

RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK

Classification: Community Park — 19 acres

Character: Although a somewhat eclectic collection of land parcels and uses, Riverside Lions Park remains a viable park unit that serves both community and neighborhood functions. The northern end of the park is routinely used for a seasonal farmers market along 7th Street. An interesting wood pergola/arbor structure with seating adds an appealing architectural feature to this area of the park. A children's play area is also provided adjacent to the arbor. Although the play equipment is in good condition, the surface area is oversized and not well sited relative to the arbor structure. An asphalt trail, which is in need of upgrading, traverses through this and other areas of the park and provides a connection to Babcock Park via a grade-separated crossing under the TH 3 bridge. Although functional, the connection is visually unappealing and lacks clear sight lines, which might intimidate some users. The trail also dead ends on the north end of the park into a parking lot on the back side of a commercial building.

The middle section of the park includes an open grass area and a large concrete pad with lights previously used for a skateboard park. An older picnic shelter with some picnic tables and grills scattered around along with an older restroom building are located further to the south. On the southern-most end of the park is the well-maintained Vets Memorial, which was dedicated in 2005 and is a highly visible and compelling architectural feature. Parking is currently limited and primarily along 7th and 8th Streets.

Development Considerations: As with the other riverside and downtown area community parks, a new master plan is needed for Riverside Lions Park to better organize site uses and determine the mix of facilities and amenities needed to best serve the community. Importantly, the park's design needs to accommodate neighborhood and community park amenities since it serves both functions. A new master plan should also focus on ways to better support the farmers market and continue to provide space for the annual car show. Particular attention needs to be paid to the vehicular access and parking issues, especially along 7th and 8th Streets and the southern end of the park. The relationship of the park and adjacent housing also needs to be addressed as part of a new master plan, including determining the cost-benefit of acquiring select properties on the southern end of the park as related to the Vets Memorial. As with Babcock, taking full advantage of the scenic values of the river corridor should be a top priority, as is the need to enhance the general aesthetic quality of the park through good design, landscaping, and architectural elements. Extending the trail on the northern end of the park into the downtown business district is also an important design consideration.

Potential Development Costs to Optimal Level: \$300,000 to \$800,000, which ranges from limiting enhancements to neighborhood park-type features and trails to more robust enhancement of community park features associated with the farmers market, arbor area, and trail connection to 5th Street.

