

Tracey Hulme  
*Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification Committee Chairman*  
Traer, Iowa  
319-404-8572  
hulmet@waterlooschools.org

**- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -**  
**POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK - A Community Initiative to Improve our Local Park**

The Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification committee along with the City of Traer and the Traer City Council have been working hand-in-hand on an initiative to make improvements to Taylor Park. The initiative is called 'POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK' and we'd like to update you on our progress.

The Polish Up Taylor Park project began in 2021 when the committee contacted the Iowa State University's Community Design Lab to provide a comprehensive concept plan for potential improvements to the park. This plan was completed in May 2023. During Traer's Sesquicentennial in 2023, the committee launched a fundraising campaign and received overwhelming support for improving Taylor Park. In 2024, the committee took the ISU CDL plan to the next stage and hired RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects from Waterloo, Iowa, to develop the overall site plan for the park - see attached map. Our goal is for improvements to the park to be done in yearly phases with an expectation of 5-7 years for the project.

Taylor Park's potential improvements include, renovations and new construction plans for the following:

- Gazebo/Bandstand
- Restroom Facility
- Driveway, Parking, and Sidewalks
- Open Air Picnic Shelter
- Children's Play Area
- Teen Activity Area
- Public Entertainment Area
- Picnic Tables, Park Benches, and Trash Receptacles
- Designated Trash Area
- Landscape Throughout the Park

To date new children's playground equipment has been installed, repairs and updates to the Gazebo/Bandstand have been completed, and new under-story blossoming trees along highway 63, a 'Mayor's Christmas Tree' centrally located in the park, and evergreens on the north side have been planted. Currently we are investigating construction plans for new a restroom facility and a new open air picnic shelter on the existing cement pad on the northwest corner. The committee is in the process of researching and applying for grant funding for 2025 and 2026 projects. Plans throughout the park are a work in progress and will continue to evolve.

Taylor Park is a central feature of Traer. Since the derecho and other wind events, many areas including the trees, shrubbery, flowers, plants, and hardscape features have fallen into disrepair. Take a walk through the park and you'll get the picture. With our new shelter house and swimming pool attractions, it's a great time to bring these other park areas up to par. Taylor Park can and should be a showcase of our town. All residents and visitors, young and old, benefit from a green space they are proud to stroll in, play in, picnic in, and hold events in. Green spaces increase the quality of life for a community and the value and pride we have in our land.

The Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification Committee is excited to be taking these steps now to ensure the future and longevity of our park. We see this as the beginning of a legacy community project to keep Taylor Park in peak condition as an investment for future generations.

*To date, funding for the ISU CDL and RITLAND+KUIPER portions of this project have been awarded through grants sourced by the Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification Committee. Future finances for improvements will be provided by local, county, state and federal grants as well as fundraising and donations. We would especially like to thank all those who's generous donations have helped launch the Polish Up Taylor Park project and we appreciate the continued support.*

For more information visit: [www.traer.com/polishuptaylorpark](http://www.traer.com/polishuptaylorpark)

For questions please contact Tracey Hulme, chairman of the Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification Committee at [hulmet@waterlooschools.org](mailto:hulmet@waterlooschools.org)

### **Here's how you can help POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK**

The Taylor Park Landscape & Beautification Committee has set up a fund within the Traer Community Foundation for contribution to the POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK initiative. These funds will be used for the ongoing improvements and future maintenance of Taylor Park projects. The funds are governed by a local board of directors through the Traer Community Foundation.

Mail your tax-deductible donations to: (make your checks payable to: POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK)  
POLISH UP TAYLOR PARK  
c/o Traer Community Foundation  
611 2nd Street, Traer, IA 50675

Traer's Landscape & Beautification Committee members are: Tracey Hulme, Rod Hulme, Patty Seuss, Mark Keefer, Shawn Kennedy, Curt Jensen, Nick Podhajsky, Michelle Podhajsky, Aaron Mennenga, and Tara Mennenga



Proposed Shelter  
Entrance Plantings  
Existing Sidewalk (Typical)

Entrance Plantings  
One-way Traffic  
Community Christmas Tree  
Benches & Lighting to Match Downtown  
Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)

Veteran's Memorial  
Entrance Plantings

Relocated Restroom Building

Picnic Area  
Existing Playground

Existing Playground

Proposed Swing Area

Entrance Plantings

Relocated Garbage Dumpster

Shade Tree (Typical)

