

Volunteer Initiatives - Shakopee Fun For All Inclusive Playground, Shakopee

1. Project Description:

Lions Park is the City of Shakopee's oldest and most popular community parks whose playground was in need of a renovation. The playground was installed in 1981 and was scheduled for replacement in the 2016 City's Park Asset plan. The park is named for the local Shakopee Lions Club who assists the City in maintaining and enhancing the park. The Lions Club has a park subcommittee that looks for projects that they can contribute to that will have a positive impact. This subcommittee approached the City in January 2015 with the concept of developing an all-inclusive playground at Lions Park since the playground was already scheduled for replacement.

An inclusive playground not only is ADA accessible but is intended to provide accessible, age, and developmental appropriate activities that stimulate all children physically, emotionally, and socially. Rather than one large play structure, inclusive playgrounds use smaller, individual components designed to fit different needs and provide unique sensory experiences. This includes the use of land forms to provide contour and challenges to the park, tunnels, group activities, and animals to touch and find, etc. The playground's surface is poured-in-place rubber.

A task force of 31 volunteers formed to help make the inclusive playground a reality. The task force met monthly to design a playground that included a zip cruz, sway fun, climbing challenges, land forms, roller slides and other stimulating activities. The task force decided on a "Safari" theme and recommended a \$400,000 playground layout to the City Council. The task force pledged to raise \$195,000 towards the playground. To help with the fundraising, they named the playground Shakopee's Fun For All Inclusive Playground. They wanted the playground to be for all ages and all abilities.

The Shakopee Rotary Club learned of the Fun For All Playground and wanted to contribute to the Playground as well. The Rotary Club felt that adding music to the playground would add another unique element that can provide emotional and social benefits to youth and adults. The Rotary Club donated five outdoor music components to the playground.

The playground and the music components were completed on October 22nd, 2016 through a community build of 60+ volunteers. Shakopee's Lions Park inclusive playground is the second one available to the public south of the Minnesota River Valley: King Park in Lakeville, Minnesota is the first.

2. Outline the Planning Process:

January 2015 – The Lions Club approached the City in January of 2015 to replace the playground in Lions Park with an all-inclusive playground.

March 2015-The Parks and Recreation Director formed and help guide a task force of 31 community members and professionals to develop Lions Park playground as an inclusive playground for the existing community and surrounding communities. This task force consists of parents, counselors, therapists, elected officials, Lions Club members, and a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members: all committed to getting this inclusive playground built.

March 2015-January 2016 – The Task force met monthly and worked with Flagship Recreation to develop the playground. They visited different inclusive playground sites on their own time and brought ideas back to the task force meetings. Flagship Recreation listened to the task force's thoughts, ideas and expectations and developed three concept plans based on the Safari theme they had chosen. The

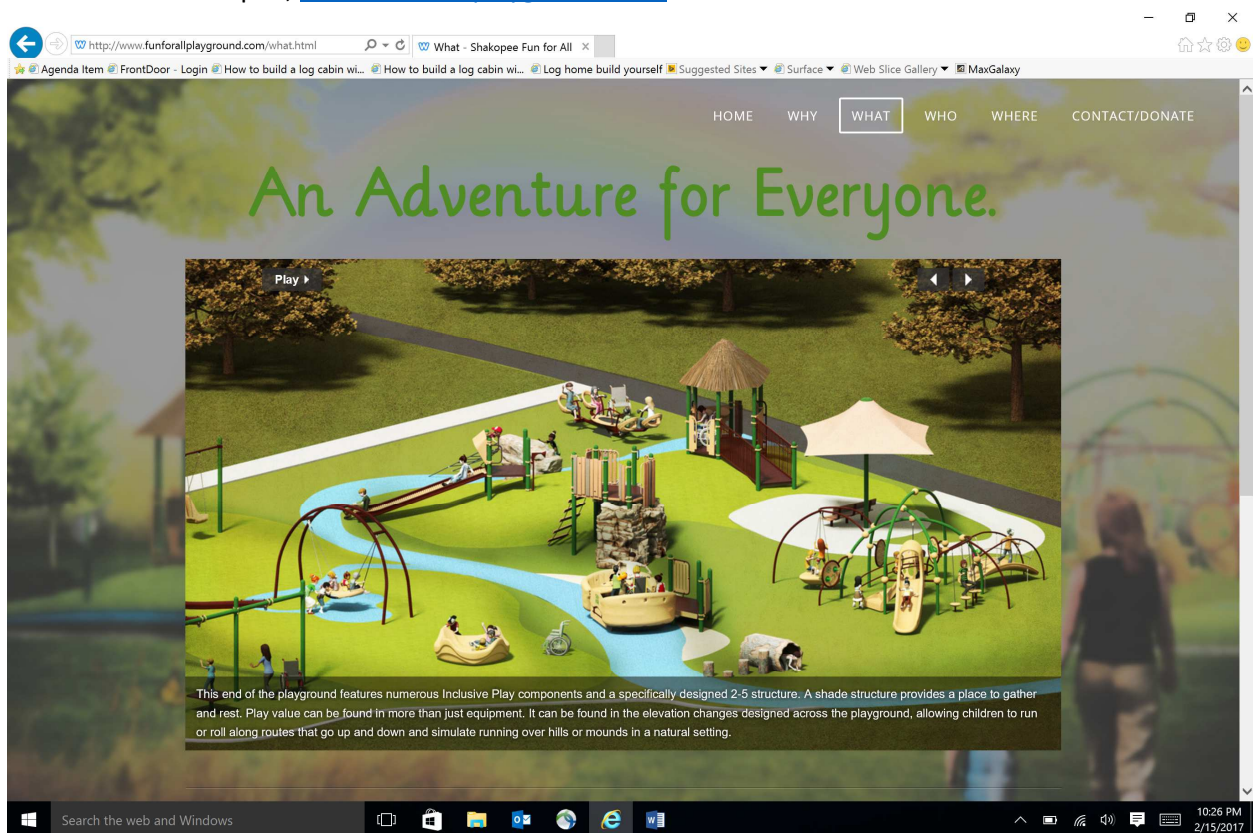
three concept plans ranged in estimated cost and the task force chose to recommend a plan estimated at \$400,000 to the City Council.

