

From:
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MITCH D. ROTH
MAYOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAWAI'I COUNTY PROVIDES UPDATES ON SEVERAL KEY PARK PROJECTS

The County of Hawai'i Department of Parks & Recreation announces updates on several projects around the island. These are among the department's many efforts to ensure residents have safe, accessible, and quality parks and recreational facilities to meet their varied and numerous needs.

"We have worked diligently to address the years of deferred maintenance at our parks and facilities island-wide, and I am incredibly proud of our team for the tremendous progress we've made thus far," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "Earlier this year, we celebrated the completion of major renovation projects, including those at Richardson Ocean Park, Kolekole Gulch Park, Magic Sands Beach Park, and La'aloa Park. As we continue to make progress on other parks and facilities, our goal is to keep residents updated on what's happening in their communities."

The list below represents just a few of the more than 130 projects in development and execution through the efforts of the department's park planning section.

One of the projects, at Miloli'i Beach Park, marks a significant milestone in the decades-long effort to ensure island-wide accessibility at numerous park sites and facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When work begins at Miloli'i Beach Park in September, it will represent a significant milestone for the County as the final park site from a 1998 legal settlement to undergo construction.

"Ensuring everyone can access our parks has been a top priority these last several years, and we are proud to have made tremendous progress in this area," said Maurice Messina, the Director of Parks & Recreation. "Three years ago, the department had 12 remaining ADA Transition Plan park projects to implement, but we are now about to start the final project on that list."

Please see the following project updates, presented in order by geographic districts, moving counterclockwise around the island:

Isaac Kepo'okalani Hale Beach Park – The planning and design process is underway to enhance this park by creating a new, large, primary pavilion for community gatherings; several smaller pavilions for picnicking; a hale wa'a; improving camping amenities; establishing a new potable water supply and electrical system for the park; a new fire protection system; and related infrastructure and recreational amenities to support maximum use and community value to the park.

William "Billy" Kenoī Regional Park – Restoration of both multi-purpose fields, the baseball field, and the softball field are literally waiting on the grass to grow... The softball field will be the first to reopen for use in late-July, followed by the primary multi-purpose field in mid-late August. The baseball field and second multi-purpose field are projected to reopen by the end of this year.

Waiākea Uka Park – This extensive park enhancement and modification project, which will deliver a new 4,400 square foot community center; significantly augmented on-site parking; a relocated youth baseball/softball facility replete with dugouts, scorer's booth, and dedicated restrooms; a concrete walking path, and fresh paint and repairs to the plantation-era Stanley Costales Gym and annex building, continues construction at a fervent pace. The gym and annex and new upper parking lot have been completed and is in use by the County's Summer Fun program. The relocated ballfield, together with its accessory improvements, is anticipated to open for use by the end of 2024, while the new community center and new lower parking area is projected to open in April of next year.

NAS Swimming Pool – The complete reconstruction of this facility (only the pool's basin remains from the original 1940s facility), which includes new locker/shower rooms, classroom, pool deck, spectator bleachers, filtration/circulation system, and parking lot are quickly nearing completion. The pool is scheduled to re-open September 3rd and will provide vital swimming, water exercise, training, and certification programs and services focused on our keiki, kupuna, and first responders.

Hualani Park/Princess Abigail Wahiika‘ahu‘ula Kawanānakoā Gym (Keaukaha Gym) – The design process is nearing completion for renovations to include roofing improvements, replacement of the structural fireproofing, various interior and exterior repairs and painting, window and ventilation system replacements, and other improvements.

Hilo Skatepark – Perimeter fencing has been installed to secure and improve care and maintenance of the site. Planning and design work continues for the development of this extensive skate park, which is directly across from the Hilo Civic Auditorium. The project includes the development of a 50,000 square foot outdoor skatepark with areas designed to accommodate beginner, intermediate, and expert skaters, parking, comfort stations, pavilion with concession area, walkways, and the design of skating facilities. Community partners will fund the construction of skating elements.

Pāpa‘aloe Park – The construction contract for a new 12,000+ square foot covered play court facility has been executed and the permitting process continues. The project, whose construction is slated to commence in early 2025, includes a new softball/multi-purpose field, a perimeter concrete walking path, a new parking lot and infrastructure, and recreational equipment in support of varied uses of the facility.

Kamehameha Park (Kohala) – The existing children’s playground equipment, that has been in use since the mid-1990s, will be demolished and a new playground will be constructed. The new playground equipment, comprised of challenging climbing elements akin to those at Gilbert Kahele Recreation Area, as well as various spinners and swings, will feature synthetic turf safety surfacing and meet ADA requirements. The equipment and surfacing have been purchased and the construction contract executed, with a tentative start date of July 24th for removal of the existing elements and site preparation work.

Kamakoa Nui Park – The initial phase of our partnership with the developers of the adjacent Nani Kai subdivision, the restoration of the sports fields, remains underway with irrigation system repairs implemented and hydroseeding and initial fertilization of the multi-purpose field completed. Phase II of this project, anticipated to include landscaping enhancements, new fencing, additional on-site parking, and a new dog park (with other possibilities in continuing discussion), are in active design development and are expected to commence soon.

Pu‘u Nui Park – Planning efforts to realize installation of the new children’s playground equipment and safety surfacing are nearing completion with efforts recently coordinated between the Friends of the Park, their construction contractor (Goodfellow Brothers, Inc.) and our department. Bids will be solicited shortly by the County for the installation of the playground’s synthetic turf safety surfacing, loose fill surrounds, and underlying drainage and foundation improvements. Once that contractor is brought onboard, a schedule for implementation of all parties’ work will be finalized and sitework will begin.

Kealahou Regional Park – The updated master plan and corresponding draft Environmental Assessment for this much-needed major recreational facility for Kailua-Kona and much of West Hawai‘i are nearing completion and should be issued by end of the 3rd quarter of this year. The

department is also currently preparing for the selection of a design team for the development of the initial phase of the park, which is anticipated to include several multi-purpose and baseball/softball fields, a covered play court facility, and necessary infrastructure to support the park's initial phase as well as future expansion. The project is being closely coordinate with the County's Department of Environmental Management, whose charge it will be to provide R-1 water to the park as a reliable source of irrigation and maintenance water.

Kailua Park (Old Airport Park) – The development of five new dedicated pickleball courts are underway and are expected to be completed in August. Design is also underway for three new comfort stations (bathrooms), two of which will replace both comfort stations near the shoreline area, one of which was destroyed by arson, the other is closed due to structural failure. A third comfort station is designed to supplement use of the Events Pavilion, canoe hales, and the Maka'eo Walking Path. The beach comfort stations are anticipated to be ready for public bidding for construction in October 2024, with the third structure to follow shortly thereafter. The department continues to work on the demolition of the old terminal building and repairs to the runway, and is in the process of replacing the fencing at all dugouts at the park. Additionally, we are moving forward with bulkhead replacement and pumproom improvements at Kona Community Aquatic Center.

Arthur Greenwell Park/Yano Hall – Utilizing a combination of in-house resources and private contractors, the fencing that surrounds the outdoor play court will be completely replaced, the court's surfacing reconstructed, and the children's playground equipment will be completely replaced.

Miloli'i Beach Park – This accessibility improvement project, which will provide for a new pavilion and comfort station (in replacement of existing facilities); new children's playground equipment; improvements to the existing outdoor sports court; development of a new paved parking lot; new accessible walkways and picnic amenities; and new potable water system, fire protection system, and electrical system, is scheduled to begin construction in early September. This project is the final full park site requiring modifications for compliance with the County's federally mandated ADA Transition Plan.

Wai'ohinu Park (Kau) – Efforts are underway to contract a design team to prepare plans for a new comfort station at this park to replace the original facilities that were closed due to multiple failures of its utilities and continued failings of the structure itself. The department is committed to seeing this new facility realized and the park's dependence on portable toilets eliminated for good.

Nā'ālehu Park – A contract has been executed for a contractor to remove the deteriorated and non-functioning lights, ballasts, and metal platform/cages atop the tall, metal light poles that serve the ballfield. The contractor will also remove all existing electrical conductors and components due to past issues with shorts and unintended electrification of the metal poles. The intent is to safely remove these failing elements to ensure the ongoing safety of park users but

retain the poles for potential future restoration of the lighting system for nighttime play. Materials have been ordered for this project and a start date is being coordinated.

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