Ornamental Tree (Typical)

Remove Playground Equipment  
Remove Basketball Court  
Remove Restrooms

Accessible Seating Area  
Plantings

Plant Switchgrass in Retention Area

Possible location for Basketball Court

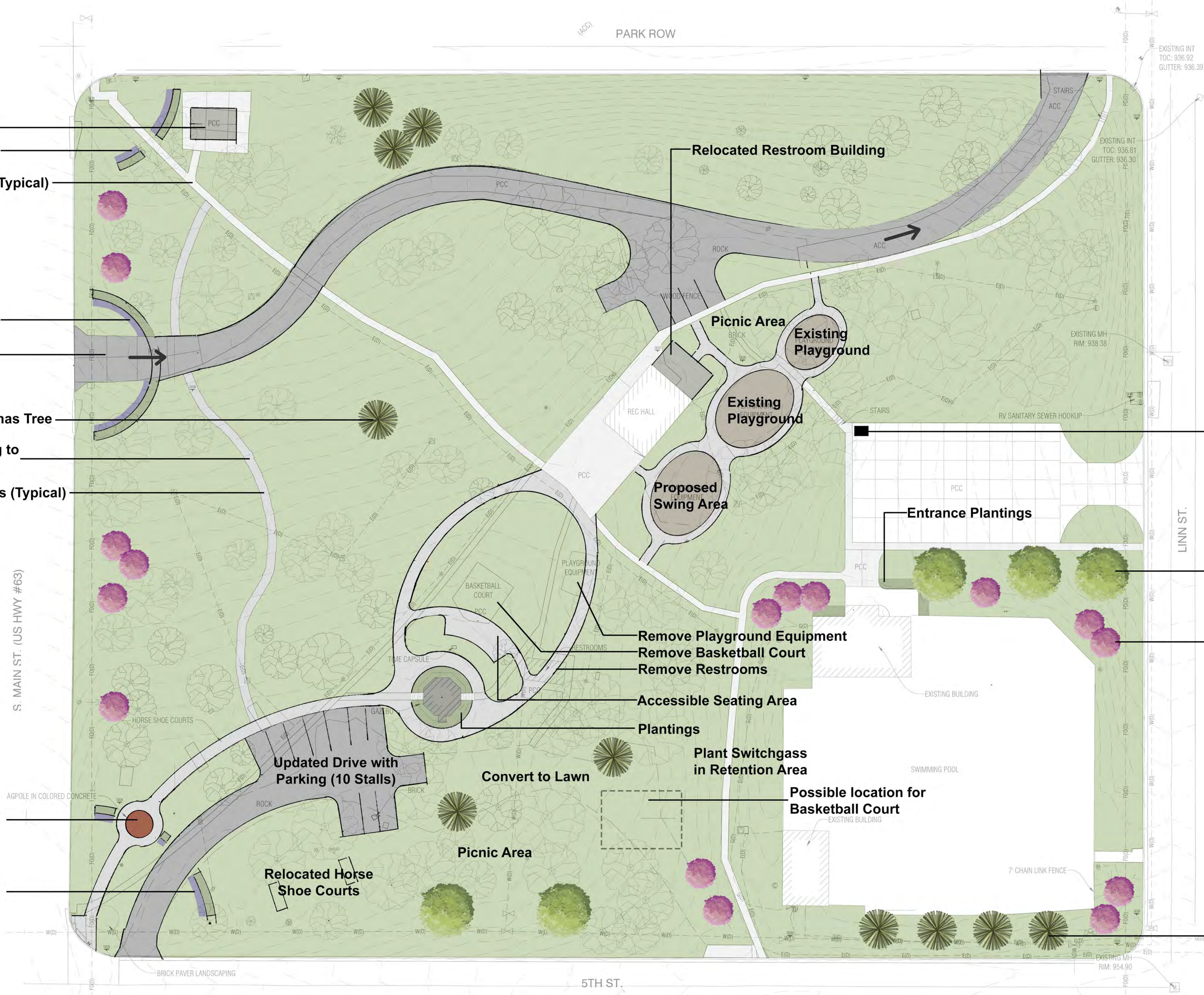
Convert to Lawn

Picnic Area

Updated Drive with Parking (10 Stalls)

Relocated Horse Shoe Courts

Evergreen Tree (Typical)



# Taylor Park Improvements

Traer, Iowa





**1. Relocate the basketball court and/or add possible pickleball court or shuffleboard.**

- a. Our recommendation is to remove basketball and other “ball” sports from the park as they are incompatible in its current location with programming for the gazebo. Given the topography of the site, any ball sport would need to be fenced in to keep the balls from rolling down the hill and there is not a great location for this to occur. After reviewing local amenities, including the nearby courts at the school, our recommendation would be to not keep or replace the court within the park. If the community decided they wanted to keep basketball inside the park, a location near 5th Street and the pool would work.