January 11, 2016 – The task force presented the three concept plans to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. They requested that the PRAB make a recommendation to the City Council to support the task force's chosen plan and allow them to fundraise.

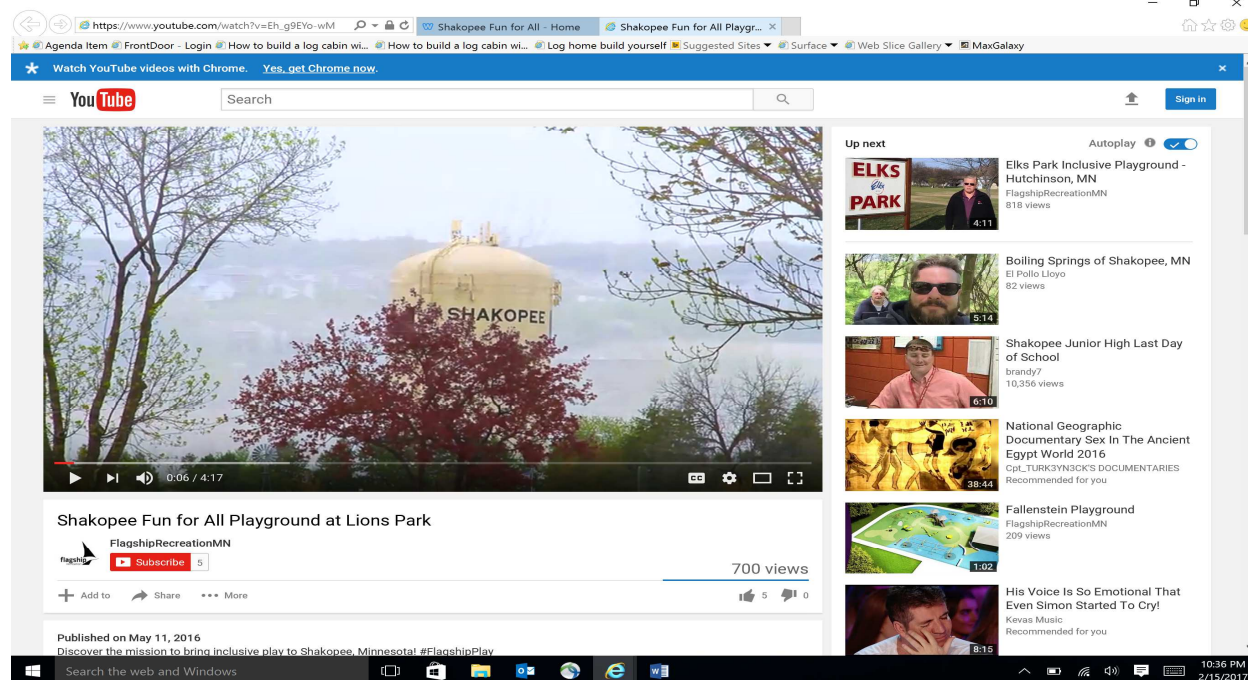
March 2, 2016 – The task force presented their recommendation to the City Council. They requested that the City Council approve the concept and support their efforts to fundraise the additional \$195,000 needed to make the playground a reality. The City Council approved 5-0.

March 21, 2016 – The task force contracted with Flagship Recreation to develop marketing material including a brochure, portfolio, website and video.

March – August, 2016 – The task force developed marketing materials and fundraised for the playground. One member of the task force who is also a City Councilman spent numerous hours obtaining donations for the playground. Much of the donations were collected because of his efforts. The task force also worked with city staff to submit a few grants. The brochure is Attachment A. A website was developed, www.funforallplayground.com



The task force also developed a video that can be seen on the website or on YouTube: Shakopee Fun For All Playground.



August 3rd, 2016 – The task force had raised 75% of their pledged amount and requested that the City Council approve the installation of the playground for the fall instead of waiting until the spring of 2017. The City Council approved 5-0.

October 22, 2016 – The task force along with many other volunteers built the playground as part of a community build. The task force has not only raised funds for the playground but also secured donations of food and beverages for the community build. The City Councilman that was so dedicated to the fundraising also spent 3-4 full days volunteering his time to assist with the final touches of the playground installation and the poured in place surfacing.

3. Outline Funding Plan:

City allocated funds for the replacement of the existing playground.	\$150,000
Lions Club pledged funds to complete the playground	\$50,000
Shakopee Valley Lions gave initial donation	\$5,000
Volunteer task force pledged to raise	\$195,000
*Task force held 4 fundraising events	

Final Costs:

\$150,000	City
\$55,000	Shakopee Lions and Valley Lions
\$155,811.29	Funds raised by the task force
\$13,245	Grant received applied for by task force and city staff
\$15,885	Rotary Club donation
<u>\$31,232.42</u>	<u>Estimated in-kind donation amounts</u>
\$421,173.71	Total cost of the playground

4. Explain the level of collaboration involved and with whom:

There was a very high level of collaboration between city staff and the task force. Staff guided the task force through the entire project, attending all meetings, serving as the direct contact with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Council. Staff also collaborated with designated task force members to coordinate the marketing materials and Community Build activities.

The task force collaborated with Flagship Recreation and Landscape Structures to develop marketing materials, fundraising strategies, playground design and playground installation.

City staff collaborated with local contractors who donated their time and equipment to prepare the playground site including site excavation, grading, class 5 installation, concrete and trucking. Staff also collaborated with the Rotary Club to add another component, the component of music, to the inclusive playground.

5. Community Support:

The Community Support on this project was tremendous. The task force members attended most meetings and fundraisers and were actively involved in the development of the marketing materials and community build. Over 60 people attended the Community Build on October 22nd. Community members could not wait for the playground to be open to the public with numerous phone calls, emails and Facebook posts.

88 local companies and individuals gave monetary donations and 9 local companies donated time and materials. The Shakopee Valley News wrote several articles on the playground and followed the progress closely. One editorial spoke to how the playground has brought the community together, Attachment B.

6. Describe how the project is unique:

The Shakopee Fun For All Playground project is unique in three ways. A nonprofit organization and volunteers changed the thinking of City Officials, 64% of the project funds were donated or granted, a playground was constructed that serves all of Shakopee, young, old, and any ability.

The city has 26 playgrounds and all were ADA accessible but not a single playground was inclusive. The Lions Club saw an opportunity to suggest a different type of playground to the City Council and with the assistance of staff put together a volunteer task force and educated the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council about what inclusive means. The project made the city realize a population that has been underserved when it comes to recreational opportunities. This type of playground allows children with disabilities to play next to their able-bodied brother, sister or friend, it allows parents and grandparents with limitations to play and get around in the playground with their children or grandchildren. It is truly a place where everybody can be a kid and have fun!

The taskforce worked on this project for 20 months and never gave up or lost sight of their goal. They believed in the project and the impact it could make on the community and got 97 other organizations and individuals to believe in it enough to donate. This project was a city project but the city's contribution was 36% of the total project. The taskforce organized and obtained funding for 64% of the project.

Finally, the Shakopee Fun For All Playground is only one of two fully inclusive playgrounds in the south metro. Communities are looking to put in inclusive playgrounds within their communities because they serve a population who does not have a lot of opportunities. All of Shakopee's playgrounds are the traditional play structures that meet ADA regulations but are not considered inclusive. The Fun For All Playground is Shakopee's unique playground that can serve all ages and abilities in a park that sees thousands of visitors annual. Being able to get this playground built with volunteers and community support is an amazing accomplishment for the city. The volunteers take extreme pride in what they have accomplished.

7. Include a sample of the publication – N/A

8. Outline the evaluation or review process –

The task force and staff set deadlines throughout the project to keep the project on schedule such as choosing a final design, City Council approval, fundraising deadlines, build date, etc. We can also evaluate the project by seeing the positive community response to both fundraising and playground use. No other formal evaluation or review process was developed.

9. Include your distribution plan: N/A

10. Describe any technology used:

The technology used throughout the project included power point presentations to boards and elected officials, websites (both the city's and Fun For All Playground – the city website had a link to the project website), Facebook, YouTube, computers to develop event and project fliers and offering online donations