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EXCLUSIVE

Paving the way for playground project in Walla Walla's Vista Terrace Park

Annie Charnley Eveland Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
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The worksite at Vista Terrace Park, Friday, Sept. 17, 2021

Greg Lehman, Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Walla Walla is laying the groundwork for a new playground at Vista Terrace Park.

The city of Walla Walla began excavation, gravel compaction and concrete work on Sept. 13 to install the playground in the Adair Vista neighborhood, 920 Mountain Park Drive, north of U.S. Highway 12.

Sunrise Rotary Club initiated the project to enhance the park, with contributions from the city and Walla Walla Noon Rotary.



3-D mockup shows the play area for Vista Terrace Park

The city's work will save close to \$40,000, said Sunrise Rotary playground equipment planning and fundraising committee chairman Pete Erb. Mountain Rock Design & Construction in Spokane arrived Sept. 20 to do the week-long installation.

The group effort has raised nearly 90% of its goal, Erb said, enhanced this summer by a \$20,000 Michael Murr Foundation grant.

“We continue to receive funds through the various sources that we had set up although now they are but a trickle,” he said. “I expect our public donation streams to grow with the progress of a playground being built in the park.”

He said the project estimate has doubled in the past year.

“One of our bids grew by 20% in just two months this summer,” Erb said. “We need to keep fundraising to stay ahead of the increase in cost.”

The city stored the play structure, which arrived in March. Costs and lack of contractor availability kept the playground from being installed sooner.

“The team and the city were both on the hunt for a contractor and the Murr Foundation came on board to offset rising costs,” he said.

Professional installation is required due to the height of the play structure and liability.

The city of Walla Walla is requiring professional installation because of the height of the structure and fall liability.

“Further, we need curbing, gravel compaction, footings to be excavated, the 5,200-square-foot area of the playground to be excavated, and the poured-in-place rubber surface to be installed, not to mention 175 feet of sidewalks to be put in,” Erb said. “This is all quite expensive. We had budgeted \$90,000 for most of these tasks in total. Our bids at the beginning of August were for almost \$180,000 and this did not include the concrete work.”

Through meetings, they reduced costs to less than \$40,000 for all excavation, sidewalks, gravel, curbs and installation.

They’ve spoken with Walla Walla Crime Watch to assist in creating a community event to open the playground with participation from the two local Rotary clubs.

Sunrise Rotary is contributing \$40,000 to the project. Noon Rotary will donate \$15,000 out of its major project funds. Hayden Homes Foundation pledged \$100,000. Check donations may be sent to Rotary Club of Walla Walla, P.O. Box 418, Walla Walla, 99362.

Donors can purchase of engraved bricks that will be used for a path in the park from Bricks R Us. Bricks of different sizes can be purchased for \$50, \$100, \$1,000, \$2,500 or \$5,000. The smallest is a 4-by-8-inch brick, and the largest a for a 32-by-32-inch brick array.

Wylie Monuments will donate other engraved finished rock products on a case-by-case plan for direction or identification of park features.

Sunrise Rotary meets every Wednesday at 6:45 a.m. at St. Francis Church Parish Hall, 712 W. Alder St. For more information visit wallawallasunriserotary.org or contact club President Derek Wood at 509-952-4653 or wddrk@yahoo.com.

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Bio Box

Order a brick

Donors can order engraved bricks to help fund Vista Terrace Playground at ubne.ws/3u8jplG.

Annie Charnley Eveland

Annie joined the U-B news staff in 1979 and since 1990 has written Etcetera, a daily community column. She was promoted to a copy editing post in 2007. She edits copy, designs and lays out pages, including the weekly arts and entertainment guide Marquee,