**2. Bathroom**

- a. The current restroom needs updating. Its location competes with ideal programming and flow of the park. We are suggesting relocating it to the northeast side of the existing shelter and creating a large open lawn area for performances at the gazebo.

**3. Gazebo**

- a. By removing the basketball court, existing restrooms, and the tire swing & other misc. playground equipment, we were able to create an event lawn with accessible seating. This area puts the focal point on the gazebo and creates a better relationship between the gazebo and existing shelter. The relocation of the restroom facility behind the existing shelter allows better pedestrian flow and detracts from the restroom competing with the gazebo as a focal point. The planting area around the gazebo is expanded allowing plenty of room for plantings to keep the vegetation off of the gazebo and not encroach on the adjacent sidewalk.

**4. ROW Sidewalks**

- a. After reviewing the site, we are discouraging the use of the sidewalks in the right-of-way around the perimeter of the park. The adjacent roads have great sidewalks already and the important connectors into the park are what are most important. It would be expensive and require retaining walls to add sidewalks to the perimeter due to the steep grades. The existing trees also pose a problem. Anyone walking to the park can cross the street and enter the park in a safe manner. Our recommendation is to increase the safety of the crosswalks with highly-visible crosswalks into the park at all existing entrances.

**5. Trash Area**

- a. Relocating the dumpster to the west side of the park where existing concrete is seems like a logical way to handle this. The location also has easy access from the road. The container would be tucked away from view from neighboring residences and include plantings but a wooden fence could also be used to provide additional screening. **UPDATE: City Council preferred the trash**

**container be located in the pool parking area. More decision making will be needed from the city on how they would like that secured.**

#### **6. Commemorative Bricks**

- a. The existing commemorative bricks throughout the park can be reused near their current locations or could be added into a centrally located plaza space within the park. Any area that is shown with pavement could be converted to bricks.

#### **7. Driveways**

- a. We are suggesting discontinuing the use of the through drive on the west side of the park and instead allowing vehicles to drive in and park near the gazebo. The space allows for 10 parking spots with room to back out and exit the way you came. The area where the current drive is would be converted back to lawn which should aid in the drainage issues on that side of the park. Currently, there are ruts in the gravel due to fast flow of drainage.
- b. The north entrance would be widened to 18' with 4 parking spots delineated near the existing shelter. If more parking is desired near the shelter, we have shown on the plan an additional route that would add 7 parking spots.

#### **8. Horseshoes**

- a. The existing horseshoes and signage for horseshoes would be relocated to the west side of the park. This would allow for better pedestrian circulation through the Veteran's Memorial to the gazebo.

#### **9. Playground**

- a. The existing playgrounds would be enclosed by sidewalks to create an edge and allow for circulation around the play equipment. Places to sit along the sidewalks would also be implemented.

#### **10. Swimming Pool Area Plantings**

- a. The existing low drainage area could be enhanced with a switchgrass planting which would eliminate the need to mow the area. Additional plantings around the swimming pool would be mostly evergreen trees and ornamental trees. The entrance of the parking lot could be planted with shade trees. Our firm does not recommend prairie plantings around the swimming pool area. The maintenance for that type of planting is high especially in small areas. If further planting was desired, we could add areas with a mix of shrubs and ornamental trees. We discourage the over use of perennials in public spaces unless there is a robust maintenance team who can handle their care. The entrance around the pool building could be enhanced by shrub and perennial plantings with the ideal situation being easy maintenance.

**11. Parking**

- a. Revising the current drives includes delineating 10 parking stalls near the gazebo and 4 parking stalls near the shelter. These spots should include handicap parking at both locations.

**Projects that could be started or accomplished in 2024**

1. Relocating and refurbishing the horseshoe pits (currently in 2025 Phased Plan)
2. Adding the picnic gazebo on the NE corner of the park
3. Tree plantings along Hwy 63 and Park Row
4. Tree plantings around pool area
5. Relocating the restroom