repair F-90?

Answer: Yes. The roadway west of the roundabout will be repaved. Until then, the City is using cold patch as a temporary repair.

Can the City prevent semi-trucks from traveling through town?

Answer: Not entirely. The City is pursuing a weight-load study, but its ability to restrict truck traffic is limited.

Is there a plan to better accommodate trucks traveling through town on Main Street?

Answer: Yes. Ideas under consideration include introducing a slight curve or eliminating the intersection.

City Planning, Growth, and Funding

What are the City's goals for the next 10 years?

Answer: The City's priorities include building a healthy tax base, attracting more commercial development, and repairing roads. The City also intends to remain fiscally responsible and avoid committing too quickly to multimillion-dollar projects.

What commercial tax benefits is the City receiving?

Answer: The City works with a financial and economic development group, but no additional commercial tax-benefit initiatives are currently underway.

Can the community help raise funds so projects can be completed sooner?

Answer: Fundraising is generally handled outside the City's direct authority. The VMCD committee pursues fundraising opportunities and grants.

Does the City plan to expand its boundaries?

Answer: The Council would like to see the City grow and may invite property owners to annex voluntarily. The City does not intend to force annexation.

How will the City maintain a consistent 10-year vision if there is staff turnover?

Answer: The City will hold goal-setting meetings and is working with MIPA to develop a goal-setting schedule.

Municipal Buildings and City Property

What is the City's financial obligation for the municipal building?

Answer: Including the purchase of the lots, the City's obligation is approximately \$900,000.

Is there anything going to be done about the ponds filled with weeds and trees over on Hudson?

Answer: There is an HOA in that area the HOA is responsible for those.

Parks and Recreation

Are there plans to improve the recreation complex road and accessibility?

Answer: Improvements would be beneficial, but funding is the primary constraint. The road currently consists of asphalt millings, and staff maintains it as well as possible. The project has been discussed but depends on available funding.

Are there plans to repair the levee behind the ball fields?

Answer: There are currently no plans for this project, but we are aware that it is an issue that will need to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Is there a plan for a dog park?

Answer: The community has expressed interest, and a dog park was discussed in last year's parks plan.

601 Main Street

What will happen to 601 Main Street?

Answer: The project is currently paused, and the city is reconsidering the plans following community concerns.

Is there a plan to improve the appearance of 601 Main Street?

Answer: Yes. The City will grade and seed the property when weather conditions allow.

Public Safety and Local Regulations

Will the City provide 24/7 police patrol?

Answer: Funding is the primary challenge. Providing around-the-clock patrol would likely require tax increases, and current call volume does not support that level of coverage.

Would Van Meter consider providing police coverage for De Soto?

Answer: The City will not initiate such an arrangement, but it is open to discussing the possibility with De Soto.

What is being done to regulate e-bikes?

Answer: The City is in the process of developing an ordinance to address e-bike use.