

## **American Rescue Plan Act Allocations**

As of Oct. 31 the City of Jonesboro has roughly \$8 million in available ARPA funding. In accordance to ARPA regulations, funds are required to be appropriated by the end of 2024. To date these funds have been delegated primarily for Quality of Place and Public Safety investments.

Staying with that current mindset, administration is proposing the fund balance be appropriated to the following project areas:

### **Land Bank funding for Development Incentives - \$500,000**

The Land Bank seeks to receive, purchase or acquire distressed or high potential properties in an effort to aid future projects or combat blight. The Land Bank Committee is an appointed body that vets potential properties and acquire land tracts through various efforts including donations, purchases and foreclosures.

In recent years the Land Bank has increased activity considerably and has proved to be a valuable asset for protecting sensitive properties. This proposal would allow a more robust line item budget and Council would then approve individual appropriations instead of authorizing repeated budget amendments for each transaction.

### **Pedestrian Street, Trail and Sidewalk projects - \$4.5 million**

ARPA-funded pedestrian improvements will be focused on investing in a variety of pedestrian safety projects. Funding would primarily be intended for cross-section pedestrian improvements that include full trail and sidewalk projects, shared use paths, or street projects with a notable pedestrian benefit.

The Connectivity Advisory Committee and City staff will be tasked with reviewing and researching areas for specific consideration by Council. The advisory committee will also help to determine the priority order of numerous undeveloped portions of the Connectivity Plan

### **Lacy Park Improvements / Indoor Turf Facility– Multiple Funding Streams - \$2.5 million ARPA, \$1.5 million Reserves**

In recent years increased interest in soccer and youth football leagues have identified a need for increased investments in our facility offerings. A large, regulation sized, indoor turf facility would allow for numerous competitive sports to continue even during inclement weather. Additionally, the facility could host any number of events that require a large open floorplan.

This plan proposes setting \$4 million aside in a specific capital improvement fund to go toward a future indoor complex. Based off early cost estimates, this amount would provide about half of the total facility cost and will help position the City to seek grants or private donations to

complete the financial sourcing needed for construction. This would be the first piece of building out the Lacy Park property, near other soccer and football fields.

### **Humanitarian Support - \$500,000**

In addition to Community Development Block Grant funding, ADFAs allocations and pass-through grant funding, administration proposes that Council place \$500,000 of Rescue Act funding in a restricted account to be solely accessed for humanitarian support efforts. Individual withdraws from restricted accounts would follow city purchasing and procurement processes and any allocations made above \$35,000, or require a contractual agreement, would be subject to Council approval and should stand on their own merit as a benefit to the intended protections.

Funding could be used to support programs that focus on emergency relief, 501(c)3 program support, facility construction, humanitarian-focused grant matches and partnership agreements with other government entities toward humanitarian support efforts.

### **Reserves Appropriations**

Jonesboro city legislation require that the City keep emergency reserve funding on hand to maintain full government functions for a period of 2 months in the event of an emergency or unforeseen hardship. Reserve funding is also available to support specific City infrastructure or personnel investments. Additionally, reserve funds are used for matches to federal grants and Arkansas Department of Transportation projects such as overpasses or highway construction efforts.

As of 10/31/2023 total reserves held by the City of Jonesboro are \$33.2 million, of which \$9.6 million are required by ordinance. The required number will increase as more projects described in this plan are completed. In addition to projects outlined below, it is important to consider that in the next 3 to 5 years, the City will likely be asked to participate in multiple highway projects and will also need to construct a new fire station after ISO reviews in 2025 and purchase or construct a new JPD patrol branch facility.

This capital improvement plan proposes allocating \$5 million in excess reserves funding toward multiple quality of place and recreational projects.

### **East Jonesboro Park Facility - \$2.25 million Reserves, \$750,000 2025 Budget allocation, additional grant funding requested.**

For more than a year, the City has been in discussions regarding a park project located behind the Journey and Cornerstone Church facilities near Baptist Hospital. Earlier this year the City applied for an Outdoor Recreation grant that would provide an additional \$1 million if the application is successful.

After discussions with Parks staff, \$3 million will fund significant improvements on the currently raw and undeveloped property. The plan under review would create roughly a 25-acre space that is much needed in East Jonesboro. The area is a good blend of open space and forest that will provide an excellent foundation for a premier park.

Long term plans for the park would include a community center, similar to others in the city. Plans and cost estimates for a community center facility construction have not yet been commissioned and would likely need to be addressed in a separate allocation when that time comes.

**Lacy Park Improvements / Indoor Turf Facility - \$1.5 million from reserves**  
(See ARPA allocation details for description)

### **Forum Renovations - \$250,000**

Over the last 3 years more than \$1 million in City funding has greatly improved the functionality and stability of The Forum Theater. Discussions with City facilities management and the Foundation of Arts have identified a need for seat upgrades, audio equipment improvements and balcony space renovations.

### **Soft-Trail Development - \$1,000,000**

Recent investments in Soft Trail amenities at Craighead Forest Park have received numerous accolades by users and have provided Jonesboro residents and guest with a great recreational opportunity.

In 2022 the City partnered with Jonesboro Unlimited to create a soft trails master plan for Craighead Forest. The plan consisted of multiple phases and has received funding support from outside entities.

Construction on the system started in spring of 2023 and Phase 1 is set to be complete in late fall of this year. While primarily intended for mountain bikes, the trails have already proven to be beneficial to walkers and joggers as well.

The \$1 million requested for soft-trail funding in this proposal would complete the network proposed by the International Mountain Biking Association and provide funding for further soft-trail development in the city. If funding exceeds the final cost of phase 2, then it would remain in a restricted fund for future soft-trail developments.