



Wabash Inclusive Park Project Awarded Additional Funds through Stellar Communities Designation Program

The Wabash Stellar Team held their quarterly meeting with representatives from the State Stellar Team. During the meeting, Kathleen Weissenberger from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) announced that the City of Wabash, designated as a Stellar Community in 2014, is receiving an additional \$200,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) to be applied to the Inclusive Playground.

“We are very excited to be able to use these funds for such a great community project and an integral part of Wabash’s overall Stellar Plan,” Weissenberger said.

In February 2015, the City of Wabash created a sub-committee to act as the Inclusive Park Steering Committee. Todd Titus, Park Superintendent is the chairperson of the committee. Wabash community members include Mayor Vanlandingham; Kerri Mattern, Park Board member and Wabash parent; Sam and Shelly Hipkind, Wabash parents; Brian and Shelly Myers, Wabash parents; Bryan Dillon, Wabash City Councilmember and parent; Keith Gillenwater of Economic Development Group of Wabash County; Pat Plummer, Wabash resident; and Clint Kugler of Wabash County YMCA. The committee’s goal is to create a park unique to the region that will allow children of all different abilities to play together. Fred Prazeau of CONTEXT landscape architecture is leading the committee through master planning, preliminary design and cost analysis of the park.

At the end of the current preliminary design phase, the committee will have a clear idea of the look, feel, scale and approximate cost of the park. CONTEXT was involved in creation of initial concepts and cost estimates used in the Wabash Stellar Strategic Investment Plan 2014-2018 (aka SIP 2014).

“We know the community is excited and ready for this park project to get built. We are working hard to create the best park for all of our kids, one that will be supported well into the future,” Titus, said.

Upon completion of the current preliminary design phase, the next step will focus on detailed design and engineering documents as well as fundraising for construction of the park. The recently announced \$200,000 is anticipated to be used for construction. The City of Wabash has committed local funds for design and engineering phases and is in the process of committing specific local funds for construction and match funds for the additional CDBG funds.

“We are committed to this Stellar project and are very excited that there were additional funds available. They (the State Stellar Communities team) said back in August that they were committed to us, and they continue to be proven partners in our efforts here in Wabash,” Mayor Vanlandingham said.

For more information about the status of all Stellar projects, please visit the Wabash Stellar website at www.wabashstellar.cityofwabash.com, contact the Mayor's office at 260-563-4171 extension 403, or Rachel Uthe, Stellar Deputy Program Manager and Media Contact, at 317-547-5580.

The Indiana Stellar Communities Designation Program, launched in 2011 is a multi-agency collaboration led by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor with administration provided by the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) the lead entities in the Stellar Communities partnership currently consisting of nine state agencies.