



# WILDWOOD®

January 15, 2019

The Honorable City Council  
City of Wildwood, Missouri  
16860 Main Street  
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: **Parking Improvements at the Al Foster Memorial Trailhead (Ward Six)**

Council Members:

## **Background ♦♦♦**

Since the opening of the new Al Foster Memorial Trailhead, the Department of Planning has been in receipt of communications from a number of sources about a growing number of parking issues there, and the general vicinity around it. These sources have included emails from representatives of the single gauge railroad (W, F & P) and City Council Members about the popularity of the area, particularly on weekends, and how all available and designated parking is now in use, leading to the overflow utilizing public streets, turf areas, and other locations. The situation reached a level in late June/early July 2018 that volunteers at the railroad could not even find parking upon its property for their needs. The aforementioned communications were in response to this latest matter.

The issue of parking, at and within the area of the trailhead, and Glencoe, in general, has been discussed many times over the years, given the City has completed a number of park facilities within this community in that same timeframe. In 2003, when the Al Foster Memorial Trailhead was opened for public use, a gravel lot was provided with approximately fifteen (15) spaces for said purposes. The limited, and approximate number of spaces, noted above was premised on the inability to accurately mark gravel with permanent lines. With the new trail just being opened for use, parking did not appear to be an issue and the railroad was able to use its gravel lot located further south on Grand Avenue for its purposes. However, as the popularity of the trail system increased, the need for parking followed.

In 2008, the City completed Glencoe City Park and added a larger, asphalt parking lot a short distance from the Al Foster Memorial Trail, thereby hoping parking needs could further be met there, given an additional thirty-three (33) new stalls were now available. However, these spaces are, again, somewhat removed from the trailhead area and, it appears, oftentimes, users of the trail will drive down to it first to determine if any parking is available there, then return to the park, if none are readily available. At this point, the use of the Al Foster Memorial Trailhead was growing, but was again not as popular a destination as it is today.

As growth continued to occur in terms of number of users on the Al Foster Memorial Trail, the City was also making critical linkages to it from other properties, such as Rock Hollow Trail and Bluff View Trail, which led to an understanding that a better functioning trailhead at the Al Foster Memorial Trailhead was needed. Over the course of almost eight (8) years, the Department of Planning and Parks, the Council Planning and Parks Committee, and the City Council, along with others, provided a framework to improve the current trailhead location, while being respectful of the nearby residential community. Plans for the improvement of the existing trailhead area were first completed in 2016, with numerous levels of review that followed.



Ultimately, a set of plans was finalized by the City and could then be submitted to the contracting community for bidding purposes. The Department was then authorized to bid the project thereafter.

As part of this bid set of plans, the Committee and the Department had identified a new, larger parking lot area for the trailhead, which would provide thirty-seven (37) spaces, while designating the old parking location as an overflow area, but using Ritter Rings (hard plastic honeycomb pattern, which allows grass to grow through them) for extras. This inclusion of this overflow area was intended to address the special events that may occur at the trailhead and overall area over the course of any given year. Unfortunately, as the bidding on the plans was completed, the low bid was well beyond the budgeted amount for the trailhead improvements that had been sought. The Planning and Parks Committee reviewed the bids and agreed to proceed with the project, but not above the budgeted amount that had previously been established for it. This decision led to a series of reductions in improvements, including the Ritter Rings for the extra parking spaces. This area was then converted to lawn area for unscripted play.

This decision regarding the overflow parking area was based upon best available information at the time, but did set in place the potential for a need for future parking at a location that was anticipated to continue to grow in popularity and use. As introduced in this Memorandum, this need for parking has materialized and led to a set of issues that need to be addressed. One such issue was the use of the area of the trailhead, where the old gravel lot was located, for general parking by users, regardless if the existing turf area supports it. The Department had previously presented this issue to the Planning and Parks Committee and recommended a proposal to control access to this new lawn area, given that, despite postings relating to no parking, individuals were pulling off the roadway and using it. The proposal was to enclose the former parking area with a set of stone columns and fencing, but it too was very expensive to complete, once bids were received in this regard. It was at this Committee meeting a decision was made to consider adding back the parking area, instead of trying to enclose it for passive park space use. Therefore, the Department began working on this change to this area of the trailhead facility.

In late summer, while preparing to present this proposal to the Committee, the Department contacted the park designer to inquire about a small section plan sheet that could be used to determine how best to address this old parking area for new purposes. The park design firm, terraspec, provided an updated sheet, but along with it, had contacted the contracting company that had completed the current improvements to the Al Foster Memorial Trailhead, and had previously bid on this overflow parking lot redesign, as part of the overall project's parameters. This firm, Ideal Landscaping, advised terraspec that it would honor its previous price for the overflow parking lot area from 2016 and complete the work under it. This offer meant the overflow parking area, completed with Ritter Rings, would be approximately sixty-eight thousand dollars (\$68,000.00), which is a reasonable price, when considering the other two (2) alternatives the Department of Planning and Parks requested terraspec to provide estimates for were equal or much greater. These other two (2) alternatives were pavers and asphalt, which had the following cost estimates of \$130,000.00 and \$60,000.00, respectively.

Accordingly, the Department scheduled this matter before the Committee in August 2018, but prior to the meeting, the City Attorney determined the previous price could not be accepted and the project would have to be rebid. Therefore, the Committee Members postponed action and the Department rebid the parking lot project. Within the Department's 2018 budget, there was enough money to cover the original price of sixty-eight thousand dollars (\$68,000.00). Bids for this work were opened on September 18, 2018 and seven (7) received. The lowest bidder was, again, Ideal Landscape Group, but the project now was at a cost of nearly one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00), with the low bid being ninety-nine thousand